

## Blanchot, the Obscure

A conference on the French critic and author Maurice Blanchot  
Organized by the journal *Colloquy*  
Under the auspices of  
The Centre for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies  
and The School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics at Monash University  
and Alliance Française Melbourne

Dates: 19-20 August 2004

Confirmed Keynote Speakers: Kevin Hart

Despite the enormous influence of his work, for many Maurice Blanchot remains an obscure figure. His fiction is regarded by some as impenetrable, his critical comments gnomic. His reclusive habits shroud decisive events of his life, most notably his brush with death during the occupation of France. For others, Blanchot's work is anything but obscure, his reticence to reveal the details of his life being only a proper extension of his lucid, critical thought.

Nevertheless, the adjective 'obscure' can function as a lens onto a series of ideas appearing throughout Blanchot's writings. The mysterious and the enigmatic feature prominently in terms of the *il y a*, death, *désœuvrement*, the event, the gaze, the negative, the neutral, madness. Perhaps what remains most obscure is the work of writing itself, both in practice and in theory. The obscurity of the work of writing brings to the fore the relation between fiction and philosophy.

This conference invites papers which address the life and work of Blanchot in a way that is faithful to Blanchot himself. We do not seek to unearth new facts, rather, to take heed of the exigency of writing as conceptualised and practised by Blanchot. We encourage papers which deal with the obscure in Blanchot's work in relation to any of the following themes:

\* Friendship \* Death \* Time and Being \* The Greeks (especially the pre-Socratics) \* Blanchot in France and Germany \* Literature (his practical and/or theoretical contribution) \* The Feminine \* The Sacred \* Mysticism \* Psychoanalysis \* Blanchot in English \*

Proposals (150 words max.) for twenty minute papers should be sent by 20 May 2004 by e-mail to [colloquy@arts.monash.edu.au](mailto:colloquy@arts.monash.edu.au), or by post to *Colloquy*, Centre for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies, Monash University, PO Box 11A, Vic 3800, Australia.

Refereed proceedings of the conference will be published electronically in *Colloquy* ([www.arts.monash.edu.au/others/colloquy/](http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/others/colloquy/)) and in print in the Monash Romance Studies series of Delaware University Press.

The *Colloquy* Editors