

es *my insister*, me dit-il.”: “Ce qui me plaît merveilleusement dans ce mot, dont tu me fais présent, ton trouvé, ta trouvaille de génie, ce ou cette intraduisible, c’est que je peux te le retourner également. Toi aussi tu es *my insister*. *Mon insister*. *Mon insisteur*” (Cixous 42).

12/ Il faudrait plutôt parler d’un saut *dans* et *hors* de l’éthique à la fois: “Une non-droiture active (ce qui ne veut pas dire non passive) active même passive, agissante, non assujettie ni au bien ni au mal, guidée seulement par le bondir. [...] Bondir au-delà de l’au-delà, dis-tu, vers une vie autre que la vie possible dis-tu, cela peut s’imaginer se trouver même, mais non pas s’espérer. Le seul bon c’est le bond. Le saut dans l’éthique qui fait sauter l’éthique” (Cixous 68).

13/ Figure omniprésente de ce chiasme ou chasme dans tous leurs échanges: “je me lis à toi, te lisant dans ta toutautreté je suis lue. Par là-dessus tu me lis dans ma toutautreté, inconnue à moi-même” (Cixous 32).

14/ “*Le Prénom de Dieu*, à part le prénom, je n’en ai pas la moindre idée, je ne veux pas en entendre parler. Comment lui dire cela? C’est ce texte qui lui est tombé dessus, qui nous a fait le coup, il y a près de quarante ans / Lis et ne dis rien. Comment lui dire cela?” (Cixous 34). On reconnaît ici l’injonction retournée d’Augustin, “*Tolle, lege*,” “Prends, et lis,” mais aussi l’autre renversement *non dit*, concernant le texte qui revient de “près de quarante ans,” soit *Le jour où je n’étais pas là*, le livre “gardé oublié” tout ce temps.

15/ “Au-dedans de’ c’est une expression à toi. Moi je dis: ‘en’ d’ordinaire. C’est toi qui as raison. Au-dedans est plus intérieur et plus abritant que en” (Cixous 55).

16/ Une troisième occurrence surgit alors qu’elle note, après l’ajout concernant le “rêve grand, solennel, incroyablement prophétique,” le “rêve majestueux et angoissé” de Derrida, que “Lui, il me renvoie la balle” (Cixous 98).

17/ “Où me mettre pour pouvoir jouir en paix donc sans ‘moi,’ franchement, de la beauté de ce texte sans m’accuser et me plaindre de trop et de trop tard?” (Cixous 79).

18/ “Souriez-moi,” dit-il, “comme je vous aurai souri jusqu’à la fin. Préférez toujours la vie et affirmer sans cesse la survie. [...] Je vous aime et vous souris d’où que je sois” (Jacques Derrida dans “Salut à Jacques Derrida,” *Rue Descartes* 48 [2005], 6.)

#### CEUVRES CITÉES

Cixous, Hélène. *Insister. À Jacques Derrida*. Paris: Galilée, 2006.

Derrida, Jacques. *Apprendre à vivre enfin*. Entretien avec Jean Birnbaum. Paris: Galilée/Le Monde, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Salut à Jacques Derrida.” *Rue Descartes* 48 (2005).

\_\_\_\_\_. “À force de deuil.” *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde*. Présenté par Pascale-Anne Brault et Michael Naas. Paris: Galilée, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Genèses, généalogies, genres et le génie*. Paris: Galilée, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Le Monolinguisme de l’autre*. Paris: Galilée, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Politiques de l’amitié*, suivi de *L’Oreille de Heidegger*. Paris: Galilée, 1994.

Derrida, Jacques, et Hélène Cixous. “Un ver à soie. Points de vue piqués sur l’autre voile.” *Voiles*. Paris: Galilée, 1998.

GINETTE MICHAUD est professeur au Département des littératures de langue française de l’Université de Montréal. Elle a co-dirigé avec Georges Leroux le numéro “Derrida lecteur” (*Études françaises*, 2002) et, avec Marie-Louise Mallet, le *Cahier de L’Herne* consacré à Jacques Derrida (L’Herne, 2004). Derniers titres parus: *Ferron post-scriptum* (Lanctôt éditeur, 2005), *Appendice*, avec Jean-Luc Nancy, *58 indices sur le corps* (Nota bene, 2004), *Edmund Alleyn. Indigo sur tous les tons* (avec Gilles Lapointe et Jocelyn Jean, Éditions du Passage, 2005) et *Tenir au secret (Derrida, Blanchot)* (Galilée, 2006).

This essay explores the occurrence and significance of the term *salut* (salvation, health, safety, but also greeting and hailing) in some of Derrida’s later work, while highlighting the textual relationship—the constant salutation—between Derrida and Nancy.

## Salut-ations

KAS SAGHAFI

### Chapeau!

I doff my cap, I take my hat off to you.

How else to remember and commemorate a great thinker, who touched us so, a thinker whom we knew, without knowing, as a living force, a thinker whom we observed from a distance mourn and watch over the work of friends and colleagues? How else than to pay our respects, to salute him, or raise our hat to him? For, one must begin by paying one’s respects, by saluting the other, by addressing a greeting to the other, as there is a *salut* at each moment of encounter or leave-taking, at every meeting or parting, at every beginning and end. *Salut!*

It is necessary to seize this occasion not only to memorialize, to remember, to pay homage or tribute to Jacques Derrida, not simply to express one’s admiration, but also to hail an extraordinary philosopher, to salute him. This act of saluting, what in French is “donner un coup de chapeau” or “tirer son chapeau à quelqu’un,” would be

a mark of one's respect. Yet this salutation would not dare to confer, as every *salut* usually does, health or eternal life on its recipient. For the would-be recipient of this particular *salut* did everything he could in his last writings to disabuse us of any hope for immunity, safety, and salvation.

I began by citing, quoting from a portion of a text itself discussing another chief, "capital text on the hat [*un texte capital sur le chapeau*]" ("Corona" 144, trans. mine). There, the word "chapeau" is cited without an exclamation mark, depriving it of any connotation of praising, congratulating, or saying bravo. Jacques Derrida refers to a hat and a crown in his essay on Gérard Granel, "Corona vitae (fragments)," published alongside texts on other friends and colleagues in *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde*. Written in the form of a letter to Jean-Luc Nancy, the co-editor of a collection dedicated to Granel, who was Nancy's teacher, Derrida cites an article written by Granel entitled "Ludwig Wittgenstein ou le refus de la couronne." There, in a discussion of the relation between religion and logic, Granel notes that Wittgenstein's ultimate attitude toward all things religious remained that of "tirer son chapeau," that of "taking his hat off," as a mark of respect. This is neither recourse to religion nor to a religiosity without positive religion, but, Granel explains with another hat-related expression, that of "mettre son chapeau sur la tête" ("putting one's hat on one's own head") which each person can only do for oneself (32). In other words, for each person, it is a matter of thinking in the manner that only he has the ability to do, in the manner best suited to him. Granel is alluding to a fragment in a collection of Wittgenstein's notes, translated by Granel himself into French, in which Wittgenstein claims that no one is able to think for another. The fragment reads: "No one can think a thought for me in the way no one can don my hat for me" (*Culture* 2-2e).<sup>1</sup> Granel renders this in French as: "Personne ne peut former une idée à ma place, de même que personne ne peut mettre mon chapeau sur la tête" (*Remarques*). To each his own hat or head, then.

Cut to a scene at Jacques Derrida's birthday celebration at the château in Cerisy-la-Salle. On a beautiful summer day, scholars from across the world are gathered round a birthday cake in the courtyard celebrating the 72nd birthday of a man of enormous vitality, whom they have been witnessing over a number of days bound up and down the stairs of the château with a spring in every step, attend every session and comment on every paper. Derrida has been in great spirits all day, laughing and joking. While standing next to Derrida, who is smoking, Jean-Luc Nancy teasingly raises his arm and feigns to put his hat, the fedora (*chapeau mou*) that he has been known to wear quite often, on Derrida's head. Like a halo or a crown, the hat rests in the air for a moment. Derrida, annoyed somewhat, moves his head to the side to try to prevent Nancy from placing his hat on his head. The hat touches his hair. Derrida

immediately reacts, runs his hand through his ruffled hair to straighten it, as if to say "ce chapeau ne tient pas sur ma tête" ("this hat won't stay on my head"). I am invoking this event not out of any indiscretion but in order to read into this scene of friendly jesting and rivalry, which for me says a great deal about the relationship between these two thinkers. However, like the hat suspended in the air, allow me to hold off from drawing any conclusions about this scene for a while.

It would be impossible to deny the increasing importance of Jean-Luc Nancy as an interlocutor for Derrida, especially in the past few years. Their incontestable proximity, or affinity, became more intense and accelerated with the publication of Derrida's majestic tome on Nancy's work, *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy* in 2000. Since then, one could trace numerous occasions or places where each winks at the other's work, where their writings have crossed. This crossing (*croisement*) of terms or concepts that have passed back and forth between the two thinkers, such as "community," "fraternity," and "freedom," this constant saluting and hailing (*saluer*) of each other, was also accompanied by the crossing of paths at numerous conferences where they both shared the stage.

It is well-known that Derrida's friendship with Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe dates back a number of decades, some details of which were recently recounted by them in their introduction to *Penser à Strasbourg*, a collection celebrating the lively intellectual environment at the University of Strasbourg and Derrida's frequent contributions to this scene. Co-organizers of the first *décade* at Cerisy devoted to Derrida's work, colleagues in GREPH (the group convened to analyze the state of the teaching of philosophy in France), collaborators with Sarah Kofman in the series "Philosophie en effet" for Galilée, and companions of long-standing, they note in their introduction that it was very early on in their friendship with Derrida that they learnt that "[philosophical] work occurs by way of texts [*le travail passe par les textes*]" (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 15). In Safaa Fathy's film *D'ailleurs Derrida*, Nancy, the only one of Derrida's friends to discuss his relationship with Derrida on camera, briefly recounts how they first came to be acquainted. He remarks that, although they have known each other for a long time, over the 30 years of friendship he and Derrida exchanged very few philosophical propositions. Friendship, he explains, is independent of "all speech [*tout discours*]." Rather, "things [between us] happen through texts [...] and not through speech [*les choses là se passent entre les textes [...] passent pas par la parole*]." The companionship of Nancy and Derrida, "a friendship of thought [*une amitié de pensée*]," then, takes the form of a different kind of rapport, a textual relationship, which, far from a relation of mastery and discipleship, has left its traces in numerous texts.

Nancy and Derrida's texts display the mutual admiration that each has for the other's work: words, terms, themes nod or wave at each other. This admiration for the other has also gone beyond tributes to the other's writing, Derrida having gone on record to remark on Nancy's exactitude, punctuality, etc.<sup>2</sup> In fact, one of the traits that Derrida appreciates most about Nancy is his hard-headedness. In *Le toucher*, Jean-Luc Nancy, he tells us, it is Nancy's "stubborn impertinence [*l'impertinence têtue*]" and "shamelessness [*l'insolence*]" that he loves and admires the most (304).<sup>3</sup> Nancy's writing is characterized by a certain boldness, and perhaps this boldness—in approach and choice of themes—is what distinguishes his work and gestures from those of Derrida. Elsewhere, at a conference devoted to Nancy, Derrida speaks of a sense of wonder or marvel (*émerveillement*) at their differences of approach ("Responsabilité" 168). He salutes the fact that Nancy has had the courage, or "the Heart," not only to take up the heritage of the tradition, but also to face those "immense conceptual ghosts" or difficulties that would frustrate most other thinkers, themes such as sense [*sens*], world, creation, freedom, community, etc., which Nancy has time and again faced head on (167).

Not only has a constant salutation been taking place between the two thinkers but, I would like to suggest, the very term *salut*, what Derrida has elsewhere called "that strange French word *salut*," has also become a theme, a part of the textual relation between the two thinkers. Semantically rich in French, the verb *saluer* means "to hail, to salute, or to pay one's respects," while the expression "*salut!*" is used in everyday informal speech to greet those to whom one is close, to say hello and goodbye, or simply "see you!" The noun *le salut*, when raised in the context of religion or illness, can mean "salvation" or "health." Yet the appearance of the term *salut* in the recent texts of Derrida and Nancy, far from simply signifying its conventional meanings, signals a radical reassessment of *salut* as salvation and safety.

The references to being "safe and sound [*sain et sauf*]" in Derrida's writings go as far back as the 1970s (for example, *The Truth in Painting*) and continue up to his last texts, and they are almost always accompanied by the quasi-mechanic repetition of a series of terms taken from Benveniste's *Indo-European Language and Society*. (As an aside, an analysis of Derrida's almost automatic recourse to Benveniste in many of his writings would be worthy of a great study). A concentrated cluster of texts during the years 1995–97 treat the question of *salut* in more detail. In "Avances," a text written to introduce Serge Margel's book on the *Timaeus* (1995), Derrida writes of an infinite wound inflicted upon all that "should be safe and sound, holy and unharmed [*sain et sauf, saint et sauf*] (*hieros, hagios, hosios, sacer, sanctus, heilig*, holy, sacred, unscathed, immune)" (38). A few pages later in a footnote, he suggests that what he is proposing

ought to be read alongside Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin, where Heidegger reads the failing of names:

dans une pensée du salut, du salutaire ou du sauf (*heilen et Gruss*). [...] Mais ne peut-on se risquer à dire, sans ou contre Heidegger, que le salut à l'autre (*Gruss*) doit suspendre toute assurance ou toute promesse du salut comme ce qui *sauve*, dans le sauf, la salvation ou le salutaire de la santé (*heilen, heilig*)? ("Avance" 42n)

[in a thought of *salut*, the salutary or the safe, the saved (*heilen and Gruss*). (...) But can it not be risked to say, without or against Heidegger, that the *salut* to the other (*Gruss*) must [*doit*] suspend all assurance or all promise of *salut* as that which saves, in the safety, salvation, or the salutariness of health (*heilen, heilig*)? (trans. mine)]

In his essay "Comment nommer" (presented in 1995 and published in 1996), dedicated to the poet Michel Deguy, who was one of the early translators of Heidegger's writings on Hölderlin, Derrida again comments that what he would have liked to examine is the call (*grüssen, heissen*) and Heidegger's definition of the poet as the one whose mission is to say what is *heilig* (safe, sound, unharmed, immune).

The question of *salut* really comes to the fore in Derrida's texts with "Faith and Knowledge" in *Religion* (1996). Asking whether it would be possible to "dissociate a discourse on religion from a discourse on the *salut*, that is on the healthy, the holy, the sacred, the saved, the unscathed, the immune [*le sain, le saint, le sacré, le sauf, l'indemne, l'immun*] (*sacer, sanctus, heilig*, holy and their supposed equivalents in so many languages)," Derrida launches into an examination of the two sources of religion and the "fatal logic of the auto-immunity of the unscathed [*l'indemne*]" (*Faith 44/Foi 59*). What is wished for or dreamed of, what Derrida calls the "law of *salut* [*loi du salut*]," is "saving the living as the intact, the unscathed, the safe (*heilig*)" (49/65–66). His remarks in "Faith and Knowledge" link the religious and the sacred and all the values associated with "the sacrosanct (*heilig*, holy, safe and sound, unscathed, intact, immune, free, vital, fecund, fertile, strong, and [...] [the] 'swollen')" to the fetishization of life, especially human life (*Faith 48/Foi 63*). Religion, then, would be the religion of the living, a celebration of all that says life-force, all the values associated with life and vitality, strength and fertility. And, at the end of "The Reason of the Strongest" in *Voyous*, Derrida raises the question of *salut* by returning to Heidegger's usage of the three verbs *retten, heilen, grüssen* in the famous *Der Spiegel* interview.

In relation to Nancy, the term *salut* is first employed and deployed by Derrida in 2000 in *Le toucher*, Jean-Luc Nancy, and in 2003 in *Voyous* and *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde*. On the last page of *Le toucher*, Derrida calls for,

une bénédiction sans espoir de salut, un salut exespéré, un salut sans calcul, un incalculable, un imprésentable salut qui d'avance renonce, comme il se doit pour être un salut digne de ce nom, au Salut (*Le toucher* 348).

[a benediction without hope of *salut*, an *exespéré salut*, a *salut* without calculation, an incalculable and unrepresentable *salut*, which in advance renounces, as it must do in order to be worthy of this name, Salvation (*Salut*). (trans. mine)<sup>4</sup>]

On the last line of the same page, he writes of “a *salut* without salvation, a *salut* just to come, a just *salut* to come [*un salut sans salvation, un salut juste à venir*]” (*Le toucher* 348). In the “Prière d’insérer,” the insert placed in *Voyous*, Derrida notes that the call of democracy to come remains “without hope [*sans espoir*],” “not hopeless [*désespéré*] but foreign to teleology, to the hope and the salut of salvation” (trans. mine).<sup>5</sup> This call, he qualifies, is not “foreign to a salut to the other [*étranger à un salut à l’autre*], to the adieu or to justice,” but still resistant to “the economy of redemption.” He repeats this caution, however with even more insistence, in the “Foreword” to *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde*, a book of bidding-farewell, adieu, but also *salut*, to so many dear friends and to an exceptional generation of intellectuals:

Ce livre est un livre d’adieu. Un salut plus d’un salut. Chaque fois unique. Mais c’est l’adieu d’un salut qui se résigne à saluer, comme je crois tout salut digne de ce nom—est tenu de le faire, la possibilité toujours ouverte, voire la nécessité du non-retour possible, de la fin du monde comme fin de toute résurrection. Non seulement de la résurrection au sens commun, qui ferait lever et marcher des corps revenus à la vie mais même de l’anastasis dont parle Jean-Luc Nancy dans *Noli me tangere* (2003). Si différente qu’elle soit de la résurrection classique, l’anastasis continué, fût-ce avec la rigueur de quelque cruauté, de consoler. Elle postule et l’existence de quelque Dieu et que la fin d’un monde ne serait pas, au sens où je l’entendais plus haut, la fin du monde. (“Avant-propos” 11)

[This book is a book of adieu. A *salut* (no) more than a *salut*. Each time unique. But it is the adieu of a *salut* that resigns itself to greet, as I believe each *salut* worthy of its name is to keep doing, the always open possibility, that is, the necessity of the possible non-return, of the end of the world as the end of all resurrection. Not only of resurrection in the everyday sense, which would raise and make the bodies returned to life walk, but even the *anastasis* of which Jean-Luc Nancy speaks in *Noli me tangere*. However different it is from classical resurrection, *anastasis* continues with the harshness of some cruelty to console. It postulates the existence of some God and that the end of a world would not be, in the sense that I meant above, the end of the world.]

Derrida’s salvos not only elevate *salut* to a major term of contention between Nancy and Derrida but also lead Nancy to explicitly treat the question of *salut* in two essays addressed to Derrida: “Consolation, désolation,” which appeared in a special issue of

*Magazine littéraire* dedicated to Derrida’s work in April 2004, and “Salut à toi, salut aux aveugles que nous devenons,” a eulogy published in the newspaper *Libération* on 11 October 2004 just following Derrida’s passing away.<sup>6</sup> Derrida’s spirited reaction to Nancy’s writings on resurrection, in particular in *Noli me tangere*, where Nancy attempts, in his own words, to “deconstruct” the notion of “resurrection,” must of course be assessed in light of a number of Nancy’s recent texts written in the context of his project of the deconstruction of Christianity and collected in *La Déclosion*, particularly “Résurrection de Blanchot.”<sup>7</sup>

The word “resurrection” has appeared in numerous places in Derrida’s own writings; in fact, Nancy refers to two of these occurrences himself in “Consolation, désolation.”<sup>8</sup> Derrida has even used the word in relation to Blanchot’s writings on at least ten instances in *Parages*.<sup>9</sup> A more detailed and nuanced tracing of the occurrences of this word in Derrida’s work would have to take into consideration the contexts in which it is being used—at times very positively, for example in the context of the poet’s role in awakening language, and others quite critically, for example as a Christian doctrine of redemption or salvation (e.g., his reading of the relation between *Aufhebung* and resurrection in *Glas*). If there is a resistance to resurrection, it is to resurrection as a theme (to be deconstructed) and to the desire to retain the name resurrection. This may be why, in the context of writing the “Foreword” to *Chaque fois unique*, a book proclaiming that each death is “the end of the world,” a book that initially was to be titled *À la vie à la mort*, Derrida may have displayed such a strong distaste for the word “resurrection.”

On 29 March 2003, Derrida and Nancy shared the stage in an auditorium at the University of Paris VII-Jussieu. In a session entitled “Dialogue,” the two thinkers presented plenary talks wrapping up a three-day conference dedicated to Maurice Blanchot. Even though the international conference had been planned months in advance, Blanchot’s death on 20 February had drawn a pall over the entire event. From the manner of proceeding (whether there had been plans to present a formal paper or to have an informal discussion) to the asides during each of their papers (whether a written homage to Blanchot was appropriate or whether it was too soon after his death to speak about Blanchot), the exchanges during the plenary session seemed tense. This was not simply an academic disagreement over the interpretation of Blanchot’s writings. Nancy and Derrida, as certain “inheritors” of Blanchot, were engaged in a contestation on how the thought of dying (*mourir*) in Blanchot is to be read. Naturally, questions of death and dying would have been raised by Blanchot’s passing away, yet this contestation played out over the figure of Blanchot, more than those already rehearsed in the past over questions of community and fraternity, was a

differend between Nancy and Derrida over death, mortality and finitude, over *salut*, salvation, and safety, and in particular over the question of resurrection. Moreover, what was at stake was also nothing less than the status (and limits) of deconstruction itself. For, to ask how to interpret Blanchot's writings on death and dying, or whether there is a thought of resurrection in his writings, amounts to asking not only "What, if any, thought of *salut* is there in Blanchot's writings?" or, as if posing the *ti esti* question, "What is *salut*?" but also "Is there such a thing as the undeconstructible?"

In order to investigate all the ramifications of this differend, one would have to turn to an attentive and micrological reading of the texts presented by both thinkers at the Blanchot conference, "Maurice Blanchot est mort" by Derrida and "Fin du colloque" by Nancy, as well as to analyze and elaborate on the choice of texts selected to be commented on—in particular "Literature and the Right to Death" and the two versions of *Thomas the Obscure* and the quasi-evangelical evocations of Lazarus in both texts.<sup>16</sup> One would have to take into consideration Derrida's piece written in honour of Blanchot, "Un témoin de toujours," published in the daily *Libération*, followed by its longer version pronounced at Blanchot's cremation ceremony and later published as the last essay in *Chaque fois unique*, where the impossibility of dying is interpreted in relation to possibility, power, and negativity. One would then have to attend to Nancy's definition of resurrection in *Noli me tangere* (published approximately a month after the Blanchot conference in April 2003)—where he insists that resurrection is not a return to life, not a process of regeneration or resurgence, not an apotheosis or an erection but an infinitely prolonged departedness or disappearance—and the two subsequent essays dedicated to Derrida, "Consolation, désolation" and "Salut à toi," written to redress, rectify, clarify, and shed new light on this differend between them. By turning to Derrida's essay from the proceedings of the Blanchot conference, later published as the fifth essay in the new edition of *Parages* (2003), by restricting my attention to Derrida's reading of the terms *mourir*, *survivre*, and *l'immortalité*, and by focusing on the relation between *salut* and resurrection, I can only, in the interest of time and space, indicate very schematically here why Derrida would be so resistant to a *thought* or *theme* of resurrection—and its deconstruction—attempted by Nancy.

"Maurice Blanchot est mort [Maurice Blanchot is Dead]" is an elliptical, almost cryptic essay, its structure bearing the traces of being composed shortly after Blanchot's death. Much can be said, and would need to be said, about Derrida's choice of texts and quotations from Blanchot's writings—from the invocation of literature, terror, and the death penalty in "Literature and the Right to Death," the phantasm of being buried alive in "The Language of Fiction," the decomposing body in *Au moment voulu* [*When the Time Comes*], the reference to a "principle of resurrection" in *L'instant de ma mort*

[*The Instant of My Death*] to the hallucinatory passage from the first version of *Thomas the Obscure*—but what is clear is Derrida's aim to give the word to Blanchot himself. His allusive essay is in fact kept in motion by the use of very long citations from Blanchot's works, often with little, if any, commentary. Counting himself among those who have written a good deal on Blanchot, with him and after him, and almost always about that impossible-possible thing called death ("la mort possible impossible"), Derrida mentions his own work on "la mort sans mort" in *Pas*, on "survivre" in *La Folie du jour* and *l'Arret de mort* in *Parages*, and on "demeure" in *L'instant de ma mort*, before turning to an examination of the essay "La littérature et le droit à la mort [Literature and the Right to Death]" ("Maurice" 596).

"Literature and the Right to Death" from *La part du feu* [*The Work of Fire*] (originally published as an article in 1948) remains an extraordinary essay on writing and its relation to death, in which Blanchot accompanies, doubles, interrupts, delimits, and rewrites the Hegelian dialectic. If, for the sake of argument, one were to agree with Kojève's reading of Hegel, one could say that Hegel's philosophy is a philosophy of death. This would be so because death functions in the Hegelian text as the source of negativity and all possibility as such. Blanchot explains that speaking allows mastery over things. The act of naming, in particular, is a disturbing power that negates the thing, annihilates it, separating the word from the thing, thus making language possible. Hence, death is already present in language: "When I speak death speaks in me" (*La part* 313, trans. mine). Language is essentially tied to death and negation and is animated by this negativity. My speech assumes that the one that I have named can be detached from herself, removed from her existence and plunged into nothingness. Thus, my speech would not be possible if she were not capable of dying. Death thus enables speech—"what a wonderful power [*puissance*]!" (316). Speech, or language, is the life of this death, it is "the life that endures death and maintains itself in it" (316, 324).

The task of literature, however, is more ambiguous and contradictory. Derrida articulates this task by citing a very lengthy passage from "Literature and the Right to Death" that I will reproduce here:

La littérature, si elle s'en tenait là, aurait déjà une tâche étrange et embarrassante. Mais elle ne s'en tient pas là. Elle se rappelle le premier nom qui aurait été ce meurtrier dont parle Hegel. « L'existant », par le mot, a été appelé hors de son existence est devenu être. Le *Lazare, veni foras* a fait sortir l'obscurité cadavérique de son fond original et en échange, ne lui a donné que la vie de l'esprit. Le langage sait que son royaume, c'est le jour et non pas l'intimité de l'irrévé. [...] Qui voit Dieu mort. Dans la parole meurt ce qui donne vie à la parole; la parole est la vie de cette mort, elle est « la vie qui porte la mort et se maintient en elle ». Admirable puissance. Mais quelque chose était là, qui n'y est plus.

Quelque chose a disparu. Comment le trouver, comment me retourner vers ce qui est *avant*, si tout mon pouvoir consiste à en faire ce qui est *après*? Le langage de la littérature est la recherche de ce moment qui la précède. Généralement, elle le nomme existence; elle veut la chat tel qu'il existe, le galet dans son parti pris de chose, non pas l'homme, mais celui-ci et dans celui-ci, ce que l'homme rejette pour le dire, ce qui est le fondement de la parole et que la parole exclut pour parler, l'abîme, le Lazare du tombeau et non le Lazare rendu au jour, celui qui déjà sent mauvais, qui est le Mal, le Lazare perdu et non le Lazare sauvé et ressuscité. *Je dis une fleur!* Mais dans l'absence où je la cite, par l'oubli où je relègue l'image qu'elle me donne, au fond de ce mot lourd, surgissant lui-même comme une chose inconnue, je convoque passionnément l'obscurité de cette fleur, ce parfum qui me traverse et que je ne respire pas, cette poussière qui m'imprègne mais que je ne vois pas, cette couleur qui est trace et non lumière. Où réside donc mon espoir d'atteindre ce que je repousse? Dans la matérialité du langage, dans ce fait que les mots aussi sont des choses, une nature, ce qui m'est donné et me donne plus que je n'en comprends. Tout à l'heure, la réalité dans mots était un obstacle. Maintenant, elle est ma seule chance (*La part* 315–16). [Even if literature stopped here, it would have a strange and embarrassing job to do. But it does not stop here. It recalls the first name which would be the murder Hegel speaks of. The 'existant' was called out of its existence by the word and it became being. This *Lazare, veni foras* summoned the dark cadaverous reality from its primordial depths and in exchange gave it only the life of spirit. Language knows that its kingdom is day and not the intimacy of the unrevealed. [...] Whoever sees God dies. In speech what gives life to speech dies; speech is the life of that death, it is 'the life that endures death and maintains itself in it.' What wonderful power. But something was there and is no longer there. Something has disappeared. How can I recover it, how can I turn around and look at what exists *before*, if all my power consists of making it into what exists *after*? The language of literature is a search for this moment which precedes literature. Literature usually calls it existence; it wants the cat as it exists, the pebble *taking the side of things*, not man, but the pebble, and in this pebble what man rejects by saying it, what is the foundation of speech and what speech excludes in speaking, the abyss, Lazarus in the tomb and not Lazarus brought back to daylight, the one who already smells bad, who is Evil, Lazarus lost and not Lazarus saved and brought back to life. *I say a flower!* But in the absence where I mention it, through the oblivion to which I relegate the image it gives me, in the depths of this heavy word, itself looming up like an unknown thing, I passionately summon the darkness of this flower, I summon this perfume that passes through me though I do not breathe it, this dust that impregnates me though I do not see it, this color which is a trace and not light. Then what hope lies in the materiality of language, in the fact that words are things, too, are a kind of nature—this is given to me and gives me more than I can understand. Just now the reality of words was an obstacle. Now, it is my only chance. ("Literature" 45–46)]

Summoning "the cadaverous reality" from its depths, literature can only in exchange give it the life of Spirit. As Hegel famously notes in the "Preface" of the *Phenomenology*

of Spirit, the life of Spirit is the life that carries with death and endures the negative. And speech is the life of this death, the life that endures death:

But the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures and maintains itself in it [Aber nicht das Leben, das sich vor dem Tode scheut und vor der Verwüstung rein bewahrt, sondern das ihn erträgt und in ihm sich erhält, ist das Leben des Geistes: Ce n'est pas cette vie qui recule d'horreur devant la mort et se preserve pure de la destruction, mais la vie qui porte la mort, et se maintient dans la mort même, qui est la vie de l'esprit]. [...] Spirit is this power [*Macht*] only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. This tarrying [*Verweilen*] with the negative is the magic power [*die Zauberkraft*] that converts it into being. (*Phenomenology* §32, 18–19/*Phänomenologie* 3.6/*La phénoménologie* 1.29)<sup>11</sup>

The life of Spirit is a tarrying with the negative because Spirit, as the "reconciliation" of the abstract and the immediate, has incorporated the death and resurrection of Christ: The death of Christ is "no longer what it immediately signifies, the non-being of this *singular* entity, it is transfigured into the *universality* of Spirit which lives in its community, and dies in it everyday and is resurrected daily" (*Phenomenology* 570–71/3.475/2.286). As Jean Hyppolite explains in *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, the community must reconcile "finite existence with divine essence, by interiorizing the death and resurrection of Christ" (546). When Hegel writes that God is *revealed* as Spirit it is because, as Spirit, God has become the universal self-consciousness of the community (547).

If language is the life that endures death and maintains itself in it, literature searches for something other. It is a search for the foundation of speech, what speech must exclude in order to speak—the other Lazarus, the one that is *not* resurrected: "the Lazarus in the tomb [*le Lazare du tombeau*] and not Lazarus returned to the light, the one already beginning to smell, who is Evil, Lazarus lost and not Lazarus saved and raised from the dead" (Blanchot, "Literature" 46/*La part* 316). Literature is bound up with death, but not the death that conspires with negativity, the death whose idealization transforms it into a dialectical power, but a death that refuses to become pure negation—an endless dying.

"The right to death" of which Blanchot speaks, Derrida explains, can of course be read as the right to accede to death, the right to kill, to be killed, and to kill oneself ("Maurice" 604). Yet the principle of death, he notes, is also "un principe de résurrection et de salut"—hence the references to Lazarus in "Literature and the Right to Death." Derrida draws a comparison between what Christ in the Gospel of John says to Lazarus—"El'azar, viens dehors (*veni foras*)"—to what the Russian soldier tells the

narrator of *L'instant de ma mort*, who according to Derrida “had already traversed life and death, the limit between life and death [*a déjà traversé la vie et la mort, la limite entre vie et mort*],” as he lets him escape death: *Veni foras*, in other words, leave here and “save yourself [*sauve-toi*]” (“Maurice” 605).

Already in 1948, Derrida remarks, Blanchot speaks of “dying [*mourir*]” only as an impossibility, that is to say, “death as impossibility of dying [*mort comme impossibilité de mourir*]” (*La part* 325/“Maurice” 606). The impossibility of dying, a “syntagma” that is repeated throughout Blanchot’s writings, is a passivity, not a possibility or a power upon which all speaking is dependent. And the right to death always fails before this impossibility. Death works in the world, but to die is to lose death: “As long as I live, I am a mortal man, but when I die, ceasing to be a man [...] I am no longer capable of dying” (Blanchot, “Literature” 55). Blanchot notes that this impossibility of dying is often confused by certain religions with immortality. “Through death I lose the possibility of being mortal, because I lose the possibility of being man; being man beyond death could only have this strange meaning: being, despite death, always capable of dying, continuing as though nothing had happened.” Other religions call this “the curse of being reborn [*la malédiction des renaissances*];” one is condemned to live again [*revivre*] and to work at dying fully and completely (56/*La part* 325).

Blanchot suggests that literature, in particular Kafka’s writings, does not “make of this theme the expression of a drama of the beyond [*un drame de l’au-delà*],” but “attempts to find a way out of this condition [*essayer de lui trouver une issue*]” (*La part* 325–26). “Literature does not act: but what it does is plunge into this depth of existence which is neither being nor nothingness and where the hope of doing anything is radically eliminated.” The writer has a relation to this “impersonal power which leaves him neither living nor dead [*une puissance impersonnelle qui ne le laisse ni vivre ni mourir*].” “Literary immortality,” he adds, is “the very movement by which the nausea of a survival which is not a survival, a death which does not end anything, insinuates itself into the world, a world sapped by crude existence [*le mouvement même par lequel, jusque dans le monde, un monde miné par l’existence brute, s’insinue la nausée d’une survie qui n’en est pas une, d’une mort qui ne met fin à rien*]” (5/327, trans. modified). The writer who writes a work eliminates and affirms himself at the same time, realizing that what the work brings is only “a mockery of immortality [*une dérision de l’immortalité*]” (*La part* 327/607).

What Blanchot calls “dying” is further discussed in *L’écriture du désastre* [*The Writing of the Disaster*] as “la mort impossible” (110) and the “impossibility of dying.” Derrida draws our attention to “l’aporie de l’impossible possible” in a passage from *The Writing of the Disaster* in which Blanchot, in a treatment of suicide, assesses the

Hegelian and Heideggerian approaches to death (“Maurice” 612). The desire for death either uses death as a power, an ability [*pouvoir*], or as a possibility, what is for Dasein the possibility of the impossible. Blanchot notes, however, that the infinite passivity of dying is “the impossibility of all possibility [*l’impossibilité de toute possibilité*]” (*L’écriture* 115, trans. mine). Thus, what Blanchot terms dying, or “mort sans mort” elsewhere, can also be a strange survival, a living on (une survie), an “immortality” even, which is not to be confused with the conventional senses of these terms (*La part* 327).

In his most fascinating analysis of Blanchot’s *The Instant of My Death* in *Demeure*, Derrida devotes some remarkable pages to the phrase “Dead—immortal [“Mort—immortel”]” (*Demeure: Fiction* 67/*Demeure*, “Maurice” 86). The narrator’s experience of being before a “firing squad” and of narrowly escaping death, Derrida writes, “made him ‘perhaps’ invincible. Invincible because totally vanquished, totally exposed, totally lost” (69/86). “Dead—immortal.” This strange phrase, a sentence that is not a sentence, unsettles all “logical modalities”:

mort et cependant immortel, mort parce qu’immortel, mort en tant qu’immortel (un immortel ne vit pas), immortel dès lors que et en tant que mort, tandis que et aussi longtemps que mort. (*Demeure, Maurice* 86)

[dead and yet immortal, dead because immortal, dead insofar as immortal (an immortal does not live), immortal from the moment that and insofar as dead, although and for as long as dead. (*Demeure: Fiction* 67)]

An immortal is someone who is dead. Derrida further explains this “immortality as death”:

car une fois mort on ne meurt plus et, selon tous les modes possibles, on est devenu immortel [...]. Quand on est mort, ça n’arrive pas deux fois [...]. Par conséquent, seul un mort est immortel—autrement dit, les immortels sont morts. (*Demeure, Maurice* 86)

[for once dead one can no longer die and, according to all possible modes, one has become immortal [...]. When one is dead, it does not happen twice [...]. Consequently, only someone who is dead is immortal—in other words, the immortals are dead. (*Demeure: Fiction* 67)]

Yet the experience described with the phrase “Dead—immortal” is “not a Platonic or Christian immortality in the moment of death or of the Passion when the soul finally gathers itself together as it leaves the body,” neither does it refer to any kind of eternity or perduring presence (67/86–87). Rather, “the immortality of death is everything but the eternity of the present [*l’immortalité de la mort est tout sauf l’éternité du présent*].” For Derrida, “this non-philosophical and non-religious experience of immortality as death [*l’immortalité comme mort*]” is also to be distinguished from resurrection or a

rebirth (*Demeure: Fiction 69/Demeure*, "Maurice" 89). "Neither happiness, nor unhappiness [*Ni bonheur, ni malheur*]," Derrida quotes from *The Instant of My Death*, "this lightness [*légèreté*] neither frees nor relieves of anything; it is neither a salvation through freedom nor an opening to the infinite [*ni un salut par la liberté ni l'ouverture à l'infini*]" (90/120). Rather, echoing a phrase—"To live without living, like dying without death [*Vivre sans vivant, comme mourir sans mort*]"—from "A Primitive Scene" in *The Writing of the Disaster*, Derrida adds that the narrator's is "a death without death and thus a life without life [*une mort sans la mort et donc une vie sans vie*]" (89/119). This "death without death" can be nothing but "a confirmation of finitude [*une confirmation de la finitude*]" (*L'écriture* 90/121).

Derrida's earlier essay "Survivre" in *Parages*, is also concerned with the question of a certain *survie*, a living on at the limits of life and death. This "more than life, no more than life" is, Derrida elaborates quoting a phrase from *L'arrêt de mort* [*Death Sentence*],

« Plus qu'une vie, plus que cette éternité de vie ...»: ce plus, cette *sur-vie* marque, (...), une survie dans le temps de la vie, dans la forme d'un sursis (168)  
 ["More than a lifetime, more than that eternity of life ...": this 'more,' this *more-than-life*, *living on*, marks, [...] a temporal extension in the time of life, in the form of a reprieve ("Living" 124, trans. modified).]

Derrida's extensive analysis of the *arrêt* in the title of Blanchot's récit, which makes the récit at the same time about a death sentence and an arrested or suspended death, advances a powerful interpretation of *survivre* in Blanchot's writings.<sup>12</sup> In a detailed reading of Blanchot's *L'arrêt de mort*, as well as Shelley's poem "The Triumph of Life," "Survivre" takes up all the possible meanings of the French word "survivre"—living on, surviving, an afterlife, above or beyond life, etc.:

(la survie peut être encore la vie ou *plus et mieux* que la vie, le suspens d'un *plus-de-vie* avec lequel nous n'aurions jamais fini), et le triomphe *de* la vie peut aussi triompher *de* la vie et renverser la procession du genitive. (121)  
 [(survival/living on can be life *again*, life after life, more life or *more than life and better*, the state of suspension of (no) more life that we would never have done with) and the triumph of life can also triumph over life and reverse the procession of the genitive. (trans. mine)]

Derrida's exploration of "survivre" finds confirmation in a passage from Blanchot's *Le pas au-delà*:

Survivre: non pas vivre ou, ne vivant pas, se maintenir, sans vie, dans un état de pur supplément, mouvement de suppléance à la vie, mais plutôt arrêter le mourir, arrêt qui ne l'arrête pas, le faisant au contraire *durer*. (qtd. on 152)

[*Survivre*, living on: not *living* or, not living, maintaining oneself, without life, in a state of pure supplement, a movement of substitution for life, but rather arresting the dying, an arrest that does not arrest it, making it on the contrary *go on, last* ("Living" 107; trans. modified).]<sup>13</sup>

This living on [*survivance*] or *revenance*, ghostly return, between living and dying, is an undecidability beyond opposition and dialectical contradiction. Derrida associates the "sur" in "*sur-vivre*" with the logic of the supplement:

Survivance et revenance. Le survivre déborde à la fois le vivre et le mourir, les suppléant l'un et l'autre d'un sursaut et d'un sursis, arrêtant la mort et la vie à la fois. ("Survivre" 153)  
 [*Survivance* and *revenance*, living on and phantom returning; living on goes beyond living and dying at the same time, supplementing each with a sudden surge and a reprieve, deciding and arresting life and death at the same time. ("Living" 108, trans. modified)]

Derrida's essay further focuses its attention on the relation or condition that he refers to as "vivre, survivre," which he remarks is "neither conjunction, nor disjunction, neither equation nor opposition":

ni la vie ni la mort, SUR VIVRE plutôt [...]. Survivre ne s'oppose pas à vivre, pas plus que cela ne s'identifie à vivre. Le rapport est autre, autre que l'identité, autre que la différence de distinction, indécis, ou, en un sens très rigoureux, «vague», évasif, évasé. ("Survivre" 179)  
 [neither life nor death, but rather LIVING ON [...]. Living on is not the opposite of living, just as it is not identical with living. The relationship is other, other than identity, other than the difference of distinguishing, indistinct/undecided, or in a very rigorous sense, 'vague,' evasive, splayed. ("Living" 135, trans. modified)]<sup>14</sup>

For, this "vivre, survivre," this "living, living on"

retarde à la fois la vie et la mort sur une ligne (celle du *sur* le moins sûr) qui n'est donc ni d'une opposition tranchante ni d'une adéquation stable. Il diffère, comme la *différance*, au-delà de l'identité et de la différence. ("Survivre" 179-80)  
 [delays at once life and death, on a line (the line of the least sure *sur-*) that is thus one neither of clear-cut opposition nor of stable equivalence. It differs and defers, like 'différance,' beyond identity and difference. ("Living" 136, trans. modified)]

Thus the two terms in "living, living on," a relation that could also be written as "dying, living on," have a *neutral* relationship, a relation of interruption and suspension, and deferral and extension.



The analyses of “survivre” in *Parages*, “mort—immortel” in *Demeure*, and “mort sans mort” from “Literature and the Right to Death,” therefore indicate that what is at work in Blanchot’s writings is far from a *thought* or *theme* of resurrection. For, resurrection, even as *anastasis*, makes use of death as a power, as a possibility, it puts negativity to work, amortizes it. Thus, despite all of Nancy’s denials, resurrection is an *Aufhebung* operation: what dies is born again, what is destroyed preserves itself, what slips away is retained. Resurrection *at once* displaces and elevates, raises, and cancels—in the language of *Glas*, it “relieves.” What is “relieved” (*relevée, aufgehobene*) is embalmed, interiorized, magnified, elevated, spiritualized, and idealized. Nancy insists in *Noli me tangere* that the *levée*, the raising, of which he speaks is not relieve (*relève*), the term used by Derrida to translate *Aufhebung*, but rather a lifting up, an upthrust, or uprising (*soulèvement*). But what does one gain by wanting to “save” resurrection, to save the *name* “resurrection” after its de-christianization? Despite all of Nancy’s qualifications, wouldn’t resurrection always ultimately invoke the glorious body, the resurrection of the body of Christ? Wouldn’t keeping the name “resurrection,” no matter how sophisticated the re-inscription of the term, allow it to remain as the horizon for one’s hope and hence encourage faith in something determinable? In the end, resurrection is reassuring; it reassures that there shall be no remainder, no *reste*.

*Salut*, however, is not only not “the triumph of life” and the living, but it is also not the promise or the reassurance of overcoming death. *Salut*, if there is such a thing, can only be an address to the other, a *salut*-ation that calls out without assurance, certainty, and determined hope. When Derrida writes of a “salut sans salut,” particularly in his analysis of Blanchot’s *The Instant of My Death*, this *salut* is without Christian soteriology, or any doctrine of salvation. As he writes in *Le monolingisme de l’autre ou la prothèse d’origine [Monolingualism of the Other]*:

Aucun salut qui sauve ou promet la salvation, même si, au-delà ou en deçà de toute soteriologie, cette promesse ressemble au salut adressé à l’autre, à l’autre reconnu comme autre tout autre (tout autre est tout autre, là où une connaissance ou une reconnaissance n’y suffit pas), à l’autre reconnu mortel, fini, à l’abandon, privé de tout horizon d’espérance. (128)

[There is no *salut* that saves or promises salvation, even if beyond or on the hither side of every soteriology, this promise resembles the *salut* addressed to the other, to the other recognized as the other entirely other (the wholly other is entirely other, there where a knowledge or recognition does not suffice for it), the other recognized as mortal, finite, in a state of neglect, and deprived of any horizon of hope. (68)]

The hat held aloft. For an instant. The very instant in which all time is suspended, the moment into which an entire history of hats and crowns, sovereignty and resistance, could be folded. As Derrida gently but insistently dodges Nancy’s hat at Cerisy, an entire relationship between the two thinkers unfolds.

In “Corona vitae,” Derrida notes that Gérard Granel’s article is itself “a way of saluting another thinker [*façon de saluer l’autre penseur, de tirer son chapeau*],” a gesture and salute to Wittgenstein’s hat in his refusal of the crown (“un salut magnifique, donc, au chapeau de Wittgenstein dans son ‘refus de la couronne’”) (144, trans. mine). In his own aforementioned article on Wittgenstein, Granel further comments on the latter’s attitude toward religion by examining the only two passages in *Remarques mêlées* mentioning the Epistles of Paul. The refusal of the crown in the title of Granel’s article has to do with a fragment that reads: “The Old Testament seen as the body without its head; the New Testament: the head; the Epistles of the Apostles: the crown on the head. [...] But I do not necessarily have to think of a head as having a *crown* [Aber ich denke mir nicht notwendigerweise einen Kopf mit einer *Krone*; Mais je ne me représente pas nécessairement une tête avec une *couronne*]” (Wittgenstein, *Culture 35–35e/Remarques 46*).<sup>15</sup> For Granel, the crown is linked to “la hauteur du pouvoir seigneurial [the height of lordly, stately power],” and images of the crown and “Lordship [*la signeurie*]” signify the Pauline, which he describes as “the perversion of the evangelical attitude by power” (“Ludwig” 31). He notes that in Wittgenstein’s view the Gospels are associated with a certain humility, which is “obscured [*écumer*]” by the Epistles of Paul. The refusal of the crown, then, is to be interpreted as a refusal of Pauline power, whereas evangelism, in contrast, would be the condition of “being uncrowned [*être découronné*], of refusing Pauline ‘power’” (32). For Wittgenstein, being uncrowned thus functions as the image of another power—that of theory and of knowledge.

In his homage to Granel, Derrida further explains the refusal of the crown in the title of Granel’s essay by quoting from the Epistle of James: “Magnifique l’homme (*makários anēr, beatus vir*) qui résiste à l’épreuve, car, une fois éprouvé, il recevra la couronne de vie (*tòn stéphanon tēs zoēs, coronam vitae*) que le Seigneur a promis à ceux qui l’aiment’ (1, 12)” (“Corona” 147). The King James Version reads: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

According to the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, as well as signifying sovereignty, crowns have, in general, been a sign of salvation and protection for the wearer.<sup>16</sup> Since the Christian life is often compared by Paul to a race or sporting contest, the “*stéphanos tēs zoēs* is an eschatological gift of God which is granted to the victor” in the contest of life. In Timothy 4: 8, Paul looks back on his life as death approaches.

Having “fought a good fight” there will be a crown given to him by the Lord, the precondition of which is “faithfulness to Christ” (*Theological* 629). Paul realizes that, in the judgment, the fruits of his life will be measured and judged (cf. 1 Cor. 4: 1-5, 2 Cor. 5: 10, etc.). Yet he “does not merely want to be saved personally,” but “wants a reward and praise for the results of his life because they prove to be enduring.” Since the crown is also an expression of joy and glory, with the crown “Paul receives from God his glory and praise”—hence “the crown of glorying” (*Theological* 630). In James 1:12 “the *stéphanos tēs zoēs* means that if the crown is the reward of victory the content conferred” with the crown is life (630–31). The “crown is the promise and gift of the Lord for those who love Him” and have faith in Him, that is to say, those who resist assaults and endure suffering (631; cf. also 2 Tm.4: 8). The crown of life is also “a crown of light, and it is thus represented as a halo around the head” (631; cf. 1 Peter 5: 4).

If a head with a crown signifies devotion to God, then in Granel’s view, by “refusing” Pauline “power,” Wittgenstein’s thought is an (uncrowned, *découronnée*) thought.<sup>17</sup> By dodging Nancy’s hat, we can hypothesize, Derrida is not only refusing the Lord’s crown of life, or Paul’s doctrines, but also Nancy’s insistence for him to accept another’s manner of thinking. Derrida’s refusal would thus be at least twofold: the refusal of the Sovereign’s crown and the refusal to be “crowned” by another, by Nancy. As if, like Wittgenstein, Derrida is claiming that each person ought to wear his or her own hat, think for himself or herself, thus remaining content with putting on one’s own hat. By evading the hat, he declines the *hauteur* of lordly power, the power and ability [*pouvoir*], the being-able, associated with the sovereign. The hat and its refusal would then stand for Derrida’s resistance to the Pauline thought of sovereignty but also to the theme of resurrection and salvation.

One must salute this refusal, this resistance and obstinacy. One must tip one’s hat to the one who dares to refuse. How else to show one’s gratitude, one’s immense respect, to the one who always resisted? Aside from lingering over his work, the work he has given us to *read*, and taught us to read in such an unprecedented manner, especially regarding the term *salut* itself, the *salut* sent to us in the form of a salutation, how else, then, do those left bereft even begin to pay their respects?

For everything that you have bestowed to us, Jacques Derrida, I take my hat off. *Salut!*

#### NOTES

1/ The bilingual English edition, Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, also contains the German: “Niemand kann einen Gedanken für mich denken, wie mir niemand als ich den Hut aufsetzen kann”

(2-2e). The German edition is *Vermischte Bemerkungen*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1977. It was translated into French by Gérard Granel as *Remarques mêlées*. Wittgenstein’s remark dates from 1929.

2/ It is in *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy*, that Derrida praises Nancy’s exactitude. Most interestingly, the words “resuscitate” and “resurrection” turn up in this passage: “L’exactitude [...] c’est son mot et c’est sa chose. Il les a réinventés, il les a réveillés, il les a ressuscités. [...] Je crois cela assez nouveau. Comme une résurrection. Exacte est la probité de sa signature” (17).

3/ In *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy*, Derrida writes: “car l’impertinence têtue de Nancy, l’insolence que j’aime et admire le plus, c’est qu’au cœur de l’extase, de l’offrande, du rapt, de l’abandon de soi à l’autre, voire du sacrifice, il rappelle résolument—c’est l’homme le plus résolu que je connaisse—, il rappelle exactement—je ne connais personne de plus exact ou ponctuel que lui” (304).

4/ The word *exespéré* in this passage coined by Derrida is impossible to translate. The “ex-” has the sense of “outside of,” “anterior.” The neologism also combines references to the words *exaspéré*, “aggravated, exacerbated,” which appears earlier in Derrida’s passage, and *espéré*, “hoped for.”

5/ *Voyous* was published at the beginning of 2003 but was first presented in July 2002 at Cerisy-la-Salle. The “Prière d’insérer” does not appear in the English translation.

6/ See Nancy, “Consolation” and “Salut à toi.”

7/ On *salut*, see Nancy, *L’intrus* (Paris: Galilée, 2000). For resurrection, besides a reference to “la résurrection infinie de soi” in “Fin du colloque” (630), see especially *Noli me tangere* (esp. 29-45, 73-77, 86-7); and “Résurrection de Blanchot” (135, 138, 145), “Consolation” (59, 60; 135, 138) and “Le judéo-chrétien” (“la résurrection guérit et glorifie la mort dans la mort même”) collected in *La Déclosion (Déconstruction de christianisme, 1)* (Paris: Galilée, 2005).

8/ Apart from the two examples cited by Nancy from *Memoirs of the Blind* and “Cette nuit dans la nuit, see *Glas; Memoirs for Paul de Man*; “Circumfession”; “By Force of Mourning”; “Faith and Knowledge”; “Hospitality”; “.....” (on Sarah Kofman); *Veils; Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy; Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde*, etc.

9/ Derrida, *Parages* (161, 169, 170 [twice], 172, 173 [twice], 208, 238, and 240).

10/ The proceedings of the conference have been published as *Maurice Blanchot: Récits critiques*.

11/ G.W.F. Hegel, “Vorrede,” *Phänomenologie des Geistes* in *Werke*, edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Michel, 20 vols. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1970, III 36; “Preface,” *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977. § 32, 18–19; “Préface,” *La Phénoménologie de l’esprit*, 2 vols., translated by Jean Hyppolite. Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1941. 29.

12/ Derrida discusses these two *arrêts* in terms of the arrested or suspended death, “arrêt suspensif” and the death sentence, “arrêt décisif” (*Parages* 159).

13/ This citation occurs on p. 184 of Blanchot’s *Le pas au-delà*. Paris: Gallimard, 1973.

14/ Derrida is referring to the meaning of “vague” (derived from the latin *vagus*) as hazy, imprecise, uncertain, indeterminate, and “évasé,” from the verb *évaser*, meaning to open out, to flare.

15/ This remark of Wittgenstein in *Culture and Value* (35-35e) dates from 1939-40.

16/ For the use and significance of the crown or wreaths from the Ancient world to its occurrences in the Old and New Testament, see the entry on *stéphanos, stephanós* in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 615-636.

17/ Derrida concedes in “Corona vitae” that, for Nancy, the crown is a signification of “life” rather than power. For an exceptionally interesting reading of Paul, see Taubes. In a reading of Psalm 2, the coronation psalm, “You are my son, I have fathered you this day,” Taubes comments “This is an act of enthronement. So we are dealing with a conscious emphasis of those attributes that are imperial, kingly, imperial” (14).

#### WORKS CITED

Blanchot, Maurice. *L’écriture du désastre*. Paris: Gallimard, 1980.

———. “Literature and the Right to Death.” Trans. Lydia Davis. *The Gaze of Orpheus and Other Literature Essays*. Ed. P. Adams Sitony. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1981. 21–62.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *La part du feu*. Paris: Gallimard, 1949.
- D'ailleurs, Derrida*. Dir. Safaa Pathy. Gloria Films Production/La Sept Arte—France, 1999.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Avances" *Le Tombeau du dieu artisan: Sur Platon*. By Serge Margel. Paris: Minuit, 1995. 1–43.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Avant-propos." *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde*. Paris: Galilée, 2003. 9–11.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Comment nommer." *Le poète que je cherche à être. Cahier Michel Deguy*. Ed. Yves Charnet. Paris: La Table Ronde/Belin, 1996. 182–206.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Corona vitae (fragments)." *Granel. L'éclat, le combat, l'ouvert*. Eds. Jean-Luc Nancy and Elisabeth Rigal. Paris: Belin, 2001. 137–64.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Demeure: Fiction and Testimony*. Trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Demeure, Maurice Blanchot*. Paris: Galilée, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Mere Reason." Trans. Samuel Weber. *Religion*. Eds. Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1998. 1–78.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Foi et savoir: Les deux sources de la 'religion' aux limites de la simple raison." *La Religion*. Eds. Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo. Paris: Seuil, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "How to Name." *Recumbents*. By Michael Deguy. Trans. Wilson Baldrige. Middleton, CT: Wesleyan UP, 2005. 191–221.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Living On: Borderlines." Trans. James Hulbert. *Deconstruction and Criticism*. New York: Continuum, 1979, 2nd ed. 1988. 75–176.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Maurice Blanchot est mort." *Maurice Blanchot: Récits critiques*. Eds. Christophe Bident and Pierre Vilar. Tours: Farrago/Léo Scheer, 2003. 595–624.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Monolingualism of the Other; Or the Prosthesis of Origin*. Trans. Patrick Mensah. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Le monolingisme de l'autre ou la prothèse d'origine*. Paris: Galilée, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Prière d'insérer." *Voyous*. Paris: Galilée, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Survivre: Journal de bord." *Parages*. Paris: Galilée, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy*. Paris: Galilée, 2000.
- Derrida, Jacques, with Jean-Luc Nancy. "Responsabilité—Du sens à venir." *Sens en tous sens: Autour de Jean-Luc Nancy*. Paris: Galilée, 2004. 165–200.
- Granel, Gérard. "Ludwig Wittgenstein ou le refus de la couronne." *Écrits logiques et politiques*. Paris: Galilée, 1990. 11–36.
- Hegel, G.W.F. *Phänomenologie des Geistes. Werke*. Eds. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Michel. 20 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *La Phénoménologie de l'esprit*. Trans. Jean Hyppolite. 2 vols. Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1941.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.
- Hyppolite, Jean. *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'esprit de Hegel*. Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1946.
- Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe and Jean-Luc Nancy. "Derrida à Strasbourg." *Penser à Strasbourg*. Paris: Galilée/Ville de Strasbourg, 2004. 9–20.
- Nancy, Jean-Luc. "Consolation, désolation." *Magazine littéraire* (April 2004): 58–60.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Noli me tangere*. Paris: Bayard, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Salut à toi, salut aux aveugles que nous devenons." *Libération* (11 Oct 2004): 3.
- Taubes, Jacob. *The Political Theology of Paul*. Eds. Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann, in conjunction with Horst Folkers, Wolf-Daniel Hartwich, and Christoph Schulte. Trans. Dana Hollander. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2004.
- Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Ed. Gerhard Kittel. Trans. and ed. Geoffrey Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–76. 10 vols.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Culture and Value*. Ed. G.H. Von Wright in collaboration with Heikki Nyman. Trans. Peter Winch. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Remarques mêlées*. 2nd ed. Trans. Gérard Granel. Mauvezin: T.E.R., 1990.

KAS SAGHAFI is Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Villanova University. He is the co-translator of Jacques Derrida's "A Europe of Hope," the co-editor of the Derrida memorial issue of *Époché* (2006), and also contributed the biographies and bibliographies to Derrida's *The Work of Mourning*. He is the author of a number of articles on French philosophy and is currently completing a manuscript on Derrida.