

After the End of the World:
In an Apocalyptic Tone by Jacques Derrida

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“Die Welt ist fort, ich muss dich tragen.”

“The world is gone. I must carry you.”

In 2003, during a lecture entitled “Béliers,”¹ held in the memory of Hans-Georg Gadamer, Derrida quoted this last line from a poem by Paul Celan “*Grosse, Glühende Wölbung* (Vast, Glowing Vault).”² In the last years of his life, Derrida has quoted this impressive line several times, “isolating it in a no doubt violent and artificial fashion,”³ and he has added his own interpretations.⁴ This line is built into two heterogeneous lines. The first is constative and describes a fact, the world has gone. The second line is performative both in the duty and the promise made to carry you. Why was Derrida so concerned about that line that clearly shows a commitment to the farewell to the world? Actually, he referred to this line dealing with the question of the world in different contexts which are not necessarily coherent. Through this discussion, we will try to make clear this apocalyptic expression “the end of the world” which Derrida repeats using the same line within

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1. Jacques Derrida, *Béliers. Le dialogue ininterrompu-entre deux infinis, le poème*, Paris: Galilée, 2003. “Rams,” *Sovereignities in Question*, eds. Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen, New York: Fordham University Press, 2005.
 2. Paul Celan “Grosse, Glühende Wölbung,” *Atemwende*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967.
 3. Derrida, *Béliers*, *op. cit.*, 27; trans., 141.
 4. Jacques Derrida, *Voyous. Deux essais sur la raison*, Paris: Galilée, 2003, 213. *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde*, Paris: Galilée, 2003, 11. *Séminaire : La bête et le souverain, volume 2 (2002-2003)*, eds. Michel Lisse, Marie-Louise Mallet et Ginette Michaud, Paris: Galilée, 2010, 31, 159-160, 357-361.

three perspectives.

1. The End of the World as a Moment to Answer to the Other

“The world is gone. I must carry you.” In *Béliers*, Derrida bitterly remembers his first meeting with Gadamer, as well as their conversations. This does not mean that Derrida felt this melancholy only after the death of this old friend for 20 years. From the beginning, their meeting was filled with a foreboding of adieu. According to Derrida, a kind of melancholy is born because one of them would survive after the death of the other. This is the foretelling of the breaking of the friendship, surviving alone after the death of this friend, which has generated this certainty of the mourning in his lifetime.

Concerning this law of the mourning of the friendship, Derrida has already tackled this matter in *Politics of Friendship*, following the genealogy of the notion of friendship from Aristotle, Cicero, Montaigne, Nietzsche to Blanchot. According to *Eudemian Ethics* of Aristotle, in friendship it is better to love than to be loved. We can talk about friendship only when we love before being loved. As friendship usually happens between two living beings, this relationship is truly put to test by the death of a friend. The survivor finds himself in a one way relationship, stuck between life and death, missing a communication shared with his friend. Derrida questions the condition of friendship, taking into account the real death of a friend, but also his virtual death. “I would not love by friendship without promising, without feeling myself in advance engaged to love the other beyond the death. So beyond the life.”⁵ Friendship implies more than a world wherein friends live together. Friendship goes with this foreboding of surviving beyond the death of a friend, thus this laps of survival allowed to make a friendship more radical. In order to express symbolically a singular friendship on the threshold of both the presence and the absence of a friend, Derrida puts forward a testamentary sentence inherited since

5. Jacques Derrida, *Politiques de l'amitié*, Paris: Galilée, 1994, 29. « Je ne pourrais pas aimer d'amitié sans m'engager, sans me sentir d'avance engagé à aimer l'autre par-delà la mort. Donc par-delà la vie. »

Aristotle: *O mes amis, il n'y a nul ami* (O my friends, there is no friend).

Thus, Derrida has more than enough talked about the mourning of a deceased friend, and by the end of his life, he has focused on the question of "the end of the world" with a line by Celan.

[...] each time, and each time singularly, each time irreplaceably, each time infinitely, death is nothing less than an end of *the* world. Not *only one* end among others, the end of someone or of something *in the world*, the end of a life or of a living being. Death puts an end neither to someone in the world nor to *one* world among others. Death marks each time, each time in defiance of arithmetic, the absolute end of the one and only world, of that which each opens as a one and only world, the end of the unique world, the end of the totality of what is or can be presented as the origin of the world for any unique living being, be it human or not.⁶

According to Derrida, Celan's line does not tell that a life has found its end in the world, nor the world shall not appear anymore for a living person. What has disappeared is not each individual's world, but every time, the death of the other foretells "the end of the world in totality, the end of any world," "the end of the world as unique totality, thus irreplaceable and thus infinite."⁷ This end is not an advent in the world, but the end itself of the whole and only world. Derrida notices that this interpretation is not compatible with the idea of resurrection. The traditional concept of resurrection assumes the existence of God, and

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6. *Béliers, op. cit.*, 23; trans., 140. « [...] chaque fois, et chaque fois singulièrement, chaque fois irremplaçablement, chaque fois infiniment, la mort n'est rien de moins qu'une fin *du* monde. Non pas *seulement une* fin parmi d'autres, la fin de quelqu'un ou de quelque chose *dans le monde*, la fin d'une vie ou d'un vivant. La mort ne met pas un terme à quelqu'un dans le monde, ni à *un* monde parmi d'autres, elle marque chaque fois, chaque fois au défi de l'arithmétique l'absolue fin du seul et même monde, de ce que chacun ouvre comme un seul et même monde, la fin de l'unique monde, la fin de la totalité de ce qui est ou peut se présenter comme l'origine du monde pour tel et unique vivant, qu'il soit humain ou non. »
7. *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde, op. cit.*, 9. « la fin du monde en totalité, la fin de tout monde possible » ; « la fin du monde comme totalité unique, donc irremplaçable et donc infinie. »

the persistent world wherein a life (a world) is lost. According to this notion, it is based on the assumption of the world's horizon that we believe that the dead can come to life again spiritually or physically. Derrida, in his part, thinks that the death of the other brings the end of the world itself wherein our faith in resurrection lies. In those terms, the survivor is doomed to confront the unique loneliness devoid of a world.

The survivor, then, remains alone. Beyond the world of the other, he is also in some fashion beyond or before the world itself. In the world outside the world and deprived of the world. At the least, he feels solely responsible, assigned to carry both the other and his world, the other and the world that have disappeared, responsible without world (*weltlos*), without the ground of any world, thenceforth, in a world without world, as if without earth beyond the end of the world.⁸

“The end of the world” is seen as a time used to answer to a friend rather than being necessarily apocalyptic. The world does not end after the death of the other. The end of the world is actually what will allow once again carrying the other and the world. Derrida refers to Sigmund Freud's notions: mourning and melancholy. Mourning is the act of carrying the other within me, in other words, “introjection, internalization of the memory (*Erinnerung*), idealization”⁹ of the world of the other. Even if this work of mourning is expected to be ethical, Derrida says that one needs a certain melancholy, in other words, a suspension of mourning. By saying “carrying the dead within me,” we do not mean literally taking the other from the outside and imprisoning him inside, because the world as horizon is already gone.

8. *Béliers, op. cit.*, 23. « Alors le survivant reste seul. Au-delà du monde de l'autre, il est aussi de quelque façon au-delà ou en deçà du monde même. Dans le monde hors du monde et privé du monde. Il se sent du moins seul responsable, assigné à porter et l'autre et son monde, l'autre et le monde disparus, responsable sans monde (*weltlos*), sans le sol d'aucun monde, désormais, dans un monde sans monde, comme sans terre par-delà la fin du monde. »

9. *Ibid.*, 74.

We necessarily feel a melancholy left inside when we carry the other at the end of the world.

Celan's line "*Ich muss dich tragen* (I must carry you)," can be interpreted both as the loss and the birth from the zero degree with no world. This is a question of carrying the other through me and carrying a forthcoming child towards tomorrow. "[...] I must carry you (either in me as in mourning, or else in me as in birth, for *tragen* is also said of the mother carrying a child, in her arms or in her womb)."¹⁰ The loneliness, lacking of the survivor's world, has to carry once again the other, who will give birth to the world. Carrying the other means the end and the origin of the world at the same time.

2. The Self-Destruction of the World in the Time of the World War

"The world is gone. I must carry you." We find ourselves saying those words when the international situation is on a critical phase. In our time, the United States have often caused such a disastrous phase by exerting their political and economic hegemony on the "new world order." From the 1980s, Derrida's political commitment has become clearer, because he tried to respond in a deconstructive way to this political transformation of the world done by the USA. Let us follow the argumentation of Derrida about the strong reality that lets us think of the end of the world.

In 1984, during the Cold War, Ronald Reagan took a harsh militaristic path with the reinforcement of the nuclear weapons. Derrida gave a conference about the nuclear war "No Apocalypse, Not Now," at Cornell University. Two years before, Derrida had found a religious tone in the political language in the United States, because they are "more sensitive to phenomenons such as prophetism,

10. Jacques Derrida, *Séminaire : La bête et le souverain, volume 2 (2002-2003)*, Paris: Galilée, 2010, 31-32. *The Beast and the Sovereign, volume 2*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011, 9. «[...] je dois te porter (soi en moi comme dans le deuil, soit en moi comme dans la naissance, *tragen* se disant aussi de la mère qui porte un enfant dans ces bras ou dans son ventre).»

messianism, eschatology and apocalypse here-and-now.”¹¹ The Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) was launched by President Reagan in 1983, in order to once again bring out the process of a nuclear deterrent. Thanks to a network of satellite, this project would allow the detection and the destruction of ballistic missiles threatening the United States.

The classic war ended with the development of the atomic bomb, thus this modern technology has succeeded in bringing a total self-destruction among humanity, which was an unprecedented experience for the human. Of course, we should not underestimate the harsh reality about nuclear weapons in the hands of great powers, nor should we forget its terrible force of destruction. In possession of nuclear weapons, an army can strike a fatal blow within a minute. Therefore, a competition in developing weapons is nothing but a competition of speed. Thus, this absolute acceleration has become a major issue compared to the previous wars; indeed, it is important to save time as much as possible, to win over the rapidity of nuclear weapons and find our right speed of the war. “[...] The nuclear age gives us to think this aporia of speed starting from the limit of absolute acceleration [...]”¹² Nonetheless, we have never passed through a full world nuclear war until now. We can only write and read about this war, and its existence is still a reference from the text. Derrida qualifies the nuclear war, which remains an imminent fable as “a phenomenon whose essential feature is that it is *fabulously textual*, through and through.”¹³ If we compare it to other kind of war, the nuclear war, being yet to come, is rather textual, for it is mediated by discourses, news, rhetoric and the archives of nuclear.

If we rely on this statement about the textual structure of the nuclear weapon, on the one hand, “the aporias of the nuclear referent,

11. Jacques Derrida, *D'un ton apocalyptique adopté naguère en philosophie*, Paris: Galilée, 1983, 84.

12. Jacques Derrida, *Psyché. Invention de l'autre*, Paris: Galilée, 1998, 398. *Psyche: Invention of the Other*, trans. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, Stanford: Stanford U.P., 2007, 390. « [...] L'âge nucléaire nous donne à penser cette aporie de la vitesse depuis la limite de l'accélération absolue [...] »

13. *Ibid.*, 401; trans., 393.

we don't believe in them,"¹⁴ Derrida refers to the modern literature, a sort of archive process, based on the institutions such as the copyright or signature, and so on. The literature is the singular archive which builds up referents in a fictional form, and keeps them inside. As does literature, the nuclear weapon has also this same kind of structure, for it produces its referents (a reality of the nuclear world war), which are also within it. We believe that "it [= the nuclear world war] *is not real, because it remains entirely suspended in its fabulous and literary epochē.*"¹⁵

"But, we do not believe — and this is the other version or the reverse side of the same paradox — in anything except the nuclear referent."¹⁶ If we think about death in its individual way, or about the social or cultural destruction, people can still be able to hold in their memories the deceased or the lost things during the mourning process. They can archive the destroyed objects by the dialectic of memory and inheritance in order to begin to ease the suffering of losing someone or something. But, if it were to be, the nuclear war could completely destroy any chance of survival and at the same time the social archive. The fatal war consists in the condition of all real referents, because it can completely erase all traces of what allows us to remember the people or the objects. Even if it is constantly absent, the referent of the nuclear weapon is testing our faith in the world.

The hypothesis we are considering here is that of a total and remainderless destruction of the archive. This destruction would take place for the first time, and it would lack any common proportion with, for example, the burning of a library, even that of Alexandria, which occasioned so many written accounts and nourished so many literatures. The hypothesis of this total destruction watches over deconstruction, it guides its footsteps, allowing one to recognize, in the light, so to speak, of that hypothesis or phantasm, the characteristic structures and

14. *Psyché, op. cit.*, 408; trans., 399.

15. *Ibid.*, 411; trans., 402.

16. *Ibid.*

historicity of the discourses, strategies, texts, or institutions to be deconstructed. That is why deconstruction, at least what is being advanced today under that name, belongs to the nuclear age.¹⁷

Derridean deconstruction is tightly linked to the destruction. This is not just a dismantlement of a built construction, rather it consists in explaining the unseen boundaries and shaking this structure radically, in order to invent the one “to come.” The wholly other event such as the complete annihilation engendered by the nuclear war, is an unbelievable referent, which allows all referents to really exist. Nuclear is a trace of all the traces, in other words, “the only ineffaceable trace, as trace of the wholly other,” “the name of everything and of nothing.”¹⁸ Far from the idea of catastrophe, the deconstruction announces a beginning which offers different ends in boundaries and tries to “invent strategies for speaking of something else, for deferring the encounter with the wholly other.”¹⁹

Since the twentieth century, regions or nation-states have not been the only target touched by the war, but the whole world has been under its sway. War changes our perspective of the world. In the 1990s, while the nation-state found itself weakened by the growth of globalization, the idea of war and terrorism has been deeply changed in people’s mind. Particularly, with the attack targeting New York in 2001, the USA took resolute actions in Afghanistan, and shortly after in 2003, they started a war in Iraq without consulting the Security Council of the

17. *Psyché, op. cit.*, 409; trans., 400. « Nous sommes ici dans l’hypothèse d’une destruction totale et sans reste de l’archive. Celle-ci aurait lieu pour la première fois et elle serait sans proposition commune avec, par exemple, l’incendie d’une bibliothèque, fut-ce celle d’Alexandrie qui fit couler tant d’encre et alimenta tant de littératures. L’hypothèse de cette destruction totale veille sur la déconstruction, elle en guide la démarche, permettant de reconnaître, à la lumière, si on peut dire, de cette hypothèse ou de ce fantasme, les structures et l’historicité propres des discours, des stratégies, des textes ou des institutions à déconstruire. C’est pourquoi la déconstruction, ce qui du moins s’avance aujourd’hui sous ce nom, appartient à l’âge nucléaire. »

18. *Ibid.*, 415; trans., 406. « la seule trace ineffaçable comme trace de tout autre » ; « Le nom de tout et de rien »

19. *Ibid.*, 412; trans., 403. « inventer des stratagèmes pour différer la rencontre du tout autre »

United Nation's resolutions. This is a clear exercise of sovereignty and exceptional strength, regardless of the discussion within the Security Council. Just after the war in Iraq began (March 26, 2003), Derrida held a seminar in which he quoted this extract of Celan:

At stake is the end of the world (*“Die Welt ist fort”*) in the sense that what is threatened, in this or that world war, is therefore the end of the world, the destruction of the world, of any possible world, or of what is supposed to make of the world a cosmos, an arrangement, an order, an order of ends, a juridical, moral, political order, an international order resistant to the non-world of death and barbarity.²⁰

After the event of the September 11, 2001, Jean-Luc Nancy also makes a negative analysis on the globalization, concerned about new emerging era of war and terrorism. With a larger perspective of things, Nancy calls into question the western globalization, based on the Jewish and Christian monotheism born in the Ancient Greece and which has announced modern capitalism. Concerning the movement of capitalism, in this economical system based on the surplus value, we are forced to repeat the same cycle of investment, recycling and reinjection, and to increase capital accumulation. This constant self-productive process, representing a reality of capitalism, feeds on itself and puts its goal straight ahead. “The world has lost its capacity to ‘form a world’ [*faire monde*]: it seems only to have gained that capacity of proliferating, to the extent of its means, the ‘non-world’ [*immonde*], which, until now, and whatever one may think of retrospective illusions, has never in history impacted the totality of the orb to such an extent.”²¹ There is no more God looming over the world, nor the Absolute, which would depict the uniqueness of the world. From now on, only “*this*

20. *Séminaire : La bête et le souverain, volume 2 (2002-2003), op. cit.*, 359; trans., 260. « Il y va d'une fin du monde (« *Die Welt ist fort* ») au sens où ce qui menace, dans telle ou telle guerre mondiale, de tout monde possible, ou de ce qui est supposé faire du monde un cosmos, un arrangement, un ordre international résistant au non-monde de la mort et de la barbarie. »

21. Jean-Luc Nancy, *La création du monde ou la mondialisation*, Paris: Galilée, 2002, 16.

world” remains with defined beings, in other words, a world which is “a fact with no reason, no end.” But, according to Nancy, with the event of the September 11, “two figures of absolute value,” the United States and Islamic Fanaticism, expose the enigmatic sameness of the One that is, no doubt, always self-destructive: but self-destruction is accompanied by self-exaltation and an over-essentialization.”²²

The seminar *The Beast and the Sovereign* held by Derrida in 2001-2002, and his book, *Rogues*, reflect those times where the idea and the reality of the world shift as the “war against terrorism” grows. In *Rogues*, with the reference of Noam Chomsky’s analysis, Derrida realizes how the USA have used the word “rogue state” for General Manuel Noriega’s Panama and even for Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. The USA denouncing arbitrarily the “rogue state” appears to be the most cunning “nation rogue” of them all, which is paradoxical. Those tendencies are far more obvious since the 1990s, where the Communist bloc was dismantled. Derrida does not simply make a political analysis, but also he brings out a discussion on the structure of the onto-theology of the sovereignty as a factor that gives birth to a feeling of losing the world because of the globalization. Indeed, sovereignty consists in being given the right and the strength to being oneself, the same self, *per se*. According to Derrida, those possibilities of auto-positioning can also fit even in terms of dictatorship. The Sovereign State on its own infers that it can abuse its power and it can violate the international right as a rogue would do.

In *The Beast and the Sovereign*, Derrida analyzes the relationship between international terrorism and the American political habit, in comparison with the animal and the man. The beast and the sovereign look the same and haunt each other, for both of them are out-laws, or above the laws. The beast looks like the criminal, because it violates the laws, showing no respect to it at all. The sovereign acts as if he were above the laws, considering itself as the root of the laws. We can find the characteristic in common within the two of them. Does the everlasting cycle, between the international terrorism and the war started by a great power, announce “the very ruin of the concept of end and of war”²³

22. *Ibid.*, 29.

23. *Séminaire : La bête et le souverain*, volume 2 (2002-2003), *op. cit.*, 359; trans., 260.

in a time of globalization? Employing Heidegger's famous formula, Derrida states: "[...] where the world is not even there, and where we, we who are wordless, *weltlos*, form a world only against the backdrop of a non-world here there is neither world nor even that poorness-in-world that Heidegger attributes to animals (which would be, according to him, *weltarm*), within this abyss of the non-world [...]"²⁴

The balance between the forces is broken in the frame of the nation-state and the ONU, thus the new violence of the international terrorism and the defense of the great powers highlight the gloomy depths of the world. On one hand, in order to counter this new menace, "immunity" is hardened more and more thanks to military security. On the other hand, the economic inequality accumulated thanks to global capitalism makes the counter-attack less and less reliable, and gives "the self-immunity" to violence. Derrida states that this conflict between immunity and self-immunity fosters the fragility of the world in this time of globalization.

3. As if the World of Cohabitation would be at the End of the World

"The world is gone. I must carry you." Perhaps a solitary man abandoned on a desert island would feel like saying those words. In only one island drawing the boundaries of his finitude, there remains in fact the only world left for him.

Derrida's seminar in 2002-2003 has the same title as the one he held a year before. He only gives, though, two references to observe: *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe and *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* by Heidegger. Of course, his choice may seem an extravagant combination; yet both of the books have something in common for they depict the world of a secluded man at the edge of the animal's world. This is the last seminar where he explains the world of living beings using Celan's line.

24. *Voyous, op. cit.*, 213. « [...] là où il n'y a pas le monde, là où nous sommes, nous, sans monde, *weltlos*, là où nous ne formons un monde que sur ce fond de non-monde, là où il n'y pas ni monde ni même cette pauvreté-en-monde que Heidegger prête aux animaux (qui seraient, selon lui, *weltarm*), en cet abîme du sans-monde [...] »

If we look back in Derrida's reading of Heidegger, we can see that Derrida has already tackled with the question of the animal and the world in Heidegger in *Of Spirit* (1987). In this book, Derrida thoroughly follows the shift of the word "spirit" Heidegger uses in times of Nazism until he writes an essay about a poet Georg Trakl in 1953. The question about the animal is analyzed from the definition in *Introduction to the Metaphysics* (1935): "the world is always a *spiritual* world." The world is spiritual and the animal does not belong to the spiritual, for Heidegger, thus the animal has no world. But five years before making this statement in *Introduction to the Metaphysics*, he submitted three sentences about the question of the world: "The stone has no world (*wetlos*)," "The animal is poor in world (*wetlarm*)," "Man is world-configuring or world-forming (*wetbildend*). The poverty of the animal between the mineral and the man engenders the complexity of these statements. The animal does have *a certain amount* of world, if we compare it to the mineral, which has none. The animal's world is poorer than the man's. Nonetheless, Heidegger thinks that the world's poverty and wealth do not make a difference in terms of hierarchy, but they are indeed different by nature. This is not a quantitative difference but differences in the relationship they have with the world. Heidegger writes, "The animal is deprived of world." But what does "privation" mean for the animal, whereas it has measures different from the man's, a man who is rich with the world? According to Derrida, "poverty does not mean a minus, it means, in a certain way, a plus: this feeling of privation, the animal can feel something whereas the stone cannot."²⁵ The contradiction "the animal has a world and has no world" always centers around the question of the world, and there is still a humanistic teleology in the word "privation." Derrida's vision turns around the idea of a comparative discussion between the mineral, the animal and the man, which increases the complexity of the question, and thereby Heidegger's notion of the world is getting far more difficult.

Derrida addresses the question of the world in the perspective of a

25. Jacques Derrida, *L'animal donc je suis*, Paris: Galilée, 2006, 213. « cette pauvreté ne signifie pas un moins, elle signifie même, d'une certaine manière, un plus: un sentiment de privation qui manque que l'animal peut sentir quelque chose alors que la pierre ne le peut pas. »

“living essence of the living (*die Lebendigkeit des Lebenden*),” which is the difficulty that Heidegger has finally reached. Heidegger tries to explain the notion of the world by comparing the mineral, the animal and the man, whereas Derrida insists on the idea of “cohabitation” of all the living in the same world, from their birth to their death.

The word “world” has at least as a minimal sense the designation of *that within which* all these living beings are carried (in a belly or in an egg), they are born, they live, they inhabit and they die [...], the designation of *that within which* the beast and the sovereign co-habit, the very thing that — transitively this time — they cohabit.²⁶

This physical indication “that within which” does not mean the idea of a container. This does not mean that the whole space-time describing the world contain all the existences. The living beings do not live “inside” the world; therefore in this case, we cannot talk about the idea of a container. For Derrida, the death of the other does not happen in the world, rather it is actually a single world that dies each time. The Derridean statement that “the world is gone” is completely different from Heideggerian “The stone has no world.” All the living beings, men and animals, share the same vision of the death of the other, as the end of the world, which made Derrida think of a common aspect between the man and the animal, in terms of cohabitation.

[...] whatever the difficulty we have in thinking, conceiving life, the limits of life, becoming-alive or dead, we can believe that these living beings have in common the finitude of their life, and therefore, among other features of finitude, their mortality in the place they habit, whether one calls that place world or earth (earth including sky and sea) and these places that they inhabit in common, where they co-habit, and *inhabiting* and *co-habiting*

26. *La bête et le souverain*, *op. cit.*, 365-366; trans., 264-265. « Le « monde » a au moins pour sens minimal de désigner ce dans quoi tous ces vivants sont portés (dans un ventre ou dans un œuf), naissent, vivent, habitent et meurent [...], de désigner ce dans quoi, ce en quoi la bête et le souverain co-habitent, cela même que, transitivement cette fois, ils cohabitent. »

meaning things that are perhaps still problematic, and different from one living being to another, taking into account what one understands by world or earth [...] ²⁷

Derrida does not think this world of cohabitation as a holistic reduction, which would erase all the differences between the living beings, including the man and the animal. Neither is the ecological symbiosis, which implies that several beings live in the same space but without following the rules of predators or the fight for staying alive. While the symbiosis refers to a pluralistic and stable closed system, the Derridean world of cohabitation is not a space wherein beings are contained. This is more a world where beings “co-habit” with ontological breaking of life and death. Although the livings co-habit together, even two human beings hardly succeed in demonstrating the identical state of their world, no matter how hard they try to. We have to admit that there are two possibilities for the world of cohabitation. On one hand, “[...] there really must be a certain presumed, anticipated, unity of the world even in order discursively to sustain within it multiplicity, untranslatable and un-gatherable, the dissemination of possible worlds.”²⁸ But, on the other hand, in the shadows of the fictitious unit of multiple worlds, there still remains “the infantile but infinite anxiety of the fact that *there is not the world*.”²⁹ The common world keeps on being absent for the living beings, and each of them are being isolated. By placing this radical dissemination on top of Robinson Crusoe’s experience, Derrida writes: “There is no world, there are only islands. That is one of the thousand directions in which I would be tempted to

27. *Ibid.*, 33; trans., 10. « [...] quelle que soit la difficulté que nous avons à penser, à concevoir la vie, les limites de la vie, le devenir-vivant ou mort, nous pouvons croire que ces vivants ont en commun la finitude de leur vie, donc, entre autres traits de la finitude, leur mortalité dans le lieu qu’ils habitent, qu’on appelle cela le monde ou la terre (la terre incluant le ciel et la mer), et ces lieux qu’ils habitent en commun, où ils cohabitent, habiter et co-habiter voulant peut-être dire des choses encore problématiques et différentes d’un vivant à l’autre, compte tenu de ce qu’on entend par monde ou terre [...] »

28. *Ibid.*, 366; trans., 256. « [...] il faut bien une certaine unité présumée, anticipée, du monde même pour y soutenir d’un discours la multiplicité, intraductible et non ressemblable, la dissémination des mondes possibles. »

29. *Ibid.* « l’angoisse infantile mais infinie du fait qu’il n’y a pas le monde. »

interpret the last line of a short and great poem by Celan: *‘Die Welt ist fort, ich muss dich tragen.’*³⁰

However, both the world of cohabitation and its absence for the living seem to be of an aporetic incompatibility. Because there are no solitudes for several individuals caught in a same world of cohabitation, but a singular solitude for each world. There only remains “the undeniable fact that there is no world, not even a world, not even one and the same world that is one.”³¹ Admittedly, there is no unique world, but we have to act *as if* the world of cohabitation were real, wherein the living beings live and die together. If the living beings have to carry life and death of the other, the birth and the mourning of the other, two conditions must meet in each insular solitude. On the one hand, one has to carry the other out of the world, in a space where the common world has gone. This is not going from a secluded island to another in the world, but “I must carry you” without reaching any shore nor any world. On the other, one must behave himself/herself *as if* there were just a world, even if the world is already gone. *As if* I make the world come to the world, in order to give it to you, and thus, to carry it as well as I will carry you. According to Derrida, life and death of the living beings does not repeat itself, one after the other, in one and only world. Derrida avoids truly this logic of the resurrection. There is no absolute world, insofar as the self and others, the arrived and the upcoming cross their own paths. The possibilities for the end of the world illustrate that the world is fictitious for every living beings so that the world is carrying the upcoming each single time, even while it is going.

“The world is gone. I must carry you.” Of which scene does Jacques Derrida let us catch sight in a quasi-apocalyptic tone, in his last few years? Through his thinking of deconstruction, we have got a brief glimpse of living and dying, each time unique, of all the living beings who believe, who must believe as if there were a world of cohabitation, even in those insular solitudes isolated by an irreplaceable abyss.

30. *Ibid.*, 31; trans, 8. « Il n’y a pas de monde, il n’y a que des îles. C’est là une des mille directions dans lesquelles je serais tenté d’interpréter le dernier vers d’un court et grand poème de Celan: *‘Die Welt ist fort, ich muss dich tragen’*. »

31. *Ibid.*, 367; trans., 266. « Le fait indéniable qu’il n’y a pas de monde, pas même un monde, pas même un seul et même monde, pas de monde un. »