1 ◆
The Law of Supplementarity:
A Reading of Derrida's "White Mythology"

In the "Eighth Study" of *The Rule of Metaphor*, Ricoeur provides a reading of "White Mythology," on the basis of which he initiates his polemic with Derrida. In order to evaluate Ricoeur's reading and subsequent criticism we must attempt (as much as this is possible) an independent reading of "White Mythology."[1] The reading will be guided by earlier Derridean texts, in particular, "The Pit and the Pyramid" and "Ousia and Grammé" (both in *Margins* like "White Mythology"), and *Speech and Phenomena*. It will proceed in three steps. By examining the first two sections in "White Mythology" ("Exergue" and "Plus de métaphore"), we shall see that metaphoricity, what Derrida calls "the law of supplementarity," targets not only any metadiscourse (such as philosophy or rhetoric) that claims univocity and domination over its subject matter, but also Hegelian reflection and the *Aufhebung* (a word Derrida renders as *relève*). Then the examination of the third and fourth sections in "White Mythology" ("L'ellipse du soleil: L'énigme, l'incompréhensible, l'imprenable" and "Les fleurs du rhétorique: L'héliotrope"), will show that the law targets not only linguistic univocity in Aristotle's "exemplary" discourse on metaphor, but also the Aristotelian notion of the analogy of being. In the concluding section of "White Mythology," "La métaphysique—Relève de la métaphore," the third step's focus, Derrida generalizes metaphor beyond the philosophical concept of it, indeed, beyond the philosophical concept.[2] Thus most generally, I hope to show that "White Mythology" can be reconstructed according to deconstruction's two phases.[3] The first two steps reconstruct "White Mythology" according to the critical phase; the third reconstructs according to the reinscriptive phase. Finally, a fourth step will reconnect this "independent" reading with the concerns of Ricoeur's reading.

1

In the opening section of "White Mythology," "Exergue," Derrida recalls the obvious fact that metaphysical concepts consist of worn out (*usée*) metaphors; *logos* consists of "bleached out" *mythos*. The Greek word, *eidos,* for instance, means not only a supersensible idea, but also outward appearance. Because of this fact, Derrida envisions (as Nietzsche did [cf. MAR, 217/258]), a metadiscursive project (a rhetoric or a metaphilosophy) that would decipher philosophical discourse as a system of figures of speech. Instead of taking up such a metadiscursive project, Derrida wants to demonstrate its structural impossibility (cf. MAR, 219/261). In order to do this, Derrida presents in "Plus de métaphore" a sort of "argument," that I am now going to reconstruct.[4]

The argument's first premise is based in a Heideggerian insight (cf. MAR, 226n29/269n19): "...metaphor remains (*reste*), in all its essential characteristics, a classical philosopheme, a metaphysical concept" (MAR, 219/261). For Derrida, this connection does not mean that metaphor is a metaphysical concept in itself. Rather, any use of the signifier metaphor imports with it a system of terms which belongs to or is derived from the philosophical tradition. How could metaphor be articulated without appealing to this series of oppositions: *physis/techne*, *physis/nomos*, sensible/intelligible, space/time, signifier/signified, sensory/sense, sensual/spiritual? Or, without this system of concepts or concepts derived from them: *theoria, eidos, logos,* etc.? *Metaphor* is not a tool designed singularly for this project (MAR, 224/266-67); it is not an arbitrary X (MAR, 254/304).[5] Rather, it is a remainder (*reste*) from metaphysical discourse, a discourse from which it cannot be entirely separated.[6]

The second is: "Metaphor has been issued from a network of philosophemes which themselves correspond to tropes or to figures, and these philosophemes are contemporaneous to or in systematic solidarity with these tropes or figures" (MAR, 219/261). This means that the words that constitute philosophy's system of operative terms (*eidos, theoria, logos, metaphora,* etc., and their cognates) themselves bear a metaphorical charge. These words are always already circulated in com-

mon or nonspecialized parlance. In circulation they have always already acquired some sort of relatively literal sense. When they enter philosophical discourse, they acquire a metaphorical sense, which is eventually reduced in favor of a new conceptual determination. Although the concept prevails, the metaphor can still be read beneath it.

To recapitulate, the first premise consists in that metaphor remains a classical *philosopheme*, a metaphysical concept; the second in that the network of *philosophemes*, to which metaphor belongs, itself bears a metaphorical charge. The conclusion consists in that "[if] one wished to conceive and to class all the metaphorical possibilities of philosophy," one must define philosophical metaphor with philosophical metaphors. In order to identify philosophical metaphors and, thereby, decide what belongs to this field or set and what does not, a characteristic (*trait*) must be determined. In other words, a way of circumscribing the field of philosophical metaphor is needed. This definition, however, would necessarily contain characteristics or signifiers whose sense would import the whole system of philosophical conceptuality because one is using *metaphor*, a *philosopheme*; and, the characteristics which constitute this definition would themselves be metaphorical because the philosophical terms derive from common parlance. Thus, the definition of philosophical metaphor would be a philosophical metaphor, but one not included in the field.

And, if one wants "to conceive and to class *all* the metaphorical possibilities of philosophy," one must construct another definition which would conceive and class the first definition. The second definition, however, would also fall prey to the same problem. It, too, could not not be a philosophical metaphor. The process, therefore, would necessarily continue *ad infinitum*. Every definition would *participate in without belonging to* the field of philosophical metaphors.[7] As Derrida says, "The field is never saturated" (MAR, 220/261); the analysis is interminable; it cannot be counted.

It is impossible then to dominate philosophical metaphor. A rhetoric, which would take up a position *outside* philosophical discourse, would still have to make use of certain terms which would derive from the discourse it attempts to dominate. A metaphilosophy (a more general but still philosophical discourse), which would take up a

position *inside* philosophical discourse, would be able to "perceive its metaphorics only around a blind spot or central deafness" (MAR, 228/272). A metaphilosophy would still have to use the resources of its own discourse, philosophy. Thus, a metaphilosophy would be able to construct a metaphorology only by ignoring (by not seeing or hearing) the tropological charges of its own terms (MAR, 228–29/273). In short, any definition of metaphor, especially of philosophical metaphor, includes the defined (MAR, 230/274, 252/301); it begs the question.

Derrida calls the essential impossibility of dominating philosophical metaphor "the law of supplementarity" (MAR, 229/273).[8] The law implies that the definition of philosophical metaphor possesses *too much* metaphor and the field, *too little*. Because the field of philosophical metaphor *lacks* the metaphor that makes the definition of philosophical metaphor possible, the field always needs a supplement. Because the definition participates in the field, it always possesses *too much* metaphor. As Derrida says,

> This extra (*en plus*) metaphor, remaining (*restant*) outside the field that it allows to be circumscribed, extracts (*ex-trait*) or abstracts itself (*s'abs-trait*) from the field, thus substracting itself (*s'y sous-trait*) as a metaphor less. (MAR, 220/261, my hyphenations)

Thus, the extra turn of speech (*le tour de plus*) is the missing turn of speech. As the title of "White Mythology's" second section, "Plus de métaphore," suggests, there is always too much metaphor and not enough.

"White Mythology's" first two sections, therefore, define an irresolvable problem: how can one speak about metaphor nonmetaphorically? "Hegel...," as Derrida points out, "determines the [same] problem with an answer indistinguishable from the proposition of his own speculative and dialectical logic" (MAR, 225/267). In the *Lectures on Aesthetics*, which Derrida cites (MAR, 225–26/268–69), Hegel says that concepts come about through the metaphorization of terms circulating in ordinary speech. Through usage (*Abnutzung*: Derrida connects this word with the French *usure*), through usage, terms with a sensuous

sense have been internalized and elevated (*aufgehobene hatte*) into a spiritual sense. Thus, words like *begreifen* (to grasp and to conceive), according to Hegel, are worn out or inactive metaphors.

In "The Pit and the Pyramid," an essay parallel to and somewhat earlier than "White Mythology," Derrida connects the issue of metaphor in Hegel to thought itself, to the self-relation or reflection (MAR, 91/105).[9] Metaphor in Hegel, according to Derrida, refers not only to linguistic change, but also to the interiorization (*Erinnerung*) and temporalization which elevates (*aufhebt*) sensuous intuition into thinking (into the concept). In short, for Derrida, metaphor refers to all forms of Hegelian idealization. Because of "The Pit and the Pyramid" analysis, in "White Mythology" Derrida can describe Hegelian metaphorization as

> a movement of idealization. Which is included under the master category of dialectical idealism, to wit, the *relève* (*Aufhebung*), that is, the recollection (*Erinnerung*) that produces signs, interiorizes them in elevating, suppressing, and conserving the sensory exterior. (MAR, 226/269)

Understood as idealization, metaphorization (in either thought or language) presupposes for Hegel a continuous unity underlying the transformations (MAR, 215/256). Metaphorization is only the becoming conscious of truth. The "tropic system" is nothing more than a figural passage or transition through which the Idea circulates and returns to itself completely (MAR, 303/254). Hegelian metaphor, therefore, implies no rupture and no need for a supplement.

Keeping in mind the rough similarities between Hegelian and Husserlian reflection (idealization and temporalization), *Speech and Phenomena* can help us see how "White Mythology's" discursive law of supplementarity applies to Hegelian thought.[10] In *Speech and Phenomena's* fifth chapter, as is well-known, Derrida shows that Husserlian temporalization implies an irreducible division of the now from the past (retention), which the future always tries to synthesize. This insight guides chapter 6's analysis. Chapter 6 explicitly concerns reflection or autoaffection, which is the basis of Husserl's attempt (like Hegel's) to disclose universal cognitive structures. What follows reconstructs chapter 6's

"argument." Or, to put this in Derridean terms, it describes *différance*.

Most fundamentally, when I reflect upon my self, I must turn away from things (the "natural" object of perception) and turn my self into an object for me. This turn, however, implies that the self which views does not see its self. Returning as opposed, I do not return as identical, but as different. The self which I am *now* cannot be found in the returning self which I *was*; there is an interval, a *space*, between the "now" self and the past self. Because the returning self lacks the *now* self, I must try again to add my self on. I have to supplement what is not present: myself. Thus, the returning self is *less* than me; yet, the now self is *more* than me. Every attempt to add my now self on only turns out an other self, a self which I am now but was not, and so on. Exhausting *my* efforts at complete self-understanding, the infinity of the relation calls for a infinite supplement: language.

The irreducible "intertwining" of language with visual (and thus silent) auto-affection, which Derrida stresses at the close of chapter 6, makes the transition to chapter 7, which is devoted to language. Because language, for Husserl, is iterable (meanings as well as phonemes and graphemes), language, too, is infinite or indefinite. Language transcends any singular use of it; after my death language remains. Thus, each attempt (by me or by any finite subject) to understand the totality of language will be incomplete. Language is always *more* than itself; language, however, is always *less* than itself. Each *time* I hear or speak, read, or write, I produce a *new* language which the *past* linguistic system lacks. This other language needs to be understood as well, and so on. Thus, the conclusions of *Speech and Phenomena*'s sixth and seventh chapters respectively are: the self is always more and less than itself; language is always more and less than itself. A certain indecision (more and/or less) always remains. The relation can never saturate itself; it *metaphorizes* the self and language without end.[11]

Stressing the *inadequacy* of the every self and linguistic relation, *Speech and Phenomena*'s argument forms the basis of that of "White Mythology" (and that of "The Pit and the Pyramid"). Thought and language are simultaneously similar to and different from that upon which they reflect. Simultaneity implies that thought and language are constituted by traces, minimal unities that are always more and/or less than

themselves. A trace is a universal transforming itself through singular instantiations. The trace's "operation" (*différance*) is even, according to Derrida, better understood on the basis of the trope, catachresis, the forced extension of a term (MAR, 255–57/304–07).

2

"White Mythology's" third and fourth sections attempt "to verify" the law of supplementarity "in several 'examples'" (MAR, 229/273). In the verification, Derrida focuses on two types of examples: examples of discourses on metaphor and examples of metaphor within each discourse. The first, primary, and primordial discourse on metaphor, however, is that of Aristotle, within which the entire history of rhetoric unfolds. The first, primary and primordial example of a metaphor is that of the sun, a metaphor that looks back to Plato and ahead to Hegel. Instead of following the exact division between "White Mythology's" third and fourth sections, "The Ellipsis of the Sun" and "The Flowers of Rhetoric," I am first going to reconstruct from them Derrida's analysis of Aristotle's discourse on metaphor. Then I am going to assemble Derrida's two analyses—one from each section—of Aristotle's solar examples.

At the opening of "The Ellipsis of the Sun," Derrida says that "There is a code or a program—a rhetoric if you will—for every discourse on metaphor" (MAR, 231/275). Obeying this code, Derrida recalls Aristotle's famous definition of metaphor and focuses on its location within Aristotle's *Poetics*. The definition arises within a discussion of *lexis*. *Lexis* is defined by the name (*onoma*), which has the purpose of signifying something. This placement, according to Derrida, links Aristotelian metaphor to the disclosure of meaning and reference, to the disclosure of "an independent being identical to itself, intended as such." As Derrida says, "It is at this point that the theory of the name, such as it is implied by the concept of metaphor, is articulated with ontology" (MAR, 237/282).

To demonstrate the connection between Aristotelian metaphor and ontology, Derrida expands the definition's context again. The discussion of *lexis* takes place within a discourse on mimesis, which "is never

without the *theoretical* perception of resemblance or similarity (*homoio-sis*)." Because of the link to mimesis, metaphor belongs to *logos* as "the possibility of meaning and truth in discourse" (MAR, 237/282-83). Expanding the context yet again, Derrida points out that the *Poetics* opens with a discussion of poetry's and thus mimesis' origin: nature. Being a special science, the study of nature (*physis*) is determined by the study of being *qua* being; nature's basic principle, *dynamis* and *energeia*, is one of the multiple ways being is said. Thus bound to nature, metaphor belongs "to the great immobile chain of Aristotelian ontology, with its theory of the analogy of being, its logic, its epistemology..." (MAR, 236/281, 244/291).

In "White Mythology" Derrida does not interpret Aristotle's ontology; concerning the analogy of being, Derrida merely refers to Aubenque (MAR, 244n45/291n31). Nevertheless, it is well-known from *Metaphysics* book IV that the so-called analogical unity describes a relation of reference to "one thing" (*pros hen*). The multiplicity of ontological principles refer to the presence, unity, and identity of *ousia* (substance).[12] The diversity of being's appearance are based in *ousia* (as *hypokeimenon*); nature's movement must actualize it (as *energeia*). Everything, for Aristotle begins and ends in unity. As he says in book IV, "it is impossible to think of anything if we do not think of one thing (*me noounta hen*)." Because Aristotle's ontology is based in *ousia* and because his ontology determines his metaphorology, Aristotle must, according to Derrida, privilege the proper over the metaphorical (MAR, 244/291).

Most of the discussion in "The Flowers of Rhetoric" concerns the Aristotelian notion of propriety. For Aristotle, according to Derrida, both metaphor and the proper (*idion* or *kurion*) concern what can be said about a being, an individual or concrete subject (MAR, 249/297, cf. 237/282–83). The *Topics* implies, according to Derrida, that both propriety and metaphor are possible because a concrete subject or individual is capable of several predicates or properties which can be extracted and exchanged (MAR, 247/295, 249/297). The proper is an exchange regulated by the identity of the essence. Any predicate that can be attributed to the subject without contradicting its essence is proper and true. While humanity, for example, is the essence of Socrates, it is proper to say that

Socrates has *logos*. The essence (or essential predicate) and the proper predicates exist in a "an element of quasi-synonymy" (MAR, 249/297). In other words, while saying something different from essence, the proper does not destroy the unity of the essence. By saying something different, in a way it says identity, the one, the unique or singular essence (the genus or species) and thing. The proper says essence immediately.

In contrast, metaphor extracts a property belonging to one essence in order to attribute it to a subject of another essence (or genus or species). Metaphor does not attribute predicates to a subject in a quasi-synonymous way; it predicates equivocally. It is improper or metaphorical to say that Socrates is a plant (*phutos*) (cf. MAR, 249/296). Metaphor then, in a way, destroys the unity of the subject's essence by not saying the same. Metaphor says essence twice. Therefore, metaphor does not "directly, fully, and properly [state] essence itself"; it does not immediately bring "to light the truth of the thing itself" (MAR, 249/297). Nevertheless, metaphor makes manifest, for Aristotle, a thing's properties by means of resemblance.

Because of metaphor's mediate capacity to reveal a thing, "analogy is metaphor par excellence" for Aristotle (MAR, 242/289). Analogy makes explicit the mediating exchanges that produce metaphors. In an analogy, according to Derrida, "all the terms...are present or presentable. One can always convene four members, two by two, a kind of family whose relationships are evident and whose names are known" (MAR, 242/289). If all the terms can be presented, then the substitutions can be reversed, and propriety reestablished. If all metaphors are elliptical analogies, then metaphors can always be converted back to analogy and thus to propriety's immediacy. Derrida points to the necessity of this conversion when he cites Aristotle's famous criticism of Plato's use of metaphors (MAR, 238/284). Even if metaphors provide knowledge through resemblance, Aristotle always prefers the proper and univocal discourse of philosophy (MAR, 247–48/295–96).

Aristotle's privilege of analogical metaphor brings us to Derrida's analysis of the first solar example (in "The Ellipsis of the Sun"). In the *Poetics*, Aristotle recognizes that analogies are sometime inventive; a term in an analogy might be missing. If a term is anonymous, then it must, as Derrida says, "be supplemented" (MAR, 242/289). Aristotle

provides the example of the sun's generating power, for which no word exists. By comparing the sun's power to the casting forth of seeds, the poet, however, can say "sowing around a god-created flame." Although the terms present (the sun, the rays, the act of sowing, the seed) seem to be proper names with fixed meanings and referents, the metaphor implies otherwise. Because the sun's power lacks a proper name, the sun's essence has never been disclosed without mediation, in complete presence. The disseminating sun metaphor, which Derrida calls "an ellipsis of an ellipsis," implies absence. The sun—the "original, unique, and irreplaceable" referent—seems to have been already elided.

Through the second solar example (discussed in "The Flowers of Rhetoric") we can explicate exactly why the sun needs supplementation. In the *Topics* (V, 3, 131b20–30), Aristotle states that a debating opponent can be defeated by "seeing whether he has rendered a property of the kind whose presence is not obvious except by sensation." He goes on to say that when a sensory attribute passes outside the range of sensation, it becomes obscure. It is impossible to know whether it still exists because we know about it only by sensation. Due to the thing's always possible absence, the predication of any attribute to it is incorrect. Anyone who says that the sun is "the brightest star that moves about the earth" has spoken incorrectly or improperly, "for," Aristotle says, "it will not be manifest, when the sun sets, whether it is still moving above the earth, because sensation then fails." Derrida makes the following comment on the passage from the *Topics*:

> The sensory in general does not limit knowledge for reasons that are intrinsic to the *form of presence* of the sensory thing; but first of all because the *aistheton* can always not present itself, can hide itself, absent itself. It does not yield upon command, and its presence is not to be mastered. Now, from this point of view, the sun is the sensory object par excellence. It is the paradigm of the sensory *and* of metaphor: it regularly turns (itself) and hides (itself). (MAR, 250/299)

In order to clarify this passage, we need to extract a series of points from Derrida's analysis of Aristotelian temporality.[13]

"Ousia and Grammé's" analysis (MAR, 58/67, 61/71) begins with Aristotle's well-known "enigma of the now" (*Physics* IV, 10–13). The "now," as Aristotle says, seems to be always "other and other" and yet remains one and the same (218a10). If the now is like this, can we really say that time *is*? Aristotle solves this *aporia* by interpreting the now as an accident that supervenes upon the essence of time (MAR 61/70–1). Time's division into parts, the "before" and the "after," is an affectation. Its division into numbers is foreign (*allothi*) to time.[14] For Aristotle, there is no essential pause or gap disrupting time's continuity. The "other and other" of time never destroys the "same and same" of time. The now or the present as continuous substratum is; the now as division or limit is not. The now possesses "points," for Aristotle, only insofar as these points always turn into what has no divisions, no beginning and end. The line must turn into a circle. Thus, the *physis* of time, which is *physis* itself, is *dynamis* directed towards *energeia*, potentiality actualizing itself in the present, in the one (MAR, 52/59).

As Derrida points out, however, Aristotle's descriptions of the *physis* of time are descriptions of *aisthesis*, of sensation or experience. Because Aristotle separates temporal movement fron local motion or exterior movement, *aisthesis* here means inner experience (a sort of proto-reflection or auto-affection) (MAR, 48–9/54–5, cf. 43/47). By turning inward, time is discovered to be psychical "movement" (cf. 218b21–219a). Psychical "movement" is not strictly movement because it cannot consist of coexisting places or points in space. In temporal "movement," nows cannot coexist. If past nows would coexist with the same present now—like points in a line—then "things which happened ten thousand years ago would be simultaneous with what has happened today." Lack of coexistence or simultaneity implies that the now is always different, "other and other." Temporal succession always and absolutely implies this lack.

Derrida stresses, however, a "correspondence" between time and space. Time must be like space because the sameness of the "now" would make no sense without coexistence (MAR, 54–5/62–3). The "now" could not *remain* the same unless it returned in an other now. No present could exist without a certain simultaneity or without something like spatial coexistence. Thus, the now demands the supplement of a

"between" *two* nows.[15] According to Derrida, Aristotle's use of the adverb *hama* (simultaneous), a locution which is neither temporal nor spatial, indicates this "synthesis" of same and other. "*Hama*," according to Derrida, "says the dyad as the minimum" (MAR, 56/65). Thus, "Ousia and Grammé's" analysis shows that a sensory or aesthetic object is always divided and "synthesized" by time. Simultaneous temporalization and spatialization—différance—put the two before the one.[16]

To return from "Ousia and Grammé" to the passage cited from "White Mythology," we can see now that the sun as "the paradigm of the sensory" indicates that nature is a sort of trace (*gramma*). The turning and hiding of the sun implies that the sensory thing is always differentiating itself as and in the now, dividing and duplicating itself as other than itself. Like Hegelian reflection, the "aesthetic synthesis" generates the sensory thing as a nonadequate self-relation. The sensory thing "is" always more than itself and/or less than itself: less than itself because the catalogue of properties lacks the properties it possesses now; more than itself because now the sensory thing possesses properties that it did not have. Because of the sensory thing's indecision, it is not a unique, unified, and identical referent; it lacks substantial continuity. Lacking substantial continuity, being is not analogical, but metaphorical, or better, homonymic.[17]

The phrase, "the sun is the paradigm of metaphor," implies one of "Plus de métaphore's" claims: the metaphoricity of all discourse, including philosophical discourse. Because every metaphor must include a sensory element (its vehicle), every metaphor can be understood only by consulting "the Idea, paradigm, or parabola of the sensory," the sun. Every metaphor then must be in some way a heliotrope (some sort of sunflower)—but also must every concept. Philosophical discourse is constituted by terms and oppositions with sensuous referents, terms such as *phainesthai, aletheia,* etc., oppositions such as the visible and the invisible, appearing and disappearing, presence and absence. All these basic terms' and oppositions' senses derive from the sun, its light and movement. Thus, as Derrida says, philosophy's "natural" language "should always lead back to *physis* as a solar system, or, more precisely, to a certain story of the relationship earth/sun in the system of perception" (MAR, 251/299). Yet, this most natural, normal, literal story must

be metaphorical because "...each time there is sun, metaphor has begun" (MAR, 251/300).

3

The first two steps of this reading have brought us to two different conclusions by means of two routes. The first conclusion, which we see in Derrida's discussion of both Hegel and Aristotle, is critical. At the specific level of language, the law of supplementarity demonstrates that there is no nonmetaphorical place from which to designate metaphor. The relation by which one moves from metaphorical discourse to a rhetorical or philosophical discourse is itself tropical. The movement produces another metaphor for which the metadiscourse did not and cannot account. Philosophical domination of metaphor (univocity) is a pretense. Similarly, because the term *metaphor* is a philosopheme, rhetorical domination of philosophy (rhetoric as non- or anti-philosophy) is a pretense.

At the most general level (again in both Hegel and Aristotle), the law of supplementarity implies that thought and being are constituted by an inadequate relation. Because of reflection's irreducible temporal character, auto-affection produces another instance of the concept, for which the concept did not and cannot account. Because of its irreducible temporal character, sensation produces another property which the sensory thing did not possess. The self and the sensory thing are divided and duplicated; the self and sensory thing are always more and less than themselves. Thus, thought and being are always marked by indecision.

If we focus on the most general level, we can see the second consequence based in the first two steps. Derrida has generalized metaphor beyond its traditional limits. Derrida states this generalization explicitly at the close of "White Mythology's" last section where he speaks of two self-destructions of metaphor. The first self-destruction is based in the metaphysical determination of metaphor. Exemplified by Aristotle and Hegel, metaphysics defines metaphor as continuity. So defined, metaphor can always be elevated into a concept or into the proper. As

the last section's title, "La métaphysique—relève de la métaphore," indi-
cates, the elevation (*relève*) of metaphor is metaphysics. The second
self-destruction destroys the metaphysical determination of metaphor.
Metaphor, for Derrida, happens everywhere; thus, the "reassuring"
opposition between the metaphorical and the proper is "exploded"
(MAR, 270/323). Not opposed to the proper or the conceptual,
metaphor must be understood as supplementarity, thanks to which
thought and being themselves are discontinuous from themselves. The
discontinuity of the relation implies that Derrida has reinscribed
metaphor as catachresis or homonymy.[18]

4

Because we have attempted to provide a relatively independent reading
of "White Mythology," certain points related to Ricoeur's "Eighth
Study" were only noted in passing. These points must now be stressed
in order to anticipate the polemic. First, Derrida's premise that
metaphor remains a metaphysical concept arises out of Heidegger.[19] In a
footnote appended to the Hegel discussion (MAR, 226n29/269n19),
Derrida mentions Heidegger's connection of metaphor with meta-
physics in *Der Satz vom Grund*. Heidegger "distrusts" the concept of
metaphor because the sensory/nonsensory opposition determines it.
Derrida agrees that this metaphysical opposition is "important" for
understanding the concept of metaphor, but he goes on to say that it is
"neither the only, nor the first, nor the most determining characteristic
of the value of metaphor." Indeed unlike Heidegger who rejects the con-
cept of metaphor, Derrida reinscribes it otherwise, as catachresis and
homonymy.

What does Derrida mean by metaphysics in the first premise? In
"White Mythology," Derrida not only connects Aristotle's definition of
metaphor to his metaphysics, but also, by means of the solar examples,
connects Aristotle's metaphysics to that of Plato (cf. MAR, 242/289).
Then, in "White Mythology's" final section, the sun metaphor is con-
nected to Descartes, Hegel, and Husserl (MAR, 266/318). Because of
these solar connections, the entire history of metaphysics, according to

Derrida, forms a system. The same system, however, organizes the entire history of rhetoric as well. Because DuMarsais and Fontanier (the leading figures in traditional French rhetoric) virtually repeat Aristotle's definition of metaphor, rhetoric, for Derrida, unfolds within the history of metaphysics. As Derrida says, all metaphor theory belongs "to a more general syntax, to a more extended system that equally constrains Platonism; everything is illuminated by this system's sun, the sun of absence and of presence, blinding and luminous, dazzling" (MAR, 267/319). Thus, as is well-known, for Derrida, the tradition, "as much philosophical as rhetorical" (MAR, 229/273), defines being as presence (MAR, 266/317–18). Derrida's definition, of course, derives from Heidegger's *Being and Time* notion of *Vorhandenheit*.[20]

Derrida's contention that the tradition forms a general syntax must be read, however, in conjunction with the style Derrida adopts in "White Mythology." Although "White Mythology" can be reconstructed according to Derrida's almost classical formulation of deconstruction, "White Mythology" is not written in the style of Derrida's 1967 texts. Instead of possessing a developmental, argumentative structure (like *Speech and Phenomena* or *Of Grammatology*), "White Mythology" is convoluted. This is the case because here Derrida first attempts to elaborate "a new delimitation of bodies of work and of a new problematic of the signature" (MAR, 231/275, cf. 216–15/257, 254–55/304, 265–68/317–20). This new delimitation is based on Derrida's earlier insight into the notion of tradition. In his 1962 *Introduction to Husserl's The Origin of Geometry*, Derrida discovered that tradition consists of an irreducible unity of fact and essence.[21] This unity, from which supplementarity, différance, and dissemination will spring, implies that tradition is neither linear nor circular, but zigzag. Thus, Derrida's style in "White Mythology," especially in the last three sections, attempts to "write" the zigzag. In fact, if Derrida is "writing" the zigzags of tradition, then all the French structuralist oppositions Derrida uses in "White Mythology," *langue* (or system) and *parole*, substitution and combination, code and message, paradigm and syntagm, synchrony and diachrony, syntax and semantics, have been reinterpreted according to the unity of essence and fact.

In connection with Derrida's "zigzagging"—*zigzagging* defines the way Derrida reinscribes and perverts certain terms against the tradi-

tion's system—we must now stress Derrida's recognition that the philosophical tradition defines metaphorization as *usure* (wearing away, as in the wearing away of a coin's exergue). Derrida's discussion of *usure* takes place mainly in the "Exergue," but he also recalls this notion in his Hegel discussion in "Plus de métaphore." Within the tradition, *usure* presupposes, according to Derrida, that a continuous kernel of sense underlies the transition from literal to figurative to concept (cf. MAR, 215/256). According to the tradition then, metaphorization is simply concept formation. Concepts overcome the difference or eliminate the relation between the literal and the figurative. Connected to metaphysics, *usure*'s continuist presupposition implies, for Derrida, that concepts elevate and absorb metaphor just as the intelligible elevates and absorbs the sensible (cf. MAR, 226/269).

In the *Aesthetics*, Hegel connects *usure* (*Abnutzung*) to the traditional distinction between live and dead metaphors (MAR, 225–26/269). The live/dead distinction, according to Derrida, implies that metaphoricity resides in the consciousness of it. In order for a term to function metaphorically, to be alive, one must recognize a relation between the literal and figurative senses. As Hegel stresses, after the literal sense has been erased, it occurs to no one to take *begreifen* as to grasp by the hand. *Begreifen* contains no recognizable tension. Concepts are dead (used up) metaphors and not true (live) metaphors.

The continuist interpretation of *usure* also implies, for Derrida, etymologism. Through usage, metaphors "abstract" terms from their "native soil" without "extraction" (cf. MAR, 215/256). Lacking division from (or possessing resemblance with) their original meanings, terms then can always be traced back to their *etymon*. In the "Exergue" Derrida cites passages from Anatole France's dialogue *In the Garden of Epicurus* where the interlocutors decipher the original meanings of metaphysical terms. Later (in "The Flowers of Rhetoric") Derrida himself notes that "metaphora" and "epiphora" in Aristotle's definition of metaphor signify not only linguistic transportation but also "a movement of spatial translation." "Genos" signifies not only a classificatory category, but also "an affiliation, the base of a birth, of an origin, of a family" (MAR, 252–53/301–02).

As we saw, in "White Mythology" Derrida opposes the metaphysi-

cal domination of the phenomena of metaphor and reinscribes metaphor; he does the same with *usure*. The domination of the phenomena of *usure* takes place through its continuist interpretation, and through the notions connected to this interpretation, the location of metaphoricity only in the conscious recognition of it and etymologism (cf. MAR, 253/302). Derrida opposes *usure*'s domination with the law of supplementarity, which implies, as we have seen, an irreducible difference or discontinuity within the same linguistic element and within the same sensible thing (and within the self). It implies an irreducible, divided relation. Being irreducible, division takes place even when we are unaware of it; the live/dead distinction is irrelevant. Defined by division, difference, and discontinuity, metaphorization and *usure* are reinscribed as catachresis or homonymy, neither of which relate etymologically (or by resemblance) to their bases (cf. MAR, 253/302). Because catachresis, homonymy, and the law of supplementarity imply discontinuity, metaphorization and *usure* are, for Derrida, equal to "a displacement with breaks,... reinscriptions in a heterogeneous system, mutations, doublings (*écarts*) without origin" (MAR, 215/256).