

# **Approaching the Vanishing Otherness: Blanchot's Infinite Conversation with Zhuangzi**

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## **ABSTRACT**

To converse is simultaneously to divert language from itself and to invite language to encounter an insurmountable obstacle of developing complete meanings. A signifier in flight in its infinite detour leads us to the threshold of the linguistic labyrinth and that renders writing itself disastrous. An otherness, a mythic stranger in silence, exists in language itself that forever opens up a void, a zero-point or a veiled outside that dominates language in self-destruction, in an utter catastrophe. From Blanchot's concept of writing, in his pursuit of this "empty" signifier, this otherness is sometimes a neutral void, or a creative force, and sometimes an evil power of death. It is a constitutive crack, a fissure that constitutes language itself in which the primordial signifier is forever missing. How we link this Blanchotian concept of the lost signifier with the Eastern concept of Dao 道 in Zhuangzi's philosophy will be the main discussion of this short paper. To Zhuangzi, language or any conceptualized idea is a great hindrance to Dao, which remains what I would like to term it as "a metonymic otherness" to language itself. A gesture of neutrality or a detachment from the "buzzing voices" of language would allow one to the silent horizon of Dao. This exterior void, a mute writing, conceals the whole consummation of self-knowledge, and the original reason or intelligence as spirit governs the body. Dao, an immobile exteriority containing the original reason beyond any empirical contemplation, certainly is quite different from the Blanchotian limit-experiences as encountering a pure form of the radical otherness when he gives

Sade as an example. Zhuangzi's neutral point or the mute writing as otherness on the way to Dao will not turn out to be Sade's pure reason of sadism. Thus, this exteriority as otherness finds its difference in Zhuangzi and Blanchot, despite their similarities.

### KEY WORDS

The way of Dao

Limit-experiences

Writing of the disaster

Silence

Self-absence

Negativity

Otherness

Différance

Origin

Structure

Signifiers

Emptiness



To write is to have the passion of the origin.

Derrida, 1978: 294

The essence of memory is therefore forgetting; the forgetfulness of which one must drink in order to die.

Blanchot, 1993: 315

I do believe that there is a certain chasm between Zhuangzi and Blanchot in terms of linguistic signs and philosophical contemplation, although they have shared similar points with each other towards the void outside the linguistic configuration. According to Saussure, a linguistic sign consists in a concept and a sound-image, and this sound-image is a psychological imprint of the sound that makes our senses, that is, the birth of signifier. Thus, the charm of the whole linguistic labyrinth of signs relies on this mythic body of signifiers. Throughout Maurice Blanchot's philosophical investigation, this mythic body as a signifier renders the speaking subject problematic, and it does not correspond with the spoken subject. And therefore insofar as this mythic signifier remains enigmatic, a possibility of anchoring the signified to a determinate position has become totally in vain. An impossibility of searching for this signifier in flight governs Blanchot's whole concept of writing in disasters. In response to Blanchot's writing as disasters, this short essay would focus on how Zhuangzi's philosophical gestures as a detachment from language, which is the royal obstacle to his concept of Dao 道, are, to some extent, similar to Blanchot's concept of language as failure of making

meanings accomplished, finished and thus, it stays as incomplete. The essay would also bring out another greater controversy that how *different* Blanchot's mythic signifier as otherness is, to a certain extent, from Zhuangzi's Dao, as an otherness of an interior space of neutrality detaching from language's own disturbing structure of meanings, that is, how the Blanchotian concept of a radical signifier as an empty otherness is in a direct confrontation with Dao as revealed in Zhuangzi's philosophy, though at the first glance, there are points of similarities between these two philosophers.

## I. In the Labyrinth of Signifiers

### a. Writing as a disaster

In Zhuangzi's philosophy, Dao, exists beyond language, but it is ubiquitous, limitless, invisible and omnipotent, from which all sources of energy and life are derived. In Zhuangzi's *Qiwu lun* 齊物論, it is obvious that language is defined as a hindrance to the way of Dao.

夫大道不稱，大辯不言 (73)

The great Dao is beyond language; the great argument can't be expressed by language.

夫道未始有封，言未始有常，為是而有咎矣...

道昭而不道，言辯而不及 (73)

There is no limitation within Dao and what can be discoursed remains indeterminate and thus it gives rise to various interpretations. Thereafter, the true Dao cannot be revealed and language as a tool for arguments will never hit the right target.

To Zhuangzi, linguistic signification, which would lead us astray, is treated only as a provisional reference of self-presence of absolute knowledge comprehended and formulated particularly in accordance with one's own self-knowledge of what Dao is and this constructed discourse obviously only serves as an exercise of interpretation, which

would express nothing of Dao. If Dao exists, according to my understanding of Zhuangzi, as a metonymic otherness along with linguistic signs, its original configurations of self-absence would still exist with the help of linguistic signs, which would function as a boundary or a limitation to Dao.

To Blanchot, the sound-image, or the phantom of signifier, exists in disappearance that renders all speaking subjects unspeakable and this failure carries us off straight to the unknown, face to face with an otherness outside passion, a heightening of a disaster. Not unlike the Derridian concept of *différance*<sup>1</sup>, Blanchot concurs that a meaning decomposes itself within its own composition, interrupted by its self-rupturing terrain in his *The Writing of the Disaster*.

To converse, it seems, is not only to turn away from saying what, thanks to language is—the presence of a presence. To converse is also to turn language away from itself, maintaining it outside of all unity, outside even the unity of that which is. To converse is to divert language from itself by letting it differ and defer, answering with an always already to a never yet. (34-35)

This impossibility as an otherness impervious to any linguistic approach, a faceless secret, could be construed as a nonthought within thought, an empty gap that blocks every self-presence of signs and thus a strenuous search for a “determinate” signifier, a fixed anchor, is doomed to fail. Thus, writing for Blanchot, is like a disaster, and it is a detour that would disqualify the right to any language at all. *This unknown* otherness remains unknown, as a foreign stranger existing there beyond our grasp of knowledge.

From the outset, Blanchot’s exploration of the nature of a signifier in writing seems to correspond with Zhuangzi’s concept of Dao, which remains inaccessible by means of language. And yet, Zhuangzi’s metonymic otherness of neutrality as Dao is quite different from Blanchot’s otherness as an unknown; the former refers to a perfect consummation of self-knowledge, whereas the latter remains either a

threatening power of unknowability or death, within its own ambiguity of suggestiveness. It is an interior space or an interrupted interval in silence devoid of any linguistic signs that an absence of meanings perishes itself within its own structurality. Thus, writing gives rise to fragments within its own incompleteness and yet this failure drags us inevitably in search for a signifier related to an otherness that makes the whole “journey” work out its own circularity.

Write in order not simply to destroy, in order not simply to conserve, in order not to transmit; write in the thrall of the impossible real, that share of disaster wherein every reality, safe and sound, sinks. (38)

To Blanchot, the writing of the disaster as a purposiveness without a purpose, refers to a self-effacement of what can be thought. Thinking proceeds towards its otherness, as if towards dying, towards self-destruction since it forms an enigma in its absence on the way to this invisible otherness, which remains as a practically unbridgeable space. Zhuangzi would agree with Blanchot partially that what is or can be thought simultaneously creates a certain gap, a constitutive chasm within itself, and, to a certain extent, it introduces an equivalence of what is negative or what is its own non-transgressible neutral point in thinking itself. In *Zhi beiyou* 知北遊, Zhuangzi observes that Great Wisdom does not exist in what can be discoursed.

且夫博之不必知，辯之不必慧，聖人以斷之矣！  
若夫益之而不加益，損之而不加損者，聖人之所保也。(875)  
A thinker of immense erudition does not really learn anything; a rhetorician is certainly not wise and a true wise man has already discarded this false knowledge! The true wise man feels nothing obtained if he gains something and feels nothing lost, if he is deprived of it. This is the true virtue of a wise man.

This gesture of neutrality or detachment from any fixed concept is not

an act of passivity, but pure patience of contemplating what is left behind from any conceptualized idea, though this invisible remainder exists in absence and self-effacement.

### **b. An encounter with a void**

This elliptical essence of origin has been the main discussion since Husserl's phenomenology<sup>2</sup>. Throughout Derrida's critique of phenomenology and philosophical investigation, the concept of writing<sup>3</sup> to Derrida is to re-explore, and to re-discover what is lost in the horizon but kept hidden in the past, namely, the origin. Each returning re-creates something missing in a process of its repetitious eccentricity.

Something invisible is missing in the grammar of this repetition. As this lack is invisible and undeterminable, as it completely redoubles and consecrates the book, once more passing through each point along its circuit, nothing has budged. And yet all meaning is altered by this lack. Repeated, the same line is no longer exactly the same, the ring no longer has exactly the same center, the origin has played. Something is missing that would make the circle perfect. (1978: 296)

It is no doubt that Derrida and Blanchot have shared the similar attitude towards this eclipse of a center which governs the whole orbit of discourses. Thus, a sign emerges by repeating itself, by repeating with an absence of the center where a missing signifier dwells as veiled. Unlike Derrida's distinction between the phonetic-alphabetic writing and hieroglyphics, writing to Blanchot, in the first perspective, is similar to living and speaking in a conflictual relation. To write, for Blanchot, is a quest for an unknown otherness within language's disturbing structurality in its own disequilibrium and it is to "bring to the surface something like absent meaning" (1986: 41). Something phantasmal with its haunting form hidden in silence disjoins meanings and makes every thought become already "the disastrous ruin of

thought (41). And thus the language of writing is the language of the other “outside of everything, outside consciousness and unconsciousness, in the element that vacillates between waking and reawaking (79).

It seems that a voice or a signifier that governs writing itself has fallen silent and a way of thinking has faded away. And yet, it does not cease speaking to us because it becomes “an insubstantial, insistent, indifferent murmur” and “the strangeness of this speaking is that, while it may seem to be saying something, it may in fact be saying nothing (1995a:152). This immediate language becomes the workless depth of being, as if encountering an immediate void that refuses meanings and reveals nothing. On the contrary, to Zhuangzi, this silent void, a mute writing, devoid of any grasp of meanings, opens up an interior space from which spiritual freedom is derived. In *Tianxia* 天下, he describes that the whole universe in its naturalness is like a big void where silence exists with no fixed anchor of discursive forms. Zhuangzi presents Hui Shi 惠施 as an example that Hui Shi’s impressive publications express nothing of Dao but lengthy and problematic rhetoric in which signs get caught in a dead end of circular repetition, irrespective of that fact that Hui Shi, like Gongsun Long 公孫龍 and Huan Tuan 桓團, has knocked down people’s opinions. It is like an articulated mirage developed within a closure of concepts that block an opening of true naturalness in Dao. In *Tiandi* 天地, there is also a shared meaning here.

泰初有無，無有無名；一之所起，有一而未形。(449)

The origin begins with nothing from which emerges a unity without forms.

同乃虛，虛乃大，合喙鳴，喙鳴合，與天地為合。(449)

In harmony with the original unity reaches the void of nothingness where exists no hindrance to the true essence. Then, the wise man speaks like the songs of birds, and returns to his pure state of nature, suffused with the rhythm of the whole universe.

忘乎物，忘乎天，其名曰忘己。忘己之人，是之謂入於天。(453)



To forget the order of things is to forget oneself. He who forgets himself is in perfect harmony with the universe.

An ultimate detachment of a mind from any linguistic configuration, to Zhuangzi, is the royal road to Dao. It is a particular kind of self-renouncement that creates a void beyond language sensible to an original subject. This reason is never confused, but of necessity so trenchant and of a firmness so rigorous that Zhuangzi has to fashion for it the word, Dao. To forget oneself is to free our mind from any constructed signification that blocks a true recognition of an original self, a pure state of Nature. To Blanchot, “forgetfulness is a practice, the practice of writing that prophesies because it is enacted by the utter renunciation of everything: to announce is perhaps to renounce” (1986: 76). This disappearance of things, the removal or destruction, gives rise to a new order of things that expresses infinitude, an expression of nothing. The sovereignty of nothing in accordance with the schema of negativity would introduce the fragmentary without fragments, an remainder that is hidden in what cannot be named, in other words, the neutral.

Both Blanchot and Zhuangzi would agree that an exteriority outside of a linguistic configuration reveals a void, in which meanings stop and nothing, the sovereignty, stays. But to Blanchot, this “outside,” rather ambiguous, might be a shuddering point, which might appear, from the outset, to be similar to what Zhuangzi called “the One,” a unity of the original reason of the first principle, and yet, this exterior outside has surrendered to “the multiple in One.”

The multiple is ambiguous. At first, its ambiguity seems easy to account for: from a certain multiplicity—from the varied, the changing, or the diverse—unitary totality is formed. This totality preserves by altering multiplicity; it preserves diversity and variation as means or as mediating moments. Or mystically, by casting them into the great fire where they are consumed, or confused one in the other. (1986: 129)

It seems that writing is in search of secrecy as an otherness to which all languages return. This multiplicity of speech as if a simultaneity of one language, is the belated transition, a lift from the individual subject to the great Presence with no name, to the universal, supreme One, where dominates everything and reigns over every being into an orbit of all essences. And yet, this supreme One to Blanchot is still quite different from Zhuangzi's supremacy of One as a highest unity in the universe, in which nothing is negated but affirmed and a true self might not be assigned as a disjointed perpetuity in the prison house of language.

## **II. Disturbing Silence as Otherness:**

### **a. How Otherness becomes its own otherness**

Blanchot states that “to speak is always to put into play an essential duplicity from which one draws advantage” (1993: 80) and “all speech is a word of command, of terror, of seduction, flattery, or aggression; all speech is violence” (81) and thus a battle or a war is a form of dialogue. It circulates within a spatial knot, a fundamental irregularity that remains as an infinite and empty strangeness and declares something unsayable. It is an empty Otherness that keeps threatening the whole speech on its own path to suicidal ruin and it is the secrecy of the limit-experience, thus, language is an invitation to Death. The limit-experience to Blanchot is “the response that man encounters when he has decided to put himself radically in question” (203) and this passion of negative thought is driven by its own desire to search for the inaccessible, an inexhaustible negativity in action that affirms what is excluded. It represents something like “a new origin,” in which thought in its own thinking affirms more than can be affirmed and “this more itself is the experience: affirming only by an excess of affirmation and, in this surplus, affirming without anything being affirmed—finally affirming nothing” (209). The word, I, becomes a sign of self-imposture, because it would never be the subject of this limit-experience and throughout Sade's writing, it would

provide a good example.

In Sade's positive materialist principles, he seeks thought in its own frenzy, capable of justifying his own wicked atheism. This exigency of excess in accord with the principles of a "positive" reason<sup>4</sup> is arrested in a progression that risks precipitating thought into its own ruin and madness.

What is characteristic of Sade's cosmos is not the longing to become one with the motionless and petrified existence of the corpse nor the effort to slip into the passivity of a form representing absence of form, a reality that is fully real, immune to the uncertainties of life yet incarnating supreme unreality. On the contrary, in the core of his world lies the demand of sovereignty as affirmed by an immense negation. (Blanchot, 1995: 88)

Sade's negation here is obviously not commensurate with Zhuangzi's negation. Sade's negation is aimed at surpassing the plane of human existence, to the extent that nothing even simply unequal is not affirmed. The cosmos the Unique person, Sade, seeks to arrive at is an utter desert, through his violence imposed upon the victims. It is not by depriving the victims of their lives that proves nothingness in existence, but rather that "their non-existence" from which he derives his greatest pleasure (87). The *Otherness* Sade strives to aim at is to turn against Nature itself in the deep horror through which finds the greatest intensity of pleasure that would quench the thirst within his own otherness, a perverse-simulated object of dark God.

Sade's pure reason of negativity where the concept of self undergoes an infinite process of self-rupturing, a pure manifestation of violent energy, is certainly not what Zhuangzi has interpreted the forgetfulness of oneself. Zhuangzi's unity of supreme *One* outside any configuration of linguistic forms is a zero-point of total contemplation of self-knowledge where dwells non-constructed original self in harmony with the universe and it is the first principle of Supreme Reason, and I would like to term it as a non-dialecticized otherness, in which

the true self is combined with the Spirit of the universe. In *Xiaoyao you* 逍遙遊, the concept of Nature has never existed as an otherness in Zhuangzi's philosophy, whereas it does function in Western thought as a mystery, an unknown power in a direct confrontation with man's existence. To Zhuangzi, Nature has its own order and its message is irreducible to any form of language and the real otherness is the linguistic configuration that has entombed a true self.

若夫乘天地之正，而御六氣之辯，以遊無窮者，彼且惡乎待哉！

故曰：至人無己，神人無功，聖人無名。(16)

If one exists in accordance with the order of Nature, flexibility would be generated from him and that governs himself along with all changes of six elements of forces in Nature. Being suffused with Nature with no medium now, his spirit will be as free as this infinite space of Universe. Thus, a virtuous man is the one who forgets himself; a true man is the one who never intends to leave his mark in the world and a saint can understand the order of things and lead a life of self-effacement.

The unity of the inexorable One is not inaccessible when one's spirit is intertwined within its supreme realm and to Zhuangzi, this primal reason of Nature as Dao if understood, will be the greatest and the most glorious energy of life. Unlike Sade's madness of writing in search of an extreme negativity, an ultimate Otherness where every life is destroyed and nothingness is affirmed like a desert of death, to Zhuangzi, a subject of self-effacement, not a subject constituted by language, is the right step to return to one's true nature in harmony with the order of the whole Universe from which every life is derived and affirmed.

### **b. Approaching a vanishing point**

If language which performs the functions of naming the possible

and responding to the impossible vacillates between these two poles in an infinite movement that forever opens up a long trajectory relating to a vanishing point, this otherness as an empty frame founds a new horizon where every fixed form of thought would disappear and become other than itself. Whereas in Zhuangzi, the vanishing point diminishes the linguistic dimension which generates all kinds of concepts that entomb the subject, in Blanchot's concept of writing, the lost signifier beyond this vanishing point remains inaccessible, and this seduces the power of writing to encounter its own death. This lost signifier around which the whole chain of signifiers circulates is the primordial loss that creates an unbridgeable gap within language itself. Its nature of flightiness makes writing itself disastrous but indestructible.

To me, as a reader of Zhuangzi and Blanchot, there might be certain mystified perplexity when I ponder upon both the lost signifier and the original self. Through writing, to Blanchot, language is in its strenuous search for its lost origin and the subject exists always in relation to its own otherness and this generates a repetition of perpetual detour and gives rise to a tragic affliction as he describes Simone Weil<sup>5</sup> as an example here. On the other hand, Zhuangzi would assert that the self transcends itself beyond the linguistic dimension and arrives at a new horizon where one returns to his original non-self as the true subject. I wonder if this spiritual *Otherness* which Zhuangzi intends to arrive at by a gesture of detachment from any linguistic sign is not merely a romanticized ideal. Despite the fact that language only functions as a great obstacle to Dao, language is, I suppose, still a positive tool which enables us to gain access to this *invisible* ideality of Dao. If there is no boundary, there is no outside as an Otherness.

How could a subject survive without desiring if the subject desires its instant separation from the linguistic context? This would be a question for Zhuangzi. If the subject desires Dao, the origin, the primal reason of all principles, it is still a desire. It is this desiring that creates a possible existence of the transcendental. As phenomenology performs a task of removing man's consciousness from consciousness

itself, and maintains that this origin is light, it may very well rediscover itself under the name of desire. This desiring intention giving rise to the origin as light is still within the constitutive power of language and to Blanchot, it is the speaking subject itself that holds this power (1993: 251). The word, “unknown,” whether or not expressed, is constantly present in language, and Zhuangzi still needs language as an instrument to explain what Dao is.

I would also like to bring about another issue, that is, if Dao becomes a desired object like the concept of God, a great danger lies ahead, namely, the empty signifier, a constitutive lack within the structurality of language would lead the subject (the spoken subject, not the speaking subject) to encounter his own threat of emptiness within thought itself. The neutral point of silence at which Zhuangzi’s *intentional* desire aims is neither the non-general nor non-particular and yet this void of spiritual “*freedom*” would be dangerously interpreted as a fantasy space which is not simply a floating mass of images, but the way a person organizes his universe of meaning in a way absolutely particular to him. And thus this primal *reason* as Dao would be a pure form of *spirituality*, which is irreducible to any interpretation, because of its pure emptiness.

Let me pursue it a little further. If the constitutive lack within the linguistic structurality is the cause of desire, and the subject cannot survive without desiring, even desiring Dao, it would be hard to distinguish the neutral point as a threatening power from the void in pure silence. When Zhuangzi even states that Dao exists in excrement and urine in *Zhi beiyou* (知北遊, 889), certainly he uses these metaphors to mean that Dao is neither visible nor invisible, neither ubiquitous nor non-existent. As to Blanchot, the neutral point, though unspeakable and unknown, is entirely threatening.

The unknown excludes all perspective; it does not remain within the circle of sight, it cannot belong to a whole. In this sense, it also excludes the dimension of a “going out ahead” . . . The unknown does not find its determination in the fact that it either is or is not, but only in the fact that

relation with the unknown is a relation that is not opened by light or closed by light's absence. A neutral relation. Which means that to think or to speak in the neuter, the neutral, is to think or to speak apart from every visible and every invisible, that is, in terms that do not answer to possibility. (1993: 301)

The neutral point for Blanchot is that the meaning can only bear the meaning by placing itself in brackets, and a subject of pure transcendence, refusing itself to all manner of knowledge and expression. This neutral point as unity of *Supreme One* in Zhuangzi is entirely different from what Blanchot believes here.

### III. ?+?

The lost signifier constitutes a lack, an unbridgeable gap within language itself and it creates an unknown and radical *otherness* that renders meanings forever unfinished and incomplete. It *affirms* the absence of work, a voluntary refusal that language fails to anchor any determinate signified. Throughout Blanchot's concept of writing of the disaster, a doomed catastrophe in meaning is the fate of language within its lost center. The neutral point is vanished or vanishing still within our own configuration and it is the vertigo of its attraction from which there is no safeguard. Through fragmentary writing, we seek the distancing Otherness and create terrifying discourses with affliction.

To Zhuangzi, the summit of the whole self-knowledge is the non-conceptualized knowledge of Dao, which exists as a metonymic otherness to language. Dao as it is so ubiquitous appears in disappearance. It is the original *reason* where an original true self emerges in silence beyond the linguistic dimension, unlike Sade's pure form of reason derived from an interior dark god of evil that negates all forms of life and drives towards an utter void of nothingness. And yet, this neutral gesture of what Zhuangzi would assert is still quite different from Blanchot's concept of neutrality as an unknown threat that at-

tempts to undermine every stability of all meaning, including the concept of God.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Derridian *différance* is neither a word nor a concept, operating beyond the metaphysical *logos*. If in *Structure, Sign and Play*, Derrida insists that the central presence has never been itself but exiled from itself into its own substitute, the center that governs the whole discourse has certainly neither a natural site nor a fixed locus but only a function. It suggests that language invades into the world with an absence of a center or an origin. The function of *Différance* here implies that there is no proper essence and thus the presence becomes the sign of the sign, the trace of the trace. This is the loss of the primordial signifier that a sign disrupts itself within its own signifying play in a movement of a chain. The lost or impossible presence of the absent origin is the secret of the structurality of structure. Given the circumstances, the concept of writing to Derrida is to retrace the origin, but this return is a moment of wandering, encountering a repetition, not of the same, but of difference, that keeps us forever suspended between its withdrawal and what has already been substituted or misplaced.

<sup>2</sup> From Jacques Derrida's discussion of Husserl's theory of signs in *Speech and Phenomena*, he interprets that according to Husserl, the structure of speech can be described in terms of ideality, which is a way of being that is irreducible to sensible experience or empirical reality. This ideality as nonreality or nonexistence out of an imaginative act is the first word of phenomenology. To Husserl, there are two forms of signs—indicative and expressive; the former can only be conceived as a category of empirical existence, whereas the latter exists as nonexistence as long as it is developed within our imaginary "re-presentation." Insofar as this expressive sign born out of an imaginative act, there must be an essential incompleteness of expression, an inadequacy that no effort can ever surmount since it is a form in its ellipsis.

<sup>3</sup> From *Margins of Philosophy*, Derrida, irrespective of how



Hegel criticizes hieroglyphics, insists that though at the peak of the teleological hierarchy of writings in which the phonetic-alphabetic writing is the governing force, transcribing the voice, a psychic-semiotic ideality or sensory perception, into a concrete content, he intends to argue that there is no pure phonetic writing, but there exists nonphonetic functions or the operative silences of alphabetic writing. What Derrida means is that there exists a juxtaposition of an abstract and exterior form with the empirical content. This superimposed form functions as unnoticed contradictions without concept.

<sup>4</sup> Maurice Blanchot, "*The Limit-Experience*," *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson, (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1995) 217-29. Here Blanchot characterizes Sade's excessiveness of reason in three ways. The first is an encyclopedic nature that Sade compiles an inventory of possibilities that explore the zero-intensity of pleasure of energy held to be disordered by the most destructive force. The second is a dialectical nature in which Sade shows his "unique" imagination in a formidable movement towards an impossible extremity. The cold-blooded crime committed in the heat of passion, regarded as his "virtue" that serves his pleasure of a soul, has been overcharged with a dark force that goes beyond the ultimate limits and thus this struggle against Nature is a dialectical stage as superior as a struggle against God. The third one is an immoderate reason. As remarkable as it may seem to be, this immoderate reason is the sign of his freedom. And there, he fails to distinguish himself from the drive of a pure signifier. It is his writing in madness that generates irrepressible solitude of horror, which is a threatening force of speech that never ceases or could be ceased. This saying "everything" in a form of eternal emptiness that pushes this mad writing to the furthestmost point, an ultimate limit that forever imprisons Sade in an empty hole of horror and violence. His own "reason" has moved himself to encounter a pure void where nothing is negated or affirmed.

<sup>5</sup> Blanchot, in *The Infinite Conversation*, describes Simone Weil's thought of tragic affliction in the section of the *Limit-experience*. Blanchot thinks that she accepts "within herself as legitimate the inevitable opposition of thoughts" (106), and that creates a

direct confrontation with those who believe in Christianity. To Simone Weil, the concept of God is derived from the idea of a *Good* which remains as an ideal and desired object and ironically it is the non-existence of absolute certitude that generates our desire, a great spiritual pride. In her profound conviction, she believes that “for God, creation consisted not in extending himself, but in withdrawing” (117), because the secret is that creation is abdication. “In creating what is other than himself, God necessarily abandoned it” (117). God needs to absent himself of divinity, so that the world would be created. In this way, it is an active abandonment that God makes us exist. Inasmuch as the concept of God remains as a form of emptiness, it maintains his “all-presence” of omnipotence. Given the circumstances, the concept of writing in search of the lost signifier, the lost origin, in accordance with this Absent-God, is an enigma of affliction in its own disaster. This affliction is “anonymous, impersonal, indifferent. It is life becomes alien and death becomes inaccessible” (120) and that makes existence itself horrible.

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