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MARGINS of Philosophy

Translated, with
Additional Notes,
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White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy

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Exergue[1]

From philosophy, rhetoric. That is, here, to make from a volume, approximately, more or less, a flower, to extract a flower, to mount it, or rather to have it mount itself, bring itself to light—and turning away, as if from itself, come round again, such a flower engraves—learning to cultivate, by means of a lapidary's reckoning, patience . . .

Metaphor *in* the text of philosophy. Certain that we understand each word of this phrase, rushing to understand—to inscribe—a figure in the volume capable of philosophy, we might prepare to treat a particular question: is there metaphor in the text of philosophy? in what form? to what extent? is it essential? accidental? etc. Our certainty soon vanishes: metaphor seems to involve the usage of philosophical language in its entirety, nothing less than the usage of so-called natural language *in* philosophical discourse, that is, the usage of natural language *as* philosophical language.

In sum, the question demands a book: of philosophy, of the *usage* or of the good usage of philosophy. And it is in our interest that the involvement promises more than it gives. Thus we will content ourselves with a chapter, and for usage we will substitute—subtitle—*usure.*[2] And first we will be interested in a certain *usure* of metaphorical force in philosophical exchange. *Usure* does not overtake a tropic energy otherwise destined to remain intact; on the contrary, it constitutes the very history and structure of the philosophical metaphor.

How can we make this *sensible*[3] except by metaphor? which is here the word *usure.* In effect, there is no access to the usure of a linguistic phenomenon without giving it some figurative representation. What could be the *properly named usure* of a word, a statement, a meaning, a text?

1. TN. *Exergue* derives from the Greek *ex-ergon,* literally "outside the work." In French and English it has a specifically numismatic sense, referring to the space on a coin or medal reserved for an inscription. In French it also has the sense of an epigraph, of something "outside the work." This combination of meanings—the coin, the inscription, the space, the epigraph, the "outside"—disseminates (in the "technical" sense understood by Derrida) its effects over this entire section of "White Mythology." See also note 2 below.

2. TN. *Usure* in French means both usury, the acquisition of too much interest, and using up, deterioration through usage. The *exergue,* then, is to explain why the subtitle of "White Mythology" is an economic term that inscribes an irreducible effect of both profit and loss. Thus, the preceding sentences noted that it is in our *interest* ("profitable") that involvement with metaphor *promises mow than it gives,* i.e. is not profitable, leads to loss. For Derrida, the "general economy" is the one that shows how metaphysics's eternal attempt to *profit* from its ventures is based upon an irreducible *loss,* an "expenditure without reserve" without which there could be no idea of profit. Thus, this essay inscribes the concept of metaphor in the general economy. On all these questions see "From Restricted to General Economy," in *Writing and Difference.*

3. TN. As always Derrida is playing on the double meaning of *sensible* here, i.e. that which is related to the senses and that which is nonsensory, meaningful in an "abstract" way. Throughout this essay I have inflected the translation of *sensible,* often giving it as *sensory.*

Let us take all the risk of unearthing an example (and merely an example, as a frequent type), of this metaphor of (the) *usure* (of metaphor), the ruining of the figure, in *The Garden of Epicurus.* As the exergue to this chapter, let us remark, the metaphor borrowed from Anatole France—the philosophical *usure* of this figure—also, by chance, describes the active erosion of an exergue.

Almost at the end of the *Garden of Epicurus*[4] a short dialogue between Aristos and Polyphilos is subtitled "or the language of metaphysics." The two interlocutors are exchanging views, indeed, on the sensory figure which is sheltered and used (up), to the point of appearing imperceptible, in every metaphysical concept. Abstract notions always hide a sensory figure. And the history of metaphysical language is said to be confused with the erasure of the efficacity of the sensory figure and the *usure* of its effigy. The word itself is not pronounced, but one may decipher the double import of *usure:* erasure by rubbing, exhaustion, crumbling away, certainly; but also the supplementary product of a capital, the exchange which far from losing the original investment would fructify its initial wealth, would increase its return in the form of revenue, additional interest, linguistic surplus value, the two histories of the meaning of the word remaining indistinguishable. "Polyphilos: It was just a reverie. I was thinking how the Metaphysicians, when they make a language for themselves, are like [image, comparison, a figure in order to signify figuration] knife-grinders, who instead of knives and scissors, should put medals and coins to the grindstone to efface the exergue, the value and the head. When they have worked away till nothing is visible in their crown-pieces, neither King Edward, the Emperor William, nor the Republic, they say: 'These pieces have nothing either English, German or French about them; we have freed them from all limits of time and space; they are not worth five shillings any more; they are of an inestimable value, and their exchange value is extended indefinitely.' They are right in speaking thus. By this needy knife-grinder's activity words are changed from a physical to a metaphysical acceptation. It is obvious that they lose in the process; what they gain by it is not so immediately apparent" (pp. 194-95).

The issue here is not to capitalize on this reverie but to watch the configuration of our problem, along with its theoretical and historical conditions, take shape by means of the logic implicit in this text. There are at least two limits: (1) Polyphilos seems anxious to save the integrity of capital, or rather, before the accumulation of capital, to save the natural wealth and original virtue of the sensory image, which is deflowered and deteriorated by the history of the concept. Thereby he supposes—and this is a classical motif, a commonplace of the eighteenth century—that a purity of sensory language could have been in circulation at the origin of language, and that the *etymon* of a primitive sense always

4. *The Garden of Epicurus* by Anatole France, trans. Alfred Allinson (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1923). All further references are to this edition. It also contains a kind of reverie on the figures of the alphabet, the original forms of certain letters ("How I discoursed one night with an apparition on the first origins of the alphabet").

remains determinable, however hidden it may be; (2) this etymologism interprets degradation as the passage from the physical to the metaphysical. Thus, he uses a completely philosophical opposition, which also has its own history, and its own metaphorical history, in order to determine what the philosopher might be doing, unwittingly, with metaphors.

The rest of the dialogue confirms this: it examines, precisely, the possibility of restoring or reactivating, beneath the metaphor which simultaneously hides and is hidden, the "original figure" of the coin which has been worn away (*usé*), effaced, and polished in the circulation of the philosophical concept. Should one not always have to speak of the ef-*face*ment of an original figure, if it did not by itself efface itself?

"All these words, whether defaced by usage, or polished smooth, or even coined expressly in view of constructing some intellectual concept, yet allow us to frame some idea to ourselves of what they originally represented. So chemists have reagents whereby they can make the effaced writing of a papyrus or a parchment visible again. It is by these means palimpsests are deciphered.

"If an analogous process were applied to the writings of the metaphysicians, if the primitive and concrete meaning that lurks yet present under the abstract and new interpretations were brought to light, we should come upon some very curious and perhaps instructive ideas" (pp. 201-2).

The primitive meaning, the original, and always sensory and material, figure ("The vocabulary of mankind was framed from sensuous images, and this sensuousness is to be found . . . even in the technical terms concocted by metaphysicians . . . fatal materialism inherent in the vocabulary," p. 201) is not exactly a metaphor. It is a kind of transparent figure, equivalent to a literal meaning (sens *propre).* It becomes a metaphor when philosophical discourse puts it into circulation. Simultaneously the first meaning and the first displacement are then forgotten. The metaphor is no longer noticed, and it is taken for the proper meaning. A double effacement. Philosophy would be this process of metaphorization which gets carried away in and of itself. Constitutionally, philosophical culture will always have been an obliterating one.

And this is an economic rule: in order to reduce the labor of rubbing, metaphysicians prefer to choose the most worn out *(use)* words from natural language: "they go out of their way to choose for polishing such words as come to them a bit obliterated already. In this way, they save themselves a good half of the labor. Sometimes they are luckier still, and put their hands on words which, by long and universal use, have lost from time immemorial all trace whatever of an effigy" (p. 199). And reciprocally we are unwitting metaphysicians in proportion to the *usure* of our words. Polyphilos cannot avoid the extreme case, although he does not see it as a problem or treat it thematically—the *absolute usure* of a sign. What is this? And is not this loss—that is, this unlimited surplus-value—what the metaphysician systematically prefers, for example in his choice of concepts in the negative, *absolute, in-finite, in-tangible, non-Being?* "In three

pages of Hegel, taken at random, in his *Phenomenology* [a book quite infrequently cited in the French university of 1900, it appears], out of six and twenty words, the subjects of important sentences, I found nineteen negative terms as against seven affirmatives . . . These *abs* and *ins* and *nons* are more effective than any grindstone in planing down. At a stroke they make the most rugged words smooth and characterless. Sometimes, it is true, they merely twist them round for you and turn them upside down" (pp. 196–97). Beyond the jest, the relation between metaphorization, which takes off on its own, and negative concepts remains to be examined. For in dissolving any finite determination, negative concepts break the tie that binds them to the meaning of any particular being, that is, to the totality of what is. Thereby they suspend their apparent metaphoricity. (Later we will give a better definition of the problem of negativity, when we can recognize the connivance between the Hegelian *relève*[5]—the *Aufhebung,* which is also the unity of loss and profit—and the philosophical concept of metaphor.) "Such is the general practice, so far as I have observed, of the metaphysicians—more correctly, the *Metataphysicians;* for it is another remarkable fact to add to the rest that your science itself has a negative name, one taken from the order in which the treatises of Aristotle were arranged, and that strictly speaking, you give yourselves the title: Those who come after the *Physicians.* I understand of course that you regard these, the physical books, as piled atop of each other, so that to come after is really to take place above. All the same, you admit this much, that you are outside of natural phenomena" (pp. 196–97).

Although the metaphysical metaphor has turned everything upside down, and although it has also erased piles of physical discourses, one always should be able to reactivate the primitive inscription and restore the palimpsest. Polyphilos indulges in this game. He extracts from a work which "reviews all systems one by one from the old Eleatics down to the latest Eclectics, and . . . ends up with M. Lachelier," a sentence of particularly abstract and speculative appearance: *"The spirit possesses God in proportion as it participates in the absolute"* (p. 193). Then he undertakes an etymological or philological work which is to reawaken all the sleeping figures. To do this, he concerns himself not with "how much truth the sentence contained," but only with its "verbal form." And after having specified that the words "God," "soul," "absolute," etc., are *symbols* and not *signs,* what is symbolized maintaining a tie of natural affinity with the symbol, and thus authorizing the etymological reactivation, (arbitrariness, thus, as Nietzsche also suggests, being only a degree of the *usure* of the symbolic), Polyphilos presents the results of his chemical operation:

"Wherefore I was on the right road when I investigated the meanings inherent in the words *spirit, God, absolute,* which are symbols and not signs.

" 'The spirit possesses God in proportion as it participates in the absolute.'

5. TN. On *relive,* see above, "La différance," note 23; "Ousia and Gramme," note 15; "The Pit and the Pyramid," note 16; and "The Ends of Man," note 14.

"What is this if not a collection of little symbols, much worn and defaced, I admit, symbols which have lost their original brilliance, and picturesqueness, but which still, by the nature of things, remain symbols? The image is reduced to the schema, but the schema is still the image. And I have been able, without sacrificing fidelity, to substitute one for the other. In this way I have arrived at the following.

" 'The *breath is seated on the shining one in the bushel of the part it takes in what is altogether loosed* (or *subtle*),' whence we easily get as a next step: *'He whose breath is a sign of life, man, that is, will find a place* (no doubt after the breath has been exhaled) *in the divine fire, source and home of life, and this place will be meted out to him according to the virtue that has been given him* (by the demons, I imagine) *of sending abroad this warm breath, this little invisible soul, across the free expanse* (the blue of the sky, most likely).'

"And now observe, the phrase has acquired quite the ring of some fragment of a Vedic hymn, and smacks of ancient Oriental mythology. I cannot answer for having restored this primitive myth in full accordance with the strict laws governing language. But no matter for that. Enough if we are seen to have found symbols and a myth in a sentence that was essentially symbolic and mythical, inasmuch as it was metaphysical.

"I think I have at last made you realize one thing, Aristos, that any expression of an abstract idea can only be an analogy. By an odd fate, the very metaphysicians who think to escape the world of appearances are constrained to live perpetually in allegory. A sorry lot of poets, they dim the colours of the ancient fables, and are themselves but gatherers of fables. They produce white mythology" (pp. 213-14 [translation modified; the last sentence reads: "Their output is mythology, an anemic mythology"]).

A formula—brief, condensed, economical, almost mute—has been deployed in an interminably explicative discourse, displaying itself like a pedagogue, with the derisive effect always produced by the prolix and gesticulating translation of an oriental ideogram. Parody of the translator, naiveté of the metaphysician or of the pitiful peripatetic who does not recognize his own figure and does not know where it has marched him to.

Metaphysics—the white mythology which reassembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own *logos,* that is, the *mythos* of his idiom, for the universal form of that he must still wish to call Reason. Which does not go uncontested. Aristos *(Ariste),* the defender of metaphysics (a typographical error will have imprinted in the title *Artiste),* finishes by *leaving,* determined to break off dialogue with a cheater: "I leave unconvinced. If only you had reasoned by the rules, I could have rebutted your arguments quite easily" (p. 215).

White mythology—metaphysics has erased within itself the fabulous scene that has produced it, the scene that nevertheless remains active and stirring, inscribed in white ink, an invisible design covered over in the palimpsest.

This dissymmetrical—false—dialogue does not deserve its position as exergue only because it is striking; or because in striking reason no less than the imagination, it engraves our problem in a theatrical effigy. There are other justifications. Very schematically:

1. Polyphilos' propositions seem to belong to a configuration whose historical and theoretical distribution, whose limits, interior divisions, and gaps remain to be interpreted. Guided by the question of rhetoric, such an interpretation would require examination of the texts of Renan[6] and Nietzsche[7] (who both, as philologists, recalled what they considered to be the metaphorical origin of concepts, and most notably of the concept which seems to support literal, proper meaning, the propriety of the proper, Being), as well as those of Freud,[8] Bergson,[9] and Lenin,[10] all of whom, in their attentiveness to metaphorical activity in theoretical or philosophical discourse, proposed or practiced the multiplication of antagonistic metaphors in order better to control or neutralize their effect. The efflorescence of historical linguistics in the nineteenth century does not suffice to explain the interest in the metaphorical sedimentation of concepts. And it goes without saying that the configuration of the motifs has no linear chronological or historical limit. The names we have just associated show this clearly, and the cleavages to be defined or maintained, moreover, occur within discourses

6. See e.g. *De l'origine du langage* (1848), in *Oeuvres completes,* vol. 8, chap. 5.

7. See, for example, "Philosophy During the Tragic Age of the Greeks," in *Early Greek Philosophy,* trans. Maximilian Mugge (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964).

8. See e.g. Breuer's and Freud's texts in the *Studies in Hysteria (Standard Edition* II, 227-28, 288–90); or further, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious (SE* VIII, 210–11); *Beyond the Pleasure Principle (SE* XVIII, end of chap. 6); *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis (SE* XVI, 295; on the metaphor of the antichamber); *The Question of Lay Analysis (SE* XX, 187-88). Moreover, concerning the intervention of rhetorical schemes in psychoanalytic discourse, naturally I refer to Lacan's *Ecrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966; see the "Index raisonné des concepts majeure," by J. A. Miller); to Benveniste, "Remarks on the Function of Language in Freudian Discovery," in *Problems in General Linguistics,* trans. Mary E. Meek (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971); and to Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbance," in Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague: Mouton, 1956).

9. See e.g. "Introduction a la métaphysique," in *La pensee et le mouvant* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1946), p. 185.

10. In his *Notebooks (Collected Works,* vol. 38 [London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1961]) on Hegel's dialectics, Lenin most often defines the relation of Marx to Hegel as an "overturning" (head over heels), but also as a "decapitation" (the Hegelian system minus everything that governs it: the absolute, the Idea, God, etc.), or further as the development of a "germ" or a "seed," and even as the "peeling" which proceeds from the skin to the pit, etc.

On the question of metaphor in the reading of Marx, and in a Marxist problematic in general, see, notably, Louis Althusser, *For Marx,* trans. Ben Brewster (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), part 3, "Contradiction and Overdetermination"; Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital,* trans. Ben Brewster (London, 1970), pp. 24, 121n., 187ff.; Althusser, "Les appareils idéologiques d'Etat," in *La pensée,* no. 151 (June 1970), pp. 7-9; and Jean-Joseph Goux, "Numismatiques" 1, II, in *Tel Quel* 35-36.

signed by a single name. A new determination of the unity of bodies of work has to precede or accompany the elaboration of these questions.

2. To read within a concept the hidden history of a metaphor is to privilege *diachrony* at the expense of system, and is also to invest in the *symbolist* conception of language that we have pointed out in passing: no matter how deeply buried, the link of the signifier to the signified has had both to be and to remain a link of natural necessity, of analogical participation, of resemblance. Metaphor has always been defined as the trope of resemblance; not simply as the resemblance between a signifier and a signified but as the resemblance between two signs, one of which designates the other. This is the most general characteristic of metaphor, which is what authorizes us to group under this heading all the so-called *symbolical* or *analogical* figures mentioned by Polyphilos (figure, myth, fable, allegory). In this critique of philosophical language, to take an interest in metaphor—in this particular figure—is therefore also to take a symbolist stand. It is above all to take an interest in the nonsyntactic, nonsystematic pole of language, that is, to take an interest in semantic "depth," in the magnetic attraction of the similar, rather than in positional combinations, which we may call "metonymic" in the sense defined by Jakobson,[11] who indeed emphasizes the affinity between the predominance of the metaphorical, i.e. symbolism (as much, we would say, as a literary school as a linguistic conception)—and romanticism (as more historical, that is, historicist, and more hermeneutical). It goes without saying that far from belonging to this problematic and sharing its presuppositions, the question of metaphor, such as we are repeating it here, on the contrary should delimit them. However, the issue is not, symmetrically, to reaffirm what Polyphilos chooses as his target; it is rather to deconstruct the metaphysical and rhetorical schema at work in his critique, not in order to reject and discard them but to reinscribe them otherwise, and especially in order to begin to identify the historico-problematic terrain on which philosophy systematically has been asked for the metaphorical rubrics of its concepts.

3. The value of *usure* also has to be subjected to interpretation. It seems to have a systematic tie to the metaphorical perspective. It will be rediscovered wherever the theme of metaphor is privileged. And it is also a metaphor that implies a *continuist presupposition:* the history of a metaphor appears essentially not as a displacement with breaks, as reinscriptions in a heterogeneous system, mutations, separations without origin, but rather as a progressive erosion, a regular semantic loss, an uninterrupted exhausting of the primitive meaning: an empirical abstraction without extraction from its own native soil. Not that the enterprise of the authors cited is entirely covered by this presupposition, but, rather, the enterprise recurs to it every time it gives the metaphorical point of view the upper hand. This characteristic—the concept of *usure*—belongs not to a narrow historico-theoretical configuration, but more surely to the concept

11. "Two Aspects of Language," in *Fundamentals,* pp. 77-78.

of metaphor itself, and to the long metaphysical sequence that it determines or that determines it. We will be interested in this question as our point of departure.

4. In signifying the metaphorical process, the paradigms of coin, of metal, silver and gold, have imposed themselves with remarkable insistence. Before metaphor—an effect of language—could find its metaphor in an economic effect, a more general analogy had to organize the exchanges between the two "regions." The analogy within language finds itself represented by an analogy between language and something other than itself. But here, that which seems to "represent," to figure, is also that which opens the wider space of a discourse on figuration, and can no longer be contained within a regional or determined science, linguistics or philology.

Inscription on coinage is most often the intersection, the scene of the exchange between the linguistic and the economic. The two types of signifier supplement each other in the problematic of fetishism, as much in Nietzsche as in Marx.[12] And the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* organizes into a system the motifs of *usure,* of "coinage speaking different languages," of the relations between "differences in name" and "differences in shape," of the conversion of coinage into "gold *sans phrase,*" and reciprocally of the idealization of gold, which "becomes a symbol of itself and . . . cannot serve as a symbol of itself" ("nothing can be its own symbol," etc.).[13] The reference seems to be economic

12. See e.g. *Capital,* trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (New York: Dutton, 1972), book 1: "For this reason, likewise, the fetishistic character of commodities is comparatively easy to discern . . . Whence did the illusions of the monetary system arise? The mercantilists (the champions of the monetary system) regarded gold and silver, not simply as substances which, when functioning as money, represented a social relation of production, but as substances which were endowed by nature with peculiar social properties . . . If commodities could speak they would say . . . Now let us hear how the economist interprets the mind of the commodity" (pp. 57-58).

13. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,* trans. N. F. Stone (Chicago, 1904), pp. 139 and 145. We are only recalling these texts. In order to analyze them from the point of view that interests us here (the critique of etymologism, questions about the history and value of the proper—*idion, proprium, eigen),* it would be necessary to account for this fact particularly: Marx, along with several others (Plato, Leibniz, Rousseau, etc.), did not only criticize etymologism as an abuse, or as a kind of nonscientific meandering, the practice of poor etymology. His critique of etymologism chose the *proper* as its example. Here, we cannot cite the entire critique of Destutt de Tracy, who plays on the words *property* and *proper,* as "Stirner" did with *Mein* and *Meinung* (mine, my opinion; Hegel did this too), *Eigentum* and *Eigenheit* (property and individuality). We cite only the following passage, whose target is the reduction of economic science to the play of language, and the reduction of the stratified specificity of concepts to the imaginary unity of an *etymon:* "Above 'Stirner' refuted the communist abolition of private property by first transferring private property into 'having' and then declaring the verb 'to have' an indispensable word, an eternal truth, because even in communist society it could happen that Stirner will 'have' a stomach-ache. In exactly the same way he here bases the impossibility of abolishing private property by transferring it into the concept of property ownership, by exploiting the etymological connection between the words *Eigentum* (property) and *eigen* (proper, own), and declaring the word *eigen* an eternal truth because a stomach-ache will be *eigen* to him. All this theoretical nonsense, which seeks refuge in bad etymology, would be

and the metaphor linguistic. That Nietzsche also, at least apparently, inverses the course of the analogy is certainly not insignificant but must not dissimulate the common possibility of both the exchange and the terms: "What then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymics, anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which became poetically and rhetorically intensified, metamorphosed, adorned, and after long usage, seem to a nation fixed, canonic and binding; truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they *are* illusions; worn out metaphors which have become powerless to affect the senses (*die abgenützt und sinnlich kraftlos geworden sind),* coins which have their obverse (*Bild*) *effaced* and now are no longer of account as coins but merely as metal."[14]

If we were to accept a Saussurean distinction, we would say that here the question of metaphor derives from a theory of *value* and not only from a theory of *signification.* It is at the very moment when Saussure justifies this distinction that he posits a necessary intersection of the synchronic and diachronic axes for all sciences of value, but for these alone. He then elaborates the analogy between economics and linguistics: "that duality [between synchrony and diachony] is already forcing itself upon the economic sciences. Here, in contrast to the other sciences, political economy and economic history constitute two clearly separated disciplines within a single science . . . Proceeding as they have, economists are—without being aware of it—obeying an inner necessity. A similar necessity obliges us to divide linguistics into two parts, each with its own principle. Here as in political economy we are confronted with the notion of *value;* both sciences

impossible if the actual private property which the communists want to abolish had not been transformed into the abstract notion of 'property.' This transformation, on the one hand, saves one the trouble of having to say anything, or even merely to know anything about actual private property and, on the other hand, makes it easy to discover a contradiction in communism, since *after* the abolition of (*actual*) property it is, of course, easy to discover still all sorts of things which can be included in the term 'property.' " Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology,* ed. C. J. Arthur (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1965), part 2, "The Language of Property," p. 247. This critique—which opens, or leaves open, the questions of the "reality" of the proper, of the "abstraction" and the concept (not the general reality) of the proper—is continued further on, a propos of some remarkable examples: "For example, *propriété*—property *(Eigentum)* and feature *(Eigenschaft);* property—possession *(Eigentum)* and peculiarity (*Eigentümlichkeit*); *'eigen'* (one's own)—in the commercial and in the individual sense; *valeur,* value, *Wert* ('worth, value'); commerce, *Verkehr* ('intercourse,' 'traffic,' 'commerce'); *ichange, exchange, Austausch* ('exchange'), etc., all of which are used both for commercial relations and for features and mutual relations of individuals as such. In the other modern languages this is equally the case. If Saint Max seriously applies himself to exploit this ambiguity, he may easily succeed in making a brilliant series of new economic discoveries, without knowing anything about political economy; for, indeed, his new economic facts, which we shall take note of later, lie wholly within this sphere of synonymy" (ibid., p. 249).

14. Nietzsche, "On Truth and Falsity in their Ultramoral Sense," in *Complete Works of Nietzsche,* ed. D. Levy (London and Edinburgh, 1911), vol. 2, p. 180. This motif of the erasure, of the paling of the image, is also found in the *Traumdeutung (SE* IV, 43), but it does not determine the theory of metaphor in unequivocal or unilateral fashion any more in Freud than in Nietzsche.

are concerned with *a system for equating things of different orders*—labour and wages in one, and a signified and a signifier in the other."[15]

In order to define the notion of value, even before it is specified as economic or linguistic value, Saussure describes the general characteristics which will ensure the metaphoric or analogic transition, by similarity or proportionality, from one order to another. And, once again, by analogy, metaphoricity constitutes each of the two orders as much as it does their relationship.

The five-franc piece once more pays the expense of the demonstration:

"We must clear up the issue [of the relation of signification to value] or risk reducing language to a simple naming process . . . To resolve this issue, let us observe from the outset that even outside language all values are apparently governed by the same paradoxical principle. They are always composed:

"1) of a *dissimilar* thing that can be *exchanged* for the thing of which the value is to be determined; and

"2) of *similar* things that can be *compared* with the thing of which the value is to be determined.

"Both factors are necessary for the existence of a value. To determine what a five-franc piece is worth one must therefore know: 1) that it can be exchanged for a fixed quantity of a different thing, e.g., bread; and 2) that it can be compared with a similar value of the same system, e.g. a one-franc piece, or with coins of another system (a dollar, etc.). *In the same way* [my italics] a word can be exchanged for something dissimilar, an idea; besides, it can be compared with something of the same nature, another word. Its value is therefore not fixed so long as one simply states that it can be 'exchanged' for a given concept, i.e. that it has this or that signification: one must also compare it with similar values, with other words that stand in opposition to it. Its content is really fixed only by the concurrence of everything that exists outside it. Being part of a system, it is endowed not only with a signification but also and especially with a value, and this is something quite different."[16]

Value, gold, the eye, the sun, etc., are carried along, as has been long known, in the same tropic movement. Their exchange dominates the field of rhetoric *and* of philosophy. A remark of Saussure's on the next page, therefore, can be viewed from the vantage of Polyphilos' translations (the "seated breath," the "divine fire, source and home of life," etc.). Saussure's remark reminds us that the most natural, most universal, most real, most luminous thing, the apparently most exterior referent, the sun, does not completely escape the general law of metaphoric value as soon as it intervenes (as it always does) in the process of axiological and semantic value: "The value of just any term is accordingly determined by its environment; it is impossible to fix even the value of the signifier

15. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics,* trans. Wade Baskin (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), p. 79.

16. Ibid., pp. 113–14.

'sun' without considering its surroundings: in some languages it is not possible to say 'sit in the *sun.*'

In the same constellation, but in its own irreducible place, once again we should reread[18] the entirety of Mallarmé's texts on linguistics, aesthetics, and political economy, all that he wrote on the sign *or* [gold], which calculates textual effects that check the oppositions of the literal *[propre]* and the figurative, the metaphoric and the metonymic, figure and ground, the syntactic and the semantic, speech and writing in their classical senses, the more and the less. And does so notably on the page which disseminates its title *or* in the course of "fantasmagoric settings of the sun."[19]

Plus de métaphore[20]

The exergue effaced, how are we to decipher figures of speech, and singularly metaphor, in the philosophic text? This question has never been answered with a systematic treatise, doubtless not an insignificant fact. Here, instead of venturing into the prologomena to some future metaphorics, let us rather attempt to recognize in principle the *condition for the impossibility* of such a project. In its most impoverished, most abstract form, the limit would be the following: metaphor remains, in all its essential characteristics, a classical philosopheme, a metaphysical concept. It is therefore enveloped in the field that a general metaphorology of philosophy would seek to dominate. 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. This stratum of "tutelary" tropes, the layer of "primary" philosophemes (assuming that the quotation marks will serve as a sufficient precaution here), cannot be dominated. It cannot dominate itself, cannot be dominated by what it itself has engendered, has made to grow on its own soil, supported on its own base. Therefore, it gets "carried away" each time that one of its products—here, the concept of metaphor—attempts in vain to include under its own law the totality of the field to which the product belongs. If one wished to conceive and to class all the metaphorical possibilities of philosophy, one metaphor, at least, always would remain excluded, outside the

17. Ibid., p. 116.

18. I have sketched this reading in "The Double Session," sec. 2, in *Dissemination.*

19. TN. *Or* is one of the prose pieces from *Grands Faits Divers* in Mallarmé, *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 398.

20. TN. The title of this section, "Plus de métaphore," is untranslatable as it means both "more metaphor" and "no more metaphor." See the end of the first paragraph of this section, where Derrida explains how "the extra turn of speech becomes the missing turn of speech." This idea is related to the "general economy" of metaphor explained in notes 1 and 2 above; in this economy "profit" produces "loss": *more* metaphor, the extra turn of speech, becomes *no more* metaphor, the missing turn of speech. What Derrida shows is that this paradox is intrinsic to the concept of metaphor.

system: the metaphor, at the very least, without which the concept of metaphor could not be constructed, or, to syncopate an entire chain of reasoning, the metaphor of metaphor. This extra metaphor, remaining outside the field that it allows to be circumscribed, extracts or abstracts itself from this field, thus substracting itself as a metaphor less. By virtue of what we might entitle, for economical reasons, tropic supplementarity, since the extra turn of speech becomes the missing turn of speech, the taxonomy or history of philosophical metaphors will never make a profit. The state or status of the complement will always be denied to the interminable *dehiscence* of the supplement (if we may be permitted to continue to garden this botanical metaphor). The field is never saturated.

In order to demonstrate this, let us imagine what such a simultaneously historic and systematic sampling of philosophical metaphors might be. First, it would have to be governed by a rigorous concept of metaphor, a concept to be carefully distinguished, within a general tropology, from all the other turns of speech with which metaphor is too often confused. Provisionally, let us take such a definition as granted. One then would have to acknowledge the importation into so-called philosophical discourse of exogenous metaphors, or rather of significations that become metaphorical in being transported out of their own habitat. Thus, one would classify the places they come from: there would be metaphors that are biological, organic, mechanical, technical, economic, historical, mathematical—geometric, topologic, arithmetic—(supposing that in the strict sense there might be mathematical metaphors, a problem to be held in reserve for now). This classification, which supposes an indigenous population and a migration, is usually adopted by those, not numerous, who have studied the metaphorics of a single philosopher or particular body of work.

In classifying metaphors according to their native regions, one would necessarily—and this has indeed happened—have to reduce the "lending" discourses, the discourses of the origin—in opposition to the borrowing discourses—to two major types: those which precisely appear more original in and of themselves,[21] and those whose object has ceased to be original, natural, primitive. The first kind provides metaphors that are physical, animal, and biological, and the second those that are technical, artificial, economic, cultural, social, etc. This derivative opposition, (of *physis* to *tekhnē*, or of *physis* to *nomos*), is at work everywhere. Sometimes the thread of the argument is not stated. It happens that there is an alleged break with tradition. The results are the same. These taxonomical principles do not derive from a particular problem of method. They are governed by the concept of metaphor and by its system (for example, the oppositions of the place of origin, the *etymon,* and the proper, to all their others),

21. Those which primarily are *encountered* in nature demand only to be picked, like flowers. The flower is always youthful, at the greatest proximity to nature and to the morning of life. The rhetoric of the flower, for example in Plato, always has this meaning. See *Symposium* 183e, 196a–b, 203e, 210c; *Republic* 474e, 601b; and *Politics* 273d, 310d, etc.

and for as long as this concept is not solicited[22] the methodological reform remains without impact. For example, in his thesis *Plato's Metaphors* (Rennes, 1945), Pierre Louis announces that he will not follow the model of "genealogical" or migrationist classification. Therefore, he tells us, he will prefer the principle of the internal organization of metaphors to the external criterion of the domain of provenance. The issue is thus to let oneself be governed by the author's intentions, by what he means, by what the play of figures signifies. An all the more legitimate proposition, apparently, in that we are concerned here with a philosophical discourse, or a discourse treated as such: what is important then, as we all know, is the signified content, the meaning, the intention of truth, etc. The requirement that one take into account Platonic thought, its system and its internal articulation, can hardly be contested by anyone attempting to reconstitute the system of Plato's metaphors. But it can quickly be seen that the internal articulation is not that of the metaphors themselves, but that of the "philosophical" ideas, metaphor playing exclusively the role of a pedagogical ornament, no matter how the author might have it. As for the properly philosophical configuration of Platonic thought, it is but an anachronistic projection. Let us consider first the discourse on method: "The traditional method, in this kind of study, consists in grouping images according to the domain from which the author borrows them. At the limit, this method may be suitable when we are concerned with a poet for whom images are but ornaments whose beauty bears witness to an exceptional wealth of imagination. In this case, one is hardly concerned with the profound meaning of the metaphor or the comparison, but rather above all with its original brilliance. Now, Platonic images do not recommend themselves solely for their brilliant qualities. Whoever studies them quickly perceives that they are not simply ornaments, but are all destined to express ideas more aptly than would a long elaboration" (pp. 13-14).

These are simultaneously paradoxical and traditional propositions. Poetic metaphor is rarely considered as an extrinsic ornament, especially in order to oppose it to philosophical metaphor. And it is rarely deduced from this that philosophical metaphor deserves to be studied for itself for just this reason, and that it has no identity of its own except in its exteriority as a signifier. Conversely, this "economist" theory of metaphor destined to spare a "long elaboration,"[23]

22. TN. This is Derrida's familiar use of the word "solicit" in its "etymological" sense, meaning "to shake the whole."

23. Metaphor and other figures of speech, notably comparison, thus would be homogenous, distinguished only by their degree of elaboration. The briefest of the figures of speech, metaphor, also would be the most general one, economizing all the others. This "economist" theory can claim Aristotle as one of its proponents: "The simile *(eikon:* image) too is a metaphor; the difference is but small (*diapherei gar mikron*). When the poet says of Achilles 'he sprang at them like (*hōs*) a lion,' this is a simile (*eikōn*); when he says 'the lion sprang on them,' this is a metaphor." *Works,* ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924), III, 4, 1406b20–22. All further references to the *Rhetoric* will be to this edition. The same motif reappears in Cicero (De *Oratore* III, 38, 156; 39, 157; *Orator* XXVII 92-94),

and above all a comparison, is as classical as can be. However, Louis allegedly had opposed himself to this tradition. "If we must have a criterion for distinguishing metaphor from comparison, I would say rather that comparison always appears as something external, easily detachable from the work, while metaphor is absolutely indispensable to the meaning of the sentence."[24] The economic procedure of abbreviation, thus, appears to act not upon another figure but directly upon the expression of the "idea," the meaning, with which metaphor this time seems to have an internal and essential link. This is what makes it cease to be an ornament, or at least an "ornament too much." (The thesis bears as its exergue a maxim of Fenelon's: "Every ornament that is only an ornament is too much.") Nothing too much in the precious ornament that is metaphor; and nothing in metaphor overburdens the necessary flowering of the idea, the natural unfolding of meaning. It follows, according to an implacable logic, that metaphor will be more "too much" than ever: identifying itself with its guardian, in custody of the signified idea, metaphor could neither be distinguished from

in Quintilian *(Institutio Oratoria* VIII, 6, sec. 4), in Condillac (De *l'art d'écrire* II, 4), and in Hegel: "Between metaphor on one side and simile (*Gleichnis*) on the other we may place the image. For it has such a close affinity with metaphor that it is strictly only a metaphor *in extenso (ausführlich),* which therefore now acquires a great resemblance to simile *(Vergleichung)."* *Aesthetics,* trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 408. All further references to the *Aesthetics* will be to this edition. And it still survives: "Metaphor is an abridged comparison." J. Vendryes, *Language,* trans. Paul Radin (London, 1925), p. 178. It seems that what deserves examination here is less the economic consideration in itself than the mechanical character of the explanations to which it gives rise (abbreviation, homogenous quantity of abridgment, shrinking of time and space, etc.). Moreover, in this case the law of economy is acknowledged in the movement from one constituted figure to another at least implicitly constituted figure, and not in the production itself of the figure. The economy of this production could not be so mechanical and external. Let us say that the extra ornament is never useless, or that the useless can always be put to use. Here, we have neither the time nor the place to comment upon the page from the *Vases communicants* on which Breton analyzes an ornament, attending to the rhetorical equivalents of condensation and displacement, and to their economy: "There is no doubt that I have a 'complex' about ties. I detest this incomprehensible ornament of masculine costume. From time to time I reproach myself for surrendering to such an impoverished custom as knotting each morning before a mirror (I am trying to explain to psychoanalysts) a piece of cloth which by means of an attentive little nothing is to augment the already idiotic expression of a morning jacket. Quite simply, it is disconcerting. I am not unaware, from another point of view, and indeed cannot hide from myself, that just as coin operated machines, the sisters of the dynamometer on which Jarry's Supermale practices victoriously ("Come, Madame"), symbolize sexually—the disappearance of the tokens in the slot—and metonymically—the part for the whole—woman, so the tie, and even if only according to Freud, figures the penis 'not only because (they) are long dependent objects and peculiar to men, but also because they can be chosen according to taste, a liberty which in the case of the object symbolized, is forbidden by nature.' (Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams, SE* V, 356)." *Les vases communicants* (Paris: Cahiers Libres, 1932), pp. 46-47. On the "work of condensation" and "the law of *extreme briefness* which has imprinted upon modern poetry one of its most remarkable characteristics" see also p. 58.

24. Here Louis supports his argument with W. B. Stanford, *Greek Metaphor* (Oxford, 1936), and H. Konrad, *Etude sur la metaphore* (Paris, 1939).

this idea, nor distinguish itself, except by falling back into the status of a superfluous sign, which immediately fades away. Outside of thought, as an effect of the "imagination," metaphors "are all destined to express ideas more aptly than would a long elaboration. In these conditions, it has appeared interesting to me to seek out what these ideas were. And this is what has led me to prefer another method than the traditional classification, a method that F. Dornseiff already has used in his study of Pindar's style (*Pindars Stil,* Berlin, 1921). This method, which consists in grouping metaphors according to the ideas they express, has the great advantage of making salient the writer's way of thinking, instead of emphasizing only his imagination. And in exactly specifying the meaning of each image, this method also allows us to see in a certain dialogue one dominant metaphor that the author 'weaves' throughout his work. Finally, the method has the merit of making tangible every change in the use of metaphors, by showing the new images which, from one dialogue to another, may appear in the expression of the same idea. In a word, it satisfies not only the need for classification, but also helps to gain a deeper understanding of the role and value of images" (p. 14).

In order not to treat metaphor as an imaginative or rhetorical ornament, in order to come back to the internal articulation of philosophical discourse, figures are reduced to modes of "expression" of the idea. In the best of cases, this could have given rise to an immanentist structural study, transposing into rhetoric—but is that theoretically possible?—M. Guéroult's method or, more accurately, V. Goldschmidt's program in *Le paradigme dans la dialectique platonicienne.*[25] Citing the definition of the *paradigm* in the *Politics* 278c, Louis ventures the following exclamation: "It would suffice to replace *paradeigma* by *metaphora* to obtain a Platonic definition of metaphor!" p. 5.) But in the present case the methodological justification is supported by an entire implicit philosophy whose authority is never examined: metaphor is charged with *expressing an idea,* with placing outside or representing the content of a thought that naturally would be called "idea," as if each of these words or concepts did not have an entire history of its own (to which Plato is no stranger), and as if an entire metaphorics, or more generally an entire tropic system, had not left several marks within this history. In this initial classification, the alleged respect for the Platonic articulations yields the following headings: two major parts, "Inquiry and Doctrine," and nine chapters: "Intellectual Activity (Reflection and Creation)," "Dialectics," "Discourse," "Man," "The Soul," "Theory of Knowledge," "Morals," "Social Life," "God and the Universe." So many anachronistic categories and architectonic violations imposed, under the pretext of fidelity, upon the thought of the philosopher who recommended respect for the articulations of the living organism, and thus for those of discourse. That these distinctions could have no meaning outside any

25. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1947. See, notably, chap. 3, "Paradigme et metaphore," pp. 104-10.

kind of Platonism does not automatically permit them to be applied to the Platonic system. Finally, they have not relieved the author from the task of affixing, as an appendix, a methodical inventory arranged according to the opposition identified above (*physis/nomos,physis/technē*). Headings of the Appendix: "Inventory of Metaphors and Comparisons Classified According to the Domains from which Plato Borrows Them: I. Nature; II. Man; III. Society; IV. Mythological Historical and Literary Reminiscences."

Thus, the criteria for a classification of philosophical metaphors are borrowed from a derivative philosophical discourse. Perhaps this might be legitimate if these figures were governed, consciously and calculatedly, by the identifiable author of a system, or if the issue were to describe a philosophical rhetoric in the service of an autonomous theory constituted before and outside its own language, manipulating its tropes like tools. This is an undoubtedly philosophic, and certainly Platonic, ideal, an ideal that is produced in the separation (and order) between philosophy or dialectics on the one hand and (sophistic) rhetoric on the other, the separation demanded by Plato himself. Directly or not, it is this separation and this hierarchy that we must question here.

The difficulties we have just pointed out are accentuated with respect to the "archaic" tropes which have given the determinations of a "natural" language to the "founding" concepts (*theōria, eidos, logos,* etc.). And the signs (words/concepts) from which this proposition is made, beginning with those of trope and *arkhē,* already have their own metaphorical charge. They are metaphorical, resisting every meta-metaphorics, the values of concept, foundation, and theory. And let us not insist upon the optic metaphor which opens up every theoretical point of view under the sun. What is fundamental corresponds to the desire for a firm and ultimate ground, a terrain to build on, the earth as the support of an artificial structure. This value has a history, is a history, of which Heidegger has proposed an interpretation.[26] Finally, even if not reducible to this framework, the concept of the concept cannot not retain the gesture of mastery, taking-and-maintaining-in-the-present, comprehending and grasping the thing as an object.

26. Kant, in expounding his theory of hypotyposis, had recourse to the example of the "ground." Hypotyposis can be *schematic* (direct presentation of an intuition to a purely rational concept) or *symbolic* (indirect presentation of an intuition to a purely rational concept). "Hitherto this function has been but little analyzed, worthy as it is of a deeper study. Still this is not the place to dwell upon it In language we have many such indirect presentations (*Darstellungen*) modelled upon an analogy enabling the expression in question to contain, not the proper (*eigentliche*) scheme for the concept, but merely a symbol for reflection. Thus the words *ground* (*Grund*) (support, *Stütze-*, basis, *Basis-*), to *depend* (to be held up from above), to *flow* from (instead of to follow), *substance* (as Locke puts it: the support of accidents), and numberless others, are not schematic, but rather symbolic hypotyposes, and express concepts without employing a direct intuition for the purpose, but only drawing upon an analogy with one, i.e. transferring the reflection (*mit . . . der Ubertragung der Reflexion)* upon an object of intuition to quite a new concept, and one with which perhaps no intuition could ever directly correspond." *The Critique of Judgement,* trans. J. C. Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 223.

Which holds for the Latin as well as for the Germanic languages. Noticing this fact, Hegel, in passing, defines our problem, or rather determines the problem with an answer indistinguishable from the proposition of his own speculative and dialectical logic:

"Metaphor has its principal application in linguistic expressions which in this connection we may treat under the following aspects:

"a) In the first place, every language already contains a mass of metaphors. They arise from the fact that a word which originally signifies only something sensuous (*nur etwas ganz sinnliches bedeutet)* is carried over (*übertragen wird*) into the spiritual sphere *(auf Geistiges). Fassen, begreifen* [to grasp, to apprehend], and many words, to speak generally, which relate to knowing, have in respect of their literal meaning *(eigentliche* Bedeutung, *sens propre)* a purely sensuous content, which then is lost and exchanged for a spiritual meaning, the original sense being sensuous *(der erste Sinn ist* sinnlich), the second spiritual.

"b) But gradually the metaphorical element in the use (*im Gebrauche*) of such a word disappears and by custom *(durch die* Gewohnheit) the word changes from a metaphorical (*uneigentliche, non propre)* to a literal expression (*eigentlichen Ausdruck, expression propre),* because owing to readiness to grasp in the image only the meaning, image and meaning are no longer distinguished, and the image directly affords only the abstract meaning itself instead of a concrete picture. If, for example, we are to take *begreifen* in a spiritual sense, then it does not occur to us at all to think of a perceptible grasping by the hand. In living languages the difference between actual metaphors *(wirklicher* Metaphern) and words already reduced by usage *(durch die Abnutzung)* to literal expressions *(eigentliche Ausdrücken, expressions propres)* is easily established; whereas in dead languages this is difficult because mere etymology cannot decide the matter in the last resort. The question does not depend on the first origin of a word or on linguistic development generally; on the contrary, the question above all is whether a word which looks entirely pictorial, deceptive, and illustrative has not already, in the life of the language, lost this its first sensuous meaning, and the memory of it, in the course of its use in a spiritual sense and been *relevé (AUFGEHOBEN HATTE)* into a spiritual meaning."[27]

Here, the opposition between actual, effective metaphors and inactive, effaced metaphors corresponds to the value of *usure (Abnutzung),* whose implications we have already discussed. This is an almost constant characteristic in the discourse on philosophical metaphor: there are said to be inactive metaphors, which have no interest at all since the author *did not think of them,* and since the metaphorical effect is to be studied in the field of consciousness. The traditional opposition between living and dead metaphors corresponds to the difference

27. *Aesthetics,* pp. 404-5. [The last phrase has been modified to include the verb *aufheben,* which Derrida of course renders as *relever.*] There are analogous considerations of the figures of prehension in Valéry, in his *Discours aux Chirurgiens,* in *Oeuvres* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), vol. 1, p. 919. See also below, "Qual Quelle."

between effective and extinct metaphors.[28] Above all, the movement of metaphorization (origin and then erasure of the metaphor, transition from the proper sensory meaning to the proper spiritual meaning by means of the detour of figures) is nothing other than a movement of idealization. Which is included under the master category of dialectical idealism, to wit, the *relève (Aufhebung)*, that is, the memory *(Erinnerung)* that produces signs, interiorizes them in elevating, suppressing, and conserving the sensory exterior. And in order to think and resolve them, this framework sets to work the oppositions nature/spirit, nature/history, or nature/freedom, which are linked by genealogy to the opposition of *physis* to its others, and by the same token to the oppositions sensual/spiritual, sensible/intelligible, sensory/sense *(sinnlich/Sinn)*. Nowhere is this system as explicit as it is in Hegel. It describes the space of the possibility of metaphysics, and the concept of metaphor thus defined belongs to it.[29]

Let us suppose, provisionally, that these oppositions can be given credence, and that the program of a general metaphorics of philosophy can be entrusted to them. In classifying the (natural) original metaphors, we would quickly have to resort to the mythology of the four elements. This time we would be dealing not with a kind of psychoanalysis of the material imagination applied to a rather indeterminate corpus,[30] but rather with a rhetorical analysis of the philosophical text, supposing that assured criteria were available for identifying this text as such. This would lead to an inevitable intersection of the classification of the native regions of metaphor with a general grid, no longer constituted on the basis of these elementary regions of phenomena (what appears), but on the basis

28. This is central to T. Spoerri's study "La puissance métaphorique de Descartes," *Colloque Philosophique de Royaumont* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1957). See also Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *Traité de l'argumentation* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958).

29. This explains the distrust that the concept of metaphor inspires in Heidegger. In *Der Satz vom Grund* he insists above all on the opposition sensory/nonsensory, an important, but neither the only, nor the first, nor the most determining characteristic of the value of metaphor. "But here, the following remark will suffice: Since our hearing and seeing are never a simple reception by the senses, it is not any longer suitable to affirm that the interpretation of thought as grasped by hearing *(als Er-hören)* and vision *(Er-blicken)* represent only a metaphor *(Übertragung)*, a transposition into the non-sensory of the so-called sensory. The notion of 'transposition' and of metaphor *(Metapher)* rest on the distinction, not to say the separation, of the sensory and the non-sensory as two domains each subsisting for itself. This kind of separation between the sensory and the non-sensory, between the physical and the non-physical, is a fundamental characteristic of what is called 'metaphysics,' which confers upon Western thought its essential characteristics. Once this distinction of the sensory and the non-sensory is recognized as insufficient, metaphysics loses its rank as authoritative thought. Once this limitation of metaphysics has been seen, the determining conception *(massgebende Vorstellung)* of 'metaphor' collapses by itself. It is particularly determinant for the way in which we represent the Being of language. This is why metaphor is often utilized as an auxiliary means in the interpretation of poetic, or more generally artistic, works. The metaphorical exists only within the borders of metaphysics."

30. TN. The reference is to Bachelard, discussed in the last section of this essay *("La métaphysique—relève de la métaphore.")*

of the receptive zones, the regions of sensibility. Outside the mathematical text—which it is difficult to conceive as providing metaphors in the strict sense, since it is attached to no determined ontic region and has no empirical sensory content—all the regional discourses, to the extent that they are not purely formal, procure for philosophical discourse metaphorical contents of the sensory type. Thus one does actually speak of visual, auditory, and tactile metaphors, (where the problem of knowledge is in its element), and even, more rarely, which is not insignificant, olfactory[31] or gustatory ones.

But there must be, in correspondence to this empirical aesthetics of sensory contents, as the very condition of its possibility, a transcendental and formal aesthetics of metaphor. It would lead us back to the a priori forms of space and time. In effect, do we not actually speak of temporalizing metaphors, metaphors that call upon the sense of hearing not only, as from Plato to Husserl, according to the musical paradigm, but also as an appeal to listening, to understanding (*entendement*)tself, etc.? Nietzsche relaxes the limits of the metaphorical to such an extent that he attributes a metaphoric capacity to every phonic enunciation: do we not transport into the time of speech that which in itself is heterogeneous to this time?[32] Inversely, is it not frequently said that every metaphoric enunciation spatializes as soon as it gives us something to imagine, to see, or to touch? Bergson is far from alone in being wary of spatial metaphors.

How is this final regression to occur? How is recourse to the final opposition of space and time possible without taking on in depth this traditional philosophical problem? (And it is as concerns both this transcendental aesthetic and the pure, a priori forms of sensibility that the problem of mathematical metaphors would find one of its loci.) How are we to know what the temporalization and spatialization of a meaning, of an ideal object, of an intelligible tenor, are, if we have not clarified what "space" and "time" mean? But how are we to do this

31. "We thought it necessary to begin with the sense of smell, because of all the senses it is the one which appears to contribute least to the knowledge of the human mind." Condillac, *Traite des sensations, Introduction,* in *Oeuvres Philosophiques de Condillac,* ed. Georges Le Roy (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1947), p. 222.

32. Which amounts, strangely enough, to making every signifier a metaphor of the signified, although the classical concept of metaphor designates only the substitution of one signified for another, one signified becoming the signifier of the other. Does not Nietzsche's operation consist, here, in extending to every element of discourse, under the name of metaphor, what classical rhetoric considered, no less strangely, to be a quite particular figure, the *metonymy of the sign?* Du Marsais says that this figure consists in taking "the sign for the thing signified," and it occupies the last place in the list of the five species of metonymy he identified. Fontanier devotes less than a page to it. This is explained by the fact that the sign examined here is a part of the thing signified, and not the very stuff of the figures of discourse. The examples are first those of *symbolic, nonarbitrary,* signs (*scepter*), for the rank of king, *staff* for that of marshal, *hat* for that of cardinal, *sword* for soldier, *robe* for magistrate, *"lance* to signify a *man,* and *distaff to* indicate a woman: *fief which falls from lance to distaff,* that is a fief which passes from the males to the females." Du Marsais, *Traite des tropes* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1967), chap. 2, ii.

before knowing what might be a logos or a meaning that in and of themselves spatio-temporalize everything they state? What logos as metaphor might be?

Already the opposition of meaning (the atemporal or nonspatial signified as meaning, as content) to its metaphorical signifier (an opposition that plays itself out within the element of meaning to which metaphor belongs in its entirety)[33] is sedimented—another metaphor—by the entire history of philosophy. Without taking into account that the separation between sense (the signified) and the senses (sensory signifier) is enunciated by means of the same root *(sensus, Sinn).* One might admire, as does Hegel, the generousness of this stock, and interpret its secret *relève* speculatively, dialectically; but before utilizing a dialectical concept of metaphor, one must examine the double turn which opened metaphor and dialectics, permitting to be called *sense* that which should be foreign to the senses.

Thus, the general taxonomy of metaphors—so-called philosophical metaphors in particular—would presuppose the solution of important problems, and primarily of problems which constitute the entirety of philosophy in its history. Thus a metaphorology would be derivative as concerns the discourse it allegedly would dominate, whether it does so by taking as its rule the explicit consciousness of the philosopher or the systematic and objective structure of his text, whether it reconstitutes a meaning or deciphers a symptom, whether or not it elaborates an idiomatic metaphorics (proper to a philosopher, a system, or a particular body of work) based on a more general, more constricting, more durable metaphorics. The concept of metaphor, along with all the predicates that permit its ordered extension and comprehension, is a philosopheme.

The consequences of this are double and contradictory. On the one hand it is impossible to dominate philosophical metaphorics as such, *from the exterior,* by using a concept of metaphor which remains a philosophical product. Only philosophy would seem to wield any authority over its own metaphorical productions. But, on the other hand, for the same reason philosophy is deprived of what it provides itself. Its instruments belonging to its field, philosophy is incapable of dominating its general tropology and metaphorics. It could perceive its metaphorics only around a blind spot or central deafness. The concept of metaphor would describe this contour, but it is not even certain that the concept thereby circumscribes an organizing center; and this formal law holds for every philosopheme. And this for two cumulative reasons: (1) The philosopher will never find in this concept anything but what he has put into it, or at least what he believes he has put into it as a philosopher. (2) The constitution of the fundamental oppositions of the metaphorology (*physis/tekhnē, physis/nomos,* sensible/intelligible; space/time, signifier/signified, etc.) has occurred by means of the

33. This complex structure leads to many confusions. Some of them may be avoided by means of I. A. Richards's proposed distinction between the metaphorical *tenor* and the metaphorical *vehicle.* Sense, the meaning "must be clearly distinguished from the tenor." *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 100.

history of a metaphorical language, or rather by means of "tropic" movements which, no longer capable of being called by a philosophical name—i.e. metaphors—nevertheless, and for the same reason, do not make up a "proper" language. It is from beyond the difference between the proper and the nonproper that the effects of propriety and nonpropriety have to be accounted for. By definition, thus, there is no properly philosophical category to qualify a certain number of tropes that have conditioned the so-called "fundamental," "structuring," "original" philosophical oppositions: they are so many "metaphors" that would constitute the rubrics of such a tropology, the words "turn" or "trope" or "metaphor" being no exception to the rule. To permit oneself to overlook this *vigil* of philosophy, one would have to posit that the sense aimed at through these figures is an essence rigorously independent of that which transports it, which is an already philosophical *thesis,* one might even say philosophy's *unique thesis,* the thesis which constitutes the concept of metaphor, the opposition of the proper and the nonproper, of essence and accident, of intuition and discourse, of thought and language, of the intelligible and the sensible.

That is what would be at stake. Supposing that we might reach it (touch it, see it, comprehend it?), this tropic and prephilosophical resource could not have the archeological simplicity of a proper origin, the virginity of a history of beginnings. And we know already that it could derive neither from a *rhetoric* of philosophy nor from a *metaphilosophy* analogous to what Bachelard, in his psychoanalysis of material imagination, called *meta-poetics.* We know this, already, on the basis of the law of supplementarity (between the concept and the field) viewed in its formal necessity. Provisionally, let us take this law for a hypothesis. In attempting to verify it in several "examples," perhaps we might, at the same time, *fill* the concept of metaphor, following its entire tradition, a tradition which is as much philosophical as rhetorical, and might also recognize, at the same time as the rule of its transformations, the limit of its plasticity.

The Ellipsis of the Sun:
Enigmatic, Incomprehensible,
Ungraspable

> He may do [the deed], but in ignorance of his relationship, and discover that afterwards, as does Oedipus in Sophocles. Here the deed is outside the play *(exo tou dramatos)*. (*Poetics*, 1453b29–32)[34]
>
> There should be nothing improbable (*alogon*) among the actual incidents *(en tois pragmasin)*. If it be unavoidable, however, it should be outside the tragedy, like the improbability in the Oedipus of Sophocles. (1454b6-8)
>
> A likely impossibility (*adunata eikota*) is always preferable to an unconvincing possibility (*dunata apithana*). The story (*logous*) should never be made up of improbable incidents *(ek meron alogōn)*; there should be nothing of the sort in it. If, however, such incidents are unavoidable, they should be outside the piece *(exo tou mutheumatos)*, like the hero's ignorance *(to me eidenai)* in *Oedipus* of the circumstances of Laius' death . . . (1460a26–30)

Neither a *rhetoric* of philosophy nor a *metaphilosophy* appear to be pertinent here—such is the hypothesis. In the first place, why not rhetoric as such?

Each time that a rhetoric defines metaphor, not only is a philosophy implied, but also a conceptual network in which philosophy *itself* has been constituted. Moreover each thread in this network forms a *turn,* or one might say a metaphor, if that notion were not too derivative here. What is defined, therefore, is implied in the defining of the definition.

As goes without saying, no petition is being made here to some homogenous continuum ceaselessly relating tradition back to itself, the tradition of metaphysics as the tradition of rhetoric. Nevertheless, if we did not begin by attending to such of the most durable constraints which have been exercised on the basis of a very long systematic chain, and if we did not take the trouble to delimit the general functioning and effective limits of this chain, we would run the risk of taking the most derivative effects for the original characteristics of a historical subset, a hastily identified configuration, an imaginary or marginal mutation. By means of an empiricist and impressionistic rush toward alleged differences—in fact toward cross-sections that are in principle linear and chronological—we would go from discovery to discovery. A break beneath every step! For example, we could present as the physiognomy proper to "eighteenth century" rhetoric a whole set of characteristics, (such as the privilege of the name), inherited,

34. TN. Aristotle, *Poetics,* trans. I. Baywater, in *The Works of Aristotle,* ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924). All further references to the *Poetics* will be to this edition.

although not in a direct line, and with all kinds of divisions and inequalities of transformation, from Aristotle or the Middle Ages. Here, we are being led back to the program, still entirely to be elaborated, of a new delimitation of bodies of work and of a new problematic of the signature.

There is a code or a program—a rhetoric, if you will—for every discourse on metaphor: following custom, in the *first place* the Aristotelian definition must be recalled, at least the one in the *Poetics* (1457b). We will not fail to do so. Certainly, Aristotle invented neither the word nor the concept of metaphor. However, he seems to have proposed the first systematic situating of it, which in any event has been retained as such with the most powerful historical effects. It is indispensable to study the terrain on which the Aristotelian definition could have been constructed. But this study would lose all pertinence if it were not preceded, or in any event controlled, by the systematic and internal reconstitution of the text to be reinscribed. Even if partial and preliminary the task is not limited to a commentary on a textual surface. No transparency is granted it. The issue already is one of an active interpretation setting to work an entire system of rules and anticipations.

"Metaphor (*metaphora*) consists in giving (*epiphora*)[35] the thing a name (*onomatos*) that belongs to something else *(allotriou),* the transference being either from genus to species *(apo tou genous epi eidos),* or from species to genus *(apo tou eidous epi to genos),* or from species to species *(apo tou eidous epi eidos),* or on the grounds of analogy (*ē kata to analogon*)" (1457b6–9).

This definition, doubtless the most explicit, the most precise, and in any event the most general,[36] can be analyzed along two lines. It is a philosophical thesis

35. TN. Derrida's citation of the Greek terms is particularly important here. The French translation of *epiphora* as "*transport*" preserves a "metaphoric" play on words that is lost in the English rendering "giving." Meta-*phora* and *epi-phora* have the same root, from the Greek *pherein,* to carry, to transport.

36. This generality poses problems which recently have been reactivated in a way, as is well known. We will come back to them in our conclusion. In any event, Aristotle is the first to consider metaphor as the general form of all the figures of words, whether metaphor *includes* them (as in these examples of transport by metonymy or synecdoche), constitutes their *economy* (abridged comparison), or finds its own *best form* in the analogy of proportionality *(Rhetoric* III). Doubtless this generality is proportional to the impoverishment of the determination of metaphor. Aristotle, from early on, was accused or excused for this. "Some Ancients have condemned Aristotle for putting under the name of metaphor the first two, which properly are but synecdoches; but Aristotle spoke in general, and he was writing at a time when there was still no refinement of figures, both in order to distinguish them and in order to give to each the name which would have best explained its nature. Cicero justifies Aristotle sufficiently when he writes in his *De Oratore: Itaque genus hoc Graeci appellant allegoricum, nomine recte, genere melius ille (Aristoteles) qui ista omnia translationes vocat."* Andre Dacier, *Introduction a la poétique d'Aristote,* 1733. Hugh Blair: "Aristotle, in his Poetics, uses Metaphor in this extended sense, for any figurative meaning imposed upon a word; as a whole put for the part, or a part for the whole; a species for the genus, or a genus for the species. But it would be unjust to tax this most acute writer with any inaccuracy on this account; the minute subdivisions, and various names of Tropes, being unknown in his days, and the invention of later rhetoricians." *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* XV, "Metaphor."

on metaphor. And it is also a philosophical discourse whose entire surface is worked by a metaphorics.

The philosophical thesis belongs to a system of interpretation joining together *metaphora, mimesis, logos, physis, phone, sēmainein, onoma.* In order to restore the movement of this chain, one must be attentive to the *place* of the discussions on metaphor, as much in the *Poetics* as in book 3 of the *Rhetoric.*[37] The place reserved for metaphor is already significant in itself. In both works, it belongs to a theory of *lexis.* "The Plot and Characters having been discussed, it remains to consider the Diction and Thought (*peri lexeōs* fan *dianoias*)" (1456a33–34; there is an analogous development at the beginning of book 3 of the *Rhetoric).* Although it has only just been mentioned, "thought" (here, *dianoia*) covers the range of that which is given to language, or of what one is given to think through language, as a cause or an effect or content of language, but not as the act of language itself (statement, diction, elocution, *lexis). Dianoia* thus determined is the subject of rhetoric, at least in its first two books. "As for the Thought, we may assume what is said of it in our Art of Rhetoric, as it belongs more properly to that department of inquiry" (1456a34). The difference between *dianoia* and *lexis* is due to the fact that the first is not made manifest by itself. Now, this manifestation, which is the act of speech, constitutes the essence and very operation of tragedy. If there were no difference between *dianoia* and *lexis,* there would be no space for tragedy: "What indeed would be the good *(ergon)* of the speaker *(tou legontos)* if things appeared in the required light even apart from anything he says *(ei phanoito nēi deoi kai me dia ton logon)*?" (1456b7–8).[38] This difference is

37. On the relations between the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* on this point, and notably as concerns the notions of *metaphora* and *eikon,* see Marsh H. McCall, *Ancient Rhetorical Theories of Simile and Comparison* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969). "Neither work can be proved to precede the other—almost certainly both were revised and supplemented from time to time. The odd absence of *eikon* from the *Poetics* must be left unresolved." This is not a total absence (see at least 1048b10 and 15).

38. TN. F. C. T. Moore, in the notes to his translation of this essay, contends that Derrida's last two citations from Aristotle *(Poetics* 1456a34 and 1456b7–8) are based on an "incorrect translation" (note 29) and a "conjectural" reading of a "corrupt" text (notes 29 and 30). On the first point, there is no question that while the Bude translation cited by Derrida and the Bywater translation do not correspond word for word, the *entire* sentence (not the fragment of it cited by Moore) does say that the examination of thought *(dianoia)* is the province of rhetoric. On the second point, it is true that Bywater and Bude have different readings of what Bude gives as *dianoia* and translates as "thought." Bywater, whose translation I have adhered to, gives the crucial word as "things," from the reading of the text that gives *deoi* here and not *dianoia.* Thus, our text does not correspond to the French edition of *Marges,* where the sentence in question would read, changing the one word: "What indeed would be the good of the speaker if his *thought* appeared in the required light even apart from anything he says?" Comparison with the Greek text used by Bywater (Becker's 1831 Quarto Text, also used in the Harvard University Press *Aristotle in Twenty-Three Volumes,* where Fyfe's translation of the *Poetics* occupies vol. 23, which is where I consulted it) shows that the Greek cited by Derrida here differs *only* as concerns this word. Even if Aristotle's text is corrupt here—which I am not competent to judge—Derrida has not falsified the *sense* of either citation in order to have it conform to his

not only due to the fact that the personage must be able to say something other than what he thinks. He exists and acts within tragedy only on the condition that he speaks.

So the discourse on metaphor belongs to a treatise *peri lexōs.* There is lexis, and within it metaphor, in the extent to which thought is not made manifest by itself, in the extent to which the meaning of what is said or thought is not a phenomenon of itself. *Dianoia* as such is not yet related to metaphor. There is metaphor only in the extent to which someone is supposed to make manifest, by means of statement, a given thought that of itself remains inapparent, hidden, or latent. Thought stumbles upon metaphor, or metaphor falls to thought at the moment when meaning attempts to emerge from itself in order to be stated, enunciated, brought to the light of language. And yet—such is our problem—the theory of metaphor remains a theory of *meaning* and posits a certain original *naturality* of this figure. How is this possible?

Aristotle has just set aside *dianoia,* sending it off into rhetoric. He then defines the components of *lexis.* Among them, the nominal, the noun. It is under this heading that he treats metaphor *(epiphora onomatos). Onoma* certainly has two values in this context. Sometimes it is opposed to the verb *(rhēma),* which implies an idea of time. Sometimes it covers the field of verbs, since metaphor, the displacement of nouns, also, in the examples given in the *Poetics,* plays upon verbs. This confusion is possible by virtue of the profound identity of the noun and the verb: what they have in common is that they are intelligible in and of themselves, have an immediate relation to an object or rather to a unity of meaning. They constitute the order of the *phone sēmantikē* from which are excluded, as we will see, articles, conjunctions, prepositions, and in general all the elements of language which, according to Aristotle, have no meaning in themselves; in other words, which do not of themselves designate something. The adjective is capable of becoming substantive and nominal. To this extent it may belong to the *semantic* order. Therefore it seems that the field of *onoma*—and consequently that of metaphor, as the transport of names—is less that of the noun in the strict sense, (which it acquired very late in rhetoric), than that of the *nominalizable.* Every word which resists this nominalization would remain foreign to metaphor. Now, only that which claims—or henceforth claims—to have a complete and independent signification, that which is intelligible by itself, outside any syntactic relation, can be nominalized. To take up a traditional Opposition that still will be in use in Husserl, metaphor would be a transport of categorematic and not of syncategorematic words *as such.* The *as such* must

argument, as Moore seems to suggest. It should be noted too that at least one other English translation of the *Poetics* (Butcher's in The Library of Liberal Arts volume, *Poetics and On Music)* gives the disputed word as *dianoia,* "thought." (My thanks to Richard Rand for his help here.)

be emphasized, since the syncategorem might itself also give rise to an operation of nominalization.[39]

Du Marsais had been tempted very literally to follow Aristotle in defining metaphor as "a figure by means of which the proper, literal meaning of a noun is transported." That he replaced *noun* by *word* from one edition to another, that his first gesture was criticized by both Laharpe and Fontanier, and that the latter systematically enlarges the field of metaphor to include all words—none of this, at least on this point, deeply disrupts the Aristotelian tradition. In effect, on the one hand, only "single word" tropes are "properly named" such, according to Fontanier. On the other hand, and consequently, after stating that all kinds of words can give rise to metaphors, Fontanier indeed must exclude from the enumeration which follows syncategorems, meanings said to be incomplete, the pivots of discourse: *"On the tropes by resemblance, that is, metaphors:*[40] Tropes by

39. Leibniz provides a remarkable example of this operation of *extension* and *extraction.* The issue is to unearth the hidden concept and name, the substantive idea dissimulated in every syntactic sign of relation. Thus, a particle is transformed into a complete signification. Again this is in a philosophical dialogue, and the subject treated is not very distant from the one in the *Garden of Epicurus:* "THEOPHILUS: I do not see why we could not say that there are *private* ideas, as there are negative truths, for the act of denial is positive . . . PHILALETHES: Without disputing about this point, it will be more useful to approach a little nearer the origins of all our notions and knowledge, to observe how the words employed to form actions and notions wholly removed from the senses, derive their *origin* from sensible ideas, whence they are *transferred* to significations more abstruse . . . Whence we may conjecture what kind of notions they had who spoke these first languages and how nature will suggest unexpectedly to men the origin and the principle of all their knowledge by the terms themselves. THEOPHILUS: . . . The fact is not always recognized because most frequently the true etymologies are lost . . . It will, however, be well to consider *this analogy of sensible and non-sensible things* which has served as the basis of *tropes:* a matter that you will understand the better by considering a very extended example such as is furnished by the use of *prepositions,* like *to, with, from, before, in, without, by, for, upon, towards,* which are all derived from place, from distance, and from motion, and afterwards transferred to every sort of change, order, sequence, difference, agreement. *To* signifies approach, as in the expression: I go *to* Rome. But as in order to attract anything we bring it near that to which we wish to unite it, we say that one thing is attached *to* another. And further, as there is, so to speak, an immaterial attachment." The demonstration is made for each preposition, and closes in this way: "and as these analogies are extremely variable and do not depend on any determinate notions, it thence comes that languages vary much in the use of these *particles* and cases which the prepositions govern, or rather in which they are found as things understood and virtually included." *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding,* trans. A. G. Langley (London, 1896), book 3, chap. 1, "Words," pp. 289-91. Du Marsais, *Traite des tropes:* "Each language has particular . . . proper . . . metaphors" (chap. 1, x). "Certain figures may vary from one language to another," as Fontanier will say, "and some do not even occur in every language." "Preface au Traité general des figures du discours autres que les tropes," in Les *Figures du Discours,* ed. Gerard Genette (Paris: Flammarion, 1968), p. 275.

Condillac, whom Fontanier judged to be as "strong" as Du Marsais (ibid., p. 276), also thought that "the same figures are not admitted to every language." *De l'art d'icrire,* in *Oeuvres Philosophiques* II, iv.

40. Fontanier, "Preface," p. 99. Resemblance or analogy: such is the distinctive source of metaphor, from Aristotle to Fontanier. Du Marsais, in defining metaphor, also spoke

resemblance consist in *presenting an idea under the sign of another idea that is more striking or better known, and which, moreover, has no other tie to the first idea than that of a certain conformity or analogy.* As a genre these tropes can be reduced to a single one, *Metaphor,* whose name, which is so well known, and perhaps better known than the thing itself, has lost, as Laharpe observes, all its scholarly import. *Metaphor* is not ordinarily distinguished into species, like *Metonymy* and *Synecdoche;* however it must not be thought that it has but a single form, a single aspect, and that it is the same in every case. On the contrary, it is quite varied, and doubtless extends further than *Metonymy* and *Synecdoche,* for not only the noun, but further the adjective, the participle, the verb, and finally all species of words belong to its domain. Thus all species of words can be employed, or in effect are employed, *metaphorically,* if not as *figures,* at least as *catachreses.* The species of words capable of being employed *metaphorically* as *figures* are the noun, the adjective, the participle, the verb, and perhaps also the adverb, although rather rarely" (p. 99).

Now, on the one hand, everything excluded from this list of words is reserved for the catachresis of metaphor, a "not true figure," which "embraces in its extension even the interjection." ("There are even very few words, in each species, not under its domination," p. 215. We will come back to this problem later.) True metaphor, therefore, keeps within the limits of the Aristotelian "noun." Which, on the other hand, appears to be confirmed throughout the entire system of distinctions proposed by Fontanier in his general definition of words. Among these words corresponding to "ideas of an object"—which naturally can be nominalized—are classed *nouns,* all words "employed substantively" *(the beautiful, the true, the just; eating, drinking, sleeping; the for, the against; the front, the back; the why, the how; the inside, the outside; the buts, the ifs, the whys, the wherefores),* and active or passive participles. The first group corresponds to *substantive* ideas of object, and the second to *concrete* ideas of object. Among the words corresponding to the "ideas of relationship" are classed the verb ("But by *verb,* here, I understand only the properly named verb, the verb *to be,* called

of a "comparison which is in the mind." It remains that Aristotle made of metaphor a rather extended genre, as we have seen, in order to cover every other nominal figure, including metonymy; that Fontanier restricts the field of metaphor (and therefore of analogy or of resemblance) in order to oppose it to metonymy; and that Du Marsais at first, by etymology, had loosened the limits of metonymy: "The word *metonymy* signifies transposition or changing of name, one name for another. In this sense, this figure includes all the other Tropes; for in all Tropes, a word not being taken in the meaning proper to it, it awakens an idea that might be expressed by another word. In what follows, we will notice what properly distinguishes metonymy from the other Tropes. The masters of the art restrict metonymy to the following uses:" (Du Marsais, II, 2). Condillac (whose philosophy, more than any other, or at least like every other, might be considered as a treatise on analogy) advances a symmetrically inverse proposition: "What we have said of comparisons must be applied to metaphors. I will bring to your attention only that if one consults etymology, all tropes are metaphors: for metaphor properly signifies a word transported from one meaning to an other" *(De l'art d'écrire* II, vi).

the *abstract verb* or substantive *verb;* and not those improperly named verbs, the *concrete* verbs which are formed by the combination of the verb *to be* with a participle: *I love, I read, I come* for *I am loving, I am reading, I am coming,"* p. 45), the preposition, the adverb, and the conjunction. The dissymmetry of these oppositions appears to be rather marked: the superiority of the ideas of object to the ideas of relation ("delicate ideas that we did not wish to separate from their signs, for fear that they escape us," p. 45), and the correlative superiority of the substantive. This superiority is apparent not only in the case of the verb *to be.* Among all other species of words, those which are subject to variations ("in their forms, in their inflections") are governed by the substantive idea ("But it is easy to see that they are dominated by the substantive idea to whose expression they all tend more or less directly," p. 46). The other species of words (preposition, conjunction, adverb, interjection) "do not vary at all, because they are not immediately tied to the substantive idea, and are even entirely detached and independent from it; and because they hardly seem tied, fundamentally, to anything other than the views of the mind, being only, as concerns it, ways of seeing" (p. 46).

Everything, in the theory of metaphor, that is coordinate to this system of distinctions or at least to its principle, seems to belong to the great immobile chain of Aristotelian ontology, with its theory of the analogy of Being, its logic, its epistemology, and more precisely its poetics and its rhetoric. In effect, let us consider the Aristotelian definition of the noun, that is, the element of metaphor. The noun is the first semantic unity. It is the smallest signifying element. It is a composite *phone semantike,* each of whose elements is in itself insignificant *(asemos),* without meaning. The noun shares this characteristic with the verb, from which it is distinguished only by its atemporality.

Before coming to the noun, Aristotle had enumerated all the elements of *lexis* which are constituted by sound without signification *(phone asemos).* The letter, for example, the *stoikheion,* the ultimate element, is part of *lexis,* but has no meaning in itself. Here, the letter is not the graphic form, but the phonic element, the atom of the voice *(phone adiairetos).* Its insignificance is not indeterminate. The letter is not just any vocal emission without meaning. It is a vociferation which although without meaning, must nevertheless be capable of "naturally" entering into the formation or composition of a *phone semantike (ex hēs pephuke sunetē gignesthai phone),* opening the possibility of a noun or a verb, contributing to *saying what is.* This is the difference between animals and man: according to Aristotle both can emit indivisible sounds, but only man can make of them a letter: "The Letter is an indivisible sound of a particular kind, one that may become a factor in an intelligible sound. Indivisible sounds are uttered by the brutes also, but no one of these is a Letter in our sense of the term" *(Poetics* 1456b22–25). Aristotle does not analyze this difference; he interprets it by teleological retrospection. No internal characteristic distinguishes the atom of animal sound and the letter, Thus, it is only on the basis of the signifying phonic

composition, on the basis of meaning and reference, that the human voice should be distinguished from the call of an animal. Meaning and reference: that is, the possibility of signifying by means of a noun. What is proper to nouns is to signify something *(Ta de onomata sēmainei ti; Rhetoric* III, 10, 1410b11), an independent being identical to itself, conceived as such. 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. Aside from the classical and dogmatically affirmed limit between the animal without *logos* and man as the *zoon logon ekhon,* what appears here is a certain systematic indissociability of the value of metaphor and the metaphysical chain holding together the values of discourse, voice, noun, signification, meaning, imitative representation, resemblance; or, in order to reduce what these translations import or deport, the values of *logos, phone semantike, sēmainein, onoma, mimesis, homoiosis.* The definition of metaphor is in its place in the *Poetics,* which opens as a treatise on *mimesis. Mimesis* is never without the *theoretical* perception of resemblance or similarity, that is, of that which always will be posited as the condition for metaphor. *Homoiosis* is not only constitutive of the value of truth *(alētheia)* which governs the entire chain; it is that without which the metaphorical operation is impossible: "To produce a good metaphor is to see a likeness" *(To gar eu metapherein to to homoion theorem estin.* 1459a7-8). The condition for metaphor (for good and true metaphor) is the condition for truth. Therefore it is to be expected that the animal, deprived of *logos,* of *phone semantike,* of *stoikheion,* etc., also would be incapable of mimesis. *Mimesis* thus determined belongs to *logos,* and is not animalistic aping, or gesticular mimicry; it is tied to the possibility of meaning and truth in discourse. At the beginning of the *Poetics mimesis* in a way is posited as a possibility proper to *physis. Physis* is revealed in *mimesis,* or in the poetry which is a species of *mimesis,* by virtue of the hardly apparent structure which constrains *mimesis* from carrying to the exterior the fold of its redoubling. It belongs to *physis,* or, if you will, *physis* includes its own exteriority and its double. In this sense, *mimesis* is therefore a "natural" movement. This naturality is reduced and restricted to man's speech by Aristotle. But rather than a reduction, this constitutive gesture of metaphysics and of humanism is a teleological determination: naturality in general says itself, reassembles itself, knows itself, appears to itself, reflects itself, and "mimics" itself par excellence and in *truth* in human nature. *Mimesis* is proper to man. Only man imitates properly. Man alone takes pleasure in imitating, man alone learns to imitate, man alone learns by imitation. The power of truth, as the unveiling of nature *(physis)* by *mimesis,* congenitally belongs to the physics of man, to anthropophysics. Such is the natural origin of poetry, and such is the natural origin of metaphor: "It is clear that the general origin of poetry was due to two causes, each of them part of human nature *(physikai).* Imitation is natural *(symphyton:* innate, congenital) to man from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature *(mimētikōtaton)* in the world and learns at first *(mathēseisprōtas:* first knowledge)

by imitation. And it is also natural for all to delight in works of imitation" *(Poetics,* 1448b4–9).

As these two sources of poetry confirm, *logos, mimesis,* and *aletheia* here are one and the same possibility. And *logos* is in its element only in *phone.* It belongs there better than elsewhere. And this is always so according to a teleological determination: just as the destination of nature is to be mimed best in human nature, and just as man, more than any other animal, properly imitates *(mimetikotaton),* so the voice is the organ most apt to imitate. This vocation of the voice is designated by the same word *(mimetikotaton)* in book 3 of the *Rhetoric:* ". . . words (*onomata*) are imitations (*mimēmata*), and . . . the human voice . . . of all organs can best imitate things *(he phone pantōn mimetikotaton ton morion"* [III, I, 1404a21-22; translation modified]).

Metaphor thus, as an effect of *mimesis* and *homoiosis,* the manifestation of analogy, will be a means of knowledge, a means that is subordinate, but certain. One may say of it what is said of poetry: it is more philosophical and more serious (*philosophōteron kai spoudaioteron)* than history (*Poetics* 1451b5–6), since it recounts not only the particular, but also states the general, the probable and the necessary.[41] However, it is not as serious as philosophy itself, and apparently will conserve this intermediary status throughout the history of philosophy. Or rather, its ancillary status: metaphor, when well trained, must work in the service of truth, but the master is not to content himself with this, and must prefer the discourse of full truth to metaphor. For example, Aristotle reproaches Plato for being satisfied with "poetic metaphors" *(metaphoras legein poiētikas)* and for keeping to hollow language *(kenologein)* when he says that Ideas are the paradigms in which other things participate *(Metaphysics,* A9, 991a20, M5, 1079b25).

For the same reason, pleasure, the second "cause" of *mimesis* and metaphor, is the pleasure of knowing, of learning by resemblance, of recognizing the same. The philosopher will be *more* apt at this than anyone else. He will be man par excellence: "The explanation is to be found in a further fact: to be learning something is the greatest of pleasures, not only to the philosopher, but to the rest of mankind, however small their capacity for it—the reason of the delight in seeing the picture *(eikonas)* is that one is at the same time learning, and deducing *(syllogizesthai)* what is represented" *(Poetics,* 1448b12-17). Book 3 of the *Rhetoric* specifies this idea, between a stalk and a flower: "We all naturally (*physei*) find it agreeable to get hold of new ideas easily: words *(onomata)* signify something *(semainei ti),* and therefore those words are the most agreeable which bring us knowledge of something new . . . From metaphor . . . we can best get hold of something fresh. When the poet calls old age a 'withered stalk' (*kalamēn*) he conveys a new idea, a new fact, to us by means of the general notion of 'lost

41. "Metaphors must be drawn, as has been said already, from things that are related to the original thing, and yet not obviously so related *(apo oikeiōn kei me phanerōn)*—just as in philosophy also an acute mind will perceive resemblances *(to homoion . . . theorem)* even in things far apart" (*Rhetoric* III, ii, 1412a9-12).

bloom' which is common to both things. The similes (*eikones*) of the poets do the same . . . The simile, as has been said before, is a metaphor, differing from it only in having a prefixed word (*prothesei*), and just because it is longer it is less attractive. Besides, it does not say outright that 'this' is 'that' " *(Rhetoric* III, 10, 1410b10–19). Thus, metaphor sets before us, vivaciously, what the comparison more haltingly reconstitutes indirectly. To set before us, to make a picture, to exercise a lively action—these are so many virtues that Aristotle attributes to the good metaphor, virtues that he regularly associates with the value of *energeia*, whose decisive role in Aristotelian metaphysics, in metaphysics, is well known. "We have still to explain what we mean by 'making a picture,' and what must be done to effect this. I say that an expression puts something before our eyes when it represents things as in a state of activity *(energounta sēmainei).* Thus to say that a good man is 'four-square' is certainly a metaphor; both the good man and the square are perfect; but the metaphor does not suggest activity (*ou semainei energeian).* On the other hand, in the expression 'with his vigour in full bloom' *(anthousan)* there is a notion of activity"[42] *(Rhetoric* III, II, 1411b22–29). Most often, this metaphorical activation or actualization consists in animating the inanimate, in transporting something into the "psychic" order (ibid., 1412a2). (The opposition animate/inanimate also governs Fontanier's entire classification of metaphors.)

A dividend of pleasure, therefore, is the recompense for the economic development of the syllogism hidden in metaphor, the theoretical perception of resemblance. But the energy of this operation supposes, nevertheless, that the resemblance is not an identity. *Mimesis* yields pleasure only on the condition of giving us to see in action that which nonetheless is not to be seen in action, but only in its very resembling double, its *mimēma.* Let us leave open the question of this energetic absence, this enigmatic division, that is, the interval which makes scenes and tells tales.[43]

42. It indeed seems, in conformity with so many other convergent affirmations by Aristotle, that in the first case (" 'four-square' ") there is a metaphor, certainly, but a developed one, that is, a comparison, an image *(eikon)* "preceded by a word."

43. The pleasure, here, comes from a syllogism—to be completed. Rhetoric must take it into account. "Since learning and wondering are pleasant, it follows that such things as acts of imitation must be pleasant—for instance painting, sculpture, poetry—and every product of skillful imitation; this latter, even if the object imitated *(auto to memimemēnon)* is not itself pleasant; for it is not the object itself which here gives delight; the spectator draws inferences (*syllogismoi*); 'that is a so-and-so,' and thus learns something fresh. Dramatic turns of fortune and hairbreadth escapes from perils are pleasant. Everything like (*homoion*) and akin (*sungenes*) to oneself is pleasant . . . And because we are all fond of ourselves (*philautoi*), it follows that what is our own is pleasant to all of us, as for instance our own deeds and words *(erga kai logous).* That is why we are usually fond of our flatterers, and honour; also of our children, for our children are our own work (*autōn gar ergon ta tekna*). It is also pleasant to complete what is defective *(ta ellipē), tor* the whole thing thereupon becomes our own work . . . Similarly, since amusement and every kind of relaxation and laughter too belong to the class of pleasant things, it follows that ludicrous things are pleasant, whether men, words or deeds. We have discussed the ludicrous

The semantic system (the order of the *phone semantike* with all its connected concepts) is not separated from its other by a simple and continuous line. The limit does not divide the human from the animal. Another division furrows the entirety of "human" language. This latter division is not homogenous, is not human in all its aspects, and to the same degree. The noun still remains the determining criterion: included in the literal elements, the asemantic vocal emissions, are not only letters themselves. The syllable belongs to *lexis,* but of course has no meaning in itself. Above all, there are whole "words" which play an indispensable role in the organization of discourse, but still remain, from Aristotle's point of view, totally without meaning. The conjunction (*sundesmos*)[44] is a *phone asemos.* This holds equally for the article, for articulation in general *(arthron),* and for everything that functions *between* signifying members, between nouns, substantives, or verbs *(Poetics* 1456b38–1457a10). Articulation has no meaning because it makes no reference by means of a categoremic unity, to an independent unity, the unity of a substance or a being. Thus, it is excluded from the metaphorical field as the onomastic field. Henceforth, the annagrammatical,

separately (*chōris*) in the treatise on the Art of Poetry" *(Rhetoric* I, ii, 1371b4–1373a1).

According to the elliptical syllogism of *mimesis,* the pleasure of knowing always accommodates itself to the marking absence of its object. It is even born of this accommodation. The *mimeme* is neither the thing itself nor something totally other. Nothing will upset the law of this pleasure according to the economy of the same and of difference, not even—especially not—the horror, ugliness, and unbearable obscenity of the imitated thing, as soon as it remains out of sight and out of reach, off stage. We would have to follow the chain of examples which have obsessed this classical *topos,* from Aristotle to Lessing. As always, when the mimetic ellipsis is in play, Oedipus, the serpent, and parricide are not far off. "Though the objects themselves may be painful to see, we delight to view the most realistic representations of them in art, the forms for example of the lowest animals and of dead bodies . . . the reason of the delight in seeing the picture is that one is at the same time learning and deducing *(manthanein kai syllogizesthai)* what is represented, for instance, that this figure is such and such a person" *(Poetics* 1448b10–17). "Il n'est point de serpent ni de monstre odieux / Qui par l'art unite, ne puisse plaire aux yeux: / D'un pinceau délicat l'artifice agréable / Du plus affreux objet fait un objet aimable. / Ainsi pour nous charmer, la Tragédie en pleurs / D'Oedipe tout sanglant fit parler des douleurs / D'Oreste parricide exprima les alarmes, / Et, pour nous divertir, nous arracha des larmes." Boileau, *Art Poetique,* Chant II, 1-8. ["There is no serpent or odious monster / That imitated by art cannot be pleasing to our eyes: /With a delicate brush agreeable artifice / Makes of the most frightful object a pleasing one. / Thus, for our pleasure, the tearful Tragedy / Of Oedipus, all bloody, spoke of sorrows / And of parricide Orestes sounded the alarum, / And, for our diversion, wrenched from us our tears."] Euripides' *Orestes* wished no longer to see in his dreams a head bristling with snakes. Longinus cited and commented on the lines of this scene; Boileau translated them. Within the same space, the same system, one can also refuse the unbearable pleasure of such a representation. From *La poetique* by Jules de la Mesnardière (1639): "Beautiful descriptions are certainly agreeable . . . But whatever powerful attractions these marvelous paintings might have, they should represent only things that are pleasant or at least bearable. A fine palette is to be employed for subjects that are not odious, and one should not work like those bizarre painters who put their entire science in the portrayal of a snake or some horrid reptile."

44. The *Rhetoric* also treats the good usage of the conjunction (III, v) and the effects of the asyndeton, the suppression of the conjunction (III, xii).

which functions with the aid of parts of nouns, dismembered nouns, is foreign to the metaphorical field in general, as is also the syntactic play of articulations.

Since this entire theory of the semantic, of *lexis,* and of the noun is implicated in metaphor, it is to be expected that the definition of metaphor would follow its exposition. This is the order of the *Poetics.* And that this definition should intervene immediately after that of the *phone semantike* and the *phone asemos,* is the index not only of a necessity, but also of a difficulty. Metaphor does not just illustrate the general possibilities thus described. It risks disrupting the semantic plenitude to which it should belong. Marking the moment of the turn or of the detour *[du tour ou du detour]* during which meaning might seem to venture forth alone, unloosed from the very thing it aims at however, from the truth which attunes it to its referent, metaphor also opens the wandering of the semantic. The sense of a noun, instead of designating the thing which the noun habitually must designate, carries itself elsewhere. If I say that the evening is the old age of the day, or that old age is the evening of life, "the evening," although having the same sense, will no longer designate the same things. By virtue of its power of metaphoric displacement, signification will be in a kind of state of availability, between the nonmeaning preceding language (which has a meaning) and the truth of language which would say the thing such as it is in itself, in act, properly. This truth is not certain. There can be bad metaphors. Are the latter metaphors? Only an axiology supported by a theory of truth can answer this question; and this axiology belongs to the interior of rhetoric. It cannot be neutral.

In nonmeaning, language has not yet been born. In the truth, language is to be filled, achieved, actualized, to the point of erasing itself, without any possible play, before the (thought) thing which is properly manifested in the truth. *Lexis* is itself, if we might put it thus, only at the stage when meaning has appeared, but when truth still might be missed, when the thing does not yet manifest itself in act in the truth. This is the moment of possible meaning as the possibility of non truth. As the moment of the detour in which the truth might still be lost, metaphor indeed belongs to *mimesis,* to the fold of *physis,* to the moment when nature, itself veiling itself, has not yet refound itself in its proper nudity, in the act of its propriety.

If metaphor, the chance and risk of *mimesis,* can always miss the true, it is that metaphor must count with a determined absence. After the general definition, Aristotle distinguishes four kinds of metaphors. The apparently unsewn series of examples perhaps might follow the basting of an entire narrative. 1 Transport from genus to species (*genos* ——→ *eidos):* "Here stands my ship" *(Odyssey* I, 185). Instead of the word "stands," the more general word, the proper word would have been "anchored," its species. (A traditional recourse to the ship, to its movement, its oars, and its sails, in order to speak figuratively of the means of transport that the metaphorical figure is.) 2. Transport from species to genus: "Truly ten thousand good deeds has Ulysses wrought" *(Iliad* II, 272). "Ten thousand" is a specific member of the genus "large number." 3. Transport

from species to species: " 'Drawing the life with bronze' " and " 'severing with the enduring bronze' " (doubtless from Empedocles' *Katharmoi*)."Drawing" and "severing" are two species of the general operation which consists in "taking away" (*aphelein*).4. Analogy: when there are two terms two by two, analogy consists in stating the fourth instead of the second and the second instead of the fourth. The cup is to Dionysus what the shield is to Ares. "The shield of Dionysus" and "the cup of Ares" are metaphors by analogy. Old age and life, evening and day, yields for example in Empedocles, " 'the evening of life' " (*Poetics* 1457b10–25; *Rhetoric* III, chap. 4).

Analogy is metaphor par excellence. Aristotle emphasizes this point often in the *Rhetoric.* "Liveliness is got by using metaphor by analogy and by being graphic" *(Rhetoric* III, 11, 1411b21). "Of the four kinds of metaphor, the most taking is the metaphor by analogy (*kat'analogian*).Thus Pericles, for instance, said that the vanishing from their country of the young men who had fallen in the war was 'as if the spring were taken out of the year.' Leptines, speaking of the Lacedamonians, said that he would not have the Athenians let Greece 'lose one of her two eyes' " *(Rhetoric* III, 10, 1411al). This privilege articulates Aristotle's entire metaphorology with his general theory of the analogy of Being.

In all these examples—in which it is so often a question of taking away, cutting off, severing (life, the eyes, etc.)—all the terms are nonetheless 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. The hidden term is not anonymous, does not have to be invented; there is nothing hermetic or elliptical about the exchange. It is almost a comparison or a double comparison. Now, Aristotle remarks, there are cases in which one of the terms is missing. The term has to be invented then. More surprisingly, in these cases the impression is stronger and occasionally also truer, more poetic: the turn of speech is more generous, more generative, more ingenious. Aristotle illustrates this with an example: an example that is the most illustrious, that is illustrative par excellence, the most natural luster there is. It is as concerns this example's power to engender that the question of the missing name comes to be asked and that one of the members of the analogical square has to be supplemented.

(In the *Republic* (VI–VII), before and after the Line which presents ontology according to the analogies of proportionality, the sun appears. In order to disappear. It is there, but as the invisible source of light, in a kind of insistent eclipse, more than essential, producing the essence—Being and appearing—of what is. One looks at it directly on pain of blindness and death. Keeping itself beyond all that which is, it figures the Good of which the sensory sun is the son: the source of life and visibility, of seed and light.)

Here is the case of the Sun in the *Poetics* (1457b25–30): "It may be that some of the terms thus related have no special name of their own, but for all that they will be metaphorically described in just the same way. Thus to cast forth seed corn is called 'sowing' (*speirein*);but to cast forth its flame, as said of the sun,

has no special name *(to de ten phloga apo tou hēliou anōnymon).* How is this anonymity to be supplemented? "This nameless act, however, stands in just the same relation *(homoiōs ekhei)* to its object, sunlight, as sowing to the seed-corn. Hence the expression in the poet 'sowing around a god-created flame' *(speirōn theoktistan phloga).*"

Where has it ever been *seen* that there is the same relation between the sun and its rays as between sowing and seeds? If this analogy imposes itself—and it does—then it is that within language the analogy itself is due to a long and hardly visible chain whose first link is quite difficult to exhibit, and not only for Aristotle. Rather than a metaphor, do we not have here an "enigma," a secret narrative, composed of several metaphors, a powerful asyndeton or dissimulated conjunction, whose essential characteristic is "to describe a fact in an impossible combination of words" *(ainigmatos te gar idea haute esti, to legonta huparkhonta adunata sunapsai)"* (*Poetics,* 1458a26–27)?

If every metaphor is an elliptical comparison or analogy, in this case we are dealing with a metaphor par excellence, a metaphorical redoubling, an ellipsis of ellipsis. But the missing term calls for a noun which names something properly. The present terms (the sun, the rays, the act of sowing, the seed) are not in themselves, according to Aristotle, tropes. Here, the metaphor consists in a substitution of proper names having a fixed meaning and referent, especially when we are dealing with the sun whose referent has the originality of always being original, unique, and irreplaceable, at least in the representation we give of it. There is only one sun in this system. The proper name, here, is the nonmetaphorical prime mover of metaphor, the father of all figures. Everything turns around it, everything turns toward it.

And yet, in one sentence, in a parenthesis that is immediately closed, Aristotle incidentally invokes the case of a *lexis* that would be metaphorical in all its aspects. Or at least no proper name is present in it, is apparent as such. Immediately after the solar sowing, here is the "wineless cup": "There is also another form of qualified metaphor. Having given the thing the alien name, one may by a negative addition deny of it one of the attributes naturally associated with its new name. An instance of this would be to call the shield not 'the cup of *Ares*' as in the former case, but 'a cup that holds no wine' " (1457b30–33).

But this procedure can be pursued and complicated infinitely, although Aristotle does not say so. No reference properly being named in such a metaphor, the figure is carried off into the adventure of a long, implicit sentence, a secret narrative which nothing assures us will lead us back to the proper name. The metaphorization of metaphor, its bottomless overdeterminability, seems to be inscribed in the structure of metaphor, but as its negativity. As soon as one admits that all the terms in an analogical relation already are caught up, one by one, in a metaphorical relation, everything begins to function no longer as a sun, but as a star, the punctual source of truth or properness remaining invisible

or nocturnal. Which refers, in any case, in Aristotle's text, to the problem of the proper name or the analogy of *Being.*[45]

If the sun can "sow," its name is inscribed in a system of relations that constitutes it. This name is no longer the proper name of a unique thing which metaphor would *overtake;* it already has begun to say the multiple, divided origin of all seed, of the eye, of invisibility, death, the father, the "proper name," etc. If Aristotle does not concern himself with this consequence of his theory, it is doubtless because it contradicts the philosophical value of *aletheia,* the proper appearing of the propriety of what is, the entire system of concepts which invest the philosopheme "metaphor," burden it in delimiting it. And do so by barring its movement: just as one represses by crossing out, or just as one governs the infinitely floating movement of a vessel in order to drop anchor where one will. All the onomatism which dominates the theory of metaphor, and the entire Aristotelian doctrine of simple names *(Poetics,* 1457a) is elaborated in order to assure harbors of truth and propriety.

Like *mimesis,* metaphor *comes back* to *physis,* to its truth and its presence. There, nature always refinds its own, proper analogy, its own resemblance to itself, takes increase only from itself. Nature gives itself in metaphor. Which is why, moreover, the metaphoric capacity is a natural gift. In this sense, it is given to everyone[46] *(Rhetoric* III, II). But, following a framework we regularly come across, nature gives (itself) more to some than to others. More to men than to beasts, more to philosophers than to other men. Since the invention of metaphors is an innate, natural, congenital gift, it will also be a characteristic of genius. The notion of nature makes this contradiction tolerable. In nature each has his nature. Some have more nature than others, more genius, more generosity, more seed. If "the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor," some have the genius of metaphor, know better than others to perceive resemblances and to unveil the truth of nature. An ungraspable resource. "To be a master of metaphor" "is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others and it is also a sign of genius" *(Poetics,* 1459a5–7; see also *Rhetoric* III, II). One knows or one does not know, one can or one cannot. The ungraspable is certainly a genius for perceiving the hidden resemblance, but it is also, consequently, the capacity to substitute one term for another. The genius of *mimesis,* thus, can give rise to a language, a code

45. We cannot undertake this problem here. See, particularly, Pierre Aubenque, *Le problème de l'être chez Aristote* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), and J. Vuillemin, *De la logique a la théologie* (Paris: Flammarion, 1967).

46. "Boileau and Du Marsais have said, and it has been a thousand times repeated on their authority, that as concerns Tropes more are created in Les Halles on a market day than there are in the entire *Aeneid,* or than are created at the Académie in several consecutive sittings . . . Now is this not an obvious proof that Tropes are an essential part of the language of speech; and that like the language of speech, they have been given to us by nature in order to serve in the expression of our thoughts and feelings; and that consequently they have the same origin as this language and as languages in general?" (Fontanier, "Preface," p. 157).

of regulated substitutions, the talent and procedures of rhetoric, the imitation of genius, the mastery of the ungraspable. Henceforth, am I certain that everything can be taken from me except the power to replace? For example, that which is taken from me by something else? Under what conditions would one always have one more trick, one more turn, up one's sleeve, in one's sack? One more seed? And would the sun always be able to sow? and *physis* to sow itself?

The Flowers of Rhetoric: The Heliotrope

> Let us come back to philosophy, which requires arguments and not analogies.
>
> Diderot, *Letter on the Deaf and Dumb*[47]

> Mlle. de l'Espinasse: Why, I should think it's my head. Bordeu: Your whole head? Mlle. de l'Espinasse: No, but look here, Doctor, I'll have to give you a comparison if I am to make myself clear. Women and poets seem to reason mostly by comparisons. So imagine a spider . . . D'Alembert: Who's that? Is that you Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse?
> Diderot, *D'Alembert's Dream*[48]

> One day all that will be of just as much value, and no more, as the amount of belief existing today in the masculinity or femininity of the sun.
> Nietzsche, *The Dawn of Day*[49]

> The alternative "either-or" cannot be expressed in any way whatever . . . They [dreams] show a particular preference for combining contraries into a unity or for representing them as one and the same thing . . . The same blossoming branch (cf. *"des Mädchen's Blüten"* ["the maiden's blossoms"] in Goethe's poem *"Der Müllerin Verrat"*) represented both sexual innocence and its contrary . . . One and only one of these logical relations is very highly favoured by the mechanism of dream formation: namely the relation of similarity

47. TN. In *Diderot's Early Philosophical Works,* trans. Margaret Jourdain (Chicago: Open Court), p. 187.

48. TN. In *Rameau's Nephew and Other Works,* trans. Jacques Barzun and Ralph H. Bowen (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 127. Translation modified.

49. In *Complete Works,* vol. 9, trans. J. M. Kennedy, p. 12.

(*Ähnlichkeit*), consonance (*Uber-einstimmung*) or approximation (*Berührung*)—therelation of "just as" (*gleichwie*). This relation, unlike any other, is capable of being represented in dreams in a variety of ways.* (**Note:* Cf. Aristotle's remark on the qualifications of a dream interpreter quoted above.)[50]

Aristotle remarked in this connection that the best interpreter of dreams was the man who could best grasp similarities (ibid., p. 97, n. 2). At this point, too, the words *"expensiveflowers, one has to pay for them"* must have had what was no doubt literally a financial meaning.—Thus the flower symbolism in this dream included virginal femininity (*jungfräulichweiblicher*), masculinity and an allusion to defloration by violence . . . She laid all the more emphasis on the preciousness of the *"centre"*—on another occasion she used the words, *"a centre-piece of flowers"*—thatis to say, on her virginity . . . Later on the dreamer produced an addendum (*Nachtrag*) to the dream: . . . "there is a gap, a little space in the flowers"

(ibid., p. 376).

Metaphor then is what is proper to man. And more properly each man's, according to the measure of genius—of nature—that *dominates* in him. What of this domination? And what does "proper to man" mean here, when the issue is one of this kind of capacity?

The necessity of examining the history and system of the value of "properness" has become apparent to us. An immense task, which supposes the elaboration of an entire strategy of deconstruction and an entire protocol of reading. One can foresee that such a labor, however far off it may be, in one fashion or another will have to deal with what is translated by "proper" in the Aristotelian text. That is to say, with at least three meanings.

The Aristotelian problematic of metaphor does not recur to a very simple, very clear, i.e. central, opposition of what will be called proper, literal meaning/ figurative meaning. Nothing prevents a metaphorical lexis from being proper, that is, appropriate *(prepon),* suitable, decent, proportionate, becoming, in re-

50. SE IV, 316-20. The next two citations from *The Interpretation of Dreams* are to this edition.

lation to the subject, situation, things.[51] It is true that this value of properness remains rather exterior to the form—metaphorical or not—of discourse. This no longer holds for the significations *kurion* and *idion,* which are both generally translated by the same word: *proper.*[52] Although the difference between *kurion* and *idion* is never given thematic exposition, it seems that *kurion,* more frequent in both the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric,* designates the propriety of a name utilized in its dominant, master, capital sense. Let us not forget that this sense of sovereignty is also the tutelary sense of *kurion.* By extension, *kurion* is interpreted as the primitive (as opposed to derivative) sense, and sometimes is used as the equivalent of the usual, literal, familiar sense (to *de kurion kai to oikeion [Rhetoric,* III, II, 1404b6]): "By the ordinary word (*kurion*)I mean that in general use in a country" *(Poetics* 1457b3–4). *Kurion* is then distinguished, on the one hand, from the unusual, rare, idiomatic word (*glōtta*),and from metaphor, on the other. As for *idion,* which is much rarer in this context, it seems to participate in the two Other meanings. More precisely, in the *Rhetoric* (III, V, 1407a31) to employ the proper name is to avoid the detour of periphrasis *(tois idiois onomasi legein, kai me tois periekhousin),* which is the correct thing to do. The contamination of these three values seems already accomplished in the Ciceronian notion of *verba propria* as opposed to *verba translata (De oratore* 2.4).

However, the value of the *idion* seems to support this entire metaphorology, without occupying center stage. We know that in the *Topics,* for example, it is at the center of a theory of the proper, of essence, and of accident. Now, if metaphor (or *mimesis* in general) aims at an effect of cognition, it cannot be treated without being placed in relation to a knowledge that bears on *definitions:* on what the thing of which one speaks is, properly, essentially, or accidentally. Certainly one may speak properly or improperly of what is not proper to the thing, its accident, for example. Here, the two values properness/improperness do not have the same locus of pertinence. Nevertheless, the ideal of every language, and in particular of metaphor, being to bring to knowledge the thing itself, the turn of speech will be better if it brings us closer to the thing's essential or proper truth. The space of language, the field of its divisions, is opened precisely by the difference between essence, the proper, and accident. Three reference points, preliminarily.

1. A noun is proper when it has but a single sense. Better, it is only in this case that it is properly a noun. Univocity is the essence, or better, the *telos* of language. No philosophy, as such, has ever renounced this Aristotelian ideal. This ideal is philosophy. Aristotle recognizes that a word may have several meanings. This is a fact. But this fact has right of entry into language only in the extent to which the polysemia is finite, the different significations are limited in number, and above all sufficiently *distinct,* each remaining one and identifi-

51. See, for example, *Rhetoric* III, 7. On the translation of *prepon* see Brunschwig's note to his edition of *Les Topiques d'Aristote* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1966), p. 6, note 3.

52. TN. As will be seen in the next few citations from Aristotle, *kurion* and *idion* are *hot* translated into English by the same word ("proper"), although they are in French. However these concepts do belong to the system of concepts of the "proper" (literal, correct, usual, individual, particular, belonging) that Derrida is analyzing here.

able. Language is what it is, language, only insofar as it can then master and analyze polysemia. With no remainder. A nonmasterable dissemination is not even a polysemia, it belongs to what is outside language. "And it makes no difference even if one were to say a word has several meanings, if only they are limited in number; for to each formula there might be assigned a different word. For instance, we might say that 'man' has not one meaning but several, one of which would be defined as 'two-footed animal,' while there might be also several other formulae if only they were limited in number; for a peculiar name might be assigned to each of the formulae [what is translated by 'peculiar name' is precisely the 'proper' name, *idion onoma;* and 'formula' is *logos*]. If, however, they were not limited but one were to say that the word has an *infinite* number of meanings *(ei de me (tetheiē) all' apeira semainein phaiē),* obviously reasoning [definition, discourse, *logos]* would be impossible; for not to have one meaning is to have no meaning (to *gar me hen semainein outhen semainein estin),* and if words have no meaning, reasoning *(dialegesthai)* with other people, and indeed with oneself, has been annihilated; for it is impossible to think anything if we do not think one thing *(outhen gar endekhetainoein me noounta hen);* but if this is possible, one name might be assigned to *this* thing. Let it be assumed then, as was said at the beginning, that the name has a meaning, and has one meaning *(semainon ti to onoma kai semainon hen)" (Metaphysics* 4, 1006a34–b13).[53]

Each time that polysemia is irreducible, when no unity of meaning is even promised to it, one is outside language. And consequently, outside humanity. What is proper to man is doubtless the capacity to make metaphors, but in order to mean some thing, and only one. In this sense, the philosopher, who ever has but one thing to say, is the man of man. Whoever does not subject equivocalness to this law is already a bit less than a man: a sophist, who in sum says nothing, nothing that can be reduced to a meaning.[54] At the limit of this "meaning-nothing," one is hardly an animal, but rather a plant, a reed, and not a thinking one: "We can however demonstrate negatively the impossibility of the same thing being and not being, if our opponent will only say something; and if he says nothing, it is absurd to attempt to reason with one who will not reason about anything, in so far as he refuses to reason. For such a man, as such, is

53. See also *Topics* I, 18. Du Marsais: "In a line of reasoning one must always take a word in the same sense as one has taken it initially, otherwise one is not reasoning correctly." Fontanier: "Words, in principle, cannot each signify but one single thing." Cited by Tzvetan Todorov, *Littérature et signification* (Paris: Larousse, 1967), pp. 109-10.

54, The poet stands between the two. He is the man of metaphor. While the philosopher is interested only in the truth of meaning, beyond even signs and names; and the sophist manipulates empty signs and draws his effects from the contingency of signifiers (whence his taste for equivocality, and primarily for homonymy, the deceptive identity of signifiers), the poet plays on the multiplicity of signifieds, but in order to return to the identity of meaning: "Homonyms are chiefly useful to enable the sophist to mislead his hearers. Synonyms are useful to the poet, by which I mean words whose ordinary meaning is the same *(kuria te kai sunōnuma),* e.g. *advancing (poreuesthai)* and *proceeding (badizein);* these two are ordinary words *(kuria)* and have the same meaning" *(Rhetoric* III s 1404b37-1405al).

seen already to be no better than a mere vegetable *(homoios gar phutōi)*" (*Metaphysics* 1006a12-15). And such a metaphorical vegetable *(phutos)* no longer belongs completely to *physis* to the extent that it is presented, in truth, by *mimesis, logos,* and the voice of man.

2. Although inseparable from essence, the proper is not to be confused with it. Doubtless this division is what permits the play of metaphor. The latter can manifest properties, can relate properties extracted from the essence of different things to each other, can make them known on the basis of their resemblance, but nonetheless without directly, fully, and properly stating essence itself, without bringing to light the truth of the thing itself.

The transported significations are those of attributed properties, not those of the thing itself, as subject or substance. Which causes metaphor to remain mediate and abstract. For metaphor to be possible, it is necessary, without involving the thing itself in a play of substitutions, that one be able to replace properties for one another, and that these properties belong to the same essence of the same thing, or that they be extracted from different essences. The necessary condition of these extractions and exchanges is that the essence of a concrete subject be capable of several properties, and then that a particular permutation between the essence and what is proper to (and inseparable from) it be possible, within the medium of a quasi-synonymy. This is what Aristotle calls the *antikategoreisthai:* the predicate of the essence and the predicate of the proper can be exchanged without the statement becoming false: "A property is something which does not show the essence of a thing, but belongs to it alone, and is predicated convertibly *(antikatēgoreitai)* of it."[55] We have been able to say, for example, that metaphor, the metaphoric capacity, is what is proper to man. In effect, given a concrete subject, Socrates, whose essence is humanity, one will have stated something proper each time that one will be able to say, "If Socrates is a man, he has logos," and reciprocally, "If Socrates has logos, he is a man"; or "If Socrates is capable of *mimesis,* he is a man," and vice versa; or "If Socrates can make metaphors, he is a man" and vice versa, etc. The first example of the *antikategoreisthai* given by the *Topics* is grammar: what is proper to man is grammar, the capacity to learn to read and write. This property belongs to the chain of what is proper to man *(logos, phone semantike, mimesis, metaphora,* etc.). "For

55. Aristotle, *Topics* I, 5, 102a18–19, trans. E. S. Forster (Loeb Classical Library). Brunschwig's edition of the *Topics* contains a note that makes a point very important for us here: "Contrary to its traditional interpretation (but conforming to its etymological sense), the word *antikategoreisthai* does not designate the legitimacy of the *transposition of subject and predicate,* but rather the legitimacy of a *reciprocal substitution between two predicates* related to an identical concrete subject (designated by the words *tou pragmatos*). In other words, one can say that a predicate P is proper to a subject S not when one has *'S is P and P is S,'* but rather when one has *'for every concrete subject X, if X is S, X is P, and if X is P, X is S.'* " See also the following section of this note. And, on the different species of "proper" (proper in itself—"For example, the property of man as a mortal living creature receptive of knowledge,"—or relatively; perpetually or temporarily), see *Topics* V, i, 128b30-35.

example, it is a property of man to be capable of learning grammar *(hoion idion anthrōpou to grammatikēs einai dektikon);* for if a certain being is a man, he is capable of learning grammar, and if he is capable of learning grammar, he is a man."[56]

3. What is proper to the sun? The question is asked in the *Topics,* as an example. Is this by chance? Was this already insignificant in the *Poetics?* Unceasingly, unwillingly, we have been carried along by the movement which brings the sun to turn in metaphor; or have been attracted by what turned the philosophical metaphor toward the sun. Is not this flower of rhetoric (like) a sunflower? That is—but this is not exactly a synonym—analogous to the heliotrope?

Initially, of course, what will appear in the Aristotelian example is that heliotropic metaphors can be bad metaphors. In effect, it is difficult to know what is proper to the sun properly, literally named: the *sensory* sun. It follows that every metaphor which implies the sun (as tenor or vehicle) does not bring clear and certain knowledge: "Every object of sensation, when it passes outside the range of sensation, becomes obscure; for it is not clear whether it still exists, because it is comprehended only by sensation. This will be true of such attributes as do not necessarily and always attend upon the subject. For example, he who has stated that it is a property of the sun to be 'the brightest star that moves above the earth' has employed in the property something of a kind which is comprehensible only by sensation, namely 'moving above the earth'; and so the property of the sun would not have been correctly assigned, for it will not be manifest, when the sun sets, whether it is still moving above the earth, because sensation then fails us."[57]

This gives rise, apparently, to two consequences which might appear contradictory, but whose opposition in a way constructs the philosophical concept of metaphor, dividing it according to a law of ambiguity confirmed ceaselessly.

First consequence: Heliotropic metaphors are always imperfect metaphors. They provide us with too little knowledge, because one of the terms directly or indirectly implied in the substitution (the sensory sun) cannot be known in what is proper to it. Which also means that the sensory sun is always im-properly known, and therefore im-properly named. The sensory in general does not limit knowledge for reasons that are intrinsic to the *form of the presence* of the sensory thing; but first of all because the *aisthēton* can always *not* present itself, can hide itself, absent itself. It does not yield itself 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). As the metaphoric trope always implies a sensory kernel, or rather something like the sensory, which can always not be present

56. *Topics* I, 5, 102a20–22. See also Brunschwig's note.

57. *Topics* V, 3, 131b20–30. See also G. Verbeke, "La notion de propriété dans les Topiques," in *Aristotle on Dialectics: The Topics,* ed. G. E. L. Owen (Oxford, 1968). The author analyzes in particular the reasons for which " 'the proper' cannot be such that its belonging to the subject could be known uniquely by sensation" (p. 273).

in act and in person, and since the sun in this respect is the sensory signifier of the sensory par excellence, that is, the sensory model of the sensory (the Idea, paradigm, or parabola of the sensory), then the turning of the sun always will have been the trajectory of metaphor. Of bad metaphor, certainly, which furnishes only improper knowledge. But as the best metaphor is never absolutely good, without which it would not be a metaphor, does not the bad metaphor always yield the best example? Thus, metaphor means heliotrope, both a movement turned toward the sun and the turning movement of the sun.

But let us not hasten to make of this a truth of metaphor. Are you sure that you know what the heliotrope is?

The sun does not just provide an example, even if the most remarkable one, of sensory Being such that it can always disappear, keep out of sight, not be present. The very opposition of appearing and disappearing, the entire lexicon of the *phainesthai,* of *aletheia,* etc., of day and night, of the visible and the invisible, of the present and the absent—all this is possible only under the sun. Insofar as it structures the metaphorical space of philosophy, the sun represents what is natural in philosophical language. In every philosophical language, it is that which permits itself to be retained by natural language. In the metaphysical alternative which opposes formal or artificial language to natural language, "natural" should always lead us back to *physis* as a solar system, or, more precisely, to a certain history of the relationship earth/sun in the system of perception.

Second consequence: Something has been inverted in our discourse. Above we said that the sun is the unique, irreplaceable, natural referent, around which everything must turn, toward which everything must turn. Now, following the same route, however, we must reverse the proposition: the literally, properly named sun, the sensory sun, does not furnish poor knowledge solely because it furnishes poor metaphors, it is itself solely metaphorical. Since, as Aristotle tells us, we can no longer be certain of its sensory characteristics as of its "properties," the sun is never properly present in discourse. Each time that there is a metaphor, there is doubtless a sun somewhere; but each time that there is sun, metaphor has begun. If the sun is metaphorical always, already, it is no longer completely natural. It is always, already a luster, a chandelier, one might say an *artificial* construction, if one could still give credence to this signification when nature has disappeared. For if the sun is no longer completely natural, what in nature does remain natural? What is most natural in nature bears within itself the means to emerge from itself; it accommodates itself to "artificial" light, eclipses itself, ellipses itself, always has been other, itself: father, seed, fire, eye, egg, etc., that is, so many other things, providing moreover the measure of good and bad metaphors, clear and obscure metaphors; and then, at the limit, the measure of that which is worse or better than metaphor:

"One commonplace (*topos*) regarding obscurity is that you should see whether what is stated is equivocal with something else . . . Another commonplace is

to see whether he has spoken metaphorically, as, for example, if he has described knowledge as 'unshakeable' (*ametaptōton*), or the earth as a 'nurse' (*tithēnēn*) or temperance as a 'harmony' (*sumphōnian*); for metaphorical expressions are always obscure *(asaphes;* a metaphor in the qualification of metaphor). Also, it is possible to quibble against one who has spoken metaphorically, representing him as having used the word in its proper sense (*hōs kuriōs*); for then the definition given will not fit, as in the case of 'temperance' for 'harmony' is always used of sounds . . . Further, you must see if he uses terms of which the use is not well-established, as Plato calls the eye 'brow-shaded' . . . for unusual words are always obscure. Words are sometimes used neither equivocally, nor metaphorically, nor in their proper sense *(oute kurids);* for example, the law is said to be the 'measure' or 'image' (*metrone eikon)* of things naturally just. Such phrases are worse than metaphors; for a metaphor in a way adds to our knowledge of what is indicated (to *sēmainomenon*) on account of the similarity (*dia ten homoiotēta*), for those who use metaphors always do so on account of some similarity. But the kind of phrase of which we are speaking does not add to our knowledge; for no similarity exists in virtue of which the law is a 'measure' or an 'image,' nor is the law usually described by these words in their proper sense. So, if anyone says that the law is a 'measure' or an 'image' in the proper sense of these words, he is lying; for an image is something whose coming into being is due to imitation (*dia mimēseōs*), and this does not apply to the law. If, however, he is not using the word in its proper sense, obviously he has spoken obscurely, and with worse effect than any kind of metaphorical language. Further, you must see whether the definition of the contrary fails to be clear from the description given; for correctly assigned definitions also indicate their contraries. Or, again, you must see whether, when it is stated by itself, it fails to show clearly what it is that it defines, just as in the words of the early painters, unless they were inscribed *(ei me tis epegrapsen),* it was impossible to recognize what each figure represented" *(Topics* VI, 2, 139b19–140a23; see also IV, 3, 123a33).

The appeal to the criteria of clarity and obscurity would suffice to confirm what we stated above: this entire philosophical delimitation of metaphor already lends itself to being constructed and worked by "metaphors." How could a piece of knowledge or a language be properly clear or obscure? Now, all the concepts which have operated in the definition of metaphor always have an origin and an efficacity that are themselves "metaphorical," to use a word that this time, rigorously is no longer suitable to designate tropes that are as much defining as defined.[58] If we went back to each term in the definition proposed by the *Poetics,* we could recognize in it the mark of a figure *(metaphora* or *epiphora* is also

58. The general form of this inclusion is recognized by the *Topics,* and illustrated with this example: "Another way is when the term which is being defined is used in the definition itself. This passes unobserved when the actual name of the object which is being defined is not employed, for example, if one has defined the sun as 'a star appearing by day'; for in introducing the day, one introduces the sun" (VI, 4, 142a-142b).

a movement of spatial translation; *eidos* is also a visible figure, a contour and a form, the space of an aspect or of a species; *genos* is also an affiliation, the base of a birth, of an origin, of a family, etc.). All that these tropes maintain and sediment in the entangling of their roots is apparent. However, the issue is not to take the function of the concept back to the etymology of the noun along a straight line. We have been attentive to the internal, systematic, and synchronic articulation of the Aristotelian concepts in order to avoid this etymologism. Nevertheless, none of their names being a conventional and arbitrary *X,* the historical or genealogical (let us not say etymological) tie of the signified concept to its signifier (to language) is not a reducible contingency.

This implication of the defined in the definition, this abyss of metaphor will never cease to stratify itself, simultaneously widening and consolidating itself: the (artificial) light and (displaced) habitat of classical rhetoric.

Du Marsais illustrates his definition of metaphor this way:

"When one speaks of the *light of the spirit,* the word *light* is taken metaphorically; for, just as light in the literal, proper sense makes us see corporal objects, so the faculty of knowing and perceiving enlightens the spirit, and puts it in a condition to bear sound judgments. Metaphor is therefore a species of Trope; the word which one uses in the metaphor is taken in another than the literal, proper sense: *it is,* so to speak, *in a borrowed dwelling,* as one of the ancients says; which is common to and essential for all Tropes" (chap. 2, X).

These two examples—the light and the house—do not have the same function. Du Marsais believes that he can present the first metaphor as one example among others, as one metaphor among others. But we now have some reason to believe that this metaphor is indispensable to the general system in which the concept of metaphor is inscribed. Du Marsais does not give the other figure—the borrowed dwelling—as one metaphor among others; it is there in order to signify metaphor *itself;* it is a metaphor of metaphor; an expropriation, a being-outside-one's-own-residence, but still in a dwelling, outside its own residence but still in a residence in which one comes back to oneself, recognizes oneself, reassembles oneself or resembles oneself, outside oneself in oneself. This is the philosophical metaphor as a detour within (or in sight of) reappropriation, parousia, the self-presence of the idea in its own light. The metaphorical trajectory from the Platonic *eidos* to the Hegelian Idea.

The recourse to a metaphor in order to give the "idea" of metaphor: this is what prohibits a definition, but nevertheless metaphorically assigns a checkpoint, a limit, a fixed place: the metaphor/dwelling. That these two examples imposed themselves, fortuitously or not, upon Du Marsais, does not exclude at each metaphor can always be deciphered simultaneously as a particular figure and as a paradigm of the very process of metaphorization: *idealization* and *reappropriation.* Everything, in the discourse on metaphor, that passes through sign *eidos,* with its entire system, is articulated with the analogy between She vision of the *nous* and sensory vision, between the intelligible sun and the

visible sun. The determination of the truth of Being in presence passes through the detour of this tropic system. The presence of *ousia* as *eidos* (to be placed before the metaphorical eye) or as *hupokeimenon* (to underlie visible phenomena or accidents) faces the theoretical organ; which, as Hegel's *Aesthetics* reminds us, has the power not to consume what it perceives and to let be the object of desire. Philosophy, as a theory of metaphor, first will have been a metaphor of theory. This circulation has not excluded but, on the contrary, has permitted and provoked the transformation of presence into self-presence, into the proximity or properness of subjectivity to and for itself. "It is the history of 'proper' meaning, as we said above, whose detour and return are to be followed."

The "idealizing" metaphor, which is constitutive of the philosopheme in general, opens Fontanier's *Figures of Discourse,* immediately providing him with the greatest generality of his theoretical space. In effect the entire treatise is rooted in the division between the signified and the signifier, sense and the sensory, thought and language, and primarily the division between the *idea* and the *word.* Fontanier recalls the etymology and buried origin of the word "idea," as if this were nothing at all, the very moment he opens his book and proposes his great distinction between words and ideas: "Thought is composed of ideas, and the expression of thought by speech is composed of words. First then, let us see what ideas are in themselves: following this we will see what words are relative to ideas, or, if you will, what ideas are as represented by words. A.—IDEAS. The word *Idea* (from the Greek *eidō,* to see) signifies relative to the objects seen by the spirit the same thing as *image;* and relative to the spirit which sees the same things as *seen* or *perception.* But the objects seen by our spirit are either physical and material objects that affect our senses, or metaphysical and purely intellectual objects completely above our senses" (p. 41). After which, Fontanier classes all ideas into physical or metaphysical (and moral) ideas, simple or complex ideas, etc. An entire stratification of metaphors and of philosophical interpretations therefore supports the concept of that which is called upon to precede language or words, that which is called upon to be previous, exterior, and superior to language and words, as meaning is to expressing, the represented to representation, *dianoia* to *lexis.* A metaphorical *lexis,* if you will, has intervened in the definition of *dianoia.* It has given the *idea.*

Here, in recalling the history of the signifier "idea," the issue is not to give in to the etymologism that we contested above. While acknowledging the specific function of a term within its system, we must not, however, take the signifier as perfectly conventional. Doubtless, Hegel's Idea, for example, is not Plato's Idea; doubtless the effects of the system are irreducible and must be read as such. But the word *Idea* is not an arbitrary *X,* and it bears a traditional burden that continues Plato's system in Hegel's system. It must also be examined as such, by means of a stratified reading: neither pure etymology nor a pure origin, neither a homogenous continuum nor an absolute synchronism or a simple interiority of a system to itself. Which implies a *simultaneous* critique of the model

of a transcendental history of philosophy and of the model of systematic structures perfectly closed over their technical and synchronic manipulation (which until now has been recognized only in bodies of work identified according to the "proper name" of a signature).

But, we were asking above, can these defining tropes that are prior to all philosophical rhetoric and that produce philosophemes still be called metaphors? This question could guide an entire reading of the analyses Fontanier reserves for catachresis in the *Supplement to the Theory of Tropes.*[59] Let us be content with indicating this reading. The *Supplement* concerns first the violent, forced, abusive inscription of a sign, the imposition of a sign upon a meaning which did not yet have its own proper sign in language. So much so that there is no substitution here, no transport of proper signs, but rather the irruptive extension of a sign proper to an idea, a meaning, deprived of their signifier. A "secondary origin":

"Nevertheless, since our principles concerning *Catachresis* serve as the foundation of our entire tropological system, we cannot but have the ardor to throw greater light on them, if possible. This is why we are going to add several new observations, here, to the very numerous ones already to be found in the *Commentary.*

"Catachresis, in general, consists in a sign already affected with a first idea also being affected with a new idea, which itself had no sign at all, or no longer properly has any other in language. Consequently, it is every Trope of forced and necessary usage, every Trope from which there results a purely *extensive sense;* this literal, proper sense of secondary origin, intermediate between the *primitive proper sense* and the *figurative sense* is closer to the first than to the second, although it could itself be *figurative* in principle. Now, the Tropes from which a purely *extensive meaning* results not only are three in number, like the Tropes from which a *figurative meaning* results, but they are determined by the same relationships as the latter: *correspondence, connection,* or *resemblance* between ideas; and they occur in the same fashion: by *metonymy, synecdoche,* or *metaphor."*[60]

59. Fontanier, "Preface," pp. 207ff. "In this *supplement* will be found new, and doubtless rather illuminating, views on an important major point, *extensive* meaning or *Catachresis,* the subject of so many of the objections raised against Du Marsais in the *Commentary* on his Treatise. Also to be seen is how Tropes differ from the other forms of discourse called *figures;* consequently one will learn how better to distinguish these different forms from one another. But what this supplement quite particularly offers, and what Du Marsais's *Treatise* and the *Commentary* do not give the first idea about, is the art of recognizing and appreciating Tropes reduced to its principles and in practice" (p. 211).

60. Ibid., pp. 213-14. These definitions are illuminated and completed by the definitions of the three kinds of meaning (objective, literal, spiritual or intellectual) proposed in the first part. The literal seems to correspond rather well to the Aristotelian *kurion,* which can be either proper or tropological, and that is sometimes mistakenly translated as "proper." here is Fontanier's definition. "The *literal sense* is the one which keeps to words taken literally, to words understood according to the acceptance in ordinary usage; consequently, it is the sense which immediately presents itself to the minds of those who understand a language. The *literal sense,* which keeps to a single word, is either *primitive, natural* and *proper,* or *derived,* if one must say so, and *tropological.* This last is due to *Tropes,* of which

Thus, Fontanier proposes a theoretical classification of all these irruptive tropes, these "nontrue figures" that no code of semantic substitution will have preceded. But this classification will borrow its types from the great, known norms. Whence a double gesture: setting catachresis completely apart, acknowledging its irreducibly original place, and yet bringing it into the shared taxonomy, seeing it as a phenomenon of usage (of abuse) rather than as a phenomenon of a code. Which is to be expected since the code is forced, but strange because the abuse is no more a form of usage than an application of the code: "There is a Trope that we have accepted, like Du Marsais, but to which we have neither assigned a rank, nor devoted an article in our *Theory:* this is *Catachresis.* In effect, we did not believe it necessary to treat this Trope more particularly, immediately that, far from making it a species apart, as does Du Marsais, and not only a species of Trope, but even of figure, we consider it only as the forced use, if not primitively, at least currently, of one or the other of the three great species we have already recognized" (p. 213).

In the supplement, the longest elaborations are granted to the catachresis of metaphor. Particularly because this time the order of the noun is largely surpassed. "Here, the examples would be innumerable, and it is not only nouns that could provide them, but all the species of words representative of ideas. *Metaphor-figure* hardly goes up to adverbs; but *metaphor-catachresis* includes in its extent even interjections. There are even very few words, in each species, that it has not subjected to its empire" (p. 215). It remains that the interpretation of the metaphor-catachreses of prepositions *(to,* for example) always consists in defining its meaning by means of the name of categoremes (disposition, site or place, time, posture, gesture, manner, animating cause, destination, etc.; cf. p. 219), and even by means of a single nominal signification, the "tendency," "as Condillac has shown so well in his Grammar."

As for nouns and verbs, the examples given by Fontanier are initially—and exclusively—those of metaphor-catachreses whose philosophical burden is the heaviest (light, blindness; to have, to be, to do, to take, to understand). The living body furnishes the "vehicle" for all the nominal examples in the physical order. *Light* is the first—and only—example chosen when one accedes to the moral

several genera and several species are to be distinguished. But *Tropes* occur, either by necessity and *extension,* in order to supplement the words for certain ideas which are missing from language, or by choice and *figure,* in order to present ideas with more vivid and striking images than their own signs. Whence two different kinds of *tropological sense:* the *extended tropological sense* and the *figurative tropological sense.* The first, as one can see, stands between the *primitive sense* and the *figurative* sense, and can hardly be regarded as anything but a new kind of *proper sense"* (pp. 57-58). What is interesting to us here, thus, is the production of a proper sense, a new kind of proper sense, by means of the violence of a catachresis whose intermediary status tends to escape the opposition of the primitive and the figurative, standing between them as a "middle." When the middle of an opposition is not the passageway of a mediation, there is every chance that the opposition is not pertinent. The consequences are boundless.

order: "Here are the ones in the moral order: *Light,* for clarity of spirit, for intelligence, or for enlightenment; *Blindness* for troubling or clouding of reason. The first *light* that we have known is doubtless the light of day, and it is for the latter that the word was created. But is not reason like a flame that the Author of nature has placed in us in order to enlighten our soul, and is not this flame for us exactly to the moral what the flame of day for us is to the physical? Thus a *light* necessarily has had to have been attributed to it, and we say, *The light of reason* just as we say *The light of day''* (p. 216).

After bringing to bear this analysis on the word *blindness,* Fontanier asks: "And how, without these *forced metaphors,* without these catachreses, could one have come to retrace these ideas?" (p. 217). These "ideas" already existed, Fontanier seems to think, were already in the mind like a grid without a word; but they could not have been retraced, tracked down, brought to daylight without the force of a twisting which goes *against usage,* without the infraction of a catachresis. The latter does not emerge from language, does not create new signs, does not enrich the code; and yet it transforms its functioning, producing, with the same material, new rules of exchange, new values. Philosophical language, a system of catachreses, a fund of "forced metaphors," would have this relation to the literality of natural language if, following Fontanier, some such thing existed. And when Fontanier nevertheless posits, presupposes the anteriority of the meaning or of the idea of the catachresis (which only comes back to an already present concept), he interprets this situation in philosophical terms; indeed, this is how philosophy traditionally has interpreted its powerful catachresis: the twisting return toward the already-there of a meaning, *production* (of signs, or rather of values), but as *revelation,* unveiling, bringing to light, truth. This is why "forced metaphors" may be, must be "correct and natural" (p. 216).

La métaphysique—relève de la métaphore[61]

Andyet, though 1 am fully in favor of the positive use of metaphor, (this rhetorical figure does far more service to human aspirations towards the infinite than those who are riddled with prejudices and false ideas—which comes to the same thing—are prepared to acknowledge), it is nonetheless true that the risible mouths of these three peasants are still big enough to swallow three sperm-whales. Let us shrink this comparison somewhat, let us be serious and content ourselves with saying that they were like three little elephants which have only just been born.
Lautréamont, *Maldoror* IV, 7[62]

It is generally speaking, a strange thing, this captivating tendency which leads us to seek out (and then to express) the resemblances and differences which are hidden in the most natural properties of objects which are sometimes the least apt to lend themselves to sympathetically curious combinations of this kind, which, on my word of honour, graciously enhance the style of the writer who treats himself to this personal satisfaction, giving him the ridiculous and unforgettable aspect of an eternally serious owl.
Ibid. V, 6[63]

Classical rhetoric, then, cannot dominate, being enmeshed within it, the mass out of which the philosophical text takes shape. Metaphor is less in the philosophical text (and in the rhetorical text coordinated with it) than the philosophical text is within metaphor. And the latter can no longer receive its name from metaphysics, except by a catachresis, if you will, that would retrace metaphor through its philosophical phantom: as "nontrue metaphor."

61. TN. This subtitle is untranslatable, at very least because of its double meaning. Derrida simultaneously uses *relève* as both noun and verb here. If *relive* is taken as a noun, the subtitle would read: "Metaphysics—the *relive,* the *Aufhebung* of metaphor." If *relive* is taken as a verb, which would be the usual reading, it can be understood in its usual sense, i.e. not as a translation of *Aufhebung.* Thus, the subtitle would read: "Metaphysics derives from, takes off from, metaphor." (Further, *relive* as a verb can also be taken as the translation of *Aufheben,* which gives a reading similar to the first one.) If one is attentive to the implications of this unstoppable alternation of meaning, along with the interplay of metaphysics, metaphor, and *relive,* one will have begun to grasp what Derrida is about in this essay. (For our system of notes on *relive,* see above, note 5.) See also below, note 73.

62. Lautréamont, *Maldoror and Poems,* trans. Paul Knight (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), p. 172.

63. Ibid., p. 200.

For all that, can some metaphilosophy, a more general but still philosophical kind of discourse on the metaphors of the "first degree," the nontrue metaphors that opened philosophy, be dreamed of? The work to be undertaken under the heading of sucn a meta-metaphorics would not be without interest. In sum, it would amount to transporting into the philosophical order the Bachelardian program of a metapoetics (*Lautréamont*, p. 55).[64] What would the limits of such a transposition be?

Bachelard, on this point, is faithful to tradition: metaphor does not appear to him either simply or necessarily to constitute an obstacle to scientific or philosophical knowledge. It can work for the critical rectification of a concept, reveal a concept as a bad metaphor, or finally "illustrate" a new concept. In the process of scientific knowledge the "verbal obstacle" often has the form of metaphor ("metaphoric contrivance," "generalized image," "deficient metaphorical character of the explanation"[65] etc.), doubtless. And doubtless the domain of metaphor is extended even beyond language, taken in the strict sense of verbal "expression": "metaphors seduce reason."[66] But, on the one hand, the psychoanalysis of objective knowledge above all must denounce "immediate metaphors" ("The danger of immediate metaphors in the formation of the scientific spirit is that they are not always passing images; they push toward an autonomous kind of thought; they tend to completion and fulfillment in the domain of the image";[67] as we will see, it is the *system* of metaphors that interests Bachelard initially); and on the other hand, a nonimmediate, constructed metaphor is useful when it comes to "illustrate" knowledge wrested from bad metaphor. Its value is then essentially pedagogical: "A psychoanalysis of objective knowledge, then, must set itself to blanching, if not to erasing, these naive

64. Gaston Bachelard, *Lautréamont* (Paris: Corti, 1939; new ed., 1956).

65. Bachelard, *La Formation de l'esprit scientifique* (Paris: Corti, 1938), pp. 74-75. See also pp. 15, 194, 195.

66. Ibid., p. 78. Bachelard cites Van Swinden: " 'The expression that iron is a sponge of magnetic Fluid is therefore a *metaphor* that departs from the true: and yet all the explanations are founded on this expression used in the *proper, literal* sense. But as for myself, I think that it is not exact . . . to think that reason indicates that these expressions are erroneous, and nevertheless to use them in the explanation of Experiments' (1785). In a somewhat confused form, Van Swinden's thought is quite clear: one cannot so easily as is alleged confine metaphors only to the realm of expression. Whether one wishes it or not, metaphors seduce reason." Immediately afterward, Bachelard shows that "very great minds have been blocked, so to speak, in primary imagery." Thus, "Descartes's metaphysics of space" would be but a metaphorics of the sponge, "the metaphysics of the sponge" (p. 79).

67. Ibid., p. 81. On the contrary, however, the *Preliminary Discourse* of the work accredits the constructed and constructive metaphors, the metaphors of intermediary status which break with sensory immediacy and naive realism. They belong to the order of *"figurative quantity,* midway between the concrete and the abstract, in an intermediary zone." "Scientific thought then is drawn off in the direction of 'constructions' that are more metaphorical than real, 'spaces of configuration' whose sensory space, after all, is but an impoverished example" (p. 5).

images. When abstraction will have achieved this, it will be time to *illustrate* [Bachelard's italics] rational schemas. In short, the initial intuition is an obstacle to scientific thought; only an illustration working beyond the concept, putting a bit of color on the essential characteristics, can aid scientific thought."[68] One may reread, at the end of *La formation de l'esprit scientifique,* the most luminous examples with which the value of *illustration* illustrates itself: not only the example of the circle, of the egg, and the oval,[69] but also the examples of the sun and the focal point, the center, the circle, and the ellipse. Here, just the conclusion:

"Even in the simple domain of images, we have often usefully attempted conversions of values. Thus we developed the following antithesis in our teaching. For Aristotelian science, the ellipse is a poorly made circle, a flattened circle. For Newtonian science, the circle is an impoverished ellipse, an ellipse whose centers have been flattened one onto the other. I made myself the advocate of the ellipse: the center of the ellipse is useless because of its two distinct focal points; for the circle, the law of areas is a banality; for the ellipse, the law of areas is a discovery. Little by little, I slowly attempted to pry the mind loose from its attachment to privileged images . . . Also, I have little hesitation in presenting rigor as a psychoanalysis of intuition, and algebraic thought as a psychoanalysis of geometric thought. Even in the domain of the exact sciences, our imagination is a sublimation. It is useful, but it can fool us to the extent that we do not know what we sublimate and how we sublimate it. It is valid only insofar as one has psychoanalyzed the principle. Intuition must never be a given. It must always be an illustration."[70]

68. Ibid., p. 78. "Modern science employs the analogy of the pump in order to *illustrate* [Bachelard's italics] certain characteristics of electric generators, but does so in an attempt to clarify *abstract* ideas . . . Here one sees a vivid contrast of the two mentalities: in the scientific mentality the hydraulic analogy comes into play *after* the theory. It comes into play *before* in the prescientific mentality" (p. 80).

69. Ibid., pp. 233ff. This is surely the occasion to recall that in Bachelard's opinion the metaphoric obstacle is not only an epistemological obstacle due to the persistence, in the field of science, of nonscientific schema deriving from the popular imagination or from the philosophically imaginary. The metaphoric obstacle is sometimes a philosophical one, when scientific schema are imported into a philosophical domain without rhyme or reason. One might speak then of an *epistemologizing* obstacle. A certain naive scientifism on the part of the philosopher can transform scientific discourse into a vast reservoir of metaphors or "models" for hurried theoreticians. "Science offers itself to the philosopher as a particularly rich collection of well constructed and well tied together knowledge. In other words, the philosopher simply demands *examples* of science." These examples "are always mentioned, never developed. Occasionally, the scientific examples are commented upon according to principles which are not scientific ones; they lead to metaphors, analogies, generalizations." *La Philosophie du non* (Paris, 1940), p. 3. In the same direction, see also the end of the chapter on "the diverse metaphysical explanations of a scientific concept," and what Bachelard says about the anagogical reverie as a mathematizing reverie, at the moment when the mathematical and the arithmetical intervene in the position of metaphors (pp. 38–40).

70. *La formation de l'esprit scientifique,* p. 237.

This epistemological ambivalence of metaphor, which always provokes, retards, *follows* the movement of the concept, perhaps finds its chosen field in the life sciences, which demand that one adapt an unceasing critique of teleological judgment. In this field the animistic or (technical, social, cultural) analogy is *as* at home as possible. Where else might one be so tempted *to take the metaphor for the concept?* And what more urgent task for epistemology and for the critical history of the sciences than to distinguish between the word, the metaphoric vehicle, the thing and the concept? Among all the examples Georges Canguilhem has analyzed, let us consider two. The first one concerns "the development of cellular theory" over which "hover, more or less closely, affective and social values of cooperation and association."[71]

"Concerning the cell, generally Hooke is granted too many honors. Certainly it was he who discovered the thing, somewhat by chance, and due to the play of a curiosity amused by the first revelations of the microscope. Having made a fine section of a piece of cork, Hooke observed its compartmentalized structure. It is he also, indeed, who invented the word, under the influence of an image, by assimilating the vegetable object to a honeycomb, itself an animal labor assimilated to human labor, for a cell is a small chamber. But Hooke's discovery started nothing, is not a point of departure. The very word was lost, to be rediscovered only a century later.

"This discovery of the thing and this invention of a word henceforth call for some comments. With the cell, we are in the presence of a biological object whose affective overdetermination is incontestable and considerable. The psychoanalysis of knowledge from now on may count among its happier successes its pretension to the status of a genre to which several contributions may be brought, even without systematic intention. Everyone will find among his memories of studying natural history the image of the cellular structure of living beings. This image has an almost canonic constancy. The schematic representation of an epithelium is the image of the honeycomb. Cell is a word that does not make us think of the monk or the prisoner, but of the bee. Haeckel has pointed out that cells of wax filled with honey perfectly correspond to vegetable cells filled with cellular essence. Nevertheless, the influence over the mind of the notion of the cell does not appear to us to be due to the completeness of the correspondence. Rather, who knows whether, in consciously borrowing from the beehive the term cell in order to designate the element of the living organism, the human mind has not also borrowed from the hive, almost unconsciously, the notion of the cooperative work of which the honeycomb is the product? Just as the alveolus is the element of an edifice, bees are, in Maeterlinck's expression, individuals entirely absorbed by the republic. In fact, the cell is both an ana-

71. *La connaissance de la vie,* 2d ed. (Paris: Vrin, 1969), p. 49. On the problem of metaphor, see also *Etudes d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences* (Paris: Vrin, 1968), most notably the chapters entitled "Models and Analogies in Biological Discovery" and "Concept and Life" (particularly pp. 358-60).

tomical and a functional notion, the notion of an elementary material and of a partial, subordinate individual labor.''[72]

This animal metaphor of the hive, analyzed here in its determined effects on the development of a theory, is put into *abyme*[73] in a way by Nietzsche: in order to figure the metaphoricity of the concept, the metaphor of the metaphor, the metaphor of metaphoric productivity itself:

"Only out of the persistency of these primal forms the possibility explains itself, how afterwards, out of the metaphors themselves a structure of ideas could again be compiled. For the latter is an imitation of the relations of time, space and number in the realm of metaphors.

"As we say, it is *language* which has worked originally at the construction of ideas; in later times it is *science.* Just as the bee works at the same time at the cells and fills them with honey, thus science works irresistibly at the great columbarium of ideas, the cemetery of perceptions, builds ever newer and higher storeys; supports, purifies, renews the old cells, and endeavours above all to fill that gigantic framework and to arrange within it the whole of the empiric world, i.e., the anthropomorphic world. And as the man of action binds his life to reason and its ideas, in order to avoid being swept away and losing himself, so the seeker after truth builds his hut close to the towering edifice of science in order to collaborate with it and to find protection. And he needs protection. For there are awful powers which press continually upon him, and which hold out against the 'truth' of science 'truths' fashioned in quite another way, bearing devices of the most heterogeneous character.''[74]

Nietzsche's procedure (the generalization of metaphoricity by putting into *abyme* one determined metaphor) is possible only if one takes the risk of a continuity between the metaphor and the concept, as between animal and man, instinct and knowledge.[75] In order not to wind up at an empiricist reduction of

72. *La connaissance de la vie,* pp. 48-49.

73. TN. *Mettre en abyme* (to put into *abyme)* is a heraldic term for the placement of a small escutcheon in the middle of a larger one. Derrida is playing on this old sense of *abyme,* with its connotation of infinite reflection, and the modern senses of *abîmer,* to ruin, and of *abîme*—abyss, chasm, depths, chaos, interval, difference, division, etc. As Derrida states two paragraphs below, he wishes to demonstrate both the generalization of metaphor, its infinitely reflective capacity, and the necessity of this (hidden) generalization in the production of so-called "nonmetaphoric" concepts, by means of the "ruination," the "plunging into the abyss" of a particular metaphor. We might think of what Derrida calls "the logic of the *abyme''* as the "figurative ruination" of logic as we know it, as for example when the distinction between the reflected and the reflecting falls apart. This is the "logic" implied by the double meaning of the title of this section: *la métaphysique—relève de la metaphore.* The double meaning of *releve,* infinitely reflecting itself in the same signifier, says that metaphysics' "derivation" from metaphor also produces its infinite attempt to "spiritualize," to negate-and-conserve *(Aufheben)* metaphor on a "higher" level, a purportedly nonmetaphoric level.

74. "On Truth and Falsity in Their Ultramoral Sense" (see note 14 above), pp. 187-88.

75. It is in order to mark this continuity that Nietzsche describes the metaphorical tissue produced by man ("solely in the . . . inviolability of the conceptions of time and space")

knowledge and a fantastic ideology of truth, one should surely substitute another articulation for the (maintained or erased) classical opposition of metaphor and concept. This new articulation, without importing all the metaphysics of the classical opposition, should also account for the specific divisions that epistepology cannot overlook, the divisions between what it calls metaphoric effects and scientific effects. The need for this new articulation has undoubtedly been called for by Nietzsche's discourse. It will have to provoke a displacement and an entire reinscription of the values of science and of truth, that is, of several others too.

Such a redistribution would have to permit the definition of the "figure" which necessarily continues to give its "sign" to a "concept" *after* rectification, after abandoning a given model "which perhaps, after all, was only a metaphor."[76]

Thus—second example—when the biological concept of *circulation* of the blood is substituted for the technical concept of *irrigation*,[77] the rectification has not reduced every figure of speech. Although not the irrigation of a garden, such as it is described in the *Timaeus*[78] or *De Partibus Animalium*, the "circulation" of

as a spider's web (ibid., p. 186). Again, re-mark and generalization of a particular metaphor, whose effects are determinable, for example in the history of the sciences. Georges Canguilhem writes, concerning Bichat's *Treatise on Membranes* (1800): "The term 'tissue' deserves to give us pause. Tissue comes, as is well known, from *tistre,* an archaic form of the verb *tisser,* to weave. If the word cell has appeared to be overburdened with implicit significations of an affective and social order, the word tissue appears no less burdened with extra-theoretical implications. Cell makes us think of the bee, and not of man. Tissue makes us think of man, and not of the spider. Tissue, a weave, is the human product *par excellence*" *(La connaissance de la vie,* pp. 64–65). See also Marx: "We have to consider labour in a form peculiar to the human species. A spider carries on operations resembling those of the weaver; and many a human architect is put to shame by the skill with which a bee constructs her cell. But what from the very first distinguishes the most incompetent architect from the best of bees, is that the architect has built a cell in his head before he constructs it in wax. The labour process ends in the creation of something which, when the process began, already existed in the worker's imagination, already existed in an ideal form. What happens is, not merely that the worker brings about a change of form in material objects, at the same time, in the nature that exists apart from himself, he realizes his own purpose, the purpose which gives the law to his activities, the purpose to which he has to subordinate his own will" *(Capital,* book 1, chap. 5, pp. 169-70).

76. "On this point, thus, experimental embryology and cytology have rectified the concept of organic structure that was too narrowly associated by Claude Bernard with a social model that perhaps, after all, was only a metaphor." "Le tout et la partie dans la vie biologique," in *Etudes d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences,* p. 332.

77. See *La connaissance de la vie,* pp. 22-23.

78. From a purely rhetorical point of view, Condillac displays much severity concerning the figures of speech used by Plato ("the greatest philosopher and the greatest rhetorician") to describe the human body, which he makes into "a monster that escapes the imagination" most notably when "he says that the blood is *the grazing ground of the flesh: and so,* he goes on, *that all the parts may receive nourishment, they have dug, as in a garden, several canals, so that the streams of the veins, emerging from the heart as from their source, can flow in these narrow channels of the human body."* Condillac contrasts this with six lines from Rousseau, and comments on them thus: "The flowers which multiply on a stem watered by a pure stream are a beautiful image of what the love of glory produces in an elevated sou!" ("De l'art d'écrire," in *Oeuvres philosophiques,* p. 555).

the blood does not properly travel in a circle. As soon as one retains only a predicate of the circle (for example, return to the point of departure, closing of the circuit), its signification is put into the position of a trope, of metonymy if not metaphor.

Is rectification henceforth the rectification of a metaphor by a concept? Are not all metaphors, strictly speaking, concepts, and is there *any sense* in setting metaphor against concept? Does not a scientific critique's rectification rather proceed from an inefficient tropic-concept that is poorly constructed, to an operative tropic-concept that is more refined and more powerful in a given field and at a determined phase of the scientific process? The criterion of this progress or mutation ("break," "remodeling," and many other forms that should be distinguished from each other), has not been defined, certainly, but a double certainty now seems problematic: 1. That this criterion must necessarily put to work a rhetorical evaluation ("from metaphor to concept," for example); 2. That tropes must necessarily belong to the prescientific phase of knowledge.

In other words, there is also a *concept of metaphor:* it too has a history, yields knowledge, demands from the epistemologist construction, rectifications, critical rules of importation and exportation.

We come back to our question: can one transport into the philosophical field the Bachelardian program of a metapoetics? Bachelard proposes to proceed by *groups* and *diagrams,* and this is what will retain us first. By *groups:*

"When one has meditated on the freedom of metaphors and on their limits, one perceives that certain poetic images are *projected* onto one another with certainty and exactitude, which amounts to saying that in *projective poetry* they are but one and the same image. In studying the Psychoanalysis of fire, we have perceived, for example, that all the 'images' of the internal fire, the hidden fire, the fire glowing beneath the embers, in short the unseen fire that consequently calls for metaphors, are 'images' of life. The projective link, then, is so primitive that one easily translates, certain of universal comprehension, images of life into images of fire, and vice versa. The deformation of the images then must designate, in a strictly mathematical way, the *group* of metaphors. Immediately that one can specify the diverse *groups* of metaphors of a particular poetry, one would perceive that occasionally certain metaphors fail because they have been added in defiance of the cohesion of the group. Naturally, sensitive poetic souls react by themselves to these erroneous additions, without needing the pedantic apparatus to which we are alluding. But it remains no less that a metapoetics will have to undertake a classification of metaphors, and that sooner or later it will have to adopt the only essential procedure of classification, the determination of groups."[79]

79. Gaston Bachelard, *Lautréamont,* pp. 54-55. Here, the *projective* model permits one to recognize not only the syntactic coherence of metaphors, but above all the original and final unity of their theme, their central semantic focal point. The demonstration of this point, moreover, is rather remarkable: the multiplicity of images (the images of fire, with which this metaphorology first had to concern itself) refers, while reflecting it, to the same

And then by *diagrams* (another mathematical metaphor, or more precisely, at least a geometrical metaphor, but this time garnished with a flower, in order to present the field of a meta-metaphorics): "If the present work could be retained as a basis for a physics or a chemistry of reverie, as the outline of a method for determining the objective conditions of reverie, it should offer new instruments for an objective literary criticism in the most precise sense of the term. It should demonstrate that metaphors are not simple idealizations which take off like rockets only to display their insignificance on bursting in the sky, but that on the contrary metaphors summon one another and are more coordinated than sensations, so much so that a poetic mind is purely and simply a syntax of metaphors. Each poet should then be represented by a *diagram* which would indicate the meaning and the symmetry of his metaphorical coordinations, exactly as the diagram of a flower fixes the meaning and the symmetries of its floral action. There is no *real flower* that does not have this geometrical pattern. Similarly, there can be no poetic flowering without a certain synthesis of poetic images. One should not, however, see in this thesis a desire to limit poetic liberty, to impose a logic or a reality (which is the same thing) on the poet's creation. It is objectively, after the event, after the full flowering, that we wish to discover the realism and the inner logic of a poetic work. At times some truly diverse images that one had considered to be quite opposed, incongruous and noncohesive, will come together and fuse into one charming image. The strangest mosaics of Surrealism will suddenly reveal a continuity of meaning."[80]

At the limit, is this very necessary attention to *syntax,* to the systematic logic i if metaphoric productions, to "metaphors of metaphors" (p. 215), compatible with the concept of metaphor? Can one do it justice without putting into question the semantic, that is, monosemic point of view? Bachelard himself interprets syntactic coordination as a semantic or thematic sheaf. The multiplicity of metaphors is regulated with one's sights set on "one and the same image," whose

focal image ("one and the same image"): but the issue was one of the hidden fire "which is not seen, and which consequently demands metaphors." This "consequently" means that what is not seen demands a metaphor. Which seems to go without saying. But, if one follows the analogical equivalence in this case (covered fire = what is hidden = life), all metaphors are also metaphors of life, as the dissimulated focal point of all metaphors, metaphors of *physis,* the source and metaphor of metaphors. A circulation of meaning that does not get us very far but amounts to the metaphor of the same, whose shadow by now is familiar to us. This is why we insisted above on the necessity linking the values of life, of metaphor, and of the metaphor of metaphor. "The mind, then, is free for the *metaphor of metaphor.* This is the concept at which we wind up in our recent book on *The Psychoanalysis of Fire.* The long meditation of Lautréamont's work was undertaken with our sights set on a *Psychoanalysis of Life"* (p. 155). We must acknowledge, here, the strict constraints of a program. The respect for the "sensitive poetic souls" who "react by themselves" to metaphors that do not follow, also had long been prescribed in this program (from Aristotle to Condillac and Hegel), as is elsewhere prescribed the determination hot "to limit poetic freedom" or "the creation of the poet."

80. Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire,* trans. A. C. M. Ross (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), pp. 109-10.

diffraction is but a projective system. Here, the unity and continuity of meaning dominates the play of syntax. We tried to demonstrate above that this subordination of the syntactic was inscribed in the most invariable characteristics of the concept of metaphor, and tried to show elsewhere[81] the essential limits of such a thematism.

Does not such a metaphorology, transported into the philosophical field, always, by destination, rediscover the same? The same *physis,* the same meaning (meaning of Being as presence or, *amounting to the same,* as presence/absence), the same circle, the same fire of the same light revealing/concealing itself, the same turn of the sun? What *other* than this return of the same is to be found when one seeks metaphor? that is, resemblance? and when one seeks to determine *the dominant* metaphor of a group, which is interesting by virtue of its power to assemble? What other is to be found if not the metaphor of *domination,* heightened by its power of dissimulation which permits it to escape mastery: God or the Sun?

For example, if one attempted to establish the diagram of the metaphorics proper (or presumed such) to Descartes, even supposing, *concesso non dato,* that one could strictly delimit the metaphoric corpus referring to this single signature, there still would be a need to point out, beneath the layer of apparently didactic metaphors (those indicated in Spoerri's psychological and empirical analysis: the ivy and the tree, the path, the house, the city, the machine, the foundation or the chain) another stratification, one that is less apparent but just as systematically organized, and that not only would be *beneath* the preceding one, but interwoven with it. Here we would encounter the wax and the pen, dress and nudity, the ship, the clock, seeds and the magnet, the book, the stick, etc. To reconstitute the grammar of these metaphors would be to articulate its logic with a discourse that presents itself as nonmetaphorical, which here is called the philosophical system, the meaning of concepts, and the order of reason, but it also would be to articulate it with schemas of continuity and permanence, with systems of longer sequences, the "same" metaphor being able to function differently here and there. But to respect above all else the philosophical specificity of this syntax is also to recognize its submission to sense, to meaning, to the truth of the philosophical concept, to the signified of philosophy. The tenor of the dominant metaphor will return always to this major signified of ontotheology: the circle of the heliotrope. Certainly the metaphors of light and the circle, which are so important in Descartes, are not organized as they are in Plato or Aristotle, in Hegel or Husserl. But if we put outselves at the most critical and most properly Cartesian point of the critical procedure, at the point of hyperbolic doubt and the hypothesis of the Evil Genius, at the point when doubt strikes not only ideas of sensory origin but also "clear and distinct" ideas and what is mathematically self-evident, we know that what permits the discourse

81. "The Double Session," sec. 2, in *Dissemination.*

to be picked up again and to be pursued, its ultimate resource, is designated as *lumen naturale.* Natural light, and all the axioms it brings into our field of vision, is never subjected to the most radical doubt. The latter unfolds *in* light: "for I cannot doubt that which the natural light causes me to believe to be true, as, for example, it has shown me that I am from the fact that I doubt."[82] Among the axioms that the natural light shows me to be true, there is, each time, at every stage, that which permits me to emerge from doubt and to progress within the order of reason, and in particular to prove the existence of a nondeceiving God ("Now it is manifest by the natural light that there must at least be as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in its effect," p. 162. "The light of nature shows us clearly that the distinction between creation and conservation is solely a distinction of the reason," p. 168. "From this it is manifest that He cannot be a deceiver, since the light of nature teaches us that fraud and deception necessarily proceed from some defect," p. 171). Prior to every determined presence, to every representative idea, natural light constitutes the very ether of thought and of its proper discourse. As natural, it has its source in God, in the God whose existence has been put into doubt and then demonstrated, *thanks to it.* ' For I have certainly no cause to complain that God has not given me an intelligence which is more powerful, or a natural light which is stronger than that which I have received from Him" *(Meditation IV,* p. 177). In escaping from the feical circle that has so occupied him, Descartes all the while inscribes the chain of reason in the circle of the natural light that proceeds from God and returns to God.

This metaphorics is of course articulated in a specific syntax; but as a metaphorics it 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. This is the end of *Meditation III,* when the existence of God has just been proved for the firs! time thanks to the natural light which he himself dispenses to us, pretending to disappear and to leave us to seek the blinding source of clarity: "It seems to me right to pause for a while in order to contemplate God Himself, to ponder at leisure His marvellous attributes, to consider and admire, and adore, the beauty of this light so resplendent, at least as far as the strength of my mind, which is in some measure dazzled by the sight, will allow me to do so" (p. 171).

Of course the adoration here is a philosopher's adoration, and since natural light is natural, Descartes does not take his discourse as a theologian's: that is, the discourse of someone who is satisfied with metaphors. And to whom one must leave them: "The author could explain in satisfactory manner, following his philosophy, the creation of the world, such as it is described in Genesis . . . ; the narrative of creation found there is perhaps metaphorical; thus, it must be

82. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy,* in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes,* vol. I, trans. Elizabeth Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 160. All further references to the *Meditations* will be to this edition.

left to the theologians . . . Why is it said, in effect, that darkness preceded light? . . . And as for the cataracts of the abyss, this is a metaphor, but this metaphor escapes us."[83]

Presence disappearing in its own radiance, the hidden source of light, of truth, and of meaning, the erasure of the visage of Being—such must be the insistent return of that which subjects metaphysics to metaphor.

To metaphors. The word is written only in the plural. If there were only one possible metaphor, the dream at the heart of philosophy, if one could reduce their play to the circle of a family or a group of metaphors, that is, to one "central," "fundamental," "principial" metaphor, there would be no more true metaphor, but only, through the one true metaphor, the assured legibility of the proper. Now, it is because the metaphoric is plural from the outset that it does not escape syntax; and that it gives rise, in philosophy too, to a *text* which is not exhausted in the history of its meaning (signified concept or metaphoric tenor: *thesis),* in the visible or invisible presence of its theme (meaning and truth of Being). But it is also because the metaphoric does not reduce syntax, and on the contrary organizes its divisions within syntax, that it gets carried away with itself, cannot be what it is except in erasing itself, indefinitely constructing its destruction.

This self-destruction always will have been able to take *two* courses which are almost tangent, and yet different, repeating, miming, and separating from each other according to certain laws. One of these courses follows the line of a resistance to the dissemination of the metaphorical in a syntactics that somewhere, and initially, carries within itself an irreducible loss of meaning: this is the metaphysical *releve* of metaphor in the proper meaning of Being. The generalization of metaphor can signify this parousia. Metaphor then is included by metaphysics as that which must be carried off to a horizon or a proper ground, and which must finish by rediscovering the origin of its truth. The turn of the sun is interpreted then as a specular circle, a return to itself without loss of meaning, without irreversible expenditure. This *return to itself*—thisinteriorization—of the sun has marked not only Platonic, Aristotelian, Cartesian, and other kinds of discourse, not only the science of logic as the circle of circles, but also, and by the same token, the man of metaphysics. The sensory sun, which rises in the East, becomes interiorized, in the evening of its journey, in the eye and the heart of the Westerner. He summarizes, assumes, and achieves the essence of man, "illuminated by the true light" (*phōtizomenos phōti alēthinōi*).[84]

83. "Entretien avec Burman," in *Oeuvres completes* (Paris: Pléiade, 1967), pp. 1387-88.

84. "In the geographical survey, the course of the World's History has been marked out in its general features. The *Sun*—theLight—rises in the East. Light is a simply self-involved existence; but though possessing thus in itself universality, it exists at the same time as an individuality in the Sun. Imagination has often pictured to itself the emotions of a blind man suddenly becoming possessed of sight, beholding the bright glimmering of the dawn,

Philosophical discourse—as such—describes a metaphor which is displaced and reabsorbed between two suns. This *end* of metaphor is not interpreted as a death or dislocation, but as an interiorizing anamnesis *(Erinnerung),* a recollection of meaning, a *releve* of living metaphoricity into a living state of properness. This is the irrepressible philosophical desire to summarize-interiorize-dialecticize-master-*relever* the metaphorical division between the origin and itself, the Oriental difference. In the world of this desire, metaphor is born in the East as soon as the latter sets itself to speak, to work, to write, suspending its pleasures, separating itself from itself and naming absence: that is, what is. Such at least is the philosophical proposition in its geotropic and historico-rhetorical enunciations. "As man's first motives for speaking were of the passions, his first expressions were tropes. Figurative language was the first to be born. Proper meaning was discovered last." And "the genius of the Oriental languages" is to be "vital and figurative."[85]

thegrowing light, and the flaming glory of the ascending Sun. The boundless forgetfulness of his individuality in this pure splendour, is his first feeling,—utter astonishment. But when the Sun is risen, this astonishment is diminished; objects around are perceived, and from them the individual proceeds to the contemplation of his own inner being, and thereby the advance is made to the perception of the relation between the two. Then inactive contemplation is quitted for activity; by the close of day man has erected a building constructed from his own inner Sun; and when in the evening he contemplates this, he esteems it more highly than the original external Sun. For now he stands in a *conscious relation to* his Spirit, and therefore a *free* relation. If we hold this image fast in mind, we shall find it symbolizing the course of History, the great Day's work of Spirit.

"The History of the World travels from East to West, for Europe is absolutely the end of History, Asia the beginning. The History of the World has an East *Kat' exochēn,* though the term East in itself is entirely relative, for although the Earth forms a sphere, History performs no circle round it, but has on the contrary a determinate East, v.z. Asia. Here rises the outward physical Sun, and in the West it sinks down: here consentaneously rises the Sun of self-consciousness, which diffuses a nobler brilliance. The History of the World is the discipline of the uncontrolled natural will, bringing it into obedience to a Universal principle and conferring subjective freedom." Hegel, Introduction, in *Lectures on the Philosophy of History,* trans. J. Sibree (New York: The Colonial Press, 1900), pp. 109–10.

85. Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Language,* trans. John Moran (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1966), pp. 12 and 11. See also, for example, Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* II, 1, chap. 10, sec. 103, and especially *La logique:* "The generation of ideas and of the faculties of the soul must have been felt in these languages [the first vulgar languages] where the first acceptance of a word was known, and where one analogy provided all the others. In names were found again the ideas which escaped the senses, the very names of the sensory ideas from which they come; and, instead of seeing them rt* i he proper names of these ideas, they were seen as figurative expressions which showed their origin. At this time, for example, it was not asked if the word *substance* meant something other than *that which is beneath;* if the word *pensee,* thought, meant other than *peser,* to weigh, to balance, to compare. In a word, one could not have imagined the questions that are asked today by metaphysicians: languages, which answered all of them in advance, did not yet permit them, and there was not yet any bad metaphysics. Good metaphysics began before languages; and languages owe to it what is best in them. But this metaphysics was then less a science than an instinct. It was nature which led men without their knowing it; and metaphysics became a science only when it ceased to be good." See, again, Fontanier, "Preface," p. 157.

"Not only the Greek philosophers, like Plato and Aristotle, or great historians and orators, like Thucydides and Demosthenes, but also the great poets, Homer and Sophocles, on the whole stick almost always to literal expressions *(eigentlichen Ausdrücken),* although similes *(Gleichnisse)* do also occur. Their plastic severity and solidity does not tolerate the sort of blending involved in metaphor or permit them to stray hither and thither away from the homogenous material and the simple, self-contained, complete cast, in order to gather up so-called 'flowers' of expression *(sogennante Blumen des Ausdrucks aufzulesen)* here and there. But metaphor is always an interruption of the course of ideas *(Vorstellungsganges)* . . . On the other hand, it is particularly the East, especially the later Mohammedan poetry, which uses figurative expressions and indeed has them of necessity."[86]

Metaphor, therefore, is determined by philosophy as a provisional loss of meaning, an economy of the proper without irreparable damage, a certainly inevitable detour, but also a history with its sights set on, and within the horizon of, the circular reappropriation of literal, proper meaning. This is why the philosophical evaluation of metaphor always has been ambiguous: metaphor is dangerous and foreign as concerns *intuition* (vision or contact), *concept* (the grasping or proper presence of the signified), and *consciousness* (proximity or self-presence); but it is in complicity with what it endangers, is necessary to it in the extent to which the de-tour is a re-turn guided by the function of resemblance *(mimesis* or *homoiosis),* under the law of the same. The opposition of intuition, the concept, and consciousness at this point no longer has any pertinence. These three values belong to the order and to the movement of meaning. Like metaphor.

Henceforth the entire teleology of meaning, which constructs the philosophical concept of metaphor, coordinates metaphor with the manifestation of truth, with the production of truth as presence without veil, with the reappropriation of a full language without syntax, with the vocation of a pure nomination: without differential syntax, or in any case without a properly *unnamable* articulation that is irreducible to the semantic *releve* or to dialectical interiorization.

The *other* self-destruction of metaphor thus *resembles* the philosophical one to the point of being taken for it. This time, then, in traversing and doubling the first self-destruction, it passes through a supplement of syntactic resistance, through everything (for example in modern linguistics) that disrupts the opposition of the semantic and the syntactic, and especially the philosophical hierarchy that submits the latter to the former. This self-destruction still has the form of a generalization, but this time it is no longer a question of extending and confirming a philosopheme, but rather, of unfolding it without limit, and wresting its borders of propriety from it. And consequently to explode the reassuring opposition of the metaphoric and the proper, the opposition in which

86. Hegel, *Aesthetics,* pp. 407-8.

the one and the other have never done anything but reflect and refer to each other in their radiance.

Metaphor, then, always carries its death within itself. And this death, surely, is also the death *of* philosophy. But the genitive is double. It is sometimes the death of philosophy, death of a genre belonging to philosophy which is thought and summarized within it, recognizing and fulfilling itself within philosophy; and sometimes the death of a philosophy which does not see itself die and is no longer to be refound within philosophy.

A homonymy in which Aristotle recognized—in the guise of the Sophist at this point—the very figure of that which doubles and endangers philosophy: these two deaths repeat and simulate one another in the heliotrope. The heliotrope of Plato or of Hegel on the one hand, the heliotrope of Nietzsche or Bataille[87] on the other, to use metonymic abbreviations here. Such a flower always bears its double within itself, whether it be seed or type, the chance of its program or the necessity of its diagram. The heliotrope can always be *releve.* And it can always become a dried flower in a book. There is always, absent from every garden, a dried flower in a book; and by virtue of the repetition in which it endlessly puts itself into *abyme,*[88] no language can reduce into itself the structure of an anthology. This supplement of a code which traverses its own field, endlessly displaces its closure, breaks its line, opens its circle, and no ontology will have been able to reduce it.

Unless the anthology is also a lithography. Heliotrope also names a stone: a precious stone, greenish and streaked with red veins, a kind of oriental jasper.

87. See particularly, apart from Bataille's well known texts, certain of his first writings collected by Denis Hollier in volume 1 of the *Oeuvres completes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970): "L'Anus solaire," "Le langage des fleurs," "La mutilation sacrificielle de l'oreille coupee de Van Gogh," "Le bas matérialisme et la gnose," "Soleil pourri," "Corps celestes," etc.

88. TN. See above, note 73.