

## ***58.2 (The Doctoral Thesis with Jacques Derrida as My Hero)***

### **– Abstract –**

The first chapter of this thesis (entitled *The Dynamics of a Deep Disagreement: Derrida and Ricoeur on Metaphor and Its Relation to Philosophy*) is an examination of four projects of clarification which are all studies in one way or another of the deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur. The objective is to show how these studies as clarifying projects simplify and even over-simplify the nature of this disagreement or, more broadly, Derrida's and Ricoeur's both convergent and divergent discourses on metaphor.

The following four chapters are the analysis proper of the dynamics of the deep disagreement. These dynamics, being both ethical and epistemological, are as much about the *indirect* as the direct encounters between Derrida and Ricoeur. The second chapter analyses Derrida's essay, "La mythologie blanche," as challenge to the tradition which Ricoeur, its undeclared champion, must take up. Accordingly, the third and fourth chapters are devoted to analysing how Ricoeur meets this challenge in *La métaphore vive*.

While the third chapter is devoted to analysing Ricoeur's indirect encounter with Derrida's project, the fourth is devoted to analysing his *direct* encounter. The latter is essentially his critical analysis of "La mythologie blanche" in the last study of *La métaphore vive*. In turn, Derrida responds to Ricoeur's critique with a polemic and an exposé of sorts in "Le retrait de la métaphore." Analysing how Derrida takes aim at Ricoeur through Heidegger is the task of the fifth and final chapter.



**- Dedication -**

To my Mother (December 12, 1921 – October 7, 2001)

*I have no proper words for it,  
no words that can match the fifty long years  
of your absolute constancy.*



– Table of Contents –

<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter I</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>The Commitment to Tell the Truth about Derrida and Ricoeur on Metaphor as Project of Clarification</b>	
1.1 Leonard Lawlor’s Study in <i>Imagination and Chance: The Difference between the Thought of Ricoeur and Derrida</i> (1992).....	13
1.2. Guy Bouchard’s Study in <i>Le procès de la métaphore</i> (1984).....	33
1.3. S. H. Clark’s Study in <i>Paul Ricoeur</i> (1990).....	44
1.4. Giuseppe Stellardi’s Study in <i>Heidegger and Derrida on Philosophy and Metaphor: Imperfect Thought</i> (2000).....	53
<b>Chapter II</b> .....	<b>69</b>
<b>Derrida’s Commitment to Tell the Truth about Metaphor as <i>Indirect</i> Encounter with Ricoeur’s Project</b>	
2.1. Derrida “versus” Ricoeur at the Montreal Conference on Communication (1971).....	72
2.2. Metaphor – in the Philosophical Text.....	78
2.3. “Improper” Argument and Analysis.....	82
2.4. “Proper” Argument and Analysis.....	88
2.5. The Problem of the Concept of Metaphor: First Investigation.....	91
2.6. The Problem of the Concept of Metaphor: Second Investigation.....	97

2.7. Catachresis.....	101
2.8. The Problem of Philosophical Metaphor as Scientific Metaphor.....	102
2.9. From the Deaths of Metaphor to the Deaths of Philosophy.....	106
2.10. The Rhetorical Remainder.....	109
<b>Chapter III.....</b>	<b>113</b>

**Ricoeur’s Commitment to Tell the Truth about Metaphor  
as *Indirect* Encounter with Derrida’s Project**

3.1. Metaphor, Subject, Discourse.....	117
3.2. Mobilizing the Tradition: Critique, Correction, Protection.....	122
3.3. The Aristotelian Basis: Act/Potency.....	124
3.4. Semantics versus Semiotics.....	136
3.5. Interaction “versus” Substitution.....	140
3.6. The Production of New Meaning.....	146
<b>Chapter IV.....</b>	<b>149</b>

**Ricoeur’s Commitment to Tell the Truth about Metaphor  
as *Direct* Encounter with Derrida’s Project**

4.1. From Polyphile to Derrida and Heidegger ( <i>peut-être</i> ).....	151
4.2. Aristotle and Equivocation.....	154
4.3. Aquinas, Analogy, and Onto-theology.....	156
4.4. The Heidegger Connection.....	161
4.5. The Critical Analysis of “La mythologie blanche”: Part One.....	165
4.6. The Critical Analysis of “La mythologie blanche”: Part Two.....	175

4.7. Dogmatic Remainder.....	179
<b>Chapter V.....</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>Derrida's Commitment to Tell the Truth about Metaphor as <i>Direct</i> Encounter with Ricoeur's Project</b>	
5.1. The Impossible Subject.....	185
5.2. Pro Domo.....	191
5.3. The <i>Re-trait</i> of Heidegger.....	198
5.4. PS.....	216
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>219</b>
<b>Appendix: Honour and Integrity in Philosophy: Are They Possible?.....</b>	<b>235</b>



## – Abbreviations –

**DC** Discours et communication

**HD** Heidegger and Derrida on Philosophy and Metaphor: Imperfect Thought

**IC** Imagination and Chance: The Difference between the Thought of Ricoeur and Derrida

**MB** La mythologie blanche

**MV** La métaphore vive

**PC** Philosophie et communication

**PM** Le procès de la métaphore

**PR** Paul Ricoeur

**RM** Le retrait de la métaphore

**SEC** Signature, événement, contexte



## – Introduction –

The present study must profess to be complicated. To profess this at all – and particularly as an opening statement – is perhaps to raise some suspicion against it. Or perhaps it is to invite the sharp rejoinder: What study is not complicated? Or, then again, perhaps it is to induce some scholarly unease. Nevertheless, in spite of all this, in spite of the risk of provoking a negative reaction, it must profess and, more than profess, even thematise complication. It must do so in order to be, as it must be in its own way, a striving for whatever light can be shed on a matter which can never be fully in the light. The present study is complicated because it is implicated – because it chooses to be implicated or, more precisely, because it chooses to be aware that it is implicated – in what it sets out to analyse and how it sets out to analyse it. In so doing, what is analysed is not only recognized as being complicated, but as being a complicating of philosophical discourse in general.<sup>1</sup>

The deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur over metaphor and its relation to philosophy ultimately reaches as far and as wide and as deep as the issue of what philosophy is (or is not) and what it should be doing (or should not be doing). To admit that this issue borders on the unwieldy and the unmanageable is perhaps to admit that the professed orientation of the present study should be carefully – quite carefully – reconsidered.

It is almost to admit that it should be reconsidered straight out of sight. Instead of prizing the recognition – the full or fullest recognition – of a complicated and even over-complicated issue, the present study would perhaps be better off to prize, particularly in light of such a complicated (and even over-complicated) issue, the task of *clarification*. The latter is undoubtedly the most popular route for philosophical discourse and it is safe to say (but not entirely safe) that all existing studies of the deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur have taken it. As a side of the matter then which certainly cannot be ignored, Chapter I examines and diagnoses *four* such studies. But before identifying these four studies or explaining the process of examination and diagnosis, it is best to admit that

---

<sup>1</sup> Part of this recognition of the complicating of philosophical discourse is that the author of this thesis (which, in some ways, struggles hard not to be a thesis) runs the risk of complicating his own situation. This is as much to say that what he does here has an inescapably performative side to it, that his own discourse, however faulty, must be somehow the measure of what it purportedly extends, expands upon or, better, exposes in this area. What it wishes to expose is philosophical truth-telling as agon, as conflict, as internal division, as heterogeneity, as being both ethical and epistemological in nature. It is therefore not possible to take this path without encountering resistance, without encountering the *other* ethical orientation, without encountering the commitment to truth-telling which is more or less collective and concerned almost exclusively with its constative side.

this process is also the case against clarification.

The way of clarification is not necessarily the best route to follow because, as much as does the alternative route, it suffers from a major difficulty and dilemma. Underlying this difficulty and dilemma is the presupposition that clarity (which is also *leukos, theoria, logos, eidos, ousia, physis*, etc.) pertains almost exclusively to the matter at hand (i.e., the deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur) and that *lack* of clarity or concealment is a moot point and should itself be occulted. The result is that, even before beginning their examination of this deep (or, according to some, not so deep) disagreement,<sup>2</sup> the authors of the four studies rule out or rule on what is precisely at issue.

Now before raising the question whether the present study, in ruling on the above presupposition, also a priori rules on what is at issue, it is perhaps best to note that, while the way of what is rightly or wrongly called *obfuscation* is the way of complication and even over-complication, the way of clarification is the way of simplification and even over-simplification. This is to say that, just as the first way threatens with incomprehension by pointing to concealment at the heart of discovery and disclosure, so the second way threatens with a blind and blinding lucidity. As may be observed in both the history of ideas and history itself, much that is initially celebrated as the light of this clarifying and simplifying sun – this sun which shines as it were with all that is good, pleasing, comfortable, caring, commodious, convenient, etc. – may also be this sun's dark centre. At the very least, it must surely be admitted that, no less than the way of complication and even over-complication, the way of simplification and even over-simplification is necessarily troubled from within.

To demonstrate this internal trouble – this major difficulty and

---

<sup>2</sup> With the exception of but one of the four studies being examined in Chapter I (i.e., S. H. Clark's *Paul Ricoeur*), the responses given to the question of the depth of the disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur tend to be equivocal if not contradictory. For example, towards the end of *Le procès de la métaphore*, Guy Bouchard speculates that Derrida and Ricoeur are much closer than they suspect. "Que Derrida et Ricoeur puissent s'entendre au sujet de la métaphore, cela n'est peut-être pas dénué de toute vraisemblance" (*PM*, 215). However, in his Introduction, he characterizes the relationship between them quite differently. ". . . Ricoeur réaffirm[e] très fortement une compréhension foncièrement traditionnelle de la philosophie, de la littérature et de l'interprétation 'in the face of what would seem to be its most disorienting and uncanny challenge', en l'occurrence la position de Heidegger et, surtout, celle de Derrida" (*PM*, 10). In strikingly similar ways, Leonard Lawlor in *Imagination and Chance: The Difference between the Thought of Ricoeur and Derrida* and Giuseppe Stellardi in *Heidegger and Derrida on Philosophy and Metaphor: Imperfect Thought* characterize the relationship between Derrida and Ricoeur as one which is both intimately shared subject matter and opposition over the nature of philosophy. But for the present study and, in particular, the analysis which is carried out in Chapters II to V, the question is not whether the disagreement between them is deep or not, but what is the nature of its depth.

dilemma of the way of clarification – is the business of Chapter I. At the same time, it is also, as already mentioned, the process of examination and diagnosis. According to the present study, these outside studies are best representative of the way of clarification and the trouble or difficulty which attends it.<sup>3</sup> They are also the means by which to present, albeit in a preliminary and variegated way, the deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur. The overall format of the present study includes then, before the analysis proper of the debate (or, rather, quasi-debate) between Derrida and Ricoeur on metaphor, a rather lengthy detour and delay. There are two

---

3 Of course, the four outside studies examined in Chapter I are considered to be best representative of projects of clarification which are also studies of the deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur. There are not many such studies. And yet, on two occasions in "Le retrait de la métaphore" (i.e., the exposé which contains Derrida's response to Ricoeur's critique of "La mythologie blanche"), Derrida makes passing reference to the possibility of others taking up the discussion where both he and Ricoeur leave it off. On the first occasion, he claims that his response to Ricoeur's critique (all of this takes place at a conference in Geneva at which Ricoeur himself is a participant) is not meant to be what he calls a *pro domo*, a defense of his earlier essay which at the same time would be an opportunistic bid to strike back at Ricoeur. On the contrary, it is meant to "re-situer le lieu d'un débat possible, plutôt que pour l'ouvrir et encore moins pour le fermer. Quiconque voudrait s'y engager dispose maintenant à cet égard d'un corpus ample et précis" (RM, 69). The second occasion comes when, before moving on to an analysis of Heidegger, he winds up his defense of "La mythologie blanche" with the following: "Laissant donc de côté, en sa réserve intacte, la possibilité d'une toute autre lecture des deux textes, *La mythologie blanche* et *La métaphore vive*, j'en viens enfin à la note annoncée sur une note [à savoir celle qui porte sur Heidegger dans *La mythologie blanche*]" (RM, 74). Both Leonard Lawlor and Guy Bouchard explicitly respond to Derrida's open invitation. Lawlor cites the second reference at the very end of his Introduction. It follows his declaring that "perhaps we can let these texts [i.e., Derrida's and Ricoeur's] be read in unforeseen and diverse ways, in ways that are novel and surprising" (IC, 7). After citing not only the second but the first reference in his Introduction, Bouchard states that it is "cette autre lecture que nous proposons ici . . ." (PM, 10).

Apart from the four studies examined in Chapter I, there are only a handful of studies which take a look, usually a fleeting and partial one, at Derrida's and Ricoeur's dispute. One of the more substantial of these studies is an early article by Leonard Lawlor called "Dialectic and Iterability" (*Philosophy Today*, 32, Fall, 1988, 181-194). While being the precursor to his book, *Imagination and Chance*, this article adopts a more partisan and radical stance. Lawlor begins by claiming that "White Mythology" reveals a pervasive metaphoricity in philosophical discourse. "Philosophy cannot therefore maintain its traditional claim to autonomy and sovereignty" (181). "According to Derrida, Ricoeur simply misunderstands metaphoricity itself. Thus the question of metaphoricity and univocity in philosophical language drives the debate which takes place in these three texts [i.e., Derrida's "La mythologie blanche," Ricoeur's *La métaphore vive*, and Derrida's "Le retrait de la métaphore]" (181). For Lawlor, the deciding factor which "plays an absolutely necessary role in every linguistic utterance" (182) is *itérabilité*, a Derridean notion not expressly thematised in the above-mentioned texts on metaphor. Rather it comes from a paper, "Signature, événement, contexte," which Derrida delivered at a Montreal conference in 1971. Ricoeur himself presented at this conference and, along with Derrida, also

reasons for arranging it thus. First, given the demands placed upon the majority of readers of this study – readers who no doubt are more inclined to hold to the way of clarification than to the way of complication and even over-complication – the studies in question deserve to be presented and moreover, presented in a reasonably thorough and objective way. Secondly, the traditional practise of integrating these studies – or at least elements or arguments of these studies – in the analysis proper or recognizing them only in footnotes is, in the first case, wholly out of the question and, in the second case, a move which would be merely arbitrary or decorative. Another

---

participated in a roundtable discussion. Lawlor goes on to connect *itérabilité* to *usure*, a notion which, unlike the former, is to be found in “La mythologie blanche.” “*Usure* indicates that any term can essentially deviate from any supposed unity of sense” (183). Here there is a dissemination of meaning which makes univocity impossible and hence undermines philosophical discourse. Lawlor then discusses Ricoeur’s analysis of Aristotle’s analogy of being. This analysis takes place in the Eighth study of *La métaphore vive* and focuses on Aristotle’s attempt to contain and control equivocity or equivocation. Expanding further on Ricoeur’s own struggle, Lawlor discusses his notion of *distanciation*, the dialectical movement wherein “meaning achieves universality by cancelling and preserving the [discursive] event’s singularity” (188). “The ultimate referent is prelinguistic ‘lived experience,’ a correlation between act and meaning which is ‘effectuated’ in discourse” (188). “Like Derrida, Ricoeur’s view of language in general intersects Husserl’s writings” (188). In the case of Derrida, however, Husserl’s ideal objectivities are deconstructed in order to demonstrate their complicity in the empirical and historical dimensions of experience. “For Derrida, the complete determination of a meaning (even such a meaning as triangularity) can never be achieved, because the terms in factual language can be used in unforeseen ways” (188). Finally, Lawlor concludes on the following note: “Without the event, is hermeneutics still possible; without identity, is philosophy still possible? Only a negative answer can be derived from the absolutely necessary condition of iterability. The confrontation therefore resolves itself into a Derridean critique of Ricoeur’s hermeneutical theory” (193).

Another study which takes more than a passing glance at the deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur is Morny Joy’s “Derrida and Ricoeur: A Case of Mistaken Identity (and Difference)” (*Journal of Religion* 68, No. 4, 1988, 508-526). Unlike Lawlor in his article “Dialectic and Iterability,” Joy shows herself to be more receptive to Ricoeur’s point of view than to Derrida’s. Entertaining the possibility that, due to Heidegger, “philosophizing is passé” (508), Joy announces that she “would like to focus on an exchange between Paul Ricoeur and Jacques Derrida as symptomatic of one of the vital issues at stake. Each thinker presents a possible response to Heidegger’s dictum that ‘the metaphorical only exists within the metaphysical.’ Their debate questions not only the philosophical enterprise as traditionally conceived and pursued (which is hardly a novel procedure) but also the very foundations of philosophy in language” (508). But before directly addressing this debate, Joy examines “briefly Heidegger’s delineation of the relation of metaphor and metaphysics” (509). At the heart of this delineation is that, while apparently denouncing metaphor for being implicated in metaphysics, Heidegger “still employs figurative language” (509). “Much of Heidegger’s later writing involves attempts to describe, in an increasingly enigmatic fashion, [the] integrative form of language (*Sagen*) that reflects and embodies ‘the being of language, the language of Being’ (*Das Wesen der Sprache, die Sprache des Wesens*)” (509). According to Joy, both Derrida and Ricoeur

way to state the matter is that, given that the four studies as oversimplification are incommensurate with the analysis proper as overcomplication, the demand for at least a certain amount of clarity in this study (for there is such a demand) is also the demand to keep the four outside studies and the analysis proper separate.

To state the matter even more completely, it is on the basis of a quadruple aim that the four outside studies have been selected and arranged. Accordingly, the objectives of Chapter I are, first, to give as fair a representation as possible of the available studies of the deep disagreement

---

question whether Heidegger "has actually escaped the logic of identity and dichotomy, and its concomitant metaphysical dislocations, in quite the way he professes" (510). Derrida, questioning Heidegger's formulation of the difference between Being and beings, "adopts a Nietzschean critique of any metaphysical claims to truth and absoluteness" (512). Not himself interested in investigating "a form of language prior to the split wrought by the metaphysical division" (512), Derrida "introduces the neologism *différance* to demarcate his distance from Heidegger because for Derrida there is no primordial Being-at-one that can ontologically, dialectically, or by perdurance subsume difference" (513). Instead of the Heideggerian nostalgia for Being as some lost native land, Derrida advocates an affirmation of life in the Nietzschean sense. Joy then goes on to glance at Derrida's response to Ricoeur's critique of "La mythologie blanche." "[Derrida] is particularly concerned that Ricoeur's identification of himself with Heidegger on the position of metaphor and metaphysics in *The Rule of Metaphor* [i.e., *La métaphore vive*] is a misreading" (517). But rather than looking closely at this matter of an alleged misreading, Joy continues her argument that Derrida is primarily concerned with undermining Heidegger. Then, in the third and final part of her essay, the author turns her attention to Ricoeur. The latter is commended because he "has charted a course through the maze of contemporary philosophical options in an attempt to formulate an ontology that he feels is appropriate to the present situation" (518). Equally opposed to Heidegger and Derrida, Ricoeur attempts "a reformulation of certain traditional ways of understanding both metaphor and metaphysics" (518). Joy then goes on to discuss Ricoeur's various objections to Derrida's reading of Aristotle and his treatment of the subject of metaphor. In particular, she points out that Ricoeur critiques Derrida's "thesis" of *métaphore usée* or *métaphore morte*. She then goes on to discuss Ricoeur's tensional and referential theory of metaphor. "Ricoeur's provocative thesis is that with the appearance of a 'live metaphor' a new experience comes to language" (521). It is in the context of this new experience which Ricoeur calls the metaphorical redescription of the world that he dares to appropriate both Husserl's *Lebenswelt* and Heidegger's *In-der-Welt-Sein*. At the same time, Ricoeur's theory manages to evade "the Heideggerian allogical manipulation and Derrida's verbal pyrotechnics by grounding itself in the more ambiguous categories of human activity" (522). Although the author concludes that Ricoeur's theory still needs more detailed development, it is given preference over Derrida's "attention to the profound ambiguities of language" which "leaves us in a state of noncommitted polymorphous exploration that is confined basically to retrospective textual analysis. Ricoeur, committed to action, seeks to explore the same ambiguities of language in a creative manner . . ." (526).

Finally, there are a few texts which only briefly touch on or enter into the vicinity of the dispute between Derrida and Ricoeur. As to be expected, some are prone to siding with Derrida and others to siding with Ricoeur. With respect to the supporters of Derrida, the general tendency is to affirm his philosophical objectives and credentials in the face of the

between Derrida and Ricoeur, secondly, to expose their fault lines as studies which in different ways are projects of clarification, thirdly, to provide a preliminary but overall view of the deep disagreement which is also a debate or a quasi-debate between Derrida and Ricoeur, and, finally, to make as accessible as possible the analysis proper which takes up the four remaining chapters – Chapters II to V – of the present study.

It is appropriate at this point to introduce the four outside studies and give some indication as to how they satisfy the above-mentioned objectives. But before proceeding to the first study, it should be noted that all four studies – as studies of Derrida and Ricoeur on metaphor and its relation to philosophy – are significant parts of larger studies. To be more precise, these larger studies are four books, each of which is the work of one author and each of which deals with matters related but not expressly belonging to the

---

fairly widespread suspicion that he is out to weaken or discredit philosophy. For example, Rodolph Gasché in *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), states: "Yet because Ricoeur is primarily concerned with warding off any intrusion of poetics into philosophy, he remains blind to the fact that Heidegger's and Derrida's investigations into metaphor and metaphoricity are not simply poetical inquiries but are based on a philosophical concept of metaphor and are thus a debate with that philosophical concept" (301). In *Jacques Derrida: Rhétorique et philosophie* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), Marcos Siscar denounces Ricoeur's presumption that he can do away with metaphysical oppositions (e.g., sensible/non-sensible) simply by moving into the foreground an undeveloped and ambiguous theory of tension. He then gives an account of Derrida's project which, while not shying away from its subversive aspect, is largely apologetic. "Interroger, déplacer chaque mot et chaque concept, les placer ou se laisser placer à travers eux dans cette loi paradoxale de la métaphore jusqu'à ce qu'il ne reste du langage que la trace d'un déplacement. N'est-ce pas celui-là le projet le plus difficile et le plus contradictoire (en tant que projet) de la déconstruction derridienne, celui, en tout cas qui rend les textes à peu près « illisible » ou « inutile » quand on les approche avec l'expectative d'y retrouver très vite une thèse dans les modèles classiques, présentée, soutenue, développée, une thèse qui parie sur son homogénéité?" (105).

With respect to the supporters of Ricoeur, the general tendency is to commend his meeting the challenge of Derrida and deconstruction. For example, Pierre Gisel in "Paul Ricoeur: Discourse between Speech and Language" (*Philosophy Today* 21, 1977, 446-456), states: "The metaphorical is first. But because there is discourse, the philosophical enterprise is possible. The metaphorical can be thought. Ricoeur criticizes Jacques Derrida for whom the thesis of an initial metaphoricity entails a metaphoricity without any limits" (452). In "Metaphor in the Modern Critical Arena" (*Christianity and Literature* 33, No. 1, Fall, 1983), Roger Lundin describes Derridean deconstruction "as an assault upon philosophy and its privileged status as a rational discourse" (24). Shortly thereafter, he glances at the work of Paul Ricoeur. "Paul Ricoeur sees in the deconstructionist line a continuation of the dominant Western tendency to view metaphor as a 'guilty' substitution of figurative for proper meaning (*The Rule of Metaphor*, 284-289). . . . Thus behind the deconstructionist attack upon the truthfulness or significance of metaphor we find, curiously enough, a metaphysics of the proper, a view of language which claims that metaphor, in doing its work of bearing, transferring, carrying over, does nothing more than make a transfer from the realm of the proper, the sensible, the real into the realm of illusion" (25).

subject in question.

The first study to be examined and then, as in the case of the three other studies, subsequently diagnosed is to be found in Leonard Lawlor's *Imagination and Chance: The Difference between the Thought of Ricoeur and Derrida* (1992). What recommends this study as the one to begin with is that, of all the books or articles which examine in some way or other the deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur, no other one treats it more systematically as a disagreement, dispute, or polemic per se.<sup>4</sup> As the title of his book suggests, Lawlor's objective is to go to the heart of the difference between them. His interest in the polemical side of their exchange is to be observed in the fact that not only does his book begin with a more than forty-page study of Derrida's and Ricoeur's disagreement over metaphor, but it also ends with a thirty-page transcript of an earlier and highly relevant debate. Having as its subject the relationship between philosophy and communication, this debate was part of a conference and, more precisely, a roundtable discussion which followed the presentation of papers by, among others, Derrida and Ricoeur.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, while Lawlor extends his inquiry into the difference between them beyond metaphor and to other subjects such as time, imagination, and chance, he nonetheless uses their principal works on metaphor as the basis from which to launch his more sweeping investigation.

With respect to Derrida's and Ricoeur's deep disagreement over metaphor, Lawlor presents summaries of the *three key texts* or, more precisely, the key parts of these texts. For reasons of economy and efficiency, the present study's report of these summaries will be a mixture of condensed statement and citation. In addition, in order to avoid an overabundance of material, most of Lawlor's discussion of Derrida and Ricoeur which goes beyond the range of these three key texts will not be reproduced.

The second study to be brought forward is found in Guy Bouchard's *Le procès de la métaphore* (1984). In a way which may be said to be even more complicated than Lawlor's, it is a project of clarification which strongly suggests that it is not a project of simplification. Reproducing and examining in detail throughout the better part of his book Derrida's and Ricoeur's discourses on metaphor, Bouchard is less concerned with the difference

---

4 Ricoeur himself calls the second half of his critical analysis of "La mythologie blanche" polemical. See page 166 of the present study.

5 The transcript which Lawlor provides at the end of his book is an English translation. The original one in French is entitled "Philosophie et communication" and is to be found in the second volume of *La Communication: Actes du XVe Congrès de l'Association des sociétés de philosophie de langue française* (Montréal: Montmorency, 1971), 393-431. An analysis of Derrida's internal dilemma in the context of this conference is given in section 2.1. of the present study.

between them than with what he considers to be their respective ways of overextending or, as he puts it, *inflating* the conception of metaphor. Unlike Lawlor then, Bouchard is explicitly critical of both Derrida and Ricoeur and, furthermore, offers a corrective in the form of his own scaled-down and presumably more tractable definition of metaphor.

It should be apparent that, because the whole of Bouchard's book focuses, first, on the concept of metaphor and thus on the most formal or technical part of the dispute between Derrida and Ricoeur, and, secondly, because it focuses on what Lawlor, with his ranging outside the three key texts, only takes as the preliminary basis of his "larger" study, it offers a certain change of perspective and way of critically encountering their projects. On the other hand, Bouchard follows a similar path to Lawlor's when he provides a resume of the three key texts which, to identify briefly here and in chronological order, are: Derrida's essay "La mythologie blanche" (1971), Ricoeur's book, *La métaphore vive* (1975) and, finally, Derrida's exposé, "Le retrait de la métaphore" (1978). Pertinent to the matter of the present study's selecting and ordering the outside studies is the fact that Bouchard's coverage of the three key texts differs both in style and substance from Lawlor's. Because of its focus on the subject of metaphor, Bouchard's study is a much more extensive treatment of what seems to be (this "seems" will prove to be important later on) the non-polemical part of these texts. At least, this is certainly the case with respect to Ricoeur's *La métaphore vive* which, while only having the last of its eight chapters or, as Ricoeur calls them, studies examined by Lawlor, is examined in full by Bouchard.

In order to be faithful to the texts he is examining, Bouchard does a great deal of paraphrasing which so closely duplicates Derrida's and Ricoeur's texts that it is often quasi-citational.<sup>6</sup> Less interpretative than

---

<sup>6</sup> To give an idea of how close Bouchard comes to paraphrasing Derrida's text in a way which makes it resemble – at least, in certain places – a string of slightly modified and unacknowledged citations (for example, it should be noted below that Bouchard discards Derrida's quotation marks around "metaphor"), a small sampling and comparison is in order. First of all, there is the following passage in "La mythologie blanche": "L'appel aux critères de clarté et d'obscurité suffirait à confirmer ce que nous annonçons plus haut: toute cette délimitation philosophique de la métaphore se laisse déjà construire et travailler par des « métaphores »" (*MB*, 301). In *Le procès de la métaphore* Bouchard traces the above passage as follows: "Les critères de clarté et d'obscurité confirment donc que la délimitation philosophique de la métaphore est travaillée par des métaphores" (*PM*, 19). A little further on, Derrida continues: "Si nous reprenions chaque terme de la définition proposée par la *Poétique*, nous y reconnâtrons la marque d'une figure (*metaphora* ou *epiphora*, c'est aussi un mouvement de translation spatiale; *eidōs*, c'est aussi une figure visible, un contour et une forme, l'espace d'un aspect ou d'une espèce; *genos*, c'est aussi une filiation, la souche d'une naissance, d'une origine, d'une famille, etc.)" (*MB*, 301-302). Bouchard, always condensing, follows his earlier paraphrase with this one: "Travail lisible en chacun des

Lawlor's, it may be thought that his resume is a better choice for serving as a schematic outline of the deep disagreement. But apart from the fact that Bouchard never really analyses this disagreement such that beginning with his study would leave out something important right at the outset of the present study, there is another problem. It is that, given the nature of the analysis carried out in Chapters II to V, the reproducing of Bouchard's resume would risk being redundant. Paying as much attention to the textual moves and movements of "La mythologie blanche," *La métaphore vive*, and "Le retrait de la métaphore" as to their arguments, the analysis of Chapters II to V, although not quasi-citational, is amply supplied (or, at least, it is to be hoped) with citations. Moreover, to place undue emphasis on the question of which of the outside studies is more precise and in what way would be to deflect attention from Chapter I's main order of business, namely, to examine these studies from the point of view of their internal distress.

While Bouchard's critique of Ricoeur is much harsher and longer than his critique of Derrida, the third outside study to be brought forward is entirely pro-Ricoeur and anti-Derrida. S. H. Clark's, *Paul Ricoeur* (1990), offers an eleven-page discussion of the dispute between them in a subsection entitled "Deconstruction and Metaphor." With a more assertive style than either Lawlor's or Bouchard's, Clark characterizes the disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur as a confrontation in which Ricoeur, as the more aggressive but nevertheless always respectful and restrained party, comes out the clear winner. In fact, Clark goes so far as to suggest that the presumably non-polemical part of *La métaphore vive* (i.e., the first seven studies which constitute a survey and analysis of many metaphorical theories as well as the development of an all-embracing one) is in some way a preparation for and prelude to Ricoeur's confronting Derrida in the Eighth Study. Challenging the assumption that there is a strictly non-polemical part of Ricoeur's discourse on metaphor is also an important part of the analysis of Chapters II to V.

If the present study should be fully committed to its task and not given to sparing itself and, furthermore, if Clark, in endorsing Ricoeur's position, also endorses and exhibits the virtues of clarity; and, furthermore, if another study, in endorsing Derrida's position, falls short in this area, then surely, as a sort of challenge to the present study and, more precisely, as a challenge to Chapter I, this situation must be looked into. It is thus as a sort of oddity that the fourth outside study comes to be selected and placed at the end of Chapter I's worksheet. Completely devoted to Derrida's discourse on metaphor and to this discourse's even "exalting" metaphor, the study in

---

termes de la définition aristotélicienne: *métaphora* [sic] ou *ephiphora*, c'est aussi un mouvement spatial; *eidōs*, c'est aussi la figure visible, le contour, la forme; *genos*, c'est aussi une filiation, la souche d'une naissance, d'une origine, d'une famille" (PM, 19).

question nonetheless exhibits – at least to some degree – a will to clarify both metaphor and philosophy. Although Derrida’s and Ricoeur’s debate on this subject (which is called a fundamental debate on the back of the author’s book) takes up only the better part of one of the four chapters of *Heidegger and Derrida on Philosophy and Metaphor: Imperfect Thought* (2000), there is a sense in which Giuseppe Stellardi’s whole project is under its sway. If one takes into consideration the fact that Heidegger himself has very little to say about metaphor and that, despite this lack or seeming lack, both Derrida and Ricoeur refer abundantly to Heidegger, that, furthermore, Stellardi does not strictly follow Derrida’s analysis of Heidegger and admits to a certain agreement with Ricoeur on the matter of Heidegger’s metaphors, and that, finally, he primarily engages Heidegger’s text as a task of exploration or, as he puts it, “the task would be better described as a ‘journeying over’ it” (*HD*, 128), then one gains some idea of the tension or trouble which traverses the author’s undertaking.

But perhaps it is now time to address the question of the tension or trouble which traverses the present undertaking. One problem which confronts it is that it cannot properly say what it is or at least cannot say what it is all at once. It must defer a large part of this task to a self-analysis at the beginning of Chapter II. But, apart from this self-analysis, it must also defer it to the analysis of the deep disagreement itself. Or, more precisely, it must defer it to the analysis of this deep disagreement as quasi-debate and even highly extended quasi-debate. Or, more precisely still, it must defer it to the analysis of the *dynamics* of this highly extended quasi-debate. Or, even more precisely, it must defer it to the analysis of the dynamics of this highly extended quasi-debate as being epistemological *and* ethical.

To leave aside for the time being the task of introducing the analysis proper then is no less than to keep in view the present issue of complication versus clarification. To the extent that the present study professes to be complicated and even over-complicated, there is the admission that it cannot be thoroughly impartial in its analysis. While it is true that Ricoeur is willing to invite a tremendous amount of complication into his work in order for it to be as comprehensive as possible, it is also true that he aims at ruling out all *excessive* complication. Ricoeur himself admits as much when, for example, he characterizes philosophical discourse as being that which is sometimes infected with an invincible ambiguity, a sort of overly poetic effusion which he thinks is to be found, for example, in the very last works of Heidegger and which results from its succumbing to the lure of the ineffable. “*Le prix de cette prétention [de mettre fin à l’histoire de l’être] est l’invincible ambiguïté des dernières oeuvres . . .*” (*MV*, 397).

Despite Ricoeur’s tremendous range then, Derrida goes beyond it or in a sense explodes what, according to Guy Bouchard, is Ricoeur’s already

inflated conception of metaphor. For Bouchard, Derrida, by tracing metaphor to the very heart of the definition of metaphor, to the very heart of the concept, and, finally, to the very heart of language and being, not only presents an epistemological obstacle to metaphorical theory, but to all philosophy of language. The present study of course will shortly take into account Bouchard's critical stand more fully. For the time being, it is enough to remark that, were Bouchard's interests less linguistic and, like Lawlor's, more epistemological, he no doubt would make much of the fact that Derrida troubles philosophy's own language.

But even to describe the situation in this fashion would still be to oversimplify it. Derrida only troubles philosophy's own language because it is already troubled. Haunted by metaphoricity (but not metaphor *stricto sensu*) which is inherent to language in general, it can never be entirely in control of itself. At the same time, it is fairly evident that the major part of philosophical discourse can go on without scrutinizing or, for that matter, scrupling over the seemingly minute part of it which escapes control. From this point of view then, the status of the second sentence of this paragraph is rendered uncertain: Derrida still seems to be an accomplice in making life difficult for philosophy and philosophers. A heterogeneous element enters the picture as "perverse" motivation, disposition, intention, inclination, etc. or, then again, as "bad" consequence, effect, result, etc. A number of "ethical" values are thus put into play which need not be harmonious with each other, let alone with those in larger circulation in both philosophy and the world in general.

It is in this way that one might return to the objection made earlier by the present study, namely, that the four outside studies all operate with a presupposition which a priori rules out or rules on the matter at issue. The problem is that, while it is true that this objection can be justified on the basis of analysing the four studies in question, it is also true that, in and of itself or rather in all that it can possibly mean or entail, it is not justifiable. Or, more properly, it is just as much unjustifiable as it is justifiable. For example, it is unjustifiable from the point of view that the objection itself is inevitably an epistemological ruling which, according to what the objection is or must be as an anti-epistemological one, rules itself out of court. Or, to put it another way, the ruling that conceptuality is prone to internal slippage rules out conceptual rule as absolute rule and therefore must rule out the certainty of the ruling that metaphoricity is implicated in conceptuality. On the other hand, it is justifiable or even more than justifiable from the point of view that it is the *responsibility* of philosophy to examine all presuppositions and therefore the responsibility of the present study to examine the presupposition in question (i.e., that lack of clarity is a moot point and should itself be occulted).

What all this ultimately means for the present study is that it cannot entirely free itself from the principle of clarity even while troubling it or because, even while doing so, it is also the clearing of a path towards it. This is both an "affirmation" and a "negation" of the principle of clarity which of course is non-receivable in many circles. But from the point of view of the present study, this double gesture can only be both ethically and epistemologically right. Strictly speaking, this study is not an affirmation or negation of this principle, but merely the challenging of its authority or rather **Authority**. Always being half-respectful and yet half-distrustful of this Authority, it is the recognition of its being not simply the eternal light of a Philosophical Saying, but also the eternal twilight of a Philosophical Doing. It is the recognition not only of the constative side of philosophical discourse, but also the recognition that this *recognition of the constative side* only comes at the expense of not recognizing the performative side. Conversely, it is the recognition not only of the performative side of philosophical discourse, but also the recognition that this *recognition of the performative side* only comes at the expense of not recognizing the constative side. Finally, it is the always precarious attempt to guard philosophy from the lure of the utterly effable and, as such, to guard it from itself.

## Chapter I

### The Commitment to Tell the Truth about Derrida and Ricoeur on Metaphor as Project of Clarification

As set out in the Introduction, the business of this chapter is to examine and diagnose four studies of the deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur. Traversing this primary task is the secondary one which is to provide a preliminary and variegated look at the deep disagreement itself.

#### 1.1. Leonard Lawlor's Study in *Imagination and Chance: The Difference between the Thought of Ricoeur and Derrida*

A key part of Lawlor's discussion of the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur already takes place in his Introduction. It is not only part of a preliminary outline of his overall project, but also part of a preliminary analysis. Given this early complication, it is better to postpone the examination of it and begin with the examination of his resumes or, as he calls them, his *readings*. This is Part I, "The Polemic between Ricoeur and Derrida." Part II and Part III are where Lawlor carries out his more extended analysis but, for reasons to be given later, these parts will not be investigated. In order to be as clear and economic as possible, the report of these readings is itself a reading. More precisely, it is a highly condensed one which takes a few judicious shortcuts<sup>1</sup> and, notwithstanding its bid to be as taut and as spare as possible, also takes the liberty of, along with citing frequently from Lawlor, making a few minor contributions and corrections.<sup>2</sup> It also avoids, as much as possible, repetitious expressions such as "according to Lawlor," "Lawlor claims that," "for Lawlor," and so on. It is to be hoped that this move will not be found unwelcome since its only aim is to facilitate a preliminary encounter with Derrida and Ricoeur. Furthermore, the present study's reading of Lawlor's readings seeks neither to critique nor to slavishly

---

1 For example, no attempt is made to reproduce Lawlor's reading of "La mythologie blanche" in its contextualized or cross-referential state. This aspect of his reading is described as follows: "The reading will be guided by earlier Derridean texts, in particular, 'The Pit and the Pyramid' and 'Ousia and Gramme' (both in *Margins* like 'White Mythology'), and *Speech and Phenomena*" (IC, 11). Two things follow. First of all, certain notions of Derrida which Lawlor often refers to (e.g., *supplémentarité*) but which are not expressly thematised in "La mythologie blanche" and "Le retrait de la métaphore" are not given the same amount of attention as Lawlor gives them. Secondly, the motif of "zigzagging" which is central to Lawlor's description of both Derrida's trajectory and the tradition's as the latter views it is likewise avoided.

2 Footnotes 8 and 9 are perhaps the only significant corrections. Footnotes 5, 6, 7, 10, 13, and 14 are citations from Derrida's and Ricoeur's texts which are not found in Lawlor's.

reproduce them but rather to “collaborate” with them. Thus the distinction between Lawlor’s voice and the voice of the present study should not be considered, insofar as the three readings are concerned, a relevant issue.<sup>3</sup>

### **Lawlor’s Reading of Derrida’s “La mythologie blanche”**

Lawlor begins by announcing that he will take up in turn each of the five sections of Derrida’s essay: “Exergue,” “Plus de métaphore,” “L’ellipse du soleil: L’énigme, l’incompréhensible, l’imprenable,” “Les fleurs du rhétorique: L’héliotrope,” and “La métaphysique - relève de la métaphore.” In the first section, “Exergue,” Derrida begins his demonstration that metaphor is implicated in the concept. “The Greek word, *eidos*, for instance, means not only a suprasensible idea, but also outward appearance” (12).<sup>4</sup> On the basis of this way of conceiving the relationship between these two familiar terms, metaphor and concept, which of course are quite often considered to be inimical, Derrida claims that no adequate study can be done of philosophical metaphor or, as he expresses it in the sub-title of “La mythologie blanche,” metaphor in the philosophical text.

In the second section, “Plus de métaphore,” Derrida presents an argument to back up his claim. The first premise of this argument is that philosophical metaphor cannot be defined without appealing to, on the one hand, such basic oppositions as sensible/intelligible, sensory/sense, and sensual/spiritual and, on the other hand, such basic concepts as *theoria*, *eidos*, and *logos*. The second premise is that all such oppositions and concepts have a figurative or tropic aspect – a metaphorical charge – and, as a consequence, what is to be defined is inseparable from the defining operation. “Thus, the definition of philosophical metaphor [is itself] a philosophical metaphor, but one not included in the field” (13).

This paradoxical situation of extracting from the subject which is presumably under definitional control in order to add to or to equip the subject which operates as definitional control is what Derrida calls the *law of supplementarity*. Operating both as a negative and positive universal, this law becomes particularly evident in the study of philosophical metaphor. Nor does this situation change, be the study of philosophical metaphor called the rhetoric of philosophy or the philosophy of rhetoric. “White Mythology’s first two sections, therefore, define an irresolvable problem: how can one speak about metaphor nonmetaphorically?” (14).

---

<sup>3</sup> The diagnosis to be carried out after these readings turns less on points of interpretation than how Lawlor proceeds in the Introduction.

<sup>4</sup> All page numbers of cited passages in section 1.1. of the present study refer to Lawlor’s *Imagination and Chance* unless otherwise indicated.

Perhaps the tradition's most powerful response to this question has been Hegel's. According to Derrida, metaphor in Hegel is taken up into and by the concept as Absolute Concept or Spirit and, as such, is taken up without remainder. With respect to philosophy's use of metaphor then, there is not in Hegel simply the semantic or epistemological work (described by Ricoeur in *La métaphore vive* as Platonic) of transferring meaning and reference from the sensible to the intelligible, but also the ontological work of transferring the sensible in its entirety to the intelligible (or World to Spirit). Accordingly, the sensible or figurative aspect of the concept is not the sign of an impure residue which would result from its base (etymological) origin, but rather the sign of the sensible's – as well as the sensible sign's – being preserved and elevated.<sup>5</sup>

In order to deal with the third and fourth sections of "La mythologie blanche," Lawlor proposes to examine them together by combining their respective analyses of Aristotle on metaphor. These analyses in turn include what for Derrida is the paradigmatic metaphor (of both good and bad metaphor)<sup>6</sup> of the Western tradition. It is the figure of the Sun to which, in both the third and fourth sections, Derrida pays special attention. Correspondingly, Lawlor guides the second part of his reading of these two sections by singling out this figure.

Going back to Aristotle's highly influential definition of metaphor (this is the first part of the above-mentioned reading), Derrida begins his investigation of the traditional association between metaphor and name (*onomos*). Since the name, according to Aristotle, corresponds to the object in a true or false way and, furthermore, since metaphor ultimately is a kind of naming, it is implicated in meaning, reference, truth, and knowledge. Derrida shows that, just as Aristotle's theory of metaphor falls inside his theory of diction (*lexis*), so the latter falls inside his theory of poetic imitation (*mimesis*). The latter in turn falls inside his theory of resemblance (*homoiosis*) which in turn falls inside his theory of nature (*physis*).<sup>7</sup>

---

5 "Surtout, le mouvement de la métaphorisation (origine puis effacement de la métaphore, passage du sens propre sensible au sens propre spirituel à travers le détour des figures) n'est autre qu'un mouvement d'idéalisation. Et il est compris sous la catégorie maîtresse de l'idéalisme dialectique, à savoir la relève (*Aufhebung*), c'est-à-dire la mémoire qui produit les signes, les intériorise (*Erinnerung*) en élevant, supprimant et conservant l'extériorité sensible" (*MB*, 269).

6 "Ce qui apparaîtra d'abord, dans l'exemple aristotélicien, c'est sans doute que les métaphores héliotropiques peuvent être de mauvaises métaphores" (*MB*, 298).

7 "Au début de la *Poétique*, la *mimesis* est posée en quelque sorte comme une possibilité propre à la *physis*. Celle-ci se révèle dans la *mimesis*, ou dans la poésie qui en est une espèce, en raison de cette structure peu apparente qui fait que la *mimesis* n'apporte pas de l'extérieur le pli de son redoublement. Elle appartient à la *physis*, ou, si l'on préfère, celle-ci comprend son extériorité elle-même et son double. La *mimesis* est donc, en ce sens, un mouvement « naturel ». Cette naturalité est réduite et confiée par Aristote à la parole de

Metaphor thus belongs to metaphysics because, underlying Aristotle's theory of nature is his theory of substance (*ousia*) which in turn is at the heart of his theory of being. Although the latter encompasses change, movement, and, of course, difference, the origin and destination of all this is but the One. "Everything, for Aristotle begins and ends in unity. As he says in Book IV, 'it is impossible to think of anything if we do not think of one thing (*me noounta hen*).' Because Aristotle's ontology is based on *ousia* and because his ontology determines his metaphorology, Aristotle must, according to Derrida, privilege the proper over the metaphorical" (18).

Much of Derrida's discussion in the fourth section is concerned with *propriety*. In Aristotle, the property of an object, while distinguishable from its essence, is in a quasi-synonymous relation to it. Thus it may be said, for example, that, while Socrates' essence is that he is human and that, distinguishable from this fact, he has reason (*logos*) as a property, the fact that he has reason is also the fact that he is human. Metaphor imposes itself in this relation by ascribing the property of one thing to another thing (e.g., Socrates is a plant) and in a way which, while initiating a comparative relation between two different things, also initiates an *impropriety* which of course is the transferred property's incompatibility with the essence of the thing to which it is ascribed. "It is improper or metaphorical to say that Socrates is a plant (*phutos*). Metaphor then, in a way, destroys the unity of the subject's essence by not saying the same" (19).

For Aristotle, metaphor by analogy is metaphor par excellence. The example he gives is: *Evening is the old age of day* (or: *Old age is the evening of life*). Since this metaphor originates from four retrievable terms – evening, day, old age, life – it can always be brought back to the univocal and proper. At the same time, it does epistemic work or is operative in a cognitive way by being a perception of resemblance and suggesting or pointing out a new class or category. But "even if metaphors provide knowledge through resemblance, Aristotle always prefers the proper and univocal discourse of philosophy" (19).

Going back to the third section (this is the second part of the above-mentioned reading), Lawlor now gives an account of Derrida's "first solar example." What is primarily at issue here is that Aristotle admits that there are metaphors by analogy which have a missing term. Despite his not looking further into this matter, Aristotle provides an example of metaphor by analogy which, for Derrida, renders problematic the distinction between good or proper and bad or improper metaphor. The example in question, *The*

---

l'homme. Plutôt qu'une réduction, ce geste constitutif de la métaphysique et de l'humanisme est une détermination téléologique: la naturalité en général se dit, se rassemble, se connaît, s'apparaît, se mire et se « mime » *par excellence* et *en vérité* dans la nature humaine. La *mimesis* est le propre de l'homme" (*MB*, 283).

*sun seeds its light*, is one in which the improper word "seeds" corresponds to no proper term and hence functions improperly even as metaphor. "Because the sun's power lacks a proper name, the sun's essence has never been disclosed without mediation, in complete presence. The disseminating sun metaphor, which Derrida calls 'an ellipsis of an ellipsis,' implies absence. The sun – the 'original, unique, and irreplaceable referent' – seems to have already been elided" (20).

Lawlor then returns to the fourth section with its "second solar example." Once again, Aristotle not only seems to be revealing the weak points of his own theory, but doing so in the way of suggesting a pact between the sun and the enigmatic. In the *Topics* he argues that the property of a sensory object can only be adequately determined on the basis of its full presence. He then goes on to claim that, when a person defines the sun as the brightest star moving about the earth, this person does so incorrectly. Given that the sun is absent half the time, it is always possible that, during that time, it does not move about the earth. Yet, if for this reason, nothing which is proper to the sun can be determined, then not only is it the paradigmatic metaphor – the good or proper one which is the perpetual return from absence to presence and from non-meaning to meaning – but also the paradigmatic *bad* metaphor. As the paradigm then of, in addition to metaphor (good or bad), the sensorial and the full presence of things, the sun is the fissured basis of the proper/improper opposition and, for that matter, all other oppositions. "Philosophical discourse is constituted by terms and oppositions with sensuous referents, terms such as *phainesthai*, *aletheia*, etc., oppositions such as the visible and the invisible, appearing and disappearing, presence and absence. All these basic terms' and oppositions' senses derive from the sun, its light and movement" (22).

[What can now be seen is that] Derrida has generalized metaphor beyond its traditional limits. [He] states this generalization explicitly at the close of "White Mythology's" last section where he speaks of two self-destructions of metaphor. The first self-destruction is based in the metaphysical determination of metaphor. Exemplified by Aristotle and Hegel, metaphysics defines metaphor as continuity. So defined, metaphor can always be elevated into a concept or into the proper. As the last section's title, "La métaphysique – relève de la métaphore," indicates, the elevation (*relève*) of metaphor is metaphysics.<sup>8</sup> The second self-destruction destroys the

---

<sup>8</sup> *Relève* has a second meaning which is "derives from." For further commentary on this, see the passage cited from Alan Bass's translation of "La mythologie blanche" on page 106 of

metaphysical determination of metaphor. Metaphor, for Derrida, happens everywhere; thus, the "reassuring" opposition between the metaphorical and the proper is "exploded." Not opposed to the proper or the conceptual, metaphor must be understood as supplementarity, thanks to which thought and being themselves are discontinuous from themselves. The discontinuity of the relation implies that Derrida has reinscribed metaphor as catachresis or homonymy (23-24).

Before moving on to his reading of Ricoeur, Lawlor stresses certain points in Derrida's analysis which Ricoeur critiques in the Eighth Study of *La métaphore vive*. Paramount among them is Derrida's affiliation with Heidegger which, according to Ricoeur, is no less than the theoretical core common to both of them. But, as Lawlor points out, while Heidegger identifies metaphor with the metaphysical transfer of meaning and reference from the sensible to the intelligible, Derrida, although considering this determination to be important, does not consider it to be the only one or the most important. "Heidegger 'distrusts' the concept of metaphor because the sensory/nonsensory opposition determines it. Derrida agrees that this metaphysical opposition is 'important' for understanding the concept of metaphor, but he goes on to say that it is 'neither the only, nor the first, nor the most determining characteristic of the value of metaphor'" (24).

For Derrida, the movement of metaphor in metaphysics is part of the general movement of all meaning away from the same or self-presence and back towards it. Although best represented by Aristotle and the relationship between potency and act and by Hegel and the relationship between world history and spirit, the relationship between the lower and upper worlds in Plato (this will be an important target for Ricoeur) also represents this movement. Infinitely above both these worlds and yet the source of them and all that is in them is the Platonic sun, the Good which attracts its own kind back up to itself. "As Derrida says, all metaphor theory belongs 'to a more general syntax, to a more extended system that equally constrains Platonism; everything is illuminated by this system's sun, the sun of absence and of presence, blinding and luminous, dazzling'" (25).

Another point which Lawlor brings out is that Derrida's style in "La mythologie blanche" is convoluted and differs from the more conventional exposition of his earlier writings. As someone who can no longer regard the tradition as "an irreducible unity of fact and essence" (25), Derrida sets out to trace the subtle interaction between this opposition. Moreover, he does so not only in the way of his "theoretical" account of the tradition, but also in the present study.

the way of his "practical" approach to it. A case in point is his use of the term *usure* and, more precisely, his homonymic or equivocal deployment of it in the description of metaphor. In other words, Derrida plays upon *usure* in order to signify both figurative loss (in the sense of wearing away, erosion, being used up, etc.) and semantic gain (in the sense of usury, plus-value, profit, etc.). This play upon *usure* is the most demonstrative or "dramatic" way of signifying the tradition's own equivocal (as epochal) conception of metaphor.

"Derrida's discussion of *usure* takes place mainly in the 'Exergue' [first section] but he also recalls this notion in his Hegel discussion in 'Plus de métaphore' [second section]. Within the tradition, *usure* presupposes, according to Derrida, that a continuous kernel of sense underlies the transition from literal to figurative to concept. According to the tradition, then, metaphorisation is simply concept formation. Concepts overcome the difference or eliminate the relationship between the literal and the figurative. Connected to metaphysics, *usure's* continuist presupposition implies, for Derrida, that concepts elevate and absorb metaphor just as the intelligible elevates and absorbs the sensible" (26).

Another point which Lawlor raises and which figures prominently in the dispute between Derrida and Ricoeur is the opposition between live and dead metaphor. In his examination of Hegel, Derrida notes that live metaphor is traditionally identified with conscious, intended, or poetic metaphor and dead metaphor with the figurative and etymological aspect of a concept. The latter is, for the most part, perceived as that which remains behind and simply records the concept-term's origin (*etymon*). "In order for a term to function metaphorically, to be alive, one must recognize a relation between the literal and figurative senses. As Hegel stresses, after the literal sense has been erased,<sup>9</sup> it occurs to no one to take *begreifen* as to grasp by the hand. *Begreifen* contains no recognizable tension. Concepts are dead (used up) metaphors and not true (live) metaphors" (26).

---

<sup>9</sup> It would be better to say that it is the *improper, figurative, or metaphorical* sense which is erased. What Lawlor calls the literal sense is actually the "primitive" or "original" sense of the word (e.g., *foundation* as bottom or physical support) which philosophy metaphorizes before *de*-metaphorizing or lexicalizing. The following is the pertinent passage from Hegel's *Aesthetics* as it is cited by Derrida in "La mythologie blanche." "« Fassen », « begreifen », (saisir, concevoir), en général de nombreux mots qui se rapportent au savoir, ont dans leur signification propre (*eigentliche Bedeutung*) un contenu absolument sensible mais qui est ensuite abandonné et remplacé par une signification spirituelle; le premier sens est sensible (*der erste Sinn ist sinnlich*), le second spirituel. Mais peu à peu s'efface à l'usage (*im Gebrauche*) le métaphorique d'un tel mot qui, à l'usage (*durch die Gewohnheit*), se transforme pour devenir, d'expression non propre (*uneigentliche*) expression propre (*eigentlichen Ausdruck*) . . ." (MB, 268).

## **Lawlor's Reading of the Eighth Study in Ricoeur's *La métaphore vive***

Lawlor begins his second reading by characterizing the final (eighth) study of Ricoeur's book as being part of an extended polemic with "La mythologie blanche."

The "Eighth Study" in *The Rule of Metaphor* (1975) echoes these earlier works; it (and the first) constitute an extended "polemic" with "White Mythology" (cf. MV, 290/368) (IC, 29).

This polemic concerns not only metaphor per se, but metaphor in philosophy and metaphor as threat to philosophy. Or, to be more precise, it concerns the threat to philosophy as the "deconstructive" conception of metaphor which, in over-generalizing it, does not constrain it to its dialectical role of poetically relating the equivocal nature of being to the univocal nature of speculative discourse which, according to Ricoeur, has as its essence its semantic aim (*visée sémantique*). "To Derridean generalized metaphoricity Ricoeur opposes a discursive pluralism that implies neither a radical heterogeneity of discursive types nor a radical homogeneity. Throughout the 'Eighth Study' he constantly tries to steer between a discontinuity which would eliminate the intersection of discourses, and especially the intersection between poetical and philosophical discourses, and a continuity which would collapse the difference between discourses. Above all, Ricoeur's discursive pluralism does not imply that philosophy is merely one discourse among many" (29).<sup>10</sup>

For Ricoeur, ordinary discourse (which presumably is analogous to speculative discourse)<sup>11</sup> is the systematic interaction between meaning and reference of which poetic discourse, an errant wanderer, is the prodigal son. Poetic discourse is the ultimately fortuitous deviation of meaning and

---

<sup>10</sup> Generally speaking, Ricoeur certainly does not give the impression that he regards philosophy as simply one discourse among many. But at the beginning of the First Study when he looks at the public sphere and describes the relationship between rhetoric and philosophy as the power and violence of the first which the latter cannot directly control, he states: "Son discours n'est lui-même qu'un discours parmi d'autres et la prétention à la vérité qui habite son discours l'exclut de la sphère du pouvoir" (MV, 16).

<sup>11</sup> What distinguishes ordinary discourse from speculative or philosophical discourse is never the focus of Ricoeur's attention in *La métaphore vive*. In the First Study he associates it with rhetoric as undisciplined speech. But then in the later parts of *La métaphore vive*, he frequently contrasts ordinary discourse with metaphorical or poetic discourse. For that matter, his use of the term "speculative" is also ambiguous. In many or most places it is interchangeable with "philosophical" (with a weak sense of being metaphysical) and, when he is discussing Aristotle and Aquinas, "theological" (with a strong sense of being metaphysical).

reference wherein metaphor, as a form of predication, breaks the rules of language and logic in order to deliver up a new wealth of information about the world. This new information, although it comes in the form of a pre-conceptual or pre-objective grasp of the world, is open to interpretation and, as a consequence, is eventually taken up by speculative discourse. "Interpretation then struggles to respect poetical discourse's multiplicity and to achieve the univocity of a concept. Productive imagination, for Ricoeur, we might say, explicates the implicit conceptual meaning of a metaphor" (32).

But productive imagination's poetico-interpretative operation is only necessary and prior to speculative discourse as its content and not as its form. "In order to 'work free' of all schematising interpretations, the nascent concept must be connected to a 'network of significations of the same order, according to the constitutive laws of logical space itself.' A horizon of 'speculative logos,' a metalanguage, must be prepared in advance, into which the new 'concept' is placed. Not generated by metaphor, speculative discourse 'offers' its already constituted systematizing resources to metaphor" (32).

Concerned with demonstrating the discontinuity between poetic discourse and speculative discourse, Ricoeur does not shrink away from investigating the area where it is most likely to be called into question. "At first, Aristotle's analogical unity of the multiple meanings of being appears as a counterexample to Ricoeur's distance between speculative and poetical discourse. Because Aristotle attempts to introduce analogy into philosophical discourse as an intermediate modality between strict univocity and equivocity, it seems philosophical discourse reproduces the semantic functioning of poetic discourse. The word *analogy* belongs to both discourses; therefore, it looks as though poetic discourse in some way induces or causes philosophical discourse. Concepts would seem to be hidden metaphors. Philosophical discourse would lack the univocal precision that Aristotle claims for it" (33).

In response to this seeming quandary, Ricoeur claims that, given that being is impervious to genus-species classification and therefore essentially equivocal in nature, the only means by which it can be conceptualized – at least by ancient and medieval thought – is by way of analogy. But what is important here is not the equivocal sense of analogy itself, but that, unlike poetic analogy, metaphysical analogy is not a fortuitous eruption of new meaning into language and cognition. It is rather a conceptual operation along with others in a pre-existing system in which poetic meaning is as much transformed as it is incorporated into speculative discourse. Now, for Ricoeur, the fact that this means of operation ultimately proves to be inadequate, that being no less resists analogy than univocity, is of course a problem for philosophy and even *the* problem for philosophy. What it most

assuredly is not for him, however, is philosophy *as* problem. "The work of thought crystalized in Aristotle's text aims to form a system or a self-sufficient structure of the meanings of being, a nongeneric unity. This aim is, for Ricoeur, *the philosophical project*" (34).

Lawlor next turns to Ricoeur's critique of Derrida but first by way of the shorter analysis of Heidegger which precedes it. Here Ricoeur claims that, on the basis of the highly limited and peripheral nature of Heidegger's discussion of metaphor, his ample use of it is much more significant than what he says about it. Despite his slighting of the importance of Heidegger's conception of metaphor, Ricoeur never ceases in characterizing Derrida's conception as the radicalization of Heidegger's and, moreover, as a certain threat if not ultimate danger to philosophical discourse. "This is because Derrida unearths, as we saw, the unavowed and unstated metaphoricity in philosophical discourse and the unavowed and unstated metaphysics in rhetorical discourse" (36).

What Ricoeur calls the theoretical core of both Heidegger's and Derrida's thought is also what he refers to as the Platonic conception of metaphor. According to Ricoeur, both Heidegger and Derrida view metaphor as the metaphysical transfer of meaning and reference from visible to invisible being. The proper is then identified with the sensible signification of some object or event and the improper with its non-sensible signification. In agreement with this Platonic conception is, according to Ricoeur, the view that Western philosophy, despite its accidental variations or even because it is one giant accident, is essentially homogeneous. Ricoeur points out that, for Derrida, the sun is the predominant figure in philosophy and represents its essential continuity from Plato to Hegel.

In addition, Ricoeur views Derrida's analysis as being preoccupied with used or dead metaphor. Dead metaphor is a theory or thesis which he takes to be very much opposed to his own theory of live metaphor. Instead of conceiving it as predication and as the production of new meaning, Derrida conceives metaphor as word-substitution and as the transfer of old meaning. It is on this basis alone that he can claim that all philosophy is inhabited by metaphor. The thrust of Ricoeur's critique of Derrida's project is that dead metaphor is not true metaphor. Rather, it is but the trace of a word's past history or what was once its nature as catachresis or even live metaphor. It is the polysemous addition to a word which occurs either with a forced transfer of meaning when the word is shifted from one reference to another or when the word outlives its metaphorical life – its diachronic, predicative, and discursive context – and reverts to the static, synchronic, and virtual or potential mode as linguistic unit or lexicalized term. This polysemous addition to the word is what becomes a coded or institutionalized signification which, at least for some period of time (for there can always be

an additional signification brought about by a new metaphorical usage), is the ordinary, current, or literal signification. "Dead metaphors, therefore, are no longer metaphors, true metaphors. Polysemy is not metaphoricity, live metaphoricity. Ricoeur stresses that live metaphors exist only in an interpretation that recognizes a deviation in sense. A live metaphor exists only in the awareness" (39). It may be said then that, for Ricoeur, Derrida's fundamental mistake is the classical one – the one of ancient, modern, and contemporary rhetoric – of taking metaphor to be an act of naming rather than an act of predicating.

Along with dismissing outright the notion that the whole of philosophy can be construed as Platonism, Ricoeur takes issue with Heidegger's and Derrida's distinction between proper and improper. "For Ricoeur, literal does not mean proper in the sense of originary, but simply the current or 'usual' sense . . ." (39). Insofar as proper signifies the primitive or original sense of a word, it implies or assumes that discourse divides between physical or natural references and metaphysical or transcendental ones. By virtue of such a determination, words referring to the physical or natural world would be absolutely independent units of meaning. "In this view words are like Platonic ideas, possessing meanings apart from their particular, contextual instantiations" (38). In the face of this, Ricoeur points out that his whole effort in *La métaphore vive* has been to show the opposite, namely, that words only have potential meaning by themselves and actual meaning in sentences and discourse. "In effect, Ricoeur accuses Derrida of being metaphysical. Ricoeur argues . . . that a more precise semantics dispels this 'illusion' of meanings in themselves and that of dead metaphoricity" (39).

In the matter of Derrida's interpretation of concept-formation and, more precisely, his interpretation of Hegel's account of it as *Aufhebung* or the sublimation of metaphor into concept, Ricoeur claims that Derrida's interpretation is an idealization of dead metaphor which ignores a crucial distinction. Rather than being a continuous movement, Hegel divides the process into two stages. The first is purely a metaphorical operation and the second purely a conceptual one. That philosophy must perform the first operation as well as the second is the result of its suffering from a lexical deficiency and, in order to name new concepts, being compelled to wrest terms in a catachrestic way from other discursive realms. "This, for Ricoeur however, is 'a relatively banal case of an 'extended' use of words'" (40).

It is not then this first catachrestic operation in Hegel's account of *Aufhebung* which counts for Ricoeur, but the second which is the final destination and ratification of new meaning. As philosophy's response to the unique question of being, this new meaning is the actualization of the potential meaning of being inherent to poetic discourse and supplied to the conceptual order. Likewise, the response to the question of metaphor is

philosophy's actualization of the meaning of metaphor which goes beyond the transitional signification of philosophical metaphor. "Ricoeur says, 'Speaking metaphorically of metaphor is not at all circular, since the act of positing the concept (*la position du concept*) precedes [*sic*] dialectically from the metaphor itself'" (40).

### ***Lawlor's reading of Derrida's "Le retrait de la métaphore"***

"Le retrait de la métaphore" is an exposé which Derrida delivered three years after the publication of *La métaphore vive*. Lawlor notes that it roughly divides into two parts. The first part is Derrida's response to Ricoeur's reading of "La mythologie blanche" and the second part is his "reinterpretation of his relation to Heidegger" (43). The latter is a complicated discussion of metaphoricity which Lawlor chooses not to examine.<sup>12</sup>

The pivotal point of Derrida's response to Ricoeur's reading is a footnote in "La mythologie blanche" which Derrida claims that Ricoeur has overlooked and which runs counter to Ricoeur's interpretation of his essay. The note in question is on Heidegger and, more precisely, Heidegger's explicitly identifying the concept of metaphor with what is considered by Ricoeur to be Platonic, namely, the metaphysical transfer from the visible to the invisible. Important to Derrida here is the fact that, in this note, he only agrees to Heidegger's point of view with a certain reservation. By ignoring this reservation, Ricoeur assimilates Derrida's position to Heidegger's and, on the basis of this assimilation, organizes his reading. "Ricoeur too hastily equates Derrida and Heidegger" (44).

Derrida goes on to claim that not just this note, but the whole of "La mythologie blanche" calls into question the Platonic conception of metaphor. While it is of course true that this conception is dependent on metaphysical oppositions among which is the sensible/non-sensible opposition, it is also true that these oppositions are themselves already implicated in metaphor which is to say that they already have a metaphorical charge or a figurative aspect. In order to demonstrate this implication of metaphor in the most

---

<sup>12</sup> In the Introduction, Lawlor gives a partial explanation as to why he does not deal with the Heideggerian part of Derrida's exposé. "Because of its extreme complexity, I shall not analyse Derrida's reading of Heidegger in *Le Retrait*. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that Heidegger's shadow casts itself across this entire book" (IC, 6). An additional explanation is then offered at the beginning of Part I, Section 3, "Distanciation and *Différance*: Derrida's Response to Ricoeur in 'The *Retrait* of Metaphor.'" "Derrida's reinterpretation of his relation to Heidegger extends into the complicated question of Heidegger's metaphoricity (a question I shall not examine here). By focussing on reading errors, on the one hand, and by steering away from Ricoeur on the other, Derrida, however, never resolves the polemic with Ricoeur" (IC, 43).

basic concepts of philosophy, Derrida examines in "La mythologie blanche" some of the studies of philosophical metaphor which have been carried out and of which there are a highly limited number. In his response to Ricoeur in "Le retrait de la métaphore," he suggests that Ricoeur does not read his essay with sufficient attention<sup>13</sup> and, as a result, does not distinguish his deconstructive reading from the studies he analyses or, more precisely, the philosophemes which are operative in them. In fact, a repeated complaint which Derrida makes is that he finds himself being criticized for holding views which he himself criticizes. "Thus, Derrida does not subscribe to Heidegger's adage [i.e., '*Das Metaphorische gibt es nur innerhalb der Metaphysik*'] but agrees with Ricoeur's evaluation of it. It is overly restrictive and Derrida submits it to deconstruction" (45).

With respect to Ricoeur's charge that Derrida is in solidarity with Heidegger on the matter of viewing Western philosophy as a homogeneous unity, Derrida argues that this view is precisely the one that philosophy has of itself and that, by contrast, he views it as being traversed by its own boundary or, to put it another way, always being united with what it is not and so, at least to some degree, divided against itself.<sup>14</sup> The attempt then is "to account for the complex differences in the tradition, from Plato to Husserl, from Platonism to phenomenology, from transcendent idealism to transcendental idealism, from objectivism to subjectivism, from structuralism to geneticism" (46).

Besides Ricoeur's claim that there is a theoretical core which is common to both Heidegger's and Derrida's conception of metaphor, there is the other pivotal issue of *usure* and dead metaphor which, in a complicated way, Ricoeur tends to separate from Heidegger and associate only with Derrida. As already noted, Derrida cultivates equivocation in "La mythologie

13 "A montrer en quoi, dans ses deux prémisses les plus générales, la lecture de *La mythologie blanche* par Paul Ricoeur me paraissait, disons, trop vivement métaphorique ou métonymique, je ne voulais, bien entendu, ni polémiquer, ni étendre mes questions à une vaste systématique qui ne se limite plus à cette *Huitième Étude de La métaphore vive* . . ." (RM, 74).

14 "L'expression « longue séquence métaphysique » le marque bien, il ne s'agissait pas pour moi de tenir « *la* » métaphysique pour l'unité homogène d'un ensemble. Je n'ai jamais cru à l'existence ou à la consistance de quelque chose comme *la* métaphysique. Je le rappelle pour répondre à un autre soupçon de Ricoeur. S'il a pu m'arriver, compte tenu de telle ou telle phase [*sic*] démonstrative ou de telle contrainte contextuelle, de dire « *la* » métaphysique, ou « *la* » clôture de « *la* » métaphysique, (expression qui fait la cible de *La métaphore vive*), j'ai aussi très souvent, ailleurs mais aussi dans *La mythologie blanche*, avancé la proposition selon laquelle il n'y aurait jamais « *la* » métaphysique, la « clôture » n'étant pas ici la limite circulaire bordant un champ homogène mais une structure plus retorse, je serais tenté de dire aujourd'hui selon une autre figure: « invaginée ». La représentation d'une clôture linéaire et circulaire entourant un espace homogène, c'est justement, tel est le thème de ma plus grande insistance, une auto-représentation de la philosophie dans sa logique onto-encyclopédique" (RM, 72).

blanche" and, in particular, with the term *usure*. *Usure* is brought into play in order to signify simultaneously two longstanding but opposed conceptions of metaphor. Now the charge that Derrida lays against Ricoeur is that, while Ricoeur identifies *usure* with one of these conceptions (i.e., figurative erosion, wearing away, loss, etc.), he ignores the other (i.e., semantic gain, profit, addition, etc.). It is only in this way that it is possible for Ricoeur to substitute dead metaphor for *usure* and then go on to claim that the former is Derrida's watchword (*mot d'ordre*). "This makes *usure* an easy target for Ricoeur's notions of polysemy and lexicalization. In turn, worn-out metaphor collapses into dead metaphor, which restricts metaphor, that is, living metaphor, to that of which one is aware or conscious. Ricoeur then can assert that philosophical discourse possesses no metaphoricity because no one notices there a contrast between semantic pertinence and impertinence" (46).

### ***Examination and Diagnosis of Lawlor's Study in Imagination and Chance***

Now that the present study's reading or meta-reading of Lawlor's readings has been accomplished, it is time to turn to the matter of his study's being a project of clarification which is also a project of simplification and even over-simplification. First of all, it should be noted that, in the Introduction, Lawlor characterizes his task as being one of *clarifying* the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur. If no attention is paid for the moment to what the following passage suggests about similarities between Derrida and Ricoeur (this point will be returned to later), it provides a good example of this characterization.

Thus, the similarities demand a clarification, perhaps a deepening and a broadening of the difference. This book responds to that demand; it aims to make the difference as visible as possible (5).

By a "deepening and a broadening of the difference," Lawlor essentially means that Part II and Part III of his book, which deal with closely related matters and texts,<sup>15</sup> explain what goes unexplained in Part I. The latter, to say it again, is his reading of the three key texts and is entitled "The polemic

---

<sup>15</sup> Lawlor's general approach to the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur is to compare and contrast the former's *différance* and the latter's *distançiation*. Among the other works he examines are Derrida's *Dissemination* (1972 [translation: 1981]) and *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry* (1962 [translation: 1989]) and Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative, Vol. III*. (1985, [translation: 1988]) and *Interpretation Theory* (1976).

between Ricoeur and Derrida." Part II and Part III therefore supplement and presumably complete the task of Part I which, as a relatively neutral and straightforward report, shows "where the difference can be most easily seen" (5). A little further on in the Introduction, Lawlor seems to equate "most easily seen" with *clearly* seen. He states that, although "it never brings to light the basis of the difference" (6), "the polemic establishes a clear difference between Ricoeur and Derrida . . ." (6). Yet if the basis of the difference is still in the dark, all that is really clear is that Ricoeur and Derrida have a difference in the sense of a difference of opinion or a dispute. Thus, "most easily seen" cannot properly mean clearly seen.

To see clearly the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur must be to clearly see the basis of this difference. In the Introduction, Lawlor begins this task which is the very ground or basis of bringing this basis to light. This first basis is the simple proposition which supports the rest of his clarifying project. Lawlor states it along these lines: while Derrida holds that mediacy precedes immediacy, Ricoeur holds that immediacy precedes mediacy.<sup>16</sup> Under mediacy fall such notions (mostly associated with Derrida) as absence, discontinuity, difference, and chance and under immediacy such notions (mostly associated with Ricoeur) as presence, continuity, sameness, and imagination. In turn, mediacy is primarily associated with *différance* and immediacy with *distanciation*.

It is Lawlor's contention that, because neither Derrida nor Ricoeur expressly address each other's notion of mediation, the basis of their difference is not brought to light. Ricoeur "does not address Derrida's notion of *différance*; Derrida does not address Ricoeur's notion of *distanciation*" (6). Part of Lawlor's argument is that Ricoeur, because he misreads "La mythologie blanche," does not recognize *différance* in this essay or, more precisely, he does not recognize it under the various headings of *usure*, the law of supplementarity, quasi-metaphoricity, etc. The second part of his argument is that, because Derrida responds to Ricoeur only in the way of correcting the latter's misreading, he does not properly acknowledge Ricoeur's point of view and, in particular, does not recognize *distanciation* as the underlying notion of Ricoeur's discussion of metaphor and metaphor's relation to philosophy. At the same time, Lawlor's identifying *différance* and *distanciation* as the basis of the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur and, moreover, recognizing these two broad notions as clarifying supplements or correctives suggests that his project is in some sense more wide-ranging

---

<sup>16</sup> This proposition is repeated more succinctly in the Conclusion: "Mediation or *distanciation*, traces or absence, derive for Ricoeur from *immediacy* and should return to it. . . . As we know already from our reading of 'White Mythology,' for Derrida, *mediation*, space, discontinuity, and traces are prior to *immediacy*, time, continuity, and perception" (Italics added, *IC*, 84).

than Derrida's and Ricoeur's projects on metaphor.

Part II and Part III of Lawlor's book deal with Ricoeur's distanciation and Derrida's *différance* respectively. A number of Derrida's and Ricoeur's works are looked into by Lawlor and, as already mentioned, certain key issues such as time, imagination, absence, and discontinuity are identified with the two forms of mediation – distanciation and *différance*. But for the purpose of demonstrating that Lawlor's study as project of clarification is also a project of simplification and even over-simplification, it is not necessary to go into the specifics, indeed, the complications of this wide-ranging inquiry. The reason for this is that, both in the Introduction and the Conclusion, Lawlor does not simply describe his task as one of bringing the basis of the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur into the light, but rather as one of bringing a barely visible difference into the light. It must be then that this barely visible difference is Lawlor's study's *raison d'être*: the intolerable obscurity surrounding the difference demands a clarification of it which, according to Lawlor, also demands "perhaps a deepening and broadening of the difference" (5). Besides its appearance and elaboration in the Introduction, this claim of a barely visible difference also serves as its sub-title: "Introduction: A Barely Visible Difference." Moreover, there is another key claim which is inseparable from this one and appears in the very first sentence of the Introduction: "It is easy to see overwhelming similarities between the works of Paul Ricoeur and Jacques Derrida" (1). As will be shortly seen, the word "overwhelming," no less than the word "similarities," plays a determinant role in Lawlor's project of clarification.

Lawlor performs in the Introduction and the Conclusion (which is subtitled "The Difference Illuminated") two identical moves. The first move is that he lists all the similarities between Derrida and Ricoeur and the second move is that he defines and describes the barely visible difference. The only way in which the two moves of the Introduction differ from the two moves in the Conclusion is that, given the wide-ranging inquiries into distanciation and *différance* which take up Parts II and III, the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur is described at the end in somewhat more detail.<sup>17</sup> But since the

---

17 In the Conclusion, Lawlor claims that "the difference can be divided into four. First, we can focus on the origin of mediation in Ricoeur and Derrida" (123). While the analysis of Ricoeur's work demonstrates that he construes the present as immediacy, "our reading of Derrida's *Introduction* [i.e., *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*] disclosed that the living present for Derrida is 'the consciousness of Difference'" (124). "Second, from the origin we can turn to the middle itself. For Ricoeur, the distanciation of meaning from the immediate event is dialectical. . . . This implies, as we saw, that the speaker's (or writer's) singular intention is simultaneously cancelled and preserved in a universal structure" (124). "Meaning for Ricoeur is content-based, continuous, imaginative, dialectical negativity; mediation for Derrida is formal, discontinuous, aleatory, disseminational information" (125). "Third, from the middle we can turn to the end. Because Ricoeur's starting point is belonging to, the positive expression of finitude, we saw that he is

additional information in the Conclusion is a summary of the “deepening and a broadening of the difference,” it does not make a significant contribution to explaining why the difference is barely visible. It follows that the two moves of the Introduction, that is, listing all similarities and defining the barely visible difference, although less detailed in some respects, should be sufficient to do what Lawlor obviously wishes to do early, namely, demonstrate that the overwhelming similarities between Derrida and Ricoeur are responsible for the difference’s being barely visible. To refer once again to the short passage given earlier, Lawlor claims that these “similarities demand a clarification, perhaps a deepening and a broadening of the difference” (5).

Lawlor’s whole project of clarification thus turns on the premise that not only are there a number of similarities between Derrida and Ricoeur, but that these similarities are overwhelming or, as he says in the Conclusion, that their positions are so close as to be “almost indistinguishable” (123). What is further claimed is that, due to these similarities as well as other factors,<sup>18</sup> the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur is so well concealed that neither of them can see it. Presumably then, these two moves by Lawlor – the listing of similarities and the describing of the difference – should themselves be clear. They should stand up to scrutiny and, even if the order of presentation is changed and, for the purpose of testing them, the similarities are not listed as they are at the very beginning of Lawlor’s Introduction, that is, if they are not listed first and in one impressive block, betray no signs of confusion.

---

able to resist the Hegelian temptation of totalization” (126). Nevertheless it can be described as a quasi-Hegelian position which “always points to a horizon of totalization, always in the complete identity of thought and being” (126). On the other hand, Derrida “is quite explicit in ‘The Double Session’: dissemination does not project a horizon” (127). “Finally, we turn to the opening, the fourth, the Idea. We saw for Ricoeur that an Idea in the Kantian sense is defined by totality and openness. Although being is essentially equivocal, there is what Ricoeur calls a struggle for univocity. “Indeed, we were able to say at different points in our analysis that the Ricoeurian Idea imposes an imperative of univocity, an end is still dictated” (128). With Derrida, matters stand differently. “Because it refers literally to nothing, to no origin, to no end, the Derridean Idea points to nothing, to no end, to no one. Lacking this one (or even ‘we’), the Derridean Idea – we should say Derridean Ideas – cannot be conceived as polysemy or analogy. As we saw in the *Introduction*, the imperative of univocity is displaced by one of equivocality; in “The Double Session” we saw this imperative reappear as the law of supplementarity, as the law of *plus de*” (129).

<sup>18</sup> These other factors are Ricoeur’s “hasty” reading of Derrida and Derrida’s “unfair” reading of Ricoeur. “Indeed, Derridean *différance* is what Ricoeur most overlooks in his reading of ‘White Mythology.’ Ricoeur does not recognize that supplementarity targets the Hegelian *Aufhebung* and the Aristotelian analogical unity of being. Derrida, however, in “The *Retrait of Metaphor*” is not entirely fair to Ricoeur. Although Derrida notes ‘the wealth’ of *The Rule of Metaphor*, he never takes into account the basis of Ricoeur’s criticism of ‘White Mythology,’ the intersection of poetic and speculative discourse” (*IC*, 47-48).

As mentioned earlier, Lawlor gives as his basic outline of the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur the idea that two forms of mediation, Derrida's *différance* and Ricoeur's *distanciation*, are in conflict with one another. To say it once again, *différance* is defined as the priority of mediacy in relation to immediacy and *distanciation* as the priority of immediacy in relation to mediacy. In turn, Lawlor uses a number of terms to describe both mediacy in the first case and immediacy in the second. Primary among these terms are *absence* and *presence*. *Différance* is a certain absence of which presence is but the effect and *distanciation* is a certain presence of which absence is but the effect. Furthermore, Lawlor claims that, while *différance* accounts for chance, it does not, unlike *distanciation*, account for productive imagination. With its emphasis on discontinuity then, *différance* is the hazardous dissemination of meaning. "Différance accounts for the unforeseeable accident and not the novel production of imagination" (2). On the other hand, *distanciation* with its emphasis on continuity, becomes the safe return of it to the world. "As Ricoeur points out repeatedly, because discourse originates in the world, all expressions are about or refer back to the world" (3).

If one were to stop at this point and take stock of Lawlor's account of the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur, one might very well conclude that, first, the difference in question is both epistemological and ontological and that, secondly, rather than being simply a difference, it is more like an opposition. In particular, the ranging of Derrida with absence and chance and Ricoeur with presence and productive imagination gives the impression that the former is engaged in a dialectics of the negative and the latter a dialectics of the positive. There are elements of Lawlor's account which support this oppositional characterization and other elements which do not. Taking up the first, one notices that Lawlor extends the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur all the way to philosophy or, more precisely, to how both Derrida and Ricoeur view and do philosophy. He declares repeatedly in the Introduction (4, 5, 6) as well as in the Conclusion (128, 129) that Ricoeur's project is to *revive* philosophy and Derrida's project to *pervert* it. As part of his demonstration of this philosophical agon between them, Lawlor cites a passage, shown below, from Ricoeur's *La métaphore vive*. Directly after citing this passage, Lawlor claims that there is an allusion to Derrida in it and that, furthermore, this allusion shows that "Ricoeur himself recognizes that the hermeneutical project differs from that of deconstruction" (4).

When the philosopher fights on two fronts, against the seduction of the ineffable and against the power of "ordinary speech" . . . , in order to arrive at a "saying" . . . that would be the triumph neither of the unintelligible nor

of manipulatable signs – is he not in a situation comparable to that of the thinker of Antiquity or the Middle Ages, seeking his path between the powerlessness of a discourse given over to the *dissemination* [Lawlor's emphasis] of meanings and the mastery of univocity through the logic of genera? (MV, 310/393-94) (IC, 4).

If one keeps in mind that Lawlor's project of clarification turns on the premise that not only is the basis of the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur well concealed, but that the difference per se is barely visible, then surely there must be elements interfering with and obscuring the above passage and other issues which render the difference all too visible. Of course, the problem then is to determine whether the obscuring elements, if there be any, are inherent to Derrida's and Ricoeur's disagreement over metaphor and its relation to philosophy or to Lawlor's account of it.

One of these obscuring elements may be Lawlor's claim that Derrida perverts philosophy. While it is true that he seems to use this word in a non-moral sense, it is also true that he never explains why he uses it. But even if this expression is taken in the relatively neutral sense of diverting philosophy from its traditional path, there is little about it which suggests that, as a feature of the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur, it is barely visible. On the other hand, when Lawlor uses another seemingly incongruous term – when he claims that Ricoeur's hermeneutics "must be seen as the recovery of the most generous instances of metaphysics" and "deconstruction must be conceived as an attempt to be more generous" because it gives "merely for the sake of the giving" (4), it is equally difficult to see why the word *generous* is used other than to invoke a similarity between Derrida and Ricoeur where there is possibly none. To compound the difficulty, Lawlor "dramatizes" the difference between them by relating their respective projects to "singular powers which ultimately affect how we conceive ethics and politics" (5).

Finally, to focus on the obscuring element which is the most daunting of all is to focus on the overwhelming similarities which Lawlor enumerates at the very beginning of the Introduction. More precisely, it is to examine "the most striking similarity," namely, Derrida's and Ricoeur's "attempt to describe mediation, that is, the relation between two beings or the movement between an origin and an end" (1). Lawlor clearly uses the word *mediation* to signify here the essential nature of both Derrida's *différance* and Ricoeur's *distanciation*. Presumably, the difference between them is derivative of this nature in the sense of mediation's being itself a potential dividing and coming into conflict with itself.

Only three paragraphs later, however, Lawlor describes mediation quite

differently. No longer the essential nature of what both unites and divides Derrida and Ricoeur and certainly no longer the most striking similarity, it is that which itself is essentially divided by *différance* and distancing. More precisely, it is divided by the fact that Derrida's *différance* is "no longer mediation" (3). Unlike Ricoeur's distancing, Derrida's *différance* is not a dialectical concept and does not "attempt to articulate mediation *in terms of its origin and its end*" (Lawlor's emphasis, 3). Rather, *différance* is integral with unforeseeable accident and "sends us indefinitely back and forth to rethink the origin and transform the end" (2).

If the most striking similarity in the first paragraph turns out to be, by the time of the fourth paragraph, the most striking difference between Derrida and Ricoeur, it is not likely that the other similarities, no matter how numerous, will make the difference between them barely visible. Certainly the first similarity cannot fulfill this role because all it does is point out that both philosophers are indebted to earlier ones such as Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger and share many of the same interests such as time, history, writing, and metaphor. Nor can the similarity coming after the most striking one fulfill this role because all it does is point out that they use many of the same or similar terms (e.g., writing, mimesis, traditionality, trace). Nor can the similarity which Lawlor calls the first of the three insights shared by Derrida and Ricoeur fulfill this role because all it does is point out that they both disclaim what many other philosophers disclaim, namely, that "it is absolutely impossible for thought to achieve complete self-knowledge or self-understanding by means of intuitive self-reflection" (1). The second and third insights fare no better. That both Derrida and Ricoeur claim that thought must externalize itself in signs and that mediation is a never-ending task are hardly traits which exclude all other philosophers. To say then with Lawlor that "both Derrida and Ricoeur oppose the hubris epitomized by Hegelianism: the hubris of the completed circle in which difference and alterity are mastered" (2) is not to say a great deal unless this statement itself is scrutinized by thoroughly analysing both Derrida's and Ricoeur's relation to Hegel.<sup>19</sup>

---

19 By claiming that Derrida and Ricoeur are equally opposed to the "hubris epitomized by Hegelianism," Lawlor seems to be putting them more on the same *ethical* footing than the same epistemological one. With respect to the latter, he makes a point of distinguishing in the Conclusion between Derrida's non-teleological notion of the dissemination of meaning and Ricoeur's distancing as dialectical movement which negates polysemy and analogy and "always points to a horizon of totalization, always in the complete identity of thought and being (*IC*,126). Of course, Ricoeur's dialectical conception of meaning which implies no closure very much appears to be what Hegel refers to as the bad infinite and what Husserl refers to as *Lebenswelt*. According to Lawlor, however, Ricoeur appropriates Derrida's notion of dissemination in order to characterize the plenitude and "gift-giving" of symbols. What seems to result is that "Ricoeur's discussion of symbolic inexhaustibility does not fit neatly into the Hegelian categories of good and bad infinite" (*IC*,126). Then Lawlor goes on to

## 1.2. Guy Bouchard's Study in *Le procès de la métaphore*

The present task is to examine Bouchard's study which is both limited and extensive. It is limited as a study of the deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur and extensive as a critique of their discourses on metaphor. For the most part, Bouchard is satisfied to provide a resume of the encounter between them which, despite its precision and thoroughness, seems to fall short of offering what is to be expected in this area. On this point, there are two considerations. First, it is Bouchard himself who calls this encounter one of the most profound debates on metaphor. Secondly, although he claims his resume to be part of his argumentation, it is difficult to see how it functions as an analysis of the debate. Perhaps there is reason to think then that, despite his emphasizing its importance in the Introduction, Bouchard overlooks it or, rather, looks through it in order to look at something else.

The number of works which Bouchard analyses and which are related in some way to Derrida's and Ricoeur's works on metaphor far exceeds the number which Lawlor analyses. On the other hand, how Bouchard relates these outside works to theirs is clearly of a different order than what Lawlor does. While Lawlor largely restricts his analysis to works by Derrida and Ricoeur which relate to *différance* and *distanciation*, Bouchard analyses a number of theoretical works dealing with metaphor. More precisely, he not only analyses Derrida's and Ricoeur's own works on metaphor, but he also analyses most of the works which Ricoeur himself analyses. Now while Bouchard largely limits this re-analysis to the second chapter of his four-chaptered book, he refers to these same works – and often at great length – throughout the nearly seventy pages of notes at the end of it.

The works which Ricoeur examines and which Bouchard reexamines represent more or less the whole tradition of philosophical, rhetorical, and linguistic study of metaphor. Ranging from Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* to Fontanier's *Les figures du discours* to contemporary works such as Group Mu's *Rhétorique générale*, they make up a large array of theories which often include a theory of metaphor as part of a larger theory of tropes and figures. In Chapter II, Bouchard examines all these theories (but, of course, mainly as theories of metaphor) in order to systematically compare and contrast them. More precisely, he introduces what he calls a metalanguage and what is essentially a number of technical terms which, according to him,

speculate that both Ricoeur and Derrida share the same quasi-Hegelian position. On the other hand, he blames Ricoeur for not recognizing that Derrida's notion of "supplementarity targets the Hegelian *Aufhebung* . . ." (48). To all these crisscrossed notions must be added another one, namely, that, even on the ethical plane, Lawlor does not have Ricoeur and Derrida in solidarity insofar as Ricoeur's *revival* and Derrida's *perversion* of philosophy are value-laden terms.

can encompass, assimilate, and standardize all the technical terms already in use by the theories in question. "*Pour comparer entre elles diverses conceptions, surtout si elles proviennent d'époques et de contextes hétérogènes, il importe d'utiliser un métalangage constant qui permet leur traduction et leur intégration à une même grille d'analyse*" (75).<sup>20</sup> Then, following Ricoeur, Bouchard analyses these theories by dividing them into two main groups: theories of substitution and theories of interaction. But within this presumably oppositional framework, Bouchard systematically critiques a further move by Ricoeur which enlarges the difference between these two kinds of theories.<sup>21</sup> The move in question is Ricoeur's identification of theories of substitution with theories of denomination and theories of interaction with theories of predication. Although Bouchard does not take issue with the second identification, he does with the first. He argues over many pages that theories of substitution do not imply that metaphor is, contrary to Ricoeur's position, simply a deviant act of denomination. He insists, on the contrary, that theories of substitution consistently treat metaphor as a linguistic unit or a *syntagma* – a subject and modifier – which can also be part of a deviant sentence or an act of predication. "*Nous nous contenterons d'ajouter que le cadre syntagmatique peut à l'occasion être un syntagme au sens restreint, c'est-à-dire une expression intermédiaire entre le mot isolé et l'énoncé complet*" (78).

In his Chapters III and IV, Bouchard is mainly concerned with demonstrating that, first, Ricoeur's conception of metaphor is problematic and that, secondly, it does not take into account the many roles or functions of metaphor. With respect to the second issue, Bouchard specifically targets the distance which Ricoeur puts between his conception of metaphor – metaphor as production of new meaning – and the ornamental or decorative notion of metaphor. Appealing to such authorities as Aristotle, Cicero, and Tertullian, Bouchard argues that the rhetorical tradition includes this notion

---

<sup>20</sup> All page numbers of cited passages in section 1.2. of the present study refer to Bouchard's *Le procès de la métaphore* unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>21</sup> While one of Ricoeur's moves is to stress the difference between the two kinds of theories, another is to bring them together. When he brings them together, it is with the theory of interaction superior to and even inclusive of the theory of substitution. Although the following passage is only mentioned in passing by Bouchard, it goes some way to giving a better representation of Ricoeur's "tensional" position.

Il n'y a donc pas, à proprement parler, de conflit entre la théorie de la substitution (ou de l'écart) et la théorie de l'interaction; celle-ci décrit la dynamique de l'énoncé métaphorique; seule elle mérite d'être appelée une théorie *sémantique* de la métaphore. La théorie de la substitution décrit l'impact de cette dynamique sur le code lexical où elle lit un écart: ce faisant, elle offre un équivalent *sémiotique* du procès sémantique (MV, 200).

of ornament and, as a consequence, is rich in its account of the possible uses or functions of metaphor. "*Suppléer aux déficiences du propre; manifester la créativité, faire interagir les idées, faire voir les choses: n'est-ce vraiment là qu'un art du colifichet? Ici encore, l'opposition tranchée entre métaphore-ornement et métaphore cognitive se révèle trop simple*" (242). As a consequence of this assessment, Bouchard holds that Ricoeur impoverishes his conception of metaphor when he opposes it to this ornamental role. Insisting that metaphor is a linguistic unit before it is a discursive event, the author places more emphasis on metaphor's being a sort of multi-purpose device – a rhetorical, aesthetic, heuristic, lexical, and phatic element – than he does on its being a large-scale semantic or cognitive operation. "*Nous pouvons maintenant répondre . . . que la métaphore est un principe omniprésent du langage*" (251).

Bouchard's critique of Ricoeur's conception of metaphor is not only focussed on what it allegedly lacks, but also on what it allegedly has in excess. In the Introduction, he implicitly finds fault with Ricoeur not only for not having a precise definition of metaphor, but also for, along with other theorists and commentators, wildly extending the conception of metaphor. "*À ce point, la tentation devient quasi irrésistible de « dénoncer » les généralisations abusives qui ont cours aujourd'hui*" (7). Identifying Ricoeur's project with what he calls the inflationary conception of metaphor, Bouchard suggests on at least one occasion that it even comes in close contact with Derrida's deconstruction. More precisely, he targets Ricoeur's *La métaphore vive* for turning all truth and reality into, if not one giant metaphor, then at least the product of a giant metaphorical activity.<sup>22</sup>

Bouchard critiques four important moves by Ricoeur: 1) his opposing discourse or *parole* to language or code and favouring the former as the site

<sup>22</sup> Although Bouchard only takes up this issue briefly in Chapter III, it seems to be the most extreme point of the inflationary conception of metaphor. The first part of his discussion here is in the resume of the fourth section of Ricoeur's Eighth Study. He notes that, according to Ricoeur, metaphor is the primary matter of speculative discourse which develops into the first notions and principles articulating the space of the concept. But Ricoeur's subsequent claim that metaphor does not essentially constitute this space even while being its matrix is greeted by a certain skepticism on Bouchard's part because, in a corresponding footnote to which he relays the second part of this discussion, he solicits another point of view. "La distinction [entre métaphore et concept] s'impose d'autant plus, pour Ricoeur, qu'ici encore la métaphore est traitée sur le mode inflationniste du « procès de nature métaphorique, dont on a pu dire qu'il engendre tous les champs sémantiques » (MV: 380). Ne percevant pas de différence entre la métaphore et ce procès métaphoriquement métaphorique, Gary MADISON en conclut que « one can no longer maintain that language refers to an extra-linguistic reality », puisque, « since the established categories which a new metaphor violates are themselves products of previous metaphorical discourse, » « what one normally takes to be the objective referent of language is in fact the correlate of a dead metaphor! » ('Reflections on Paul Ricoeur's Philosophy of Metaphor', *Philosophy Today*, XXI (1977) 4, p. 427) . . ." (PM, 319).

of the semantic, 2) his extending the meaning of metaphor to include larger figures of speech such as parable, allegory, fable, and myth, 3) his claiming that resemblance does not determine the metaphorical operation but rather results from it in the sense of the latter's being an imaginative or inventive perception of the world, and, finally, 4) his claiming that metaphor comes into referential contact with an extra-linguistic reality and, as a consequence, with truth, knowledge, and being.

Bouchard's critique of the above moves by Ricoeur divides into two parts. The first part – Chapters I and II – bears on Ricoeur's alleged lack of definitional rigour and his devaluation of language as system or code by exclusively identifying semantics with the sentence and discourse. The second part – Chapters III and IV – bears on Ricoeur's inflating what Bouchard calls the cognitive role of metaphor and what, in his estimation, arbitrarily excludes a number of other roles or functions traditionally assigned to metaphor. With respect to the overall layout of his book, five items should be quickly pointed out. First, Bouchard gives a lengthy resume of Derrida's and Ricoeur's texts on metaphor which takes up almost a third of his book. Secondly, the first half of this resume comes in Part I – “La définition de la métaphore” – and constitutes Chapter I. The second half comes in Part II – “Les rôles de la métaphore” – and constitutes Chapter III. Thirdly, Bouchard considers this resume to be, as already mentioned, part of his argumentation. “*Nous suivrons très attentivement les textes de chacun des deux auteurs. Voir dans cette lecture une simple passion pour le résumé en tant que tel serait oublier, de celui-ci, la fonction argumentative*” (10). Fourthly, Bouchard takes this resume to be the means by which to become familiar not only with the basic conceptions of Derrida and Ricoeur, but also with those of the many theoreticians which they themselves take up. Fifthly, Bouchard, as it seems, also considers the resume to be an opportunity to refer Ricoeur's interpretations of these many theoreticians to his extensive notes at the back of the book where they are given a second going over.

In order to give an idea of the extent of Bouchard's corrective operation, the following is a list of the theorists whose works Ricoeur examines and Bouchard only reexamines by way of critiquing Ricoeur's interpretation of them: Aristotle, Fontanier, Saussure, Black, Richards, Beardsley, Frye, Goodman, Jakobson, Ullmann, Henle, Todorov, Cohen, and Group Mu. In general, Bouchard's criticisms of Ricoeur's readings of these theorists largely amounts to demonstrating that these same readings are in some sense predetermined by Ricoeur's overall project and, as a consequence, reductive.<sup>23</sup>

---

23 “Le rôle heuristique de la métaphore ne se réduit pas à la dénomination. Mais, dans la mesure où celle-ci en relève, il ne sert à rien de la banaliser pour mieux faire ressortir la restructuration du réel que permettent certaines métaphores. « Étant donné la complexité

Je dirais plutôt que Ricoeur n'apprend rien de la très grande majorité des auteurs qu'il passe en revue. En un sens, son livre est un *inécrit*, c'est-à-dire un texte implicite qui sert de norme à l'accueil ou au rejet des théories examinées, un texte qui affleure par bribe, mais qui ne s'expose jamais lui-même de façon systématique (69).

In addition, Bouchard, examining Ricoeur's theory of metaphorical reference as it refers to Benveniste, Frege, Wittgenstein, Strawson, Jakobson, Black, Goodman, and Searle, claims that their arguments only support Ricoeur's theory insofar as the latter does not take into account all aspects of how these theorists approach the problem.

It is now time to turn to how Bouchard deals with what he calls an epistemological obstacle and raises not only in the Introduction where, to be precise, it is more described than identified, but also later on in his book. With respect to these later occurrences, it is sufficient to point out that, in the second and fourth chapters, there are short sections which deal with Derrida and which are both entitled "Reconsidération de l'obstacle épistémologique." In the first of these sections, Bouchard argues that Derrida's position is incoherent.

Pourtant, lorsqu'on s'intéresse à « la métaphore dans le texte philosophique », il faut bien, de ce trope, reconnaître la figure. Comment Derrida peut-il y parvenir sans définir lui-même la métaphore et sans entrer du même coup dans le cercle qu'il dénonce? (73-74).

Bouchard goes on to claim that, although Derrida manipulates certain existing conceptions of metaphor, these conceptions themselves are irreducible to one another and, as a consequence, there is a certain "*absence de rigueur au nom de laquelle on rassemble, sous le nom de métaphore, « toutes les figures dites symboliques ou analogique » (MB: 255): figure, mythe, fable, allégorie*" (74-75). Furthermore, Derrida's position is, besides being incoherent, guilty of what it accuses metaphorical theory, namely, circularity in that, in order to show that the definitions of metaphor are themselves metaphorical, it is necessary to have a definition of metaphor which permits the recognition of the metaphors in the definition. Then Bouchard offers a warning:

---

évidente du problème, pourquoi les philosophes exigeraient-ils qu'il y ait ici des réponses correctes uniques? »" (PM, 233).

On notera d'ailleurs que si Derrida avait raison, l'impossibilité d'une philosophie de la métaphore ne serait qu'un fragment d'une impossibilité beaucoup plus radicale: celle de toute philosophie du langage. Car il n'est point de lieu non linguistique d'où le philosophe puisse parler du langage (75).

In the second "Reconsidération de l'obstacle épistémologique," Bouchard claims that Derrida carries over his demonstration of circularity to "Le retrait de la métaphore" in which he demonstrates the metaphysical nature of the concept of metaphor. Citing passages from both Derrida's exposé and *De la grammatologie*,<sup>24</sup> Bouchard raises the suspicion that, like Heidegger, Derrida treats being as a *primum signatum*, a hypostatized and even apotheosized source of meaning.

Mais l'être comme signifié transcendantal n'équivaut-il pas alors à ce « logos absolu » en vertu duquel « la face intelligible du signe reste tournée du côté du verbe et de la face de Dieu »? Onto-théo-tropisme? (217).

Bouchard then cites two examples of metaphor in Heidegger which Derrida himself examines and which, according to Bouchard, suggest that being plays "*le même rôle stratégique que Dieu [joue]*" (218). Then, turning his attention back to "La mythologie blanche" and to the *dieu-soleil* connection, Bouchard criticizes Derrida's analysis of "the sun seeds it light" metaphor.

Mais où a-t-on jamais *lu* que les quatre termes présents soient le soleil, les rayons, l'acte de semer et la graine? Le premier terme de la proposition n'est pas le soleil, mais cet acte de lancer analogue à l'acte de semer qu'exprime en français le verbe darder. . . . Il faudrait donc en fait déclarer que le premier terme est à la fois présent et absent, présent en tant que métaphore du genre pour l'espèce, absent en tant que nom « propre » (ou plutôt: « nom courant »); et il faudrait surtout constater que même en l'absence d'un « propre », la métaphore par analogie peut fonctionner . . . (219).

Bouchard's further criticisms focus on Derrida's claim that the sun is both the paradigm of metaphor and the paradigm of the sensible. Citing at length from Aristotle, he offers opposing interpretations to Derrida's: "*le soleil*

---

24 Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1967).

« sensible » n'est pas le modèle" of the sensible and therefore "il est peut-être aventureux de déclarer qu'il « ne peut pas être connu dans son propre »" (220). Drawing from Aristotle's *Topics* and *On the Heavens*, he then claims that "en un certain sens, donc, le soleil est immobile" (221).

Son histoire est ici celle d'une immobilité en mouvement, et toute histoire qui se trame de la sorte ne peut être pensée dans la simplicité d'un mouvement de l'Orient à l'Occident. Si la philosophie ne peut dominer la métaphore, elle ne peut non plus dominer le soleil. Comment pourrait-elle, dès lors, affirmer, du soleil, qu'il « est seulement métaphorique » (MB: 300)? Par quel mouvement passe-t-on d'un « propre » (sensible) mal assigné à l'absence implicite de tout « propre » et de là à l'affirmation que le « soleil n'est jamais présent en propre dans le discours » (MB: 300)? (*PM*, 221-222).

To turn now to Bouchard's Introduction is to focus on an "epistemological obstacle" whose scope and complexity – to judge by the author's own description of it – is perhaps more daunting than what he takes to be Derrida's. "*Nous sommes à l'époque de l'euphorie métaphorique*" (4). Here he reports that the contemporary discussion of metaphor ranges in diverse ways and without any sign of abatement from one polar extreme to the other. The two principal categories of judgement in this area – the nature and value of metaphor – lend themselves to attitudes which run from outright aversion and hostility to something which verges on exaltation. Even in the fields of rhetoric, linguistics, and literary studies, interest in metaphor can fluctuate wildly over a relatively short span of time.

De peu de discussions consacrées à la métaphore, la plupart, déplorait, en 1927, John Middleton Murry, sont superficielles. A peine un demi-siècle plus tard, la situation a considérablement évolué. Prolifération d'articles et de colloques tant nationaux qu'internationaux, note Jacques Derrida. Une production extraordinaire sur un sujet apparemment inépuisable, souligne Max Black. Et Wayne Booth suppose qu'en 2039 le nombre de personnes étudiant la métaphore dépassera la population du globe (3).

In addition to this ability either to shrink or to swell enormously in its own proper field, metaphor can migrate with ease to many other ones.

Shibles rappelle qu'on voit en elle la méthode centrale de la science, de la poésie, de la littérature, de la philosophie, du langage, de la psychologie, de la psychiatrie, etc. Edge souligne l'accroissement récent de l'intérêt des philosophes des sciences pour les fonctions cognitives de la métaphore. D'un point de vue psychologique, Paivio exprime l'espoir que son étude puisse contribuer à une meilleure conceptualisation du mécanisme général de la compréhension. Petrie insiste sur son rôle fondamental en éducation: c'est elle, soutient-il, qui permet à l'étudiant d'apprendre quelque chose de radicalement nouveau, quelque chose qui ne s'insère pas dans ses cadres conceptuels mais les modifie. Quant à Tracy, il relève l'importance de la métaphore pour l'étude du phénomène religieux, car chaque religion majeure se fonde sur certaines métaphores radicales (4).

By the facility with which it traverses so many fields and diverse interests, metaphor no longer remains an essentially linguistic phenomenon and ends up with such an extended meaning that it can signify both empirical objects such as models, maps, and diagrams and transcendental ones such as thoughts, dreams, and visions. *"Au-delà, le mot métaphore est employé non seulement en un sens vaporeux, mais, semble-t-il, sans la moindre nécessité théorique"* (7).

Given the above state of affairs, it is small wonder that, even before he is halfway through his description, Bouchard raises a doubt as to whether he himself should address the subject. Almost in the same breath, however, he announces that he has two reasons for wading into this contentious area.

Deux raisons, pourtant, nous incitent à reprendre l'ensemble de la problématique d'un point de vue philosophique. La première est liée à la persistance de certains problèmes. . . . La deuxième raison qui nous incite à reprendre l'ensemble de la problématique, c'est l'intérêt particulier que la métaphore présente pour le discours philosophique. (4-5, 7).

These two reasons are spread out over six pages and split off into other motivations, considerations, etc. With respect to the first reason, it is worthwhile to note that the vast problem which Bouchard has just described and will soon describe even in more detail suddenly becomes reduced to *"la persistance de certains problèmes"* (4). Briefly outlining these problems,

Bouchard moves from one which seems to be of a purely technical nature – “*d’où vient le changement d’extension du terme métaphorique?*” (5) – to one which is undoubtedly of much larger scope and which he characterizes as the current inflation of the cognitive role of metaphor. “*Cette inflation, surtout si elle déborde le domaine du langage, s’apparente à l’autophagie.*” (5). He then describes this inflation as being, first, the practise of taking the meaning of metaphor beyond the bounds of language and, secondly, the excessive interest in the subject of metaphor which threatens to reduce it to insignificance. “*L’intérêt démesuré que suscite aujourd’hui la métaphore ne peut-il mener qu’à son insignifiance?*” (5). Thus it is that, before he has given his second reason for venturing into this domain, Bouchard makes two important moves. First, he identifies the problem of metaphor with the inflationary conception of metaphor and, in turn, with the cognitive role of metaphor. Secondly, he denounces this problem as one which is not inherent to metaphor itself but of many theorists’ or non-theorists’ own making.

His second reason for plunging into this widespread problem is, to say it again, the particular interest which metaphor presents for philosophical discourse. In conjunction with this, Bouchard unleashes a second wave of difficulties in the form of ideas and evaluations which roughly divide philosophers between those who take metaphor to be a threat to truth and knowledge (e.g., Locke, Hobbes, Quine) and those who take it to be at the very core of language-creation, concept-formation, and philosophy itself. Notwithstanding this vast problem of metaphor, Bouchard’s first philosophically-oriented response to it repeats the tactical move of his first reason or set of reasons which may be characterized as a considerable narrowing down of matters:

Le travail de chaque philosophe, commente Wayne Booth, consiste ainsi en l’élaboration critique, implicite ou explicite, de l’inadéquation des métaphores de tous ces collègues. Dans le quatrième chapitre, il nous faudra situer ce rôle philosophique de la métaphore dans un contexte qui le préserve sans pour autant occulter les autres fonctions de celle-ci (9).

His second reason for taking up the problem of metaphor then is that, viewed as being a problem which is attributable to the inflationary conception of metaphor which in turn is the result of recognizing only the philosophical role of metaphor, it can be resolved by giving this role its due in Chapter IV. His next philosophically-oriented response to the problem of metaphor is to announce that, by looking at, as was mentioned earlier, an area or issue which he seems to think important by calling it “*l’un des*

*débats les plus profonds*" (9), he will be dealing with two major problems which he claims are also Derrida's and Ricoeur's problems: "*celui de la définition de la métaphore et celui de son rôle dans le discours (philosophique)*" (10).

But even before he has finished explaining why he chooses to look at this debate, it very much appears that the plan or procedure in question rests on three presuppositions. The first presupposition is that the problem of defining metaphor and the problem of the role of metaphor are ones which can be treated separately. The second presupposition is that Derrida and Ricoeur either treat them separately or else make no claims which are contrary to this separation. Finally, the third presupposition is that the two separated problems equal the vast problem of metaphor which Bouchard has sketched out in the Introduction.

Bouchard's third philosophically-oriented response to the problem of metaphor (which is also part of his second reason for taking up this highly dispersed subject) is to underline the importance and utility of Ricoeur's *La métaphore vive*. Not only does this book survey the tradition as a whole and not only does it bring together the Anglo-American and Continental schools, but it also takes in the most important contemporary theories. According to Bouchard, "*La métaphore vive nous fournira donc l'occasion et de repenser l'ensemble (relatif) des théories de la métaphore, et d'approfondir la portée philosophique de celle-ci*" (10). On the other hand, he not only claims that, first, Derrida erects an epistemological obstacle which must be removed and, secondly, that Ricoeur's conception of metaphor is one-sided and must be corrected, but that the latter reaffirms "*une compréhension foncièrement traditionnelle de la philosophie, de la littérature et de l'interprétation . . .*" (10).<sup>25</sup> In other words, Bouchard will deal with the problem of metaphor by looking at a debate which, if his assessment of Ricoeur's end of it is valid, does not appear to be representative of all the ramifications of this problem. After all, it is metaphor as *contemporary* problem which Bouchard describes and lays particular stress on in the Introduction. More precisely, what he describes is the inflationary conception of metaphor in the way of this trope's wandering all about and becoming something of an inter-disciplinary virus or interloper.

At the very end of his Introduction, Bouchard turns once again to the problem of definition. But instead of relating this problem to the Derrida-

---

<sup>25</sup> In order to show that Bouchard's assessment of Ricoeur as a dyed-in-the-wool traditionalist might itself be one-sided, the present study takes the liberty of delving back to a much earlier Ricoeurian writing, "*Civilisation universelle et cultures nationales*" (*Histoire et vérité* [Paris: Seuil, 1964,] 286-300). "*Une culture meurt dès qu'elle n'est plus renouvelée, recréée; il faut que se lève un écrivain, un penseur, un sage, un spirituel pour relancer la culture et la risquer à nouveau, dans une aventure et un risque total. La création échappe à toute prévision, à toute planification, à toute décision d'un parti ou d'un état*" (297).

Ricoeur debate which, for better or worse, represents for him the contemporary problem of metaphor, he cites a passage from an article by Wayne Booth. In this passage Booth declares that "we seem to have a kind of common-sense agreement about a fairly narrow definition, one that survives even while our theory expands the original concept beyond recognition" (11). Bouchard then announces that his project is precisely the one of coming up with this narrow definition. But with the Derrida-Ricoeur debate now on hold and with his impromptu glance at the opinions of two other theorists (i.e., Booth and Khatchadourian), Bouchard never fully explains the relationship between his "narrow" project of defining metaphor and his "wide" project of looking at the Derrida-Ricoeur debate. The result is that, at the very end of the Introduction, he must make an extended plea for the first project rather than demonstrating its necessity.

C'est cette définition minimale que nous espérons reconstruire même si la possibilité d'une telle entreprise a été contestée. Khatchadourian, par exemple, déclare que la plupart des théories présupposent que toutes les métaphores ont une nature commune exprimable par une description unique, alors que cela serait faux. Booth lui-même affirme qu'il n'y a pas de réponse unique à la question de savoir ce qu'est la métaphore . . . (11).

Once again, Bouchard points to an epistemological obstacle but, instead of demonstrating how it should be taken up into an examination of the debate, he attempts to dismiss it with three short questions.

Mais l'hypothèse d'une définition unique n'est-elle pas valable jusqu'à preuve du contraire, et s'en priver d'emblée n'équivaudrait-il pas à s'empêcher de la trouver ou de la construire? (11-12).

The presupposition of this question is that hypotheses, whether they are good or bad, widely accepted or not, count as some sort of evidence. But if in fact hypotheses of the above kind already exist and constitute the vast problem of metaphor, then it can just as easily be claimed that they count as evidence in favour of Booth's and Khatchadourian's position.

Que l'ensemble des choses baptisées métaphores ne soient pas compatibles entres elles, cela ne résulte-t-il pas de l'inflation du terme et ne doit-il pas inciter le théoricien à produire une théorie cohérente qui éliminerait

les emplois abusifs? (12).

The presupposition of Bouchard's second question is that the problem of defining metaphor is separate from the problem of determining its nature. But if a narrow definition of metaphor is sought for its own sake, then the definition itself will be determining the nature of metaphor and whatever coherence is gained will be at the expense of the resulting theory's missing its object.

La définition proposée serait alors normative, mais depuis quand le travail théorique doit-il obtenir l'assentiment de tous? (12).

Bouchard's third question presupposes that the vast problem of metaphor is not already made up of countless normative definitions. Furthermore, it would seem that, if the definition were to be truly up to the task of solving the problem of metaphor, it must obtain a consensus or near consensus.

With these three questions now out of the way, Bouchard is ready to begin his resume and what turns out to be his largely separate treatment of Derrida and Ricoeur. But he does so without having removed the epistemological obstacle represented by Booth and Khatchadourian and which, to say it again, is not properly assimilated to what is supposed to be one of the pivotal areas of investigation, the debate between Derrida and Ricoeur. Therefore he only sidesteps this obstacle with his three questions.

### **1.3. S. H. Clark's Study in *Paul Ricoeur***

Unlike Bouchard, S. H. Clark does not call the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur a profound debate but rather he calls it Ricoeur's confrontation with Derrida. His account of it is limited to the sixth section of his book which is divided into seven sections. This sixth section is entitled "The Rule of Metaphor" and contains the account in an eleven-page subsection, "Deconstruction and Metaphor." Both these sections form part of what Clark calls, in describing his book as a whole, his "compact and accessible summary of the major developments of [Ricoeur's] thought – existentialism, symbolism and mythology, psycho-analysis, text theory, metaphor, and narrative . . ." (10).<sup>26</sup> In his Introduction, he announces that he will "examine how these interact with and clarify the current preoccupations of literary theory" (10).

In contrast to the above statement of purpose which emphasizes

---

<sup>26</sup>All page numbers of cited passages in section 1.3. of the present study refer to S. H. Clark's *Paul Ricoeur* unless otherwise indicated.

Ricoeur's thought for its own sake, more than half of Clark's Introduction is taken up with a description of Ricoeur's long struggle with *other* currents of thought. As representatives of a conception of language to which Ricoeur is opposed, Clark quickly names Foucault, Lacan, and Derrida. Characterizing them as deniers of reference and the speaking, intending agent, he also claims that they are "a subversive response [which] remains conditioned by and to a large degree dependent on a series of restricted and unstated premises derived from structuralism" (5). He calls Ricoeur himself a post-structuralist but with the crucial difference that, although Ricoeur acknowledges structuralism's insights and has even incorporated them into his own hermeneutic philosophy, he strongly censures this discipline for treating language per se as an autonomous field.

Clark then goes on in his Introduction to give a brief but wide-ranging account of deconstruction as both general movement and Derridean project. Examining a passage which comes from the work of an American exponent of deconstruction, Jonathan Culler,<sup>27</sup> Clark notes that there is "a symptomatic progression from the 'interest' in 'accurate discrimination' to a 'discernment' opposed to any kind of ethical or political commitment . . ." (6). Almost immediately after, he gives credit to deconstruction for "validating the application of sophisticated rhetorical exegesis to texts previously consigned to other domains, and conversely exposing literary works to greater conceptual scrutiny" (6). Then, shortly after, he links his own objections and critique to Ricoeur's attitude to deconstruction and states that it is necessary to "stress the disproportionate influence in Derrida's work of what Ricoeur calls 'vengefulness'" (7). But only a couple of sentences later, he returns to a more positive note and makes the following comment: "Yet when reinserted into the context of critical philosophy, Derrida represents not rupture and abolition but vigorous renewal" (7).

Along with numerous remarks of a similar nature, the above comments indicate that Clark views Ricoeur's project as being, on the one hand, the appropriation or at least domestication of deconstruction and, on the other hand, the refutation or even outright repudiation of it. With respect to the former, Clark, paying a lengthy tribute to Ricoeur in the Introduction, observes that Ricoeur investigates a large number of contemporary discourses both in and outside philosophy and, furthermore, in a way which is a "respectful, almost grateful assimilation of criticism: there is nothing in his work remotely comparable to Derrida's altercation with Searle" (4). Secondly, there is also in the Introduction a brief outline of Ricoeur's career where Clark mentions his book *De l'interprétation: Essai sur Freud*.<sup>28</sup> In the

---

<sup>27</sup> Johnathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983).

<sup>28</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation: Essai sur Freud* (Paris: Seuil, 1965).

fourth section, "Freud and Philosophy," Clark examines this book at length. On the first page of this section, he describes Ricoeur's hermeneutic task in a way which, although referring only to Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche, is not without relevance to Ricoeur's relationship to Derrida.

The process of doubt is two-way: philosophy must seek to preserve its own realm of jurisdiction and privilege of situating alternative modes of thought, but in turn it must risk itself, expect to be transformed in the encounter with its challengers. This dialectic is not restricted specifically to psychoanalysis: Freud joins forces with Marx and Nietzsche to found the modern hermeneutics of suspicion, of freedom through disbelief, through demystification. Though the sphere of validity of the psychoanalytic critique may at times appear quite sharply restricted, the ideal of critique itself is accorded an immense and unwavering respect (57).

A similar passage comes at the end of the Introduction and in a way which not only links Derrida to the hermeneutics of suspicion, but links the hermeneutics of suspicion (albeit in a vastly different way) to Ricoeur's project. There is an assimilation of the first to the second which resembles the Hegelian dialectic of conservation and elevation (*Aufhebung*).

It is worth stressing that Ricoeur's work has relevance not merely where it directly treats such issues as symbol, metaphor, and narrative, but also where its often highly technical discussions illuminate the conceptual heritage that lies behind much post-structuralist thinking. In the course of this book, for example, such major Derridean themes as the status of the trace, the alienation of the text, the centring [*sic*] of structure, and the latent power of concealed metaphor will be discussed in detail. Furthermore, if as de Man is prepared to concede 'however negative it may sound, deconstruction implies the possibility of rebuilding' (1983: 140; compare Derrida, 1973: 159), Ricoeur's persistent engagement with the full force of the hermeneutics of suspicion provides impressive testimony . . . (12)<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> A strikingly similar theme is to be found in Patrick Bourgeois' *Philosophy at the Boundary of Reason: Ethics and Modernity* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001). On a few occasions (xiv, xvii, 11, 153), Bourgeois speaks quite disparagingly of Derrida's

While it is true that Clark repeatedly commends Ricoeur for being tolerant, respectful, and non-antagonistic towards the discourses which are part of or close to philosophy, it is also true that he is not averse to Ricoeur's having a showdown with certain of these discourses. The first indications of this second line of Clark's attitude or assessment are admittedly faint but come very early in the Introduction.

Ricoeur never picks a fight. One of the most impressive traits of his work is his respectful, almost grateful assimilation of criticism: there is nothing in his work remotely comparable to Derrida's altercation with Searle. At times we may lament the absence of 'blistering refutations', but these would run counter to the values that Ricoeur's whole intellectual enterprise seeks to promote: humility, mutual respect, the truth of charity. But the force of his quiet implicit retorts to his more vociferous contemporaries should not be underestimated (4).

After going on to mention the major objections which Ricoeur raises against Saussurian linguistics in particular and structuralism in general, Clark makes some further comments which seem to contradict his statement that Ricoeur never picks a fight.

[Ricoeur's dense thought] seems to invite the reader into new domains of thought with a kind of weighty transparency; but then at a certain level of familiarity one realizes that this very transparency is combative, a position staked on disputed terrain. There is no backing away from the necessarily conflictual nature of interpretation: and Ricoeur, we should remember, has held his own in uncompromising, at times vitriolic, debate with the major figures of the post-war period: Sartre, Lévi-Strauss, Althusser, Lacan, Derrida, Habermas. His reading against the grain is as dexterous and as audacious a conceptual enterprise as anything in Derrida (11).

With respect to Ricoeur's confrontation with Derrida over metaphor or,

---

deconstructive project or deconstruction in general and, at the same time, he allows room for its making a positive contribution if received through the filter of a radical Ricoeurian critique ( xvi).

more properly, with respect to all the implications of this confrontation, Clark offers some revealing comments much later on in his book. They come at the very beginning and the very end of the sub-section, "Deconstruction and Metaphor." First, he characterizes this confrontation in rather dramatic terms by stating that "what is at stake is the claim of reflective philosophy to retain its traditional prerogative as governing metadiscourse" (137). In order to assert and reenforce this claim, Ricoeur's project must go beyond being simply a theory of metaphor. "The proper understanding of metaphor involves something like a complete overhaul of philosophy; but one that philosophy itself must carry out" (137).

"It is difficult not to see this as a classic illustration of the policing of boundaries: 'vigilance' inevitably appears a repressive and repressed quality" (138). But Clark does not dwell on this point and, after giving a summary of the first two sections of the Eighth Study of *La métaphore vive* – sections which come before Ricoeur's confrontation with Derrida and deal with Aristotle's and Aquinas's analogical conception of being – he offers a comment, first, on an unusual display of humour by Ricoeur and, secondly, on the latter's overall response to deconstruction.

A rare joke – 'Ah, the sun! Oh the fire! The heliotrope cannot be far away' (*RM*: 278) – signals an imminent confrontation with deconstruction for which this detour through ancient and medieval philosophy has been mere preparation. It has also been an exemplary reappropriation of a cultural heritage in contrast to 'the convenience, which has become a laziness of thinking, of lumping the whole of Western thought together under a single word, metaphysics' (*RM*: 311) (*PR*,139).

Finally, at the end of this sub-section, Clark not only links Ricoeur's confrontation with Derrida to philosophy's traditional quarrel with rhetoric, but he also links the end of Ricoeur's book to its very beginning.<sup>30</sup>

---

30 In the First Study of *La métaphore vive*, "Entre rhétorique et poétique: Aristote," Ricoeur supplies a brief description of the often troubled relations between philosophy and rhetoric.

Avant donc la taxinomie des figures, il y eut la grande rhétorique d'Aristote; mais avant celle-ci, il y eut l'usage sauvage de la parole et l'ambition de capter par le moyen d'une technique spéciale sa puissance dangereuse. La rhétorique d'Aristote est déjà une discipline domestiquée, solidement suturée à la philosophie par la théorie de l'argumentation dont la rhétorique à son déclin s'est amputée (*MV*, 14).

The relatively unproblematic account of rhetoric as 'philosophy's oldest enemy and oldest ally' offered in the opening chapter [i.e., the First Study] has now become overt confrontation. The 'claim to truth' of philosophic discourse excludes it from the 'sphere of power', where eloquence holds sway: 'before becoming futile, rhetoric was dangerous' (RM: 10) . . . 'Reflective mastery and clarification are closely related' (RM: 84) (PR,147).

To turn attention now to Clark's formal or specific account of Ricoeur's confrontation with Derrida (i.e., the subsection, "Deconstruction and Metaphor") is, first of all, to note that it goes beyond a simple summary or report. Clark not only reproduces Ricoeur's critique of Derrida's essay, "La mythologie blanche," but he also endorses it. Although there are numerous indications of his favouring Ricoeur over Derrida throughout his book and particularly in the Introduction and particularly in the form of numerous ethico-rhetorical statements, the most direct backing comes when Clark argues on behalf of Ricoeur in the latter's confrontation with Derrida. This is to say that he both recognizes to some extent Derrida's response to Ricoeur in "Le retrait de la métaphore" and takes on the responsibility of refuting it. But in order to clarify the status of this refutation, there are four points which should be considered. First, Ricoeur himself does not refute or comment on this response in any of his later writings.<sup>31</sup> Secondly, Clark's recognition of it is highly abbreviated and dispersed throughout his account of Ricoeur's confrontation with Derrida. Thirdly, Derrida's exposé, "Le retrait de la métaphore," is nowhere identified by Clark (except by publication year and by indirect reference to the Bibliography) as being the source of the response in question.<sup>32</sup> Fourthly, the passages taken from "Le retrait de la métaphore" are not dealt with separately but rather linked to passages from

---

31 The only later critique of Derrida which Ricoeur seems to undertake is in *Temps et récit*. It concerns Derrida's analysis of Husserl's "living present". Clark briefly discusses it in the third part of the second section, "Deferral or Eschatology."

32 These references are further obscured by being in error on occasion. For example, in the following passage Clark, although taking three "sound-bites" from "Le retrait de la métaphore," provides two different references. While the second is correct, the first is not. "Derrida later defends himself by insisting that to talk of metaphor requires a metaphorical idiom: 'elle (la métaphore) continuerait à se passer de moi pour me faire parler, me ventriloquer . . . je ne peux en traiter sans traiter avec elle' (1979: 105) [sic]. His argument is not an 'affirmation' but 'un mode...déconstructif' of working out the implication of this tradition; certainly not a 'perversité manipulatrice' (1978b: 109) . . ." (PR, 143). Although this obscuring of reference may be a simple error (although it happens twice), the fact that Clark shows little concern about the order in which he presents his highly abbreviated quotations is more suspect.

"White Mythology" and "Limited Inc."<sup>33</sup>

The fact that Clark refutes Derrida's response to Ricoeur's critique only by reproducing it in a way which sharply delimits it is contrary to the values of respect and solicitude which the author esteems so highly in Ricoeur. Unlike Ricoeur's treatment of "La mythologie blanche" in *La métaphore vive*, Clark neither offers a resume of "Le retrait de la métaphore" nor does he cite a single passage from it which goes beyond a sentence or two. In fact, on three of the five occasions when he refers to Derrida's exposé,<sup>34</sup> he is content either with citing a mere phrase or sentence from it or simply commenting on it as part of a parenthetical remark. Moreover, each citation or remark only comes after other commentary of a decidedly hostile nature.

This is the point that de Man made against Derrida on Rousseau [vis-a-vis Derrida's book, *De la grammatologie*], that he presented himself as merely the latest in a 'massive tradition' of corrective commentaries, 'always accompanied by an overtone of intellectual and moral superiority' (1983: 112, 122). There is an implicit self-righteousness, an absence of the requisite 'solicitude' (1983: 101). (Derrida's subsequent vigorous denial that his work presents the metaphysical as 'l'unité homogène d'un ensemble' (1978b: 110) underestimates the specific strengths of his own arguments . . .) (139-140).

Of course, the vigorous denial in the above passage refers to Derrida's response to Ricoeur's critique which takes up about six of the thirty pages of "Le retrait de la métaphore." Clark's second reference, again resorting to parenthesizing a short citation from Derrida, comes in the following passage.

The charge of collusion [by Ricoeur] results from treating metaphor at the level of word rather than the level of

---

33 Jacques Derrida, "Limited Inc abc," *Glyph 2*, 1977, 162-254.

34 Besides the reference to Derrida's exposé in footnote 32 on the preceding page, there is a fifth one which is the most substantial of all. It deals with Derrida's objection to Ricoeur's assimilating his position on metaphor to Heidegger's.

Derrida vigorously protests against this "geste d'assimilation ou au moins de dérivation," claiming to have demonstrated "une réserve nette et sans équivoque" towards his predecessor (1979: 109) [*sic*]. The sole evidence offered for this, however, is "la place et la portée" of a single footnote (n. 29: 1982: 226) quoting the key passage on the sensible and invisible from Heidegger's *Der Satz vom Grund*. No serious argument is offered about the overall tradition in which Ricoeur situates his work (*PR*, 144).

sentence. He attaches to the 'opposition between the figurative and the proper a meaning that is itself metaphysical, one that a more precise semantics dispels' (*RM*: 290). Derrida later denies that he has paid insufficient attention to this distinction ('ni davantage propre, littéral ou usuel, notions que je ne confonds pas' (1978b: 104), but there is no acknowledgement of the semantic level of metaphor anywhere in the essay (146).

Finally, there is the parenthesizing of a disparaging reference to Derrida's exposé in the following passage.

Derrida [in "La mythologie blanche"] quotes the relevant passages from Hegel's *Philosophy of Fine Arts* in full (1982: 225); deferentially, one might say derivatively. Certainly it appears to be offered in order to ground and justify his more adventurous textual forays: as Ricoeur says, he 'bases his work on' it (*RM*, 286). (Derrida takes particular exception to this term (*appuyer*), to the point of angrily inserting a rebuttal in the middle of a quotation (1978b: 112)) (*PR*, 141-142).

It might be objected that Derrida's "angrily inserting a rebuttal in the middle of a quotation" is, along with Clark's other references to an exposé largely kept out sight, far from being a fair representation of Derrida's response to Ricoeur. But even if this issue of Clark's unfairness to Derrida is ignored and Ricoeur's arguments alone are looked to as proof against Derrida's deconstructive project, there still remains the problem of how to determine that Ricoeur's reading of "La mythologie blanche" – a reading, of course, on which Ricoeur's very own arguments are based – is accurate. It is precisely this reading which Derrida challenges in "Le retrait de la métaphore" and, given that Clark ultimately pays very little attention to it, there is a need for some other way of gauging Ricoeur's reading of "La mythologie blanche." It is to this end, it seems, that Clark cites a long passage from Ricoeur's Eighth Study which he calls "an admirably lucid summary of an extremely elusive text" (142). By referring to "La mythologie blanche" in this way, Clark is obviously not paying Derrida a compliment because a little later on he characterizes Derrida's writing in general as obfuscating, decadent, and obscurantist. "The famous style, far from being some kind of liberating breakthrough, derives from the most decadent and obscurantist aspects of the late Heidegger . . ." (143). At the same time, he claims that Ricoeur paraphrases Derrida's text successfully and, as a

consequence, is able to pin down his argument and refute him. "The very act of paraphrase is crucial. Once pinned down and pegged out, Derrida can be argued with, and refuted" (142). But Clark's way of explaining matters, namely, that, on the one hand, there is an extremely elusive, even obfuscating text and, on the other hand, an argument which can be clearly drawn from it and pegged down, still leaves unanswered the question of how this feat is accomplished.<sup>35</sup>

In his account of Ricoeur's confrontation with Derrida, Clark relies overwhelmingly on Ricoeur's reading of "La mythologie blanche" in order to contribute his own critique and assessment. But the only reason for following Ricoeur so closely in this respect is that he recognizes the latter to be trustworthy and Derrida not. Among the many positive assessments of Ricoeur and negative assessments of Derrida in the Introduction, there are the following:

Ricoeur does not simply announce a commitment to openness. His is a rationality genuinely inclusive, kinetic, in constant internal evolution: the Socratic inheritance in its most positive form. Intellectual positions are never either finally formulated or completely abandoned: they are there to be reoccupied, reargued. . . . And in this continuous self-criticism Ricoeur's thought is more genuinely exploratory than many apparently more radical interventions (4-5).

I would stress the disproportionate influence in Derrida's work of what Ricoeur calls 'vengefulness' (*RM*: 295). A theory of intertextual dependence that demands intimate cohabitation with past writings combines with ostentatious gestures of severance, a stylistic scorched-earth policy. If he cannot be the subject of his own discourse, he'll still have the trickiest text in town: a baroque, apocalyptic prose seasoned with a mincing self-righteousness (7).

Of course, by using Ricoeur's trustworthiness and Derrida's untrustworthiness (which, if not absolutely stated, are heavily implied) as

---

<sup>35</sup> The problem seems to be this: if Derrida's text is truly obfuscating, decadent, and obscurantist, then very little, if anything, can or should be said about it. If not, then Ricoeur is in need of clear criteria by which to isolate and identify its argument or thesis. But if such criteria are lacking, then what he extracts from it remains largely a matter of interpretation. Since no criteria are in fact forthcoming, Clark should at least be cautious and not be so quick to treat Ricoeur's paraphrase of "La mythologie blanche" as an irrefutable piece of evidence.

the basis of his approach to Ricoeur's confrontation with Derrida, Clark cannot very well claim that his account of this confrontation itself demonstrates, first of all, that a moral imbalance or inequality exists between them, and, secondly, that there is good reason to trust Ricoeur's critique of Derrida and not to trust Derrida's response to this critique. It must be a judgement based on prior impressions and/or received opinion. But whether it is one or the other or both together, it falls short of the espoused standards of scholarship in which Clark no doubt wishes to keep faith.<sup>36</sup>

#### **1.4. Giuseppe Stellardi's Study in *Heidegger and Derrida on Philosophy and Metaphor: Imperfect Thought***

Giuseppe Stellardi's study strives hard not to be a project of clarification or at least not one in any conventional sense. Taken broadly, it is the study of Heidegger and Derrida on philosophy and metaphor. Taken narrowly, it is the study of the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur. Taken in the widest sense, it is the study of philosophy, metaphor, and the relationship between them. Carrying out this widest study with less than the usual amount of scholarly precision is justified right at the outset.

This contact, this obscure copulation [i.e., between philosophy and metaphor] which constitutes the primary stake and wager of this study, is not approachable in a direct manner, through a straight determination reflecting itself – if such a determination were possible – in its very

---

<sup>36</sup> "Faith" versus "unbelief" seems to be a sort of Hegelian opposition which Clark views as being operative in Ricoeur's work. In the Introduction, he follows his discussion of Ricoeur's battle with Foucault, Lacan, and Derrida (and, on a more general level, with structuralism and deconstruction) with a tentative evaluation of the former's intellectual contribution.

Thought is a "task" that must acknowledge its own situation of fall, exile, and alienation, and direct itself towards "reconstruction." But the prefix is misleading. The excavation through the "sedimented" levels of the concept does not allow the "re"-discovery of original wisdom. Meaning emerges not through nostalgic regression, but in the space opened by the commitment to the "act" of interpretation. And this is arguably the crucial issue in his work. Is the positive side of the dialectic essentially sacramental, a vindication of hierophany, a warning against "forgetting the signs of the Sacred, losing hold of man himself, as belonging to the Sacred" (*Le conflit des interprétations*, 288); or does Ricoeur succeed in utilizing all the resources of post-modernist scepticism in order to promote a new beginning, a "second naïveté" on the far side of the "hermeneutics of suspicion"? (*PR*, 8).

title, and directing, by means of a rational method, the journey inaugurated by it. Hence the extreme (conjunctive and suspensive) generality of the title under which this work announces itself, which is meant to signal, more than the inordinate ambition of its author, the amplitude and implications of a question which, such as I attempt to shelter and face here, only preserves its sense at the cost of resisting any reduction and fragmentation, and also of renouncing any too strong preliminary methodic, decision. The price to be paid for this fidelity to the question, however, will include a large measure of incompleteness, approximation, and imprecision: imperfect thoughts, these of mine shall be (15-16).<sup>37</sup>

Due to the vastness and complexity of the field, Stellardi adopts a free, open, and mobile type of analysis. His method is to continually oscillate between the two poles of philosophy and metaphor and, as a sort of parallel movement, take up provisional positions which are mainly his definitions of metaphor and philosophy. Claiming that this mobility, this “rigour that is not rigidity” (18) is necessary in order to free his analysis from pre-existing conceptions of philosophy and metaphor, he sets out not so much to find answers to large-scale questions as to keep open a radical line of questioning.

From the beginning to the end of his book, Stellardi follows a path which takes – or at least seems to take – metaphor beyond a metaphysical conception of it. At its most basic level, this conception is the philosophical, speculative, theoretical, rhetorical mastery of metaphor. For example, he states that “the recognition of a fundamental complicity between metaphor and philosophy translates directly into the undecidability of priorities and hierarchies, and perhaps even into the impossibility of *founding* philosophy as an autonomous discourse” (Stellardi’s emphasis, 46). On the other hand, a close examination of Stellardi’s book will reveal that neither Chapter One nor his final chapter, Chapter Four, primarily adopt an extra-metaphysical stance. While the first, “Of Metaphor,” is largely devoted to providing a definition which is also a description and theory of metaphor, the second, “Of Philosophy,” is largely devoted to providing a definition, description, and theory of philosophy. Now, insofar as defining metaphor is out of keeping with an extra-metaphysical conception of it and, insofar as Stellardi’s

---

<sup>37</sup> All page numbers of cited passages in section 1.4. of the present study refer to Stellardi’s *Heidegger and Derrida on Philosophy and Metaphor: Imperfect Thought* unless otherwise indicated.

qualifying his definition as provisional does not prevent him from using it in the later part of his book (i.e., Chapter Three), Chapter One is devoted to a metaphysical conception of metaphor. And insofar as defining philosophy is out of keeping with an extra-metaphysical conception of it, Chapter Four is devoted to a metaphysical conception of philosophy.

Chapter Three, "Metaphors that Hurt," is Stellardi's analysis of not only Heidegger on metaphor, but metaphor *in* Heidegger. Largely critical in its orientation, it belies the title of Stellardi's book which suggests that Heidegger's views on philosophy and metaphor and the relationship between them are at least as important as Derrida's. In fact, Heidegger is far from being treated by Stellardi as an authority and what really counts for him is that Heidegger's writings, considered to be philosophical by him only in the broadest sense, prove to be a sort of textual field which can be explored "to see if and how a discursive machine functions . . . , perhaps even (partially) in a way that is unknown to its author" (128).<sup>38</sup> Stellardi's Chapter Two,

---

38 Chapter Three takes Stellardi from the Ricoeur-Derrida debate (Chapter Two) to philosophy as ongoing but "self-destructive" supertheory (Chapter Four). He begins his analysis of Heidegger on metaphor and, more particularly, metaphor *in* Heidegger "with the intention of developing it in a more open and personal way" (127). He then follows by listing the obstacles and difficulties which confront him. "To say that we are more *in* than *before* this text means therefore that we are partly lost, partly impotent, in this relationship" (129). Notwithstanding what seems to be an untenable position for an analyst, Stellardi sets out to question the internal coherence of Heidegger's text. Agreeing with Ricoeur's assessment of Heidegger's condemnation of metaphor, Stellardi sees the latter equating it with metaphysics, with representational thought, and with language "as an instrument for the establishment of the total interdependence that permits the exploitation of Being"(131). But despite his hostility to metaphor, "Heidegger's text is overrun by metaphor. It does not control it: expelled, metaphor comes back . . ." (133). Declaring that textual facts here are obviously at odds with authorial intention, Stellardi goes on to supply an operative notion of metaphor by which to analyse Heidegger's *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. Then, distinguishing between an "ordinary" context which is philosophical language and an "extraordinary" context which is language per se, Stellardi equates Heidegger's metaphors with a leap towards the "unspeakable" of the extraordinary context which is, once again, the essence of language. Of course the risk is that Heidegger's text "begins to wander, to lose itself more and more – in vagueness, poetry, mysticism, analogy, tautology, contradiction, the unspeakable" (140). In addition, it is caught in a dilemma because it is neither able to transform itself into poetry nor shake off metaphor as the lingering sign of metaphysics and representational thought. "The philosopher (Heidegger's reader, in the first instance) suffers thus from the *presence* of metaphor! . . . It's not metaphor's suffering, its indefinite waiting, that bothers the philosopher, but the faux pas or the bad faith of a text that, mixing genres and losing control (or pretending to lose control, perhaps not without premeditation and gain, somewhere, one suspects) allows itself to be invaded by dangerous plants and inebriating flowers, and cannot manage to destroy them, in spite of its stated (but unconvincing) desire to do so" (143). Further on in his analysis, Stellardi goes on a different tack when he describes "the structure and function of Heidegger's metaphor" (148). Now it is no longer an unwanted and out of control element but a specially designed tool which Heidegger employs. "Heidegger rejects metaphor as the instrument of representation. He

"Derrida: The Catastrophe of Metaphor," is the analysis of "the debate between Derrida and Ricoeur on metaphor and philosophy" which "still best represents and synthesizes a cluster of problems that contemporary theory has definitely not been able to dispose of" (67). Similar to Lawlor's and Bouchard's way of proceeding, Stellardi begins with "La mythologie blanche," follows with the Eighth Study of *La métaphore vive*, and ends with "Le retrait de la métaphore." But before embarking on these readings, he makes it clear that Derrida counts for him much more than Ricoeur.

. . . Derrida's contribution still represents the unsurpassed edge of what our epoch has been able to produce as truly radical reflection on the enormously intricate problem that goes under the working title "metaphor and philosophy," or "metaphor and concept." His contribution thus remains not only "interesting," but also strictly speaking, unavoidable, at least until a complete remodeling of the philosophical field in which it was generated becomes possible (67).

In addition to the analysis of "La mythologie blanche" and "Le retrait de la métaphore," Chapter Two is devoted to a further discussion of Derrida and, in particular, his notions of undecidability, *différance*, and dissemination.

Besides the exorbitant sway which Derrida's point of view has over it, Stellardi's analysis is noteworthy for the reason that it undergoes a stylistic shift when he moves from Derrida's "La mythologie blanche" to Ricoeur's Eighth Study. While the former is examined in a very general way and with the text kept virtually out of sight, the latter is given a standard resume which reproduces Ricoeur's arguments and explicit point of view. Holding that Ricoeur argues for philosophy's essential separation from and control

---

uses it, nevertheless, but only as 'open' metaphor . . ." (149). This use, highly complex and ambiguous, coincides with a certain kind of thought which "wants to find again the marvel of its origins, which was generated by the happening of being" (152). Stellardi then gives a detailed account of the rhetorical structure of "Die Sprache" in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. The last few sections of Chapter Three are devoted to the following: metaphor and suffering ("But true thought must suffer the threshold [between poetry and technique]") (160), the hypothesis that true poetry is without metaphor and "presents a world" (162), language as difference, analogic trait, and the relationship between them ("From another point of view, since it cannot be founded, [the trait] is 'co-originary' with difference and comes before any possibility of 'seeing' any difference, any analogy within language and in the world") (166), the relationship between poetry (nomination) and philosophy (metaphor), Heidegger's use of poetry as sacred text, and, finally, Heidegger's "work of thought which is not, cannot, and does not want to be poetry, [and] can only suffer, to an extent, not from its renunciation, but also from its incapacity to enunciate itself in a more luminous and accomplished manner") (182).

over metaphor, Stellardi stresses that Ricoeur confronts Derrida as one who poses a threat to philosophy. But while he points this out and seems to consider it important, he is far from making it an integral part of his analysis. Although he agrees with Derrida's purportedly generalizing metaphor to the point that it permeates all language and, a fortiori, all philosophy, ("[i]nstigating the generalization of metaphorical power, allowing its proliferation, accepting the effects thereof" [76]), his ultimate conclusion is that Ricoeur's fears are unfounded. "For both, the thin line separating poetry from philosophy is to be preserved" (101). But this conclusion is not arrived at on the basis of an examination of Ricoeur's arguments per se, but on the basis of Derrida's response to them in "Le retrait de la métaphore."

But Stellardi goes beyond Lawlor, Bouchard, and of course Clark in his look at the exposé, "Le retrait de la métaphore." If one discounts the fact that this exposé is only thirty pages long while both "La mythologie blanche" and the Eighth Study are well over twice as long, it weighs in as the most challenging piece of writing. Along with giving a response to Ricoeur's critique of "La mythologie blanche," Derrida undertakes a lengthy analysis of both Heidegger on metaphor and – what is most significant here – *quasi-metaphor* in Heidegger. Neither literal or proper nor figurative or metaphorical, quasi-metaphor is, insofar as it can be determined or located in a text such as Heidegger's, the always provisional signifier of neither the transcendental nor the empirical, but the condition of the possibility of both. To speak of quasi-metaphor then is not to speak of metaphor per se and it is certainly not to speak of the generalization of metaphor except in a qualified sense. Contrary to the rest of his book where Stellardi repeatedly refers to this generalization without any qualification whatsoever and affirms it both in his own name and Derrida's, his analysis or, more properly, his resume of "Le retrait de la métaphore" is, for the most part, precise. It is also happens to be the part of his book where he most clearly relies on paraphrase and citation.<sup>39</sup>

Before moving on to what he calls a deeper study of Derrida in the second part of Chapter Two, ("I will pursue and deepen the examination of Derrida's 'machine'. . ." [105]), Stellardi devotes a half-dozen pages to analysing the difference between Derrida and Ricoeur. Entitled "Some Questions," this short subsection is a mixture of suppositions and relatively

---

<sup>39</sup> To the degree that Stellardi shows later on that he either chooses to ignore or has not grasped the thrust of Derrida's analysis of Heidegger, it must be presumed that his resume of "Le retrait de la métaphore" is not much more than a technical success. Nothing could be less doubtful than that Derrida is providing an explanation for the apparent discrepancy between Heidegger's denunciation of the concept of metaphor and his abundant use of what seem to be metaphors. By contrast, Stellardi, with a few rare exceptions, continually refers (and of course in a critical way) to Heidegger's metaphors as metaphors in the traditional sense and does not bother to explain why he departs from Derrida.

strong claims. It begins with the declaration that "the difference between Ricoeur and Derrida is not clear-cut: It sometimes seems insignificant and sometimes enormous" (99). Concentrating first on the "insignificant" end of the difference between them, he speculates that their thought is deeply united in "a questioning, a radical self-interrogation of philosophy in the quest for its own statute, for its own place (to be found or maintained), with one final step: the confirmation of its own privilege" (99). He then goes on to suggest that Derrida, no less than Ricoeur and despite the fact that the former poses a threat to philosophy, still wants it to be a view of the totality, a metadiscourse, a "master discourse in the theoretical space" (100). He then points out that Derrida's response to Ricoeur in "Le retrait de la métaphore" is relatively mild and that "most of Ricoeur's criticisms against him are not due to a real disagreement, but to a defective and therefore unsustainable reading of his texts . . ." (101). Stellardi also finds Derrida and Ricoeur to be in essential agreement on the nature and operation of philosophical metaphor. "For Ricoeur the so-called philosophical metaphors are no longer metaphors. . . . For Derrida, too, philosophical metaphors are not common metaphors" (101). And "for both, the thin line separating poetry from philosophy is to be preserved" (101). Then, suddenly reversing his direction, Stellardi adds: "But the apparent proximity becomes an insuperable distance when Derrida explains that the step beyond metaphor can only be a total generalization of metaphor . . ." (101). As might be expected, Ricoeur "rejects the idea that metaphysics is in a metaphoric relation vis-a-vis Being . . ." (102). Furthermore, Ricoeur "rejects all hermeticisms and despair of language and denies the possibility, the necessity, and the opportunity of a rupture with the tradition of speculative philosophy" (102). It is only Derrida who "puts thought (even if only by supposition) in danger of losing itself . . ." (103). On the other hand, Ricoeur's philosophy "never risks its own point of foundation, because 'speculative discourse has its necessity in itself, in putting the resources of conceptual articulation to work'"(103). Stellardi then asks a series of questions about "the sense and extent of the 'risk' that deconstruction is prepared to accept" (103). But he cuts short this line of inquiry by declaring that "these questions will not find a definitive answer here" (103).<sup>40</sup>

Given all the above and much else in Stellardi's book which is complicated and even over-complicated, it could very well be asked: how is it to be considered a project of clarification? Before dealing with the point – significant but not of first importance – that Stellardi himself identifies it as a

---

40 This move of suggesting or raising a question or even a number of questions in order to shortly dismiss them (or else to defer answering them) is made several times throughout Stellardi's book. Examples can be found on pages 22, 46, 70, 73, 78, 89, 103, 106, 116, 214, 239, 247.

project of clarification, there is another point which should be considered. Without denying that his book is difficult and complex, it is possible to think that, if it is also obscure, its obscurity results less from its complicating matters than from its conflating them. The most outstanding example of Stellardi's conflating and thereby obscuring matters is his free-wheeling use of the term metaphor. Not only does metaphor signify the definition or description of metaphor which he himself provides in Chapter One,<sup>41</sup> but it also signifies much which falls in the neighbourhood of Derrida's, Heidegger's, and Ricoeur's discussions of metaphor. In the case of Derrida, Stellardi's unregulated use of this term obscures the fact that there is less a concept of metaphor in Derrida than a disruption of this concept. A crucial point of which Stellardi must be aware but nonetheless overlooks is that Derrida does not begin "La mythologie blanche" by asking a question of quiddity, but rather by asking a question which can never be properly answered, namely, "[Y] a-t-il de la métaphore dans le texte philosophique?" (MB, 249).

In the case of Heidegger, Stellardi bases his Chapter Three analysis of *Unterwegs zur Sprache* on the above-mentioned definition and description of metaphor in Chapter One. "Towards a Description of Metaphor" is a subsection of Chapter One which is also part of a larger section called "Beyond the Traditional Model." By offering a presumably non-traditional definition and description of metaphor, Stellardi suggests that he is also offering a theory of metaphor which, in spite of or even on account of its provisional nature, is adequate in dealing with both Derrida and Heidegger on metaphor.<sup>42</sup> The difficulty is that, in his apparent haste to provide this theory (it is the work of about a dozen pages), Stellardi never explains why it should be entrusted to take on the task of explaining a mode of thought which itself calls into question all metaphorical theory. Moreover, to label his own theory provisional does not render its explanatory function more legible or understandable unless it and all else, including Derrida and Heidegger, were destined to be taken up into another theory, a super-theory which itself would be irreproachable.

But, as to be expected, no *Aufhebung* of the provisional theory is forthcoming. On the contrary, when the author puts his theory of metaphor

---

41 The short version of his definition is: "Metaphor is a meaning-effect generated by way of interaction between two contexts with reference to a text. A *meaning-effect* is a commotion of the order of discourse, produced by a successful effort of reabsorption of an irregularity, measured on the basis of previous expectations" (HD, 51).

42 "Ideally, the task would be . . . to compare current theories of metaphor and, finally, to select, extrapolate, or build an operational one for the purposes of this study" (38). Immediately before his "ideal" prospectus, the author states that he will "have to disavow [it] consistently, together with its guarantees and promises, in order not to repudiate the most pressing reasons for the inquiry itself" (37).

to work at the beginning of Chapter Three (which is also where he begins his analysis of Heidegger), it is with the proviso that "this sort of analysis remains inevitably insufficient and secondary in the elaboration of a question that does not tolerate too strong a framing for its initial position, even less a definitive limitation of its scope" (134). Now while it is no doubt true that Stellardi's analysis bases itself on "the elaboration of a question" or even on simply raising or posing a number of questions, it is also true that most of these questions result from his particular way of looking for provisional answers. But if he uses his theory of metaphor which he admits to be inadequate in order to raise questions about philosophy and metaphor and, furthermore, if he also uses it to supply provisional answers on the basis of which these further questions are raised, then surely these questions will not be any more adequate or reliable – any more philosophically worthy or valuable – than the answers from which they spring.

Despite his evident concern for questioning in philosophy, and despite his raising many questions throughout his book, Stellardi never asks himself what would be *for him* the most radical question, namely, what is the value of all these questions which his own theory, proclaimed inadequate, is largely responsible for? To put it another way, the difficulty which Stellardi circumvents only by keeping it a blind spot in his text is that there is little reason to think that the above-mentioned questions are reliable or adequate in dealing with the subject of Heidegger and Derrida on philosophy and metaphor. There is little reason to think so because there is little reason to think that they are *better* questions than the ones which Heidegger and Derrida ask themselves and pose to philosophy and philosophers in general.

In order to illustrate the unreliability and imprecision of these questions, it will be sufficient to look at, along with Stellardi's resume of "Le retrait de la métaphore" in Chapter Two, the beginning of Chapter Three. This chapter's first section, "Position of the Problem and Initial Questions," runs only to a few pages and yet it is the forum for laying down a general approach to analysing Heidegger's text. What is most striking about this section is that, although Stellardi begins with some preliminary propositions which strongly affirm the intractability of Heidegger's text, he nonetheless proceeds to other propositions which, despite their being somewhat equivocal, broadly announce Heidegger's rejection of metaphor. "In Heidegger's text there is metaphor. This trivial statement . . . does not go without saying. It is, for instance, explicitly belied with much force by Heidegger himself, when he insistently sets out to discredit metaphor, and precisely in circumstances where the presence of metaphor . . . seems to be indubitable" (130). What makes this second affirmation particularly troublesome in light of the first one, namely, the one stressing the intractability of Heidegger's text is that it falls short of the level of precision

which Derrida's own analysis brings to this area and which should provide a standard for Stellardi, or, more precisely, it falls short with respect to the question of the ostensible contradiction between Heidegger's negative remarks about metaphor and his use of language which is not literal, proper, or univocal. Stellardi's analysis of Heidegger is not only out of keeping then with his allegiance to Derrida, but also it does not agree with Derrida's analysis of Heidegger's text as Stellardi himself reproduces it. In Chapter Two, instead of any mention of Heidegger's "repression," "rejection," "condemnation," "abandonment," and so on of metaphor, there is only mention of his reserve in talking about metaphor and his "apparently univocal, simplifying, and reductive denunciation of the 'metaphysical' *concept* of metaphor . . ." (Italics added, 93). As Derrida's analysis goes on to attest, Heidegger's battle is not with metaphor per se, but with a possible construal of his text as being metaphorical in the metaphysical or Platonic sense, that is, in the sense of its being a transfer of meaning and reference from the sensible or empirical realm to the intelligible or transcendental realm.<sup>43</sup>

As already mentioned, Derrida's analysis is reproduced in Chapter Two without a critique by Stellardi. Whereas this analysis demonstrates that Heidegger's text is neither metaphorical nor literal, Stellardi's own analysis in Chapter Three begins with the claim that Heidegger's text is full of metaphors. The precise status of this claim is not easy to determine right away because, after posing "two separate sets of questions"<sup>44</sup> – questions

---

43 The care which should be taken in looking into the apparent discrepancy between what Heidegger says about metaphor and how he uses it is evidenced by Derrida in the following passage:

La métaphoricité du texte de Heidegger déborderait ce qu'il dit thématiquement, sur le mode de la dénonciation simplificatrice, du concept dit « métaphysique » de la métaphore (Greisch, p. 441 et suiv., Ricoeur, p. 359). Je souscrirais assez volontiers à cette affirmation. Reste pourtant à déterminer le sens et la nécessité qui lient entre elles cette dénonciation apparemment univoque, simplifiante et réductrice du concept « métaphysique » de métaphore et d'autre part la puissance apparemment métaphorique d'un texte dont l'auteur ne veut plus qu'on comprenne comme « métaphorique », justement, ni même sous aucun concept de la métalinguistique ou de la rhétorique, ce qui s'y passe et prétend s'y passer de la métaphore (RM, 78).

44 "We ought then to distinguish between declarations of intent and textual facts, and ask two separate sets of questions: (1) How does Heidegger see metaphor, how does he see his own 'usage' of language, and why does he reject metaphor? (2) How does metaphor function in Heidegger's text, and how does language work there, irrespective of all the author's explicit statements and of his inferable positions?" (HD, 133).

which are set down to guide his analysis and which assume that Heidegger's text is full of metaphors – he asks a further question which does not assume this and which in fact requires his theory of metaphor to set everything on course.

Is it possible to prove that Heidegger's text is filled with metaphors? In order to do so, would it suffice to define metaphor and check whether an object corresponding to such a definition is present in the text, in which form, in which proportion, and with which effects on the text itself? An attempt of this kind (which I shall undertake) could yield some interesting results. However, this sort of analysis remains inevitably insufficient and secondary in the elaboration of a question that does not tolerate too strong a framing for its initial position, even less a definitive limitation of its scope (133-134).

Immediately following the above passage is an extremely brief section (two pages) which is Chapter Two's second section, "Delimiting the Field." It begins with the following announcement: "Once again, I shall draw the essential traits of the provisional definition of metaphor, which I gave in Chapter 1" (134). The definition which Stellardi thereupon provides and which, like his "two separate sets of questions," is meant to guide his analysis, is partly semantic and partly psychological. Metaphor is described as a linguistic occurrence which brings about an interaction or exchange between two different contexts or sets of associations, significations, references, etc. Some new coherence or coordination is thereby generated which is also the production of a new comprehension on the part of the reader. Taking this definition straight to Heidegger's text, Stellardi of course has no problem demonstrating that it is full of metaphors and answering – with of course always additional questions – the "two separate sets of questions" which already presuppose that Heidegger's text is metaphorical. But, just as in the case of Bouchard's efforts in *Le procès de la métaphore*, Stellardi cannot avoid having a definition which determines the nature of metaphor in Heidegger rather than a definition which is determined on the basis of isolating and identifying metaphor. Moreover, his calling this definition provisional and thereby implying that his whole analysis is subject to revision is of no help if, while always mistrusting his answers in order to sanctify his questioning, his own questions go without the sanction of the very thought which would call them into question.

Before moving on to the final stage of diagnosing Stellardi's study as a

project of clarification which is also a project of simplification and even oversimplification, the equivocal status which it bequeaths to Ricoeur's work needs to be examined. Despite acknowledging a debt to Ricoeur which he does not precisely identify and despite the possibility (soon to be commented on) that his own theory of metaphor is derived from Ricoeur's, there are some points which are quite clear. First among them is the fact that, apart from Derrida's "La mythologie blanche" and "Le retrait de la métaphore" and Heidegger's *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, no work has anywhere near the amount of attention lavished on it as does the Eighth Study. Setting his resume of it between his resumes of Derrida's "La mythologie blanche" and "Le retrait de la métaphore," Stellardi devotes almost as many pages (thirteen) to the Eighth Study as to Derrida's "La mythologie blanche" and "Le retrait de la métaphore" (sixteen). Calling *La métaphore vive* an "excellent work" (78), Stellardi nonetheless sets aside only four paragraphs in order to review Ricoeur's book from the First Study to the Seventh Study. Now these seven studies amount to more than three hundred pages of critical and corrective analysis of ancient, modern, and contemporary theories of metaphor. Furthermore, Ricoeur takes metaphorical theory over these pages from the level of the noun or word to the level of the sentence and then finally to the level of poetic discourse and its dialectical relation to speculative discourse. At the end of his review of both Ricoeur's and Derrida's writings on metaphor, Stellardi, despite condemning Ricoeur for holding the traditional notion that philosophy is not metaphorical but only conceptual, still finds his theory of metaphor to be a contribution.

Simplifying once again, I should say that from Ricoeur's side almost nothing has changed with reference to the traditional philosophical point of view on this matter [i.e., on the matter of philosophy's preserving itself rather than "risking" itself]. It is certainly true that the strict metaphysical theory of metaphor is refuted and a very interesting and rich reworking is carried through in order to produce a more adequate and comprehensive theory of metaphor (103-104).

The fact that Stellardi finds Ricoeur's theory to be better than most or perhaps all other theories of metaphor and, at the same time, does not take it into account or at least does not refer to it when he provides his own theory is one of those questions which the author should perhaps raise about his own work. Just as he, by focussing on the Eighth Study, ignores how Ricoeur develops his theory of metaphor from the First to the Seventh Study, so does he provide his provisional theory in Chapter One without explaining

why it should be considered more reliable than Ricoeur's or, for that matter, other contemporary theories. On the other hand, Stellardi's theory bears a striking resemblance to Ricoeur's in that the latter also describes metaphor as an interaction or exchange between two contexts. First of all, there is interaction between what is called, not only by Ricoeur but by other interactive theorists and, in particular, Max Black, the metaphorical sentence or frame and the metaphorical word or focus. Secondly, there is interaction between what Ricoeur, vastly extending the theory of metaphor, calls the first order level of reference to the world (*descriptive*) and the second order level of reference to it (*redescriptive*). While Stellardi touches on these points (but without mentioning the interactive theory) in his resume of the Eighth Study, he does not bring them up as references when he sketches out his own theory of metaphor.

By theorizing about philosophy and, as he does in Chapter Four, philosophy's relation to other discourses such as scientific, poetic, ordinary, etc., Stellardi occupies himself with the largest of subjects. On some occasions, he claims that this undertaking is unjustifiable and that truth is not at issue because it is impossible to attain. On at least one other occasion, however, he claims that he has a moral duty to tell the truth about philosophy and metaphor.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, just as he occupies himself with raising questions throughout his book, so he also summarily dismisses these questions or defers answering them. That he esteems Ricoeur as a theoretician and an eminent representative of philosophy's traditional view of itself goes hand in hand with the fact that he under-represents Ricoeur's theory of metaphor and overrules the latter's position with a *parti pris*,<sup>46</sup> namely, Derrida's metaphorization of philosophy. Highly sympathetic to and supportive of deconstruction, his own work is not a project of deconstruction, but rather a project of theorization. More precisely, it is a project in which deconstruction is theorized to the point that, in a move reminiscent of both Hegel's *Aufhebung* and Husserl's *Lebenswelt*, Stellardi speculates on the "death" of deconstruction and its ongoing movement in an endless super-theory.

I shall once again abandon this question [i.e., the question of whether philosophy controls theory] and

---

45 "On the contrary, what imperatively moves the investigation at every stage, and even beyond the horizon and the interest of philosophy as discourse and as institution, is a moral duty to search for 'the truth.' The duty is itself unjustifiable and, I believe, purely philosophical, though free from any disciplinary affiliation (including to philosophy)" (*HD*, 33).

46 "I should actually add that although there is here a 'philosophical *parti pris*' in the way I question the link between metaphor and philosophy, no decision has been made in advance that philosophy 'must be saved'" (*HD*, 17).

instead suggest another, less terroristic one: Would it be possible to put together a supertheory capable of unifying and explaining the different metaphorical operations produced by the different theoretical movements and systematisations . . . ? A supertheory of theory? A model capable of encompassing all theoretic possibilities? The question is less idle than it may seem. Deconstruction, more than a specific theory, in is my opinion a dynamic element in the path leading toward (but not nearly approaching, and for essential reasons) such a supertheory of all the possible theoretical effects. The path is not simply long: It is in fact endless. The old (and almost empty) name for such a supertheory would be, once again, as it has always been, philosophy (247-248).

Unlike Derrida who, in analysing a philosophical discourse, be it Hegel's, Husserl's, or Heidegger's, monitors its virtually perfect control to the point that it inevitably, and in spite of itself, loses control, Stellardi makes innumerable gestures of loss of control while focussing on the point of gaining control. If such were not the case, it would be impossible for him to undertake (or even to think of undertaking) what he announces in his Introduction, namely, a project of clarifying philosophy.

The ultimate (and certainly remote) aim of this study is therefore, without doubt, the clarification of the status, structure, and legitimacy of philosophical discourse, and its delimitation in relation to neighbouring ones. From this point of view, at least in a preliminary phase, metaphor will function as a point of departure and a touchstone: Its presence – and possibly its specific difference from other types of metaphor – within the philosophical text, and more specifically in some texts of Heidegger and Derrida, might tell us something relevant concerning philosophy itself (32).

From a provisional definition, description, and theory of metaphor in Chapter One, Stellardi follows a winding path of analysis – his “series of oscillations” (17) – to a provisional definition, description, and theory of philosophy in Chapter Four. Philosophy is described as the discourse which, unlike science, is concerned only with non-verifiable truth, with what, according to Stellardi, is the “strong” meaning of truth. “‘Strong’ meaning: affirmation and creation of truth. Proposition of that which is de jure or de

facto, temporarily or permanently, undemonstrably true, auto-proclamation of what must be true" (211). The author speculates that this "strong" truth is "strictly linked to the ethical impulse" (213) and "corresponds, probably, to what Aristotle understood under the heading of rhetoric . . ." (214). As the bearer of this "strong" truth, philosophy interacts with other discourses and mainly occupies itself with finding its unique and indispensable place among them. It fills, via metaphor, "the spaces of movement and articulation of sense that more traditional procedures of control, having been in part expelled or dismantled, are no longer able to manage" (234). But by this account it may be seen that, just as Stellardi views metaphor at the heart of philosophy and yet presumably outside its control, so he views it, while still at the heart of philosophy, presumably in the latter's control or else exerting a control which is indistinguishable from philosophy's self-control. While the first certainly is a non-traditional philosophical but not necessarily rhetorical view of the relationship between philosophy and metaphor, the second view – the one which is Stellardi's own theory – is not far away from Aristotle.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, while the first is the theme which runs rather wildly throughout Stellardi's book, the second is the thesis which structures and orders it.

No doubt the first thematic of Stellardi's book is meant to complicate or even outflank the second, but the second is also meant to control and contain the first. At the same time, by conflating Derrida on metaphor with metaphor in general, deconstruction in general, and even philosophy in general, Stellardi handles roughly – indeed, caricatures at times<sup>48</sup> – what

---

47 Discussing Aristotle on metaphor in "La mythologie blanche," Derrida notes:

La métaphore, effet de *mimesis* et d'*homoiosis*, manifestation de l'analogie, sera donc un moyen de connaissance. Subordonné mais certain. On peut dire d'elle ce qu'on dit de la poésie: elle est plus philosophique et plus sérieuse (*philosophôteron kai spoudaioteron*) que l'histoire (*Poétique*, 1451 b), puisqu'elle ne raconte pas seulement le particulier mais dit le général, le vraisemblable et le nécessaire. Elle n'est pourtant pas aussi sérieuse que la philosophie elle-même et elle conservera ce statut intermédiaire, semble-t-il, à travers toute l'histoire de la philosophie. Statut ancillaire plutôt: bien ordonnée, la métaphore doit travailler au service de la vérité, mais le maître ne peut s'en contenter et doit lui préférer le discours de la vérité pleine (*MB*, 283-284).

48 Despite placing great emphasis on the fact that his definitions of metaphor and philosophy are only provisional, Stellardi consistently makes sweeping statements which belie his commitment to proceed with a certain amount of "epistemological" reserve and caution. For example, in Chapter Four he states: "In the functioning of the philosophical mode of discourse, the role of metaphor is not secondary. In a sense, we can say that metaphor is the essential instrument of philosophy, which confirms Heidegger's ideas" (*HD*, 232). Of course, Heidegger's ideas are, along with philosophy and metaphor, one of those

must, in order to be meaningful as the articulation of the extremely elusive and systematically elided slippage of meaning in philosophy, have the most delicate treatment of all. Falling short here, falling away from Derrida's text and leaving it behind too quickly, it is inevitable that Stellardi also falls away from the traditional efficiency and mastery of philosophy.

---

areas which the author continually declares to be ambiguous and uncertain. Nevertheless, it would be unfair not to take this opportunity to mention that, even when pressed around from all sides by what is confusing, repetitive, and oftentimes banal, exploratory and insightful elements do present themselves. For example, in his analysis in Chapter Four of the different "dispositions of philosophy," Stellardi compares structuralism and deconstruction in a way which does not occult the mutual implication of the ethical and the epistemological in philosophical discourse.

In this respect (and, by the way, all this has to do with *respect*; that is, the relation with a given order of priorities, the acceptance or rejection of a state of things) structuralism belongs to the tradition that (through both idealism and empiricism) strives to regulate the relation between subject and object that is called *theory*, and links it inextricably to the metaphorical field of *vision*. For example, (and, once again, simplifying in the extreme), we could say that from the structuralist point of view the literary object (like any other object) may initially be positioned outside the field of vision of the reader/subject, but can in principle always be included in the theoretical field through operations of the mind aimed at the discovery and production of structures. This setup or disposition is never really questioned; nevertheless, it constitutes the foundation not only of structuralism, but also of that necessary part of structuralism that is at work everywhere in criticism and in theory, even beyond the recognizable legal borders of structuralism itself.

Deconstruction questions any given opposition, it even questions the very position from which only theory is possible (for instance, the position of the subject as external to the object): the "old name" of this position is philosophy. It can therefore be argued that deconstruction sees the theoretic relationship (that is, philosophy) as a problem in itself, as the first and most important problem of theory (*HD*, 240-241).



## Chapter II

### Derrida's Commitment to Tell the Truth about Metaphor as *Indirect* Encounter with Ricoeur's Project<sup>1</sup>

The present study must take a short detour through itself with all the risk this entails before it can properly take up the analysis of the deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur. Although it was stated in the Introduction that it cannot say what it is all at once, it was also stated or at least suggested that it is committed to saying something *differently* about itself. Concerned as it is with truth-telling and its complication and even over-complication, it cannot avoid examining its own truth-telling. Setting itself apart from the four studies examined in Chapter I as projects of clarification which are also projects of simplification and even oversimplification, it must itself be a project of *obfuscation* (if this term can be somewhat reformed or refined) which is also a project of complication and even over-complication. But to say that it sets itself apart is already misleading because there is not an opposition between projects of obfuscation and projects of clarification but rather a profoundly ramifying difference. Just as the latter are dedicated to being comprehensive and therefore complex or complicated in their striving for ultimate clarity (even though this striving for clarity is itself founded upon some simplification), so the former are dedicated to being clear in their obscurity or, to put it less paradoxically, in their striving for greater comprehensiveness.

The first question may very well be then: what is the nature of the present study insofar as it is possible for it to catch sight of itself and insofar as it is distinguishable from the object of its study or at least one of these objects, namely, the deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur? Perhaps what should first be mentioned is that, even though it is a common enough practise, the present study does not wish to identify itself with an authorial "I." Because this "I" can easily become an additional question or problem in the context of complication and even over-complication, such a move would place an insufferable burden on the present study which, for the sake of convenience, shall from now on call itself PS. To keep this "I" out of sight then is a simplifying move but one which cannot reduce the object of study insofar as the latter, as complication and over-complication, is irreducible. On the other hand, insofar as the object of study is the deep

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the present study, the word "project," insofar as it refers to Derrida's and Ricoeur's works, refers only to the former's "La mythologie blanche" and "Le retrait de la métaphore" and the latter's *La métaphore vive*. Although its signification could be extended to encompass their works as a whole, a matching ethico-epistemological analysis would not only be over-complicated *in extremis*, but unbearably long and repetitive. (Perhaps this is how some view Derrida's lifework.)

disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur, this simplifying move keeps it from being driven offstage by the problematic of the "I."

The second important consideration is that, as already suggested in the Introduction, PS is closer to Derrida's project than Ricoeur's. A number of additional considerations follow from this which, if the worst sort of confusion is to be avoided, are equally important to bring out and register. Given the context of over-complication, to say "worst sort of confusion" may be suspect. In truth, this notion cannot be entirely registered at the epistemological or theoretical level, but also must be registered at the ethical or practical level. This is to say that what is to be avoided as the worst sort of confusion refers to PS's own commitment to truth-telling and, more particularly, to the fact that truth-telling always runs the risk of inducing a miscarriage of itself, of delivering a fatal blow to what it anticipates in the way of conveying itself to others and in the way of garnering a certain amount of interest and attention. It is therefore incumbent upon PS to make such points as the following as clear as possible: that, although it is more indebted to Derrida's project than to Ricoeur's, this indebtedness is not meant to operate as the basis on which to repudiate Ricoeur's project or to assimilate it to Derrida's except in a qualified sense. A certain amount of assimilation of one to the other is unavoidable (and, for that matter, a certain amount of repudiation) because PS's commitment to truth-telling is, like Derrida's, a project of complication and even over-complication, a project of "ultimate" comprehensiveness and obfuscation.

A further consideration which comes from taking seriously the fact that PS lines up with Derrida's project is that it is inevitably a *parti pris*. While in most contexts of philosophical truth-telling such a situation would be intolerable or equivalent to bad faith, it is not possible in the present context to think that a commitment to truth-telling could be other than a *parti pris*. Philosophy itself as project of clarification which is also, as it is been often called, metaphysics has its presuppositions not simply in place as reasons or arguments but also has them *kept* in place – guarded and protected – as tradition, institution, ideal, order, control, and so on. At the same time, the commitment to philosophical truth-telling which admits that it is a *parti pris* can never be – or, at least, *should* never be – simply a licencing of itself, a dismissal of any attempt to find justification for itself, or, on the other side of the ledger, a non-resistance to itself, an unwillingness to call itself into question.

Out of this last point springs another one, namely, that PS suffers from its own internal dilemma which is the justifying of itself while calling itself into question. Part of its justification as the complication and even over-complication of truth-telling can only come precisely from this calling itself

into question but, on the other hand, the latter cannot escape being, in any final accounting, something of an empty gesture or else a highly circumscribed move. For example, if it is stated that PS's meta-reading of Lawlor's reading in Chapter I likely inflects these readings such that the threat which Derrida's project poses to Ricoeur's is highlighted, there is perhaps here the raising of a doubt about the case PS is making for a deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur but, on the other hand, not one which can do away with the conviction that no interpretation is possible without some sort of inflection.

The same sort of limited move or gesture is at work if PS takes another example such as its reading of Stellardi's study. Describing it as a project of clarification is somewhat risky since it bears signs of being a complication and even over-complication of truth-telling. For one thing, this study makes a fairly consistent effort to catch sight of itself as project which must necessarily fall short, which is more concerned with raising questions and providing provisional answers than arriving at some definite conclusion. In addition, it reveals a certain ethical side to itself, a certain performative side to its truth-telling, a certain setting of itself apart from philosophy's customary self-assuredness and systematisation. Consideration of these matters is no doubt threatening to PS's distinction between clarification and obfuscation and it seems that, at least in this context, the former is being collapsed into the latter. Indeed, there is much in Stellardi's project which is confusing or conflated and, if the word *obfuscate* is taken in the usual sense of obscuring matters unnecessarily, then perhaps, despite whatever merits it may have, this project is more deserving of being called obfuscating than Derrida's.

Without reproducing the arguments in favour of viewing Stellardi's project as an attempt to clarify the whole of philosophy even while obscuring it, it must be admitted that, for the very reason that it is invested with these contrary aims or intentions, it is not so far removed from PS. On the other hand, Stellardi does not catch sight of this internal conflict or division or at least does not thematise it. In this way, it is still very much in line with the norms of philosophical truth-telling. Ricoeur, as will be seen in Chapters III and IV, is particularly concerned about intention (and, more precisely, the *form* of intention) in philosophical or speculative discourse and, although he allows for background intentions, gives no indication that he thinks that they should be thematised or at least thematised as the performative side of truth-telling inseparable from the constative side. The simplifying or reducing of philosophical intention is a major concern of PS, not only with respect to analysing Ricoeur's project, but also Derrida's.

PS's dilemma of being committed both to justifying and not justifying itself may also be expressed as the imperative of analysis which, in the

present context, is to resist as much as possible being polemical and tilting at Ricoeur. The fact that this polemic is irreducibly built into the analysis should not be held against it or at least should not be separated from another fact, namely, that, from the point of view of the analysis itself, the polemical stretches all the way down to presuppositions. Given this state of affairs, the only way to offset the deeply polemical nature of PS is to make Ricoeur appear more favourable and Derrida less favourable than might otherwise be the case. But with respect to Derrida, there is the problem that, while PS must begin its analysis with "La mythologie blanche," it is "Le retrait de la métaphore" which lends itself most easily to an examination of the play or conflict of philosophical intentions. Although in all instances the examination of this play or conflict is largely a matter of interpretation and guesswork, of accumulating a lot of circumstantial evidence which is never entirely certain, "La mythologie blanche" still resists this procedure or, more precisely, it betrays few signs of what is really needed to be rung in right now, that is, few signs of having an internal dilemma or at least one which is not already incorporated into its own analysis.

In order to deal with this problem of finding a more observable dilemma in Derrida's project, it is not necessary to go outside the deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur, but only to examine it briefly in another setting and with Derrida the point at issue and Ricoeur in the background. Given the inbuilt prejudice of PS, the latter would inevitably come under fire if his project were exposed and examined at this early stage. Of course, when Ricoeur's commitment to truth-telling is analysed in Chapter III and Chapter IV (and even at the end of Chapter V) as the indirect and direct encounters with Derrida's project, it will not be spared coming under fire, but it is to be hoped that, by that time, such an expression will have a new meaning. The best that can be said for the time being is that, on the basis of viewing philosophical discourse as ethico-epistemological dynamic, PS is in no position to claim that Ricoeur should be arguing or doing philosophy differently.

## **2.1. Derrida "versus" Ricoeur at the Montreal Conference on Communication (1971)**

A few months before "La mythologie blanche" was published in 1971, Derrida and Ricoeur presented exposés at the same conference and participated in a roundtable discussion which followed and which was called "Philosophie et communication."<sup>2</sup> Since the illocutionary and perlocutionary

---

<sup>2</sup> "Philosophie et communication," *La Communication: Actes du XVe congrès de l'association des sociétés de philosophie de langue française: Tome I* (Montréal: Montmorency, 1971), 393-431. Ricoeur's exposé at this conference, "Discours et communication," is to be found

effects of Derrida's exposé can be considered part of the complication and even over-complication of truth-telling, this roundtable discussion is particularly helpful at this juncture. But first it is necessary to take a brief look at Derrida's exposé, "Signature, événement, contexte."<sup>3</sup> In the opening paragraph, Derrida examines the various significations of the word "communication" in such a way that the *concept* of communication is destabilized and rendered uncertain.

Est-il assuré qu'au mot de *communication* corresponde un concept unique, univoque, rigoureusement maîtrisable et transmissible: communicable? Selon une étrange figure du discours, on doit donc se demander d'abord si le mot ou le signifiant « communication » communique un contenu déterminé, un sens identifiable, une valeur descriptible. Mais pour articuler et proposer cette question, il a déjà fallu que j'anticipe sur le sens du mot *communication*: j'ai dû prédéterminer la communication comme le véhicule, le transport ou le lieu de passage d'un sens et d'un sens *un*. Si *communication* avait plusieurs sens et si telle pluralité ne se lassait pas réduire, il ne serait pas d'emblée justifié de définir *la* communication comme la transmission d'un sens, à supposer même que nous soyons en état de nous entendre sur chacun de ses mots (transmission, sens, etc.). Or le mot *communication*, que rien ne nous autorise initialement à négliger en tant que mot et à appauvrir en tant que mot polysémique, ouvre un champ sémantique qui précisément ne se limite pas à la sémantique, à la sémiotique, encore moins à la linguistique (*SEC*, 49).

Although Derrida is deeply concerned with communication and the many subtle aspects of this subject, his focus on a particular task, the analysis of the concept-term, makes it impossible for him not use words or expressions which themselves go unquestioned and yet which may communicate a great deal. The best examples of such words or expressions are the following: "*il ne serait pas d'emblée justifié de*" and "*rien ne nous autorise initialement à négliger.*" Presumably the "*nous*" here refers both to Derrida and the philosophical community which then are said to be not initially justified or authorized in reducing the polysemy of communication and attributing to this

---

on pages 23-48 of *La Communication*.

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Derrida, "Signature, événement, contexte," *La Communication*, 49-76. Also to be found in *Marges de la Philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), 365-393.

word a single sense. It seems that what Derrida appeals to as proper justification and authorization is a certain philosophical duty or task of which asking the most searching and penetrating questions is the first order of business. At the same time, it should be noted that, if these questions end up disabling the concept of communication and, what likely would follow, communication in the philosophical community, it is not clear how this first order of business, if it is truly meant to be taken as a universal duty or responsibility, could be other than the *only* order of business.

If asking the most searching and penetrating questions is disruptive of and even dangerous to philosophy, then the justificatory role of this duty or responsibility is rendered uncertain. The "*nous*" which Derrida uses in the above passage cannot then be inclusive of the philosophical community or at least it can only be inclusive of it in a formal, polite, or perfunctory way. Similarly, the demands of protocol and propriety are likely determinant in his description of the destabilizing inquiry into communication insofar as he suggests that this inquiry is a preliminary step on the way to some conception or comprehension more concrete, stable, constructive, and so on. The tension between the opposing aims of engaging the philosophical community and somehow keeping at a distance from it lead to, so it seems, some dissimulation or commitment of a dubious sort, itself not necessarily intended or reflected upon.

What can only be teased out of Derrida's exposé and called the tension between two opposing aims or intentions is, by comparison, legible in the transcript of the roundtable discussion. This is as much to say that, on the basis of noting the various responses to Derrida's exposé and his subsequent explanations, arguments, and commentary, the two poles of keeping at a distance from the philosophical community and engaging it are visible. First of all, there is considerable resistance to certain key notions which, when Derrida goes further into his exposé, are articulated at great length. While Derrida himself carefully pitches these notions (e.g., *écriture* and *itérabilité*)<sup>4</sup> at the level of, to borrow a term from "Le retrait de la métaphore," quasi-metaphoricity, a number of his questioners continually refer them – as well as their understanding of them – either to, on the one hand, the semiotic or semantic, or, on the other hand, the empirical. Since their arguments and objections in this area go in the direction of drawing these notions back into metaphysics, they represent a certain denial of Derrida's project in the sense of the ongoing possibility of its being shunned or condemned. This in turn means that they also represent, given his efforts to counteract this threat,

---

<sup>4</sup> *Itérabilité* is repetition of any mark, trace, or sign which is also its differentiation. *Écriture* is an example of Derrida's use of *paleonymy* which, as he describes it, is an inverting of the traditional hierarchy of concepts – in this case writing and speech – in order to generalize the characteristics of the first such that it encompasses the second.

both his disengagement from the philosophical community and his attachment to it.

But there is a way in which the roundtable discussion reflects more dramatically Derrida's divided loyalty to philosophy and non-philosophy. There is, first of all, the fact that one or more participants of the roundtable discussion show signs of being annoyed with him. The clearest sign of annoyance comes early in the discussion when the president, René Schaerer, addresses Roland Paul Bloom who, like Derrida and Ricoeur, earlier delivered a paper on philosophy and communication.<sup>5</sup> Schaerer asks Bloom whether he would like to respond to the first question asked which, due to its sparking a rather lengthy debate between Derrida and Ricoeur, seems to have been forgotten by him. In lieu of responding to this question, Bloom turns to Derrida and complains about the latter's setting himself apart from other philosophers.

Je ne sais pas si je répondrai à la question, mais je veux discuter un peu avec M. Derrida. Il me semble que vous vous placez un peu contre tous les autres philosophes dont il a été question aujourd'hui, que ce soit Levinas ou Strawson ou Searle. Ils veulent tous, je crois, rester en contact avec le monde du sens commun et il me semble que dans votre théorie sémiotique, ce que vous reproche d'ailleurs, je crois, M. Ricoeur,<sup>6</sup> vous réduisez, vous faites disparaître ce monde que nous tous nous acceptons, à partir duquel nous vivons (*PC*, 404).

A couple of other signs of alienation or antipathy are one person's remark that the notion of *itérabilité* induces in him a certain malaise and another's remark that Derrida's manner or conduct seems to indicate that he is irritated about something. Of course, these last two signs mean little by

---

<sup>5</sup> Roland Paul Blum, "La perception d'autrui," *La Communication*, 77-95.

<sup>6</sup> In the roundtable discussion, Ricoeur identifies Derrida's *écriture* with what he calls interchangeably in his exposé, semiology and semiotics.

Effectivement, il y a dans la discursivité tous les traits que vous avez reconnus à l'écriture mais que vous êtes obligé de reporter sur l'écriture parce que, à mon sens, vous êtes resté dans une sémiologie et jamais dans une sémantique, c'est-à-dire, dans une sémiologie où vous vous demandez quelles sont les conditions du signe; alors, comme elles ne sont pas satisfaisantes dans l'ordre phonique, il faut les chercher dans un autre ordre qui est alors la trace, la distanciation, l'espacement, etc. Mais moi je dis ... parce que justement il y a une grande lacune dans toute votre entreprise, qu'il n'y a pas là une théorie du sens (*PC*, 398).

themselves but if read in the context of much more violent attacks on Derrida and deconstruction over the years, then they take on an added significance. In any event, what is more important here is that, although Derrida's work generates a certain amount of dislike, scorn, and indifference, it cannot be separated from what he purposes or intends philosophically and yet, at the same time, neither can it be separated from his ongoing efforts to win respect and be part of the community. But the question then is: if these efforts are one with (besides his scholarly competence) a certain amount of accommodation, civility, and agreeability, how can this agreeability not always be a threat to his maintaining a certain distance? Moreover, how can this threat to his maintaining distance not also be a threat to, for example, his deconstructive analysis of communication?

In order for his agreeability to be a threat to his deconstructive analysis, this threat need not take the form of suggesting that the latter is inherently wrong, but only the form of suggesting that it is inherently wrong *for philosophy*. To this degree or in this way, Derrida moves against his own analysis, but this "moving against" cannot be contradiction in the strictest sense but only temporary abandonment. Speaking from inside his analysis, he necessarily views theories of communication, discourse, meaning, and so on as possibilities for philosophy and, at the same time, what is ultimately *impossible* for philosophy. But when he is forced to step outside his analysis in a debate or, more properly, a polemic and become agreeable (for polemics are not simply a matter of disagreement) to the point of, as he does in the roundtable discussion, throwing his lot in with theory-builders or, more precisely, with Ricoeur as theory-builder,<sup>7</sup> then his simultaneous defence of his analysis becomes fraudulent in the sense of being an obstruction or dead end which refuses to acknowledge itself as such.

On more than one occasion in the roundtable discussion, Ricoeur chides Derrida for, while extending his analysis of communication to writing and speaking, not having in place a theory of discourse. In response to this, Derrida claims that a theory of discourse requires a preliminary theory which

---

<sup>7</sup> Derrida makes an effort to close the gap between Ricoeur and him on more than one occasion in the roundtable discussion. Perhaps the most striking example of his agreeability is the following:

Un point pour dire que sur la tâche d'une théorie spécifique du discours je suis tout à fait d'accord avec vous, même si l'horizon ou les fondements de cette tâche peuvent être conçus différemment. Je suis tout à fait d'accord qu'il faut élaborer une théorie spécifique du discours. Je suis, d'autre part, tout à fait d'accord, et je l'ai marqué au passage ce matin, sur la nécessité de critiquer dans ce domaine un certain impérialisme de la linguistique et je dis aussi, et là je suis d'accord avec vous, que l'intérêt de la théorie d'Austin me paraissait résider en ce point; donc tout à fait d'accord là aussi (PC, 404).

he calls a theory of the event<sup>8</sup> and which he considers to be, on the one hand, systematically overlooked by philosophers and, on the other hand, given all that he argues against the singularity of the semiotic or semantic occurrence,<sup>9</sup> perhaps not possible. The status of this “perhaps” is significant insofar as, if it were left out by Derrida, it would make his observation about a theory of the event’s being systematically overlooked seem, instead of being a reprimand of sorts, either trite or else a wholesale condemnation of philosophy. Accordingly, it seems that this “perhaps” is a vital concession to philosophy which, even though it dissolves in deconstruction’s area of greatest certainty, the condition of the impossibility of theory, is, as soon as Derrida’s project encounters the flesh-and-blood commitment to theoretical truth-telling, a *sine qua non*.<sup>10</sup>

---

8 “Simplement, ce qui m’a intéressé, de façon tout à fait préalable, à une théorie du discours qui en effet est nécessaire, ce qui m’a intéressé c’est de repérer tous les présupposés, disons très vite non-critiques, qui me paraissent retenir jusqu’à ici les tentatives de théorie du discours auxquelles on a pu assister aussi bien dans la linguistique que dans la philosophie. Ces présupposés, ce sont ceux que j’ai très schématiquement dessinés ce matin, à savoir, que quelque chose comme l’événement, par exemple, allait de soi, que nous savions, ce que c’était qu’un événement; or une théorie du discours suppose une théorie de l’événement . . .” (PC, 399)

9 An idea of how Derrida does away with the singular event or, what amounts to the same thing, self-presence can be obtained from the following remarks on the generalizing of *écriture*.

Avant de montrer plus précisément quelles conséquences découlent de ces traits nucléaires de toute écriture . . ., avant donc de proposer ces conséquences comme hypothèses de travail et de discussion, je voudrais montrer que les traits qu’on peut reconnaître dans le concept classique et étroitement défini d’écriture sont généralisable. Ils vaudraient non seulement pour tous les ordres de « signes » et pour tous les langages en général mais même, au-delà de la communication sémio-linguistique, pour tout le champ de ce que la philosophie appellerait l’expérience, voire l’expérience de l’être: la dite « présence » (SEC, 59).

10 Another dimension of the roundtable discussion which should be mentioned is the customary occultation of the ethical side of philosophical truth-telling. Despite their differences over how the subject of communication should be handled, both Derrida and Ricoeur respond to questions about the relation of the ethical to communication by stressing its importance and at the same time pleading that they cannot deal with it.

**Derrida:** “La dernière partie de votre question concerne l’éthique. C’est une question importante et difficile. Il est certain que tous ce que j’ai proposé ce matin ou toutes les implications de ce que j’ai proposé ce matin n’ouvrent pas immédiatement sur la possibilité d’une éthique et qu’on peut même considérer que c’est menaçant pour une éthique. Un certain type d’analyse est toujours dangereux

## 2.2. Metaphor – in the Philosophical Text

The commitment to philosophical truth-telling is the commitment to tell the truth *well* which is always the possibility of not telling it well. While clarification is only concerned with the latter insofar as it can be avoided or effaced, obfuscation must in some way register it. Not that this registering is any less the struggle to perform well, but that it is also the struggle to reduce the possibility of effacing this struggle. The first major difficulty which confronts PS in its analysis of “La mythologie blanche” is that it must be necessarily double-focussed. The second major difficulty which confronts it is that it must be necessarily reductive. To bring these two difficulties together is to say that both the form and content of Derrida’s essay are over-complicated and that using the terms *form* and *content* is a provisional move which allows the first major difficulty to be quickly identified. It allows PS to say that the second major difficulty, the one of being necessarily reductive, is largely confined to the task of analysing the contents of Derrida’s essay. On the other hand, being necessarily reductive or simplifying in this area is inseparable from complicating it in another area which is the task of analysing the form of Derrida’s essay.

The third major difficulty confronting PS is that, although committed to analysing both Derrida’s and Ricoeur’s discourses as ethico-epistemological dynamics, the ethical inevitably slides off into the practical, performative, or rhetorical as well as the non-ethical and the unethical. If philosophical truth-telling is essentially conflictual and full of strategies, ruses, and devices, such a state of affairs is not so surprising. Although the dominant intention of philosophical truth-telling is its very commitment to truth which itself is

---

pour l’éthique et réciproquement. Par conséquent, je crois qu’une théorie de l’éthique, de la spécificité des actes éthiques, des intentions éthiques, des lois morales, etc., est indispensable, qu’elle est à constituer. Mais on ne pourra pas le faire rigoureusement ou sans que l’éthique ne soit une sorte de violence doctrinaire ou intéressé, si on n’a pas préalablement analysé, élaboré tous les préalables historico-transcendants de la forme de la question éthique, de la motivation de l’éthique, etc.” (PC, 426).

**Ricoeur:** “Et comme tous les actes sont produits dans un milieu de culture, nous ne sommes pas dans un milieu éthique neutre et toutes les façons de se commettre sont marquées par des structures éthiques antérieures. Nous ne connaissons pas un monde éthiquement neutre; par exemple, il y aura peut-être un monde où il sera permis de tuer, mais il y aura autre chose qui ne sera pas permis. Mais ce que je maintiens c’est que, si c’est le point d’appui d’une structure éthique éventuelle, ce n’est pas un phénomène éthique comme tel, c’est un acte par lequel le sujet s’implique, c’est la relation du locuteur dans l’élocution. Cette relation est absolument fondamentale” (PC, 412).

necessarily ethical, this dominant intention does not rule out other intentions or a play or conflict of intentions or, for that matter, intentions which hardly register as intentions. With respect to this last point, the analysis which fleshes out these subordinate or dominated intentions always runs the risk of fleshing them out too much and even to the point that they loom larger than the dominant intention. A certain sensibility is therefore required which PS is now trying to evoke and which may need to be *re-evoked* periodically.

The fourth major difficulty confronting PS is to make the case that Derrida's project indirectly or apart from any debate or polemic per se encounters Ricoeur's project. Since making this case rests upon an accumulation of evidence stretching to Chapter V such that the best view of Chapter II is likely retrospective, to sift through all this evidence perhaps requires the patience of a jurist at an interminable trial. What is being attempted over a long course and in various ways is to catch sight of the ethical as one side of the philosophical difference between Derrida and Ricoeur which is both part of and not part of the epistemological side.

One way to describe to Derrida's task in "La mythologie blanche" is to say that it calls a whole discursive continuity or, for that matter, community – the notion, idea, concept, definition, theory, conception, use, etc. of metaphor – into question. Such a task likely renders his own discourse both precarious and presumptuous. Precarious in the sense that, while questioning the validity of the definition of metaphor, Derrida cannot himself dispense with at least something like a definition of it. Presumptuous in the sense that, in trying to determine the validity which the philosophical and rhetorical tradition has bestowed on a certain conception of metaphor, he works his way through all the resources of this tradition and exhausts them. Indeed, in his attempt to bring this conception of metaphor so fully into view that it ultimately disappears, Derrida is forced to take a precarious – one might even say a poetic or rhetorical – step beyond the tradition.

If "La mythologie blanche" may be considered to be both a modest and immodest undertaking, then the modest side of it would be its negative thesis which is that it is impossible to adequately (i.e., fully, conclusively, unequivocally, etc.) define and classify philosophical metaphor.<sup>11</sup> With

---

<sup>11</sup> In "Le retrait de la métaphore," Derrida, raises an objection to Ricoeur's claim that there is a thesis in "La mythologie blanche" and, moreover, one of dead metaphor.

Tous ces malentendus font système avec l'attribution à *La mythologie blanche* d'une thèse, et d'une thèse qui se confondrait avec la présupposition contre laquelle précisément je me suis acharné (*RM*, 73).

It is no doubt true that, if a thesis is a proposition wholly theoretical in intent and import, then there is no thesis in this essay. However, what *is* intended by Derrida is a proposition,

respect to the immodest side, there is what might be called the essay's anti-thesis. By opposing itself to the proposition: "*le sens visé à travers ces figures est une essence rigoureusement indépendante de ce qui la transporte,*" (273), this anti-thesis is the inverse of "*l'unique thèse de la philosophie, celle qui constitue le concept de métaphore, l'opposition du propre et du non-propre, de l'essence et de l'accident, de l'intuition et du discours, de la pensée et du langage, de l'intelligible et du sensible, etc.*" (273).<sup>12</sup> While the negative thesis and its limited focus on metaphor leads directly to the anti-thesis and its unlimited focus on philosophy, the former is, at least in a formal way, in control of the essay from beginning to end.<sup>13</sup>

The negative thesis of "La mythologie blanche" is modest in the sense that, practically speaking, philosophical resistance to it is nil. Derrida himself observes that there are few systematic studies of philosophical metaphor. While it is possible that such a paucity of work in the area implies an intentional oversight, it is also possible that it implies a lack of philosophical interest. From a purely formal standpoint then, this essay, first published in a literary journal (i.e., *Poétique* 5, 1971, 1-52) seems to address itself to the margins of philosophy.

The manner in which Derrida boards the subject of metaphor is surely not, in and of itself, right or wrong because philosophy holds open – is supposed to hold open – the possibility of investigating a matter in all ways. Ricoeur himself, in his exposé, "Discours et communication,"<sup>14</sup> declares that "*il n'y a pas de tabous en philosophie . . .*" (DC, 26). At first glance, it seems difficult to find anything in this declaration which is modest or which would not render it more appropriate to be spoken, with all due respect to Ricoeur, by Derrida.<sup>15</sup> But, apart from this consideration, philosophy rarely shows itself to be so adventurous as to seriously put itself at risk and, on the contrary, habitually keeps within certain recognized limits. If this keeping

---

namely, "reconnaître en son principe la condition d'impossibilité d'un tel projet (MB, 261).

12 All page numbers of cited passages in section 2.2. and the following sections of this chapter refer to Derrida's "La mythologie blanche" unless otherwise indicated.

13 This formal control of the essay by the negative thesis is evidenced, for example, at the beginning of the fifth and final section. After having analysed in the two preceding sections the traditional conception of metaphor from Aristotle to Hegel and now coming to a consideration of a contemporary epistemologist, Gaston Bachelard, Derrida explicitly takes up once again – and in a manner similar to the first and second sections (but now looking at scientific metaphor) – the issue of a possible philosophical metaphoric.

14 See footnote 2 on page 72.

15 S. H. Clark thinks differently. After praising Ricoeur as one who carries forward "the Socratic inheritance in its most positive form" and shortly before comparing him to such "structuralist" thinkers as Foucault, Lacan, and Derrida, Clark states: "And in this continuous self-criticism Ricoeur's thought is more genuinely exploratory than many apparently more radical interventions" (PR, 5).

within limits is really more the prudence of philosophy than its reckless audacity, then, insofar as Derrida's project is philosophical and not entirely disposed to endangering itself, there should be something of this prudence in it.

To demonstrate that Derrida's project is adventurous (which may be considered by many to be ethically neutral or even unethical) is less difficult than to demonstrate that its immodesty, imprudence, or presumptuousness is harnessed to the opposite.

La métaphore *dans* le texte philosophique. Assuré d'entendre chaque mot de cet énoncé, se précipitant à comprendre — à inscrire — une figure dans le volume capable de philosophie, on pourrait s'apprêter à traiter d'une question particulière: y a-t-il de la métaphore dans le texte philosophique? sous quelle forme? jusqu'à quel point? est-ce essentiel? accidentel? etc. L'assurance est vite emportée (249).

Here there is, as is in his exposé, "Signature, événement, contexte," an indirect recognition and even an implicit admonishment of a common practice in philosophy. This practice is one of treating well-handled terms as if their meanings were already well established and secure. Derrida no doubt finds something imprudent in this practice and perhaps even presumptuous and precipitate. Something also perhaps unbecoming to philosophy insofar as it registers a neglect, calculated or otherwise. In any event, it is clear that he wants to strike out on a different path and, at least on this particular point, be more modest and reserved. "*L'assurance est vite emportée*" (249).

On the other hand, the particular question he raises — *y a-t-il de la métaphore dans le texte philosophique?* — is probably one which has never been asked by either philosophy or rhetoric. It therefore imposes itself straight off as something upstart and upsetting. Instead of doing the usual thing which is to ask the question, what is philosophical metaphor?, Derrida asks, is there philosophical metaphor? All previous studies no doubt have assumed it as object insofar as they have assumed the reasonably clear and straightforward concept of metaphor. Derrida's essay, on the other hand, leaves little doubt that investigating this concept — and investigating it scrupulously — is precisely what should be attended to first. By forcing on the philosophical scene such a scrupulous investigation, "La mythologie blanche" implicitly censures philosophy for a certain neglect of its investigative responsibilities.

But the reserve and caution of Derrida in the face of the presumptuousness of the tradition ends up becoming a certain presumption

itself, namely, the one of taking on the whole tradition. A double dilemma of sorts is registered here. First of all, there is the dilemma of being committed to a proper investigation of this subject only in order to arrive at, if not its dissolution, then a certain limited or equivocal demand for it. Secondly, there is the dilemma of being committed to a proper way of doing philosophy only in order to call the proper way into question. This irreducible dilemma afflicting Derrida's project is one with its being both philosophical and anti-philosophical.

### 2.3. "Improper" Argument and Analysis

Derrida's point of entry leads to a question which is simple and yet infinitely complex. Insofar as this question cannot be overlooked or dismissed by philosophy, it forces itself on the scene as an epistemological demand, duty, task, etc. The question, *Y a-t-il de la métaphore dans le texte philosophique?*, is also the question, If there is metaphor in the philosophical text, how does it come to be known and determined? As the commitment to tell the truth about metaphor, Derrida's inquiry must be responsive to these questions and be responsible before them. With such a binding commitment, there can be no stopping short of the difficulties raised by them and it may be said in all fairness that this fundamental part of Derrida's commitment to tell the truth about philosophical metaphor is, first, the inescapably "adventurous" side of it and, secondly, its ethical dimension. There can be neither a simple response nor an avoidance of how others – a few others at least – have answered or not answered the above questions. Or, to put it another way, Derrida cannot avoid examining how the whole tradition has already given, as if by default, an affirmative answer to the question.

As mentioned earlier, Derrida notes (this comes when he discusses the standard way of classifying metaphor in the philosophical text, namely, by its biological, organic, mechanical, historical, economic site of origin) that there are few systematic studies of philosophical metaphor. "*Cette classification, qui suppose un indigénat et une migration, est couramment adoptée par ceux, il ne sont pas nombreux, qui ont étudié la métaphorique d'un philosophe ou d'un corpus singulier*" (262). Though he does not mention it, there must be even fewer studies or none which deal with it as problem or issue. In order to do precisely this, Derrida begins by examining a work which at least resembles such a study. Of course, its only resembling such a study – *perhaps its not even being a study* – is already reason to raise some suspicion against it.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Generally speaking, there is no reason to consider this study in Anatole France's *Le jardin d'Épicure* so negatively. But what seems necessary to take into consideration as part of an analysis which is not excluding any traits or traces of the ethical is that this study probably

The study in question is a fictitious dialogue in Anatole France's *Le jardin d'Épicure*. Why Derrida would begin his inquiry into metaphor with a work which many would consider to be literary rather than philosophical is, apart from all general considerations about Derrida's objectives or intentions, still a question in the stricter or narrower sense. In this fictitious dialogue, Polyphile addresses another character, Ariste, and argues that all metaphysical concepts are derived directly from metaphors. However, he does not primarily have in mind poetic metaphors but those which metaphysics itself produces and puts to use. His thesis is that all metaphysical concepts are surreptitious transfers of meaning and reference from nature to a fictitious upper realm. According to Polyphile, it is essentially the etymological study of metaphysical concepts which reveals the true physical or natural origins. Metaphysics constitutes itself by conveniently forgetting its figurative aspect and metaphorical history, its connection to the physical world, and its converting its metaphors into literal terms referring to nothing.

Polyphile compares the metaphorical operation of metaphysics to the grinding and polishing of coins. This operation is one of effacing the exergue, the figurehead and inscription of these coins such that they are converted into pure metal. The polished coins, a sort of absolute and universal currency, represent the nature of metaphysical concepts. Derrida observes that the comparison of philosophical metaphors to coins which are polished down by much handling crops up on at least a few occasions throughout the tradition. The second figure which Polyphile employs is that of the palimpsest. According to Polyphile, the writing in dark ink on the palimpsest is like the work of metaphysics. Underneath it and concealed by it is the writing in white ink which is likened to metaphysics' origins. Derrida comments:

La métaphysique – mythologie blanche qui rassemble et réfléchit la culture de l'Occident: l'homme blanc prend sa propre mythologie, l'indo-européenne, son *logos*, c'est-à-dire le *mythos* de son idiome, pour la forme universelle de ce qu'il doit vouloir encore appeler la Raison (254).

Two brief points are now in order: first, the analysis which follows Derrida's examination of the Polyphile-Ariste dialogue takes in works, principally Aristotle's, whose philosophical status is beyond doubt; secondly, the syntactic and semiotic dimension of language soon arises in Derrida's inquiry

---

has professional opinion against it. Along with its being a dialogue and more or less out of fashion as philosophy, the author is no doubt considered to be, first and foremost, a novelist, satirist, and social commentator.

and, in some respects, operates as a critique of Polyphile's position. "*Dans cette critique [avancée par Polyphile] du langage philosophique, s'intéresser à la métaphore – cette figure particulière – , c'est donc un parti pris symboliste*" (255). Derrida describes Polyphile's "symbolist" position as being, despite his anti-metaphysical stance, in conformity with the traditional conception of metaphor. Just as it has been since Aristotle, metaphor is viewed by Polyphile as being wholly a diachronic and semantic operation. This conception, extremely common and historically stable, equates metaphor with the perception of resemblance. "*La métaphore a toujours été définie comme le trope de la ressemblance . . .*" (255). As such, it conceals the synchronic, syntactic, and semiotic dimension of language.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the justification which he provides for disinterring the example of *usure* in *Le jardin d'Épicure*, Derrida's early focus on it still might be suspect. Polyphile's position, although formally rejected by Derrida, is cited at great length. Furthermore, the majority of Derrida's observations tend to be non-critical. It seems that what is disinterred here, if destined to be re-buried, is first to be carefully looked over.

Il va de soi que la question de la métaphore, telle que nous la répétons ici, loin d'appartenir à cette problématique et d'en partager les présuppositions, devrait au contraire les délimiter. Il ne s'agit pas, cependant, de consolider par symétrie ce que Polyphile choisi comme cible; plutôt de déconstruire les schèmes métaphysiques et rhétoriques qui sont à l'oeuvre dans sa critique, non pour les rejeter et les mettre au rebut mais pour les réinscrire autrement et surtout pour commencer à identifier le terrain historico-problématique sur lequel on a pu demander systématiquement à la philosophie les titres métaphoriques de ses concepts (256).

To arrive at a different understanding of philosophical metaphor – one which

17 Derrida's general view of the traditional conception of metaphor identifies the semiotic with the linguistic level below the noun or, more precisely, below the *nominalizable*. This is to identify the semiotic with the linguistic level even below – on those rare occasions when they are converted into nouns – such syntactical units as prepositions, conjunctions, and articles. Since metaphor as a kind of naming is unquestionably at the heart of the traditional conception, Derrida labels this conception semantic. On the other hand, Ricoeur's general view of the traditional or rhetorical conception of metaphor puts the semiotic on the level not only of the preposition, syllable, letter, etc., *but also the word or noun*. Ricoeur therefore views the traditional conception of metaphor as semantic only insofar as it indicates, despite its reliance on semiotic theory which he identifies with the theory of substitution and single-word trope, that metaphor is not primarily denomination but predication (i.e., that the word or noun receives its meaning from the sentence).

is neither a defence nor a dismissal of Polyphile's position – is what Derrida lays out. But at the same time there is of course a certain critique of this position in that it grounds itself in metaphysics while being anti-metaphysical. In order to characterize metaphysics as transfer of meaning and reference from one realm to another, Polyphile must rely himself on such oppositions as proper/improper, sensible/intelligible, and natural/artificial.

On the other hand, Polyphile brings into view the philosophical concept as heterogeneity, as impurity, as what goes largely unrecognized by the philosophical community and which translates into, not surprisingly, a longstanding equivocation. Specifically, the latter is that, although philosophical metaphor is presumably effaced by the philosophical concept which replaces it, it still manages to show its face.

L'exergue effacé, comment déchiffrer la figure, singulièrement la métaphore dans le texte philosophique? On n'a jamais répondu à cette question par un traité systématique et cela n'est sans doute pas insignifiant (261).

This trace or vestige of something essentially foreign to the philosophical concept is neither that to which the concept is reducible nor what is reducible to the concept. To investigate this sensitive area between, on the one hand, the philosophical imperative which speaks and wants to speak transparently through the concept and, on the other hand, the figurative or foreign element which inhabits this concept and ignores this imperative is what leads Derrida to ask such questions as the following.

Comment rendre *sensible* [la métaphore philosophique], sinon par métaphore? ici le mot *usure*. On ne peut en effet accéder à l'*usure* d'un phénomène linguistique sans lui donner quelque représentation figurée. Que pourrait être l'*usure proprement dite* d'un mot, d'un énoncé, d'une signification, d'un texte? (249).

In order to tell the truth about philosophical metaphor, both the essentially equivocal nature of it and the essentially equivocal nature of the traditional conception of it must be explored. Being itself a philosophical text, "La mythologie blanche" is not immune from equivocation and separate from what it inquires into. Rather than pass frivolously over these matters (here again, the adventurous and even dangerous side of truth-telling is revealed), Derrida makes them an indispensable part of his inquiry.

In order to deal with the figurative life of the concept as a question for philosophy, Derrida must challenge the traditional way of treating this figurative life of the concept as past life only. He must find signs of the present figurative life of the concept which takes his inquiry beyond being merely an etymological study and makes it a sort of self-study which is also a demonstration of this figurative life. It is to make his inquiry both the work of analysis which uncovers this life and the rhetorical play which strangely subverts and supplements the analysis. Given the complicated and even over-complicated nature of metaphor, what is required is not only the constative but the performative side of language. Derrida must not only make the problem of philosophical metaphor sensible in the way of making sense of the matter, but also in the way of putting the matter before the senses.

In order to demonstrate philosophical metaphor both theoretically and practically or constatively and performatively, Derrida creates something like a philosophical metaphor which is also something like its impossibility. Insofar as *usure* represents figurative wearing away, erosion, loss, etc., it is not only a metaphor but a metaphor of philosophical metaphor. On the other hand, *usure* operates not only as philosophical metaphor, but as philosophical concept. As concept it has an additional figurative aspect and signification which is *usure* as usury or semantic gain and which corresponds to the transition from metaphor to philosophical concept. The reason for this homonymic or equivocal deployment of *usure* is Derrida's attempting to capture, besides the more or less negative signification of philosophical metaphor, its positive signification. Now insofar as *usure* becomes this complicated figure-concept and succeeds as a technical term in Derrida's inquiry, it does a strange thing: it tends to escape its own meaning. This is to say that *usure* itself is not an example or illustration of figurative effacement and conceptual gain, but rather an example of conceptual gain *and* figurative gain. This figurative gain comes with its signification as usury or semantic profit and is the correspondingly sensible or physical aspect of this particular signification.

*Usure* is at the same time not only a figure of conceptual gain, but an example or illustration of conceptual *loss*. While it is true that *usure* as both usage (wearing away) and usury (gain) is a more comprehensive and, in this sense, adequate definition of philosophical metaphor as the traditional understanding of it, it is also true that it is at odds with the philosophical ideal of dissipating the equivocal. *Usure* then is in itself an example or illustration not of figurative erosion, but of conceptual erosion. Of course, by functioning as an illustration of this sort, *usure* is not only at odds with the philosophical ideal of dissipating the equivocal, but also the ideal of philosophy's being only an intended rejection, removal, or replacement of

concepts.

Despite the importance which Derrida assigns to usure as an operative concept for his historico-problematic inquiry and, furthermore, despite its prominence in the first section, it falls to the wayside by the time Derrida begins the second section, "Plus de métaphore." In a way which is similar to the role of the Polyphile-Ariste dialogue, usure serves as a provisional background whose main purpose is to bring into early view what is traditionally ignored or concealed. In providing this background, Derrida of course takes the risk of employing both a dubious work and a dubious concept. But there is certainly even more than this going on or at least more of this going on at a deeper and murkier level which also seems to be a matter of stretching investigative possibilities to the limit. Since *exergue* signifies both the epigraph at the beginning of a work and the inscription on a coin, the title of the first section likely refers to, on the one hand, the whole of the Polyphile-Ariste dialogue (by metaphorizing it as an extended epigraph) and, on the other hand, this dialogue's theme of polishing coins. In the case of the former, *exergue* would be signifying then what normally stands outside the work or, more precisely, what is not quite proper to it. At the same time, it signifies, as part of the contents of the first section, the erosion or effacement of philosophical metaphor. Given the overall thrust of Derrida's essay, it likely signifies as well the erosion or effacement of the *concept* of philosophical metaphor. This is to say that, given that the first section deals largely with usure and, furthermore, given that usure drops out of sight as figure and concept after this section, the title likely signifies the wearing away of the first section as extended epigraph and therefore the wearing away of its contents which is also the wearing away of a worn-out conception of metaphor. "Exergue," the title of the first section, likely signifies the usure of usure.<sup>18</sup>

---

18 In "Le retrait de la métaphore," Derrida is more explicit on the matter of this "worn-out" conception.

L'autre raison qui m'attiré vers l'expression « vieux sujet », cette une valeur d'épuisement apparent qu'il m'a paru nécessaire de reconnaître une fois de plus. Un vieux sujet, c'est un sujet apparemment épuisé, usé jusqu'à l'os ou jusqu'à la corde. Or cette valeur d'usure, et d'abord d'usage, cette valeur de valeur d'usage, d'utilité, de l'usage ou d'utilité comme être *utile* ou comme être *usuel*, bref tout ce système sémantique que j'abrègerai sous le titre de *l'us* aura joué un rôle déterminant dans la problématique traditionnelle de la métaphore. La métaphore n'est peut-être pas seulement un sujet *usé* jusqu'à l'os, c'est un sujet qui se sera entretenu d'un rapport essentiel à *l'us*, ou à *l'usance* (*l'usance* est un vieux mot français, un mot hors d'usage aujourd'hui dont la polysémie mériterait toute une analyse à elle seule). Or ce qui peut

## 2.4. "Proper" Argument and Analysis

Derrida articulates his negative thesis at the beginning of the second section, "Plus de métaphore."

Au lieu de risquer ici des prolégomènes à quelque métaphorique futur, essayons plutôt de reconnaître en son principe la *condition d'impossibilité* d'un tel projet. Sous sa forme la plus pauvre, la plus abstraite, la limite serait la suivante: la métaphore reste, par tous ses traits essentiels, un philosophème classique, un concept métaphysique. Elle est donc prise dans le champ qu'une métaphorologie générale de la philosophie voudrait dominer. Elle est issue d'un réseau de philosophèmes qui correspondent eux-mêmes à des tropes ou à des figures et qui en sont contemporains ou systématiquement solidaires. Cette strate de tropes « instituteurs », cette couche de « premiers » philosophèmes (à supposer que les guillemets soient ici une précaution suffisante) ne se domine pas. Elle ne se laisse pas dominer par elle-même, par ce qu'elle a elle-même engendré, fait pousser sur son sol, soutenu de son socle. Elle s'emporte donc chaque fois qu'un de ses produits - ici, le concept de métaphore - tente en vain de comprendre sous sa loi la totalité du champ auquel il appartient. Si l'on voulait concevoir et classer toutes les possibilités métaphoriques de la philosophie, une métaphore, au moins, resterait toujours exclue, hors du système: celle, au moins, sans laquelle ne se serait pas construit le concept de métaphore ou, pour syncoper toute une chaîne, la métaphore de métaphore. Cette métaphore en plus, restant hors du champ qu'elle permet de circonscrire, s'extrait ou s'abstrait encore ce champ, s'y soustrait donc comme métaphore en moins. En raison de ce que nous pourrions intituler, par économie, la supplémentarité tropique, le tour de plus devenant le tour de moins, la taxinomie ou l'histoire des métaphores philosophiques n'y retrouverait son compte. A l'interminable *déhiscence* du supplément (s'il est permis de jardiner encore un peu cette métaphore botanique)

---

paraître usé aujourd'hui, dans la métaphore, cette justement cette valeur d'*us* qui a déterminé toute sa problématique traditionnelle (RM, 66).

sera toujours refusé l'état ou le statut du complément. Le champ n'est jamais saturé ( 261).

It might be asked: if few have undertaken this project, what significance is there in claiming its impossibility? What does Derrida mean when he states: "*On n'a jamais répondu à cette question par un traité systématique et cela n'est sans doute pas insignifiant*" (261)? Perhaps what is implied here is that philosophy has good reason not to conduct such an investigation in order not to run into the deepest sort of difficulties. But perhaps what is also implied is that philosophy has no good reason, as philosophy (and hence there would be the added implication of wrongdoing), not to look into these difficulties. But apart from his choosing to accent the second way of determining what is right or wrong in this area, it might be thought that Derrida is caught in a performative contradiction and puts himself in the awkward position of undertaking what he declares to be impossible. Up to a point this is true, but since Derrida only speaks of the *condition* of the impossibility of such a study, the issue is not one of whether or not such a project can be carried out, but rather one of all such projects falling short.

As already mentioned, S. H. Clark holds that Ricoeur's project, one which he praises for its philosophical openness and self-criticism, is "the Socratic inheritance in its most positive form" (PR, 4). While it is possible that the same could not be said of Derrida's project (but for reasons other than any lack of openness and self-criticism), it is also possible that it is the Socratic inheritance in its most daring or courageous form. Like Socrates, Derrida does not avoid, in addition to the deepest sort of inquiries, the most formidable of opponents. The plea before the bench of philosophy that a general ignorance of philosophical metaphor (and hence the concept) should be recognized has at least some similarity to the plea before the bench of Athens that a general ignorance of justice, virtue, and piety should be acknowledged. Due to the systematic neglect of inquiring into this area, however, Derrida must begin not with what is most formidable but simply with what is most available. In the second section, he examines Pierre Louis' *Les métaphores de Platon*, a study which, claiming to break with tradition, refrains from the customary task of classifying metaphors according to their ostensible sites of origin.<sup>19</sup> What Louis means by the traditional form of

---

<sup>19</sup> Derrida's main objection to Pierre Louis' study in *Les métaphores de Platon* (Rennes, 1945) is that it deals equivocally with philosophical metaphor by conflating it with the philosophical concept.

Tenir compte de la pensée platonicienne, de son sens et de son articulation interne, c'est là une exigence peu contestable pour qui veut reconstituer le système des métaphores de Platon. Mais on s'aperçoit très vite que l'articulation interne n'est pas celle des

classification is that there are tropes in Plato – for example, form, light, or sun – which, although they refer to the suprasensible world of knowledge, seem to be derived from the world of the senses. For Louis, to classify metaphors in the etymological fashion – that is, in the fashion of their having some primitive origin – is to overlook what is most significant, namely, their connection to philosophical ideas.<sup>20</sup>

Philosophical metaphors are therefore not rhetorical or poetic ornaments. Their role is rather to avoid a lengthy, more complicated discussion or demonstration. But Derrida points out that this notion of metaphor as verbal shortcut, as well as recurring frequently throughout the tradition, implies, despite the author's explicit intentions to the contrary, that the use of metaphor in philosophy is a matter of convenience rather than necessity. What ultimately happens then is that Louis can only maintain his thesis by having it oscillate between an understanding of philosophical metaphor which renders it virtually indistinguishable from the philosophical concept and an understanding of metaphor which implies that it is expendable as rhetorical artifice. Or, as Derrida puts it: "*Il s'ensuit, selon une logique imperturbable, que la métaphore sera plus « en trop » que jamais: s'identifiant à son tuteur, à la direction de l'idée signifiée, elle ne pourrait s'en distinguer, se distinguer qu'à la condition de retomber comme une signe excédentaire et aussitôt fané*" (265).

What catches Derrida's attention next is a passing but impressive account of philosophical metaphor in Hegel's *Aesthetics*. "*Nulle part ce système [fait des oppositions métaphysiques] n'est plus explicite que chez Hegel. Or il décrit l'espace de la possibilité de la métaphysique et le concept de métaphore ainsi défini lui appartient*" (269). According to Hegel's account, certain words become metaphorical when, in the natural or historical evolution of a language, their meaning and reference are taken up from the physical world and, in order to comprehend this same world (i.e., to render it pure concept), transported to the theoretical or ideal realm. Then, over the course of time and as a result of frequent use, these words lose their figurative aspect or, more properly, this aspect becomes indissociable from the new meaning and reference. The *Aufhebung* of metaphor is then one of its being taken up into metaphysics and, even though suppressed and transformed, nonetheless conserved inside it.

Now Derrida asks: what would be the precise nature of a study which based itself on the Hegelian account? Presumably it would want to

---

métaphores elles-mêmes mais celles des idées « philosophiques », la métaphore jouant exclusivement, quoi qu'en ait l'auteur, le rôle d'ornement pédagogique (*MB*, 263).

<sup>20</sup> Derrida will be looking at a similar view of philosophical metaphor when he examines Gaston Bachelard's work in the final section of his essay.

investigate philosophical metaphor's origins as physical or sensible signification and reference. Hence the further question arises: what words connect to the physical world at the most basic level of language? It seems that the answer must be: fire, air, earth, and water. However, a study of philosophical metaphor cannot rest at this level; it must schematize all the linguistic zones, first, which are presumably derived from these elements, secondly, which correspond to a more diverse physical order, and, thirdly, which supply the stock of words eventually taking an upwards flight and becoming the vocabulary of metaphysics. In addition to this task, what is required is some kind of transcendental explanation as to how meaning is transferred from the sensible to the suprasensible realm. Questions of time and space then demand to be taken up. "*Mais à cette esthétique empirique des contenus sensibles devrait correspondre, comme sa condition de possibilité, une esthétique transcendantale et formelle des métaphores. Elle nous reconduirait aux formes a priori de l'espace et du temps*" (270). But, as Derrida points out, these questions – the issues of time and space – are the very ones which traditionally have been the most intractable for philosophy. Moreover, they are discursive areas in which philosophical metaphor is already implicated. Therefore, once again, there is the situation of defining philosophical metaphor by using it.<sup>21</sup>

## **2.5. The Problem of the Concept of Metaphor: First Investigation**

The fact that Derrida begins by inquiring into philosophical metaphor rather than metaphor per se is probably not without significance. It likely allows him to demonstrate that the problem of philosophical metaphor is integral with the traditional one of poetic metaphor. Moreover, by treating it as a historico-problematic and dealing at length with the tradition, he is able to display not so much the outsider's destructive intent (as perhaps could be held against Polyphile or, more properly, Anatole France), but rather the scholar's care, forbearance, patience, and diligence. To be sure, he also upsets philosophy along the way and interferes with its noble task of looking for safe harbours and havens for truth.<sup>22</sup> But if this task is not without a

---

21 "La conséquence en est double et contradictoire. D'une part, il est impossible de dominer la métaphorique philosophique, comme tel, *de l'extérieur*, en s'en servant de concept de métaphore qui reste un produit philosophique. Seule la philosophie semblerait détenir quelque autorité sur ses productions métaphoriques. Mais, d'autre part, pour la même raison, la philosophie se prive de qu'elle se donne. Ses instruments s'appartenant à son champ, elle est impuissante à dominer sa tropologie et sa métaphorique générales. Elle ne la percevrait qu'autour d'une tache aveugle ou d'un foyer de surdit . Le concept de m taphore d crit ce contour mais il n'est m me pas s r qu'il circonscrive ainsi un centre organisateur; et cette loi formelle vaut pour tout philosoph me" (MB, 272).

22 Derrida employs a similar expression in his analysis of Aristotle. "Toute l'onomatisme qui

certain errancy of its own, then Derrida's project would be extending to it something like a diagnosis if not a remedy. On other hand, insofar as it is a disruption of or interference with philosophy which always risks being excessive or unjust, it equally risks doing a bad turn to itself. Perhaps then what is circumspect about it is also its wariness of becoming self-stricken and self-undone.

Although the negative thesis may very well represent Derrida's circumspect or cautious side and the anti-thesis his presumptuous side, the negative thesis, as already mentioned, leads to the anti-thesis. In the third section, "L'ellipse du soleil: L'énigme, l'incompréhensible, l'imprenable," Derrida begins the main part of his inquiry by looking into the history or genealogy of the concept of metaphor. But, at the same time, he also gives an indication of what his inquiry will not be and which, at the deepest level, resembles a critique of the type of project which Ricoeur carries out.<sup>23</sup>

---

commande la théorie de la métaphore, toute la doctrine aristotélicienne des noms simples (*Poétique* 1457a) est faite pour assurer des havres de vérité et de propriété" (*MB*, 291)

23 Ricoeur's account of metaphorical theory as *internal development* is ambiguous. On the one hand, it seems to be in agreement with Derrida's critique – which is to say that it seems to be at odds with treating historical or other factors as major theoretical determinants – and, on the other hand, not to be in agreement. At the beginning of the Second Study, Ricoeur briefly brings up the New Rhetoric of France, principally represented by Gérard Genette's "La rhétorique restreinte," (*Communications*, 16, [Paris: Seuil, 1970], 158-171) in order to refute the argument that the decline of rhetoric since Aristotle is due to its separation from a larger field which included argumentation and composition. Although devoting the first section of the First Study precisely to this matter and, moreover, after treating rhetoric's separation from philosophy as highly significant for both rhetoric and poetry, Ricoeur ends up claiming nonetheless that it is still not the most important reason for the decline of rhetoric. Theory of metaphor itself is the most significant reason insofar as, instead of, after Aristotle, enlarging itself into a theory of the sentence and discourse, it becomes a theory of denomination which itself is subsidiary to a theory of tropes and figures. For Ricoeur then, metaphorical theory itself has a particular configuration, a set of coordinates, which has guided it through history both in its long period of decline and its recent (Anglo-American) revival as interactive theory. On the other hand, Ricoeur's explanation of the internal development of metaphorical theory rests on an interpretation of Aristotle which both credits him for providing the proper foundations of metaphorical theory and blames him for its decline. According to Ricoeur, it is Aristotle's own emphasis or seeming emphasis on metaphor as single-word trope which leads astray the later rhetorical tradition and allows the study of metaphor to be submerged in a larger and more general project of tropical taxonomy. Ultimately, then, Ricoeur bases a significant part of the development of metaphorical theory on an *accident or error*. Such an account then sounds very close to what Derrida wishes to avoid when he says that, if one does not take the trouble to delimit the general function and effective limits of metaphorical theory, "on courrait le risque de prendre les effets les plus dérivés pour les traits originaux d'un sous-ensemble historique, d'une configuration hâtivement identifiée, d'une mutation imaginaire ou marginale" (*MB*, 275).

Comme il va de soi, nulle pétition ici de quelque continuum homogène qui rapporterait sans cesse à elle-même la tradition, celle de la métaphysique comme celle de la rhétorique. Néanmoins, si l'on ne commençait par prêter attention à telles contraintes plus durables, exercées depuis une très longue chaîne systématique, si l'on ne prenait pas la peine d'en délimiter le fonctionnement général et les limites effectives, on courrait le risque de prendre les effets les plus dérivés pour les traits originaux d'un sous-ensemble historique, d'une configuration hâtivement identifiée, d'une mutation imaginaire ou marginale. (274-275).

To say that the above passage resembles a critique of Ricoeur's project is to say that Ricoeur depicts the development of metaphorical theory as being historically ruptured and dramatically discontinuous. It is also to say that the encounter between Derrida and Ricoeur is already taking place in not just a figurative sense, but in the sense that Ricoeur's project is both firmly attached to the tradition and launched or projected from it.

Derrida begins his lengthy examination of Aristotle in the third section by noting the following: "*Aristote, certes, n'a inventé ni le mot ni le concept de métaphore. Il semble pourtant en avoir proposé la première mise en place systématique, celle qui en tout cas fut retenue comme telle avec les effets les plus puissants*" (275).<sup>24</sup> The cornerstone of Aristotle's theory of metaphor is, of course, the following definition.

"La métaphore (*metaphora*) est le transport (*epiphora*) à une chose d'un nom (*onomatos*) qui en désigne une autre (*allogriou*), transport du genre à l'espèce (*apo tou genous epi eidos*), ou de l'espèce au genre (*apo tou eidous epi to genos*), ou de l'espèce à l'espèce (*apo tou eidous epi eidos*) ou d'après le rapport à l'analogie (*è kata to analogon*)" (1457b, tr. Budé) (*MB*, 275).

As already mentioned in Chapter I, metaphor, traditionally understood, belongs to the realm of meaning which is also the realm of words, nouns, and naming in general. This is evident in Aristotle at various points and one of the issues which Derrida first takes up is Aristotle's discussion of the units

---

<sup>24</sup> Ricoeur's comparable remark on Aristotle's significance is in the Preface of *La métaphore vive*. "C'est lui, en effet, qui a défini la métaphore pour toute l'histoire ultérieure de la pensée occidentale, sur la base d'une sémantique qui prend le mot ou le nom pour unité de base" (*MV*, 7).

of speech below the word or noun. Here Aristotle claims that the sound which a human being emits as a vowel or consonant is not equivalent to the same sound which an animal produces. Derrida calls this a retrospective and teleological account of the difference between language and animal sounds and notes that, by virtue of it, the syntactic's implication in the semantic is both recognized and not recognized. It is recognized in the form of the non-human or physiological path which meaning must take in order to arise from non-meaning but, at the same time, it is not recognized as being part of meaning's final destination at the level of human speech.

Metaphor stands in solidarity with other Aristotelian notions such as *aletheia* and *logos*. Operating as a sort of hidden syllogism, it deduces sameness from similarity. Aristotle directly comments on the veridical and heuristic role of metaphor when, for example, he declares that a good metaphor gives pleasure by providing knowledge.<sup>25</sup> Good metaphor, for Aristotle, largely means metaphor by analogy. "*L'analogie est la métaphore par excellence. Aristote y insiste beaucoup dans la Rhétorique*" (289). It is the trope which, resembling simile or comparison, naturally reveals the role of resemblance. One example Aristotle cites is a figure which compares old age to a dried-up tuft of grass. He remarks that this figure, by bringing together two species or two examples of a biological activity, allows the perception of the genus. The latter he identifies as "loss of flower."<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, metaphor also signifies absence, deviation, and improper use of words. Here metaphor occupies a sort of linguistic twilight zone. While still somehow conveying meaning, it nonetheless introduces the opaque, obscure, and obtrusive. It seems to ply a course between the nonsensical and the full sense of language. It seems to veer between the syntactical which escapes meaning and reference and the direct, explicit use of language which, while virtually effacing itself as medium, is in accord with the true and the real. However, the errancy of metaphor is only temporary. It only absents itself in order to make a fruitful return and provide a supplement to meaning. Yet a certain difficulty arises in that there are bad metaphors which presumably do not carry out this work. In the case of at least some species of these bad metaphors, confusion or deception arises and Aristotle is critical of their use in argument along with other figures of speech such as homonym which cloud definition. Derrida's inquiry at this

---

<sup>25</sup> "Le Livre III de la *Rhétorique* le précise, entre une calame et une fleur: « Apprendre sans difficulté est naturellement (*physei*) agréable pour tout le monde; or les mots (*onomata*) ont une signification (*semainei ti*); par conséquent ce sont les mots qui nous apportent quelque connaissance qui sont les plus agréables . . . La métaphore produit tout particulièrement cet effet »." (chap. x, tr.fr., p. 349) (*MB*, 284).

<sup>26</sup> Derrida continues the above passage from the *Rhetoric* as follows: "« Quand on nous dit que la vieillesse est comme l'éteule (*kalamen*), on nous fournit une connaissance et une notion par le genre: vieillesse et éteule ont toutes deux perdu leur fleur »" (*MB*, 284).

point becomes the question: what is the difference between good and bad metaphor?

Accordingly, he carefully observes the fact that, when Aristotle discusses good metaphor and, more precisely, metaphor by analogy, he also provides an example – a rather illustrious one – of metaphor by analogy which does not follow the normal pattern of having four retrievable terms. The example in question is the figure of the sun or, more precisely, what is said of the sun in ancient Greek, namely, that it seeds its light. Aristotle himself notes that, while “seeds” is figurative, it is the only word to signify the sun’s casting its light. The fourth term is missing and Derrida asks: “*Où a-t-on jamais vu qu’il y a le même rapport entre le soleil et ses rayons qu’entre l’ensemencement et la semence?*” (290).

Although Aristotle brings up the figure of the sun in order to register it as anomaly or exception, it goes unacknowledged even by him that, given that it is supposed to be an example of metaphor by analogy and, furthermore, given that its missing term is supposed to be the original or proper term which “seeds” replaces, this figure, by reason of its obscure origins, ends up being the exception which throws the rule into doubt. Perhaps it is not out of place to speculate here that Aristotle’s reticence on this matter is one with philosophy’s traditional identification of the act of securing truth with the act of making truth secure. It is not so much to possess it as not to be dispossessed of it. At the deepest level of investigation, what is generally wanted by philosophy is less the positive securing of it than the positive response to the threat to or absence of it. This response is both a recognition and a non-recognition. It is both the recognition and non-recognition of never fully having the truth (there is always room for another investigation or commentary); it is both the recognition and non-recognition of the indiscernible behind truth; and, finally, it is both the recognition and non-recognition of the right to pull up short of – for fear of putting them into jeopardy – the essential, elemental, integral, or ideal bases of truth. So it is that, by implicitly invoking a governing consciousness which is responsible for expressing the sun’s activity on earth in the form of seeding its light, philosophy can dismiss another possibility, namely, that there is an unconscious use of language which forces new meanings onto old words. Given this dismissal of the unconscious or secret operation of language, the sun can be maintained as being singular, universal, and wholly independent from language. It need not be seen to be bound up itself in a linguistic network which is contemporary with it.<sup>27</sup>

---

27 “Si le soleil peut « semer », c’est que son nom est inscrit dans un système de relations qui le constitue. Ce nom n’est plus le nom propre d’une chose unique auquel la métaphore *surviendrait*; il a déjà commencé à dire l’origine multiple, divisée, de toute semence, l’oeil,

There is another troublesome figure which Aristotle brings up and then passes quickly over.

Et pourtant, en une phrase, une parenthèse aussitôt refermée, Aristote évoque incidemment le cas d'une *lexis* qui serait de part en part métaphorique. Aucun nom propre n'y est du moins présent, apparent comme tel. Aussitôt après l'ensemencement solaire, voici la « coupe sans vin »: « On peut encore user de ce mode de métaphore d'une autre manière; après avoir désigné une chose par un nom qui appartient à une autre, on nie une des qualités propre à celle-ci; par exemple, au lieu d'appeler le bouclier « coupe d'Arès » on l'appellera « coupe sans vin »».

Mais ce procédé, Aristote ne le dit pas, peut se poursuivre et se compliquer à l'infini. Aucune référence n'étant plus proprement nommée dans une telle métaphore, la figure est emportée dans l'aventure d'une longue phrase implicite, d'un récit secret dont rien ne nous assure qu'il nous reconduira au nom propre (290).

By conscientiously pointing out and then hastily passing over the anomaly of the metaphor whose proper terms can never be assured, Aristotle formally recognizes it but never incorporates it into an explanation. Rather, its being implicitly labelled anomaly or exception almost operates as an explanation in and of itself. Or, to put it another way, it is legitimized as what requires no explanation simply because it is identified as being marginal. Aristotle's recognition of troublesome metaphors or figures, insofar as it is not an investigation of them or a recognition of their falling short as good or proper figures, is also a form of non-recognition.

The difference between, on the one hand, what is the exception to good metaphor and yet not considered bad metaphor and, on the other hand, *enigma* or what Aristotle identifies as confused figure of speech is not clear insofar as the first resembles or is not far from also being a random juxtaposition of words. But there is a sense in which not only bad or dubious metaphors but also good ones are brought under the banner of the exceptional and enigmatic when Aristotle claims that metaphorization comes more naturally to some human beings than to others. Only poets and philosophers make good metaphors. It is a gift and not something which can

---

l'invisibilité, la mort, le père, le « nom propre », etc. Si Aristote ne s'engage pas dans cette conséquence, c'est sans doute qu'elle contredit à la valeur philosophique d'*aletheia* . . ." (MB, 291).

be learned.

Puisque l'invention des métaphores est un don inné, naturel, congénital, ce sera aussi un trait de génie. La notion de nature rend cette contradiction tolérable. Dans la nature, chacun a sa nature. Certains ont plus de nature que d'autres, plus de génie, de générosité, de semence. Si « ce qui est important, c'est d'exceller dans les métaphores », certains ont le génie de la métaphore, savent mieux que d'autres apercevoir les ressemblances et dévoiler la vérité de la nature. Ressource imprenable. « Exceller dans les métaphores », « c'est la seule chose qu'on ne peut pas prendre à autrui et c'est un indice de dons naturels (*euphuias te semeion estin*) » (*Poétique* 1459 a cf. aussi *Rhétorique* III, chap. ii) (*MB*, 292).

## 2.6. The Problem of the Concept of Metaphor: Second Investigation

In the background of Aristotle's theory of metaphor is an ontology which Derrida identifies, first, as Aristotle's theory of *phusis* and, secondly, his theory of the analogy of being. In accordance with this ontology, meaning and reference have as their absolute basis the correspondence between word and object. With respect to later metaphorical theory, this correspondence becomes one between word and idea. Traditionally, the distinction between the metaphorical and the non-metaphorical has been defined then as the distinction between an improper versus proper correspondence to the real or ideal.

As Aristotle notes, a word may have many significations but, in order for it to be meaningful, it must operate with only one of them. An uncontrolled polysemy would be a chaotic dissemination, a complete breakdown of communication and order. Derrida notes how harshly Aristotle censures the sophist for his practise of substituting an equivocal term for a univocal one. In contrast to the philosopher who only concerns himself with truth, the sophist aims to win at argument. He brings to any matter obscurity rather than clarity. Besides the sophist, there is also that sort of person so unreasonable as to insist that X is both Y and not Y. Such a person, according to Aristotle, is little better than a vegetable.

A la limite de ce « ne-rien-vouloir-dire », on est à peine un animal, plutôt une plante, un roseau et qui ne pense pas: « Il est cependant possible d'établir par réfutation l'impossibilité que la même chose soit et ne soit pas,

pourvu que l'adversaire dise seulement quelque chose. S'il ne dit rien, il est ridicule de chercher à discuter avec quelqu'un qui ne peut parler de rien: un tel homme, en tant que tel, est dès lors semblable à un végétal (*homoios gar phutô*) » (*Métaphysique* I 1006 a 10) (*MB*, 296).

When Derrida cites Aristotle's condemnation of the sophist and the irrationalist, he does so at some length and without raising any objection to it. And yet, from a certain standpoint, he cuts the sort of figure whom Aristotle condemns. It seems then that Derrida willingly risks drawing this condemnation on himself and, at the same time, that he is oblivious to it or perhaps even defiant of it. All of this likely turns on – if it is to be accepted as pertinent material here – the fact that, for Derrida, dealing with metaphor properly is to deal with it equivocally rather than univocally.<sup>28</sup> The question he never quite renders explicit might very well be: Can the equivocal in a way similar to the polysemous be controlled and rendered meaningful? If his project is a demonstration of the equivocal as the more appropriate vehicle of understanding metaphor, then his passing encounter with Aristotle the moralist is quasi-confrontational on both the epistemological and ethical fronts.

With respect to the proper/improper distinction, one of the first points Derrida takes up is that there is a significant difference between Aristotle and the later rhetorical tradition in that the former allows for the possibility that, along with ordinary or literal terms, some metaphors themselves have proper significations. This peculiarity is the result of a certain ambiguous play between two levels of analysis in Aristotle: the semantic and the ontological. More precisely, it is the ambiguous play between the proper as it applies strictly to words and the relations between words (which is the proper of the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*) and the proper as it applies to objects (which is the proper of the *Topics*). In contrast to later rhetorical theory which seals off the semantic from the ontological and thereby strictly equates proper with current, literal, or univocal, Aristotle leaves open the

---

28 Perhaps it would be better to say that metaphor is *always* dealt with equivocally and that it is more appropriate to affirm this than to deny it. In "Le retrait de la métaphore," Derrida brings out this point more clearly than he does in "La mythologie blanche."

J'essaie de parler *de* la métaphore, de dire quelque chose de propre ou de littéral à son sujet, de la *traiter* comme mon sujet mais je suis, par elle, si on peut dire, obligé à parler d'elle *more metaphorico*, à sa manière à elle. Je ne peux *en traiter* sans *traiter avec elle*, sans négocier avec elle l'emprunt que je lui fais pour parler d'elle. Je n'arrive pas à produire un *traité* de la métaphore qui ne soit *traité avec* la métaphore qui du coup paraît intraitable (*RM*, 64).

possibility of a metaphor's being proper by being in one-to-one correspondence with the object.

Proper is most commonly denoted in the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric* by the term *kurion* and proper in the *Topics* by the term *idion*. *Kurion* best translates as the current or literal sense of a word and *idion* as the proper in the sense of the property of an object which is to be distinguished from its essence and accidents. Although, as just mentioned, Aristotle most commonly uses *kurion* in the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric* and *idion* in the *Topics*, Derrida suggests that it is the latter which is ultimately more significant. "*Pourtant la valeur de l'idion semble soutenir, sans en occuper l'avant scène, toute cette métaphorologie*" (294).<sup>29</sup>

As already mentioned in the Lawlor reading, Aristotle claims in the *Topics* that the property of an object is in a quasi-synonymous relation to the object's essence. According to Derrida's account of Aristotle's theory, it is the slight play or difference between essence and property which allows for metaphor. "*Cet écart permet sans doute le jeu de la métaphore*" (296). This is to say that metaphor is the transfer of the property or properties of one object to another object. Of course, it is only a semantic transfer and not an ontological one and, as such, neither disturbs the object's essence nor its properties. In this way, when a metaphor becomes a common or current expression which, as has already been noted, is what Aristotle's theory claims and what distinguishes it from later rhetorical theory, then it is proper.<sup>30</sup>

For Derrida, it is not insignificant that, in the *Topics*, Aristotle repeats a certain gesture which he makes in the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*. Indeed, what is remarkable is not only that this gesture – the pointing out and subsequent passing over an exception or anomaly – is repeated, but that it once again involves the Sun. Here it takes the form of Aristotle's claim that the definition of the sun as the brightest star moving over the earth during

---

29 Derrida's privileging of *kurion* is an early target for Ricoeur in *La métaphore vive*. His critique of it comes in one of two successive footnotes focussing on Derrida in the First Study.

La lecture des *Topiques* n'encourage, ni le rapprochement entre *kurion* et *idion*, ni surtout l'interprétation de l'*idion* dans le sens « métaphysique » de primitif, d'originaire, d'indigène. Le traitement de l'*idion* dans les *Topiques* relève d'une considération absolument étrangère à la théorie de la *lexis*, et particulièrement à celles des dénominations ordinaires ou extraordinaires (*MV*, 27).

30 There is no little ambiguity in this area but it seems that what Aristotle means by a species of metaphor which is essentially a proper noun (e.g., *the lion advanced* in which "lion" signifies Achilles) is what Ricoeur would call a dead metaphor. Presumably this dead metaphor adds a new signification to *lion*.

the day is wrong for two reasons. Aristotle's first reason is that the term being defined, namely, the sun, is already implicated in the defining part of the proposition, namely, the brightest star that moves over the earth during the day. The second reason is that the sun, regularly concealing itself, may not always be moving over the earth. Hence the conclusion is that "moving over the earth" cannot be a property of the sun.<sup>31</sup>

The Aristotelian sun then, according to Derrida, proves to be an essence with unknowable properties. As both literal and figurative source of light, it is also the essence of essences. This essence of essences complicates itself by concealing itself. Not only does it conceal itself by simply being a great imponderable egg in the sky, but also by being a great shining eye which regularly absents itself. Its very regularity in this respect – its movement away from and back to the world and away from and back to the full presence of things – is what makes the Aristotelian sun the paradigmatic metaphor. But, once again, its meaning and signification are shrouded in mystery or, more properly, they are implicated in a virtually unlimited problematic.<sup>32</sup>

---

31 The following, as cited by Derrida, is the relevant passage from Aristotle:

« Par exemple, quand on a posé que c'est un propre du Soleil d'être l'astre le plus brillant qui se meut au-dessus de la Terre, on se sert dans le propre d'une expression telle que *se mouvoir au-dessus de la Terre*, ce qui est connu par la sensation, et par suite le propre du Soleil ne saurait avoir été donné correctement: car on ne verra pas bien si le Soleil, au moment où il se couche, continue à se mouvoir au-dessus de la Terre, parce que la sensation nous fait alors défaut » (*Topiques*, V, 3. 131 b 20-30, tr. Tricot) (*MB*, 298).

32 "Quelque chose s'est inversé dans notre discours. Nous disions plus haut: le soleil est ce référent unique, irremplaçable, naturel, autour duquel tout doit tourner, vers lequel tout doit se tourner. Nous devons maintenant, suivant pourtant le même trajet, retourner la proposition: le soleil proprement dit, le soleil sensible, ne fournit pas seulement de mauvaises connaissances parce que de mauvaises métaphores, il est seulement métaphorique. Puisqu'on ne peut plus s'assurer, nous dit Aristote, de ses caractères sensibles comme de ses « propres », le soleil n'est jamais présent en propre dans le discours. Chaque fois qu'il y a une métaphore, il y a sans doute un soleil quelque part; mais chaque fois qu'il y a du soleil, la métaphore a commencé. Si le soleil est métaphorique déjà, toujours, il n'est plus tout à fait naturel. Il est déjà, toujours, un lustre, on dirait une construction *artificielle* si l'on pouvait encore accrédi-ter cette signification quand la nature a disparu. Car, si le soleil n'est tout à fait naturel, que reste-t-il de naturel dans la nature? Le plus naturel de la nature comporte en lui-même de quoi sortir de soi; il compose avec la lumière « artificielle », s'éclipse, s'ellipse, a toujours été autre, lui-même: le père, la semence, le feu, l'oeil, l'oeuf, etc., c'est-à-dire tant d'autres choses encore, donnant de surcroît la mesure des bonnes et des mauvaises métaphores, des claires et des obscures; puis, à la limite, de ce qui est pire ou meilleur que la métaphore" (*MB*, 300).

## 2.7. Catachresis

To the extent that bad metaphor, unlike good metaphor, is no addition or even an obstacle to knowledge, it resembles the unknown essence of the sun and its hidden movement. Unlike good metaphor, catachresis which is perhaps the most celebrated species of bad or untrue metaphor (Ricoeur equates it with dead metaphor)<sup>33</sup> is not the movement of proper to improper or known to unknown or sameness to difference and back again. It is rather the direct movement from improper to improper or, strangely enough, from proper to proper. With respect to the first, although it is the case that all metaphors by analogy are fashioned out of a rearrangement of four terms, these terms themselves give no indication of being absolutely primitive or original and hence belong to an infinite chain of contingent associations in which the proper is lost to view and is no longer possible except as what springs out of the "sub-microscopic" workings of this chain as the ideally constituted. Derrida compares this long chain to a secret narrative wherein transfers are both made and forgotten.

Dès qu'on admet que dans une relation analogique tous les termes sont déjà pris, un à un, dans une relation métaphorique, tout se met à fonctionner non plus en soleil mais en étoile, la source ponctuelle de vérité ou de propriété restant invisible ou nocturne (291).

With respect to the movement from proper to proper, Derrida notes that Fontanier defines catachresis as the extension of one word which signifies

---

33 Only once does Ricoeur explicitly identify dead metaphor with catachresis. Nevertheless, since it is in the context of discussing philosophy's frequent need to fill a lexical deficiency and, furthermore, since his definition of dead metaphor is itself restricted to a philosophical or metaphysical context (i.e., the Platonic sensible/intelligible opposition), there seems little reason not to think that this identification is fundamental.

Il est vrai que le langage philosophique, dans son travail de dénomination, paraît contredire le jugement de sémanticien concernant la rareté des métaphores lexicalisées. La raison en est simple: la création de significations nouvelles, liée au surgissement d'une nouvelle manière de questionner, met le langage en état de carence sémantique; c'est alors que la métaphore lexicalisée intervient dans une fonction de suppléance. Mais, comme Fontanier l'avait parfaitement aperçu, il s'agit d'un trope « par nécessité et par extension pour suppléer aux mots qui manquent à la langue pour certaines idées... » (*Les figures du discours*, 90); brèf, il s'agit d'une *catachrèse*, qui peut être d'ailleurs de métonymie ou de synecdoque aussi bien que de métaphore (*MV*, 369).

one idea to another idea which lacks its own proper word. It is therefore the forced application of a familiar word to an unfamiliar or anonymous idea and, moreover, one which, however rude or violent, is useful.

Catachresis is, for Derrida, fully implicated in the problem of metaphor. Albeit no less a metaphysical concept than the other, it helps to signify what the metaphorical is or is not or, to put it another way, what the tropic or figurative is in the very defining terms of metaphor.<sup>34</sup> At this deep level of investigation, the proper/improper distinction no longer holds and, of course, neither does the distinction between metaphor and non-metaphor.

## **2.8. The Problem of Philosophical Metaphor as Scientific Metaphor**

Even while Derrida complicates and even over-complicates the subject of metaphor, his project runs along a relatively simple and straightforward path. As mentioned earlier, the peculiarity of his initial question is that, contrary to the usual practise, it does not presuppose the quiddity of philosophical metaphor such that the only task would be to properly define it. Rather, it implies that there is something to find which calls itself philosophical metaphor and that it is best to leave open the question of whether it does so rightly. In fact, Derrida very quickly comes to the conclusion that philosophical metaphor can never be properly called to account because any definition of it will necessarily have its definiendum implicated in its definiens. Nonetheless there is sufficient evidence to show that, although it has not been studied very much, philosophical metaphor is widely recognized. Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Marx, Freud, Lenin, and Bergson are a few of the philosophers or thinkers who, as Derrida notes, have made observations about it. Therefore, if the investigation which issues from Derrida's question is to do justice to this question, it would seem that it must be a consideration of anything which could possibly oppose the recognition of the condition of the impossibility of defining philosophical metaphor.

But Derrida does not analyse more than a few observations from most of the above philosophers or thinkers because their suspicions about the influence of metaphor on thought and their both metaphorical and metaphysical descriptions of philosophical metaphor are not a serious step beyond Aristotle. Observations such as Nietzsche's are, on the other hand,

---

<sup>34</sup> "Mais peut-on, nous demandions-nous plus haut, nommer encore métaphores ces tropes définissants, antérieurs à toute rhétorique philosophique et producteurs de philosophèmes? Cette question pourrait guider toute une lecture des analyses que Fontanier réserve à la *catachrèse* dans *le Supplément à la théorie des tropes*. Contentons-nous ici d'une indication. Ce *Supplément* concerne d'abord l'inscription – violente, forcée, abusive – d'un signe, l'imposition d'un signe à un sens qui n'avait pas encore de signe propre dans la langue" (*MB*, 304).

directly supportive of Derrida's negative thesis.<sup>35</sup> It is therefore significant that, when he takes a look at the work of a contemporary epistemologist, Gaston Bachelard, Derrida does not limit his analysis to what a footnote or two might handle. On the contrary, it takes up the better part of the fifth and final section and seems to add a new dimension to his inquiry. But it remains a question whether Derrida undertakes this lengthy examination of Bachelard's limited analysis of metaphor for epistemological reasons only.

This last phase of the inquiry into philosophical metaphor is begun by Derrida's speculating that, although a rhetorical or philosophical study must ultimately prove deficient in defining philosophical metaphor, perhaps there is the possibility (but, one must ask, how strong or meaningful can this possibility be in the context of Derrida's already demonstrating the condition of its impossibility) of a meta-philosophical study capable of mastering it.

Rêvera-t-on pour autant de quelque méta-philosophie, d'un discours plus général mais de type encore philosophique, sur les métaphores de « premier degré », sur ces non-vraies métaphores qui ont ouvert la philosophie? (308).

It is in this context that Bachelard's work is singled out as possibly furnishing this new kind of study. At the same time, Derrida does not raise the question

---

<sup>35</sup> Both in the first and last sections of his essay, Derrida cites from Nietzsche's *Truth and Falsehood in the Extra-Moral Sense* or, more properly, the French translation of *Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne* in *Le Livre du philosophe* (trans., A. K. Marietti, [Paris: Seuil, 1969]). On both occasions, the cited passages have as much a figurative as thematic connection to Derrida's discussion of metaphor. In the first section, the passage cited finds Nietzsche making use of, like Polyphile in *Le jardin d'Épicure*, the figure of coins which are polished until they lose their inscription. In the fifth and final section, the cited passage finds Nietzsche making use of the figure of the columbarium. Directly before this second passage, Derrida discusses the use of metaphor in science and, in particular, a certain unwanted influence which metaphor can exhibit in scientific inquiry and investigation. Drawing from Georges Canguilhem's *La connaissance de la vie*, Derrida reproduces a brief account of "« le développement de la théorie cellulaire » sur lequel « des valeurs affectives et sociales de coopération et d'association planent de près ou de loin »" (*MB*, 311). Being, as said before, as much a figurative as thematic connection, the two passages from Nietzsche are in some sense interruptions or interventions which briefly shift the focus from metaphor in the narrower sense to metaphor in the larger sense. What is primarily at issue then is truth as metaphoricity or quasi-metaphoricity. Being a mobile multiplicity of traces which constitute the non-human as much as the human, it leads scientific and philosophical thought away from the "truth" of its nature as such towards propositional and empirical truth only. "Cette opération de Nietzsche (généralisation de la métaphoricité par la mise en abîme d'une métaphore déterminée) n'est possible qu'à prendre le risque de la continuité entre la métaphore et le concept, comme entre l'animal et l'homme, l'instinct et le savoir" (*MB*, 313).

of – and surely not because of some lapse or oversight – why it should be assumed that there is a difference between a rhetorical study of philosophical metaphor and a so-called *meta-philosophical* study of it. After all, if it has already been established that all rhetorical studies are philosophical because they operate with the same metaphysical presuppositions, there is no reason to think that, because a study is re-christened meta-philosophical, the same would not hold true for it.<sup>36</sup>

It may be then that Derrida's prolonged inquiry is governed by some other consideration. As an *envoi*, a sending out into the world, this inquiry cannot be the product of a total indifference to its reception. It is possible therefore that there is the need for a certain *délicatesse* at this juncture and for a further proof that it has left behind its initial waywardness. This return to the land of the serious, civil, and straightforward is no doubt of a scholarly bent and corresponds to a certain obligation to give Bachelard, the eminent epistemologist who has published recently on both poetic and scientific metaphor, his due.

In *La formation de l'esprit scientifique* (1967), Bachelard discusses the ever-present possibility of metaphorical control and over-control of the scientific concept. By virtue of certain affective associations – ones, for example, of an anthropomorphic or animistic nature – the metaphorical or figurative dimension of certain concepts can result in even sophisticated research being carried out under the spell of a vivid or agreeable image. Bachelard's response to this problem is one of suggesting that science should consciously employ other metaphors to counter the "pre-scientific" ones. Presumably the countering metaphors are but provisional means or tools which science can later dispense with. Derrida gives reason to think, that, despite Bachelard's optimism, the separation of the figurative from the conceptual is never completed and, in fact, the attempt at this separation goes hand in hand with the opposite movement which is the uniting of the conceptual with the figurative. While it is no doubt true that metaphors can be employed to counter other metaphors in science, it is also true that there is no straight progression from figurative concepts to pure concepts but rather shifts from figurative concepts to other figurative concepts. The example Derrida provides is that of the blood's movement in the body which was first depicted as a system of irrigation and later depicted as a circulatory system. The latter is of course no less a figure than the former. All shifts from one scientific concept to another happen in particular historico-scientific contexts and what is ultimately going on is that these shifts are not

---

<sup>36</sup> Derrida pays tribute to Bachelard by taking the term *meta-philosophy* from him. At the same time, there is little reason not to think that, despite Bachelard's endorsement of it, it is simply a way of dignifying what has been traditionally assigned to work on the margins of philosophy.

governed by criteria monitoring a process of conceptual purification, but rather ones dealing with explanatory efficiency.

The second way in which Derrida examines Bachelard's discussion of metaphor is to take a look at his meta-poetics.<sup>37</sup> As a sophisticated classification of metaphor in the poetic text, its governing hypothesis is that certain metaphors are related to other metaphors and that, taken as a whole, these relations constitute an aesthetic pattern, an ordering of dominant and less dominant metaphors. Furthermore, this pattern or ordering constitutes a diagram of the poetic text which, according to Bachelard, has both syntactic and semantic import. Following the latter's very own suggestion and, of course, in the spirit of entertaining all possibilities, Derrida hypothesizes that Bachelard's scheme could be transferred *mutatis mutandis* to the philosophical text. Taking as an example Descartes' writings, he quickly sketches out the likely shape of such a program. According to Bachelard's theory, one central metaphor should come into view and, in the case of Descartes, it would be no other than natural light (*lumen naturale*).

Mais, si on se rend au point le plus critique et le proprement cartésien de la démarche critique, au point du doute hyperbolique et de l'hypothèse du Malin Génie, au point où le doute frappe non seulement les idées d'origine sensible mais les idées « claires et distinctes » et les évidences mathématiques, on sait que ce qui permet au discours de repartir et de se poursuivre, son ultime ressource, est désigné comme *lumen naturale* (318).

This metaphor is precisely the one, however, which breaks out of the circle of Cartesian logic or, to put it another way, is the equivocation which surreptitiously closes this circle. "*La lumière naturelle et tous les axiomes qu'elle donne à voir ne sont jamais soumis au doute le plus radical. Celui-ci se déploie dans la lumière.*" (318). Descartes states that, according to the natural light, it is manifestly clear that God exists and, at the same time, attributes this natural light to God. The central metaphor of *lumen naturale* is thus employed in order to embrace both philosophical meaning and what stands outside this meaning. Derrida claims that, in varying ways, all philosophical texts, if so schematized, yield the same result. A Bachelardian metaphoricity applied to philosophical texts must then run into a major difficulty. Having its primary justification in relating philosophical metaphors to philosophical meaning, it would ultimately run up against a central or

---

<sup>37</sup> The following reference is supplied by Derrida: *Lautréamont*, ed. Corti, 1939, nouv. éd. 1956, p. 54-55.

dominant metaphor dropping out of this program.

Qu'y trouver d'autre sinon la métaphore de la *domination*, accrue de son pouvoir de dissimulation qui lui permet d'échapper à la maîtrise: Dieu ou le Soleil? (318).

## 2.9. From the Deaths of Metaphor to the Deaths of Philosophy

The fifth and final section of Derrida's essay (which includes the Bachelard study) is entitled "La métaphysique – relève de la métaphore." Allan Bass, the English translator of this essay, notes the following:

This subtitle is untranslatable, at very least because of its double meaning. Derrida simultaneously uses *relève* as both noun and verb here. If *relève* is taken as a noun, the subtitle would read: "Metaphysics – the *relève*, the *Aufhebung* of metaphor." If *relève* 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". . . . If one is attentive to the implications of this unstoppable alternation in meaning, along with the interplay of metaphysics, metaphor, and *relève*, one will have begun to grasp what Derrida is about in this essay.<sup>38</sup>

What Derrida is about here is worth comparing to Nietzsche's account of the relationship between metaphor and concept.<sup>39</sup> Derrida, along with citing him in "Exergue" on the subject of metaphors that are so well-handled that they lose their figurative value, also cites him in the fifth section at some length and on a matter which PS is thematising.

---

<sup>38</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Sussex: The Harvester Press Limited, 1982), 258.

<sup>39</sup> Although characterizing his writing as being masked, Nietzsche's style is still very acerbic and direct. It is likely that, given his philosophical canonization and the greater tolerance which it wins for him, the aggressive aspect of this style is largely forgiven. On the other hand, this style, both aggressive and direct and even, on occasion, highly offensive, is the product of a free spirit who spent the better part of his time alone and away from institutions. Derrida's situation, being different, would likely render it impossible for him to be both aggressive and equally direct at the same time.

A la construction des concepts travaille originellement, comme nous l'avons vu, le langage et plus tard la science. Comme l'abeille travaille en même temps à construire les cellules et à remplir ces cellules de miel, ainsi la science travaille sans cesse à ce grand columbarium des concepts, au sépulcre des intuitions, et construit toujours de nouveaux et de plus hauts étages, elle façonne, nettoie, rénove, les vieilles cellules, elle s'efforce surtout d'emplir ce colombage surélevé jusqu'au monstrueux et d'y ranger le monde empirique tout entier, c'est-à-dire le monde anthropomorphique. Alors que déjà l'homme d'action attache sa vie à la raison et aux concepts pour ne pas être emporté par le courant et ne pas se perdre lui-même, le savant construit sa cabine tout près de la tour de la science pour pouvoir y aider et pour trouver lui-même protection sous le bastion existant. Et il a besoin de cette protection, car il y a des puissances redoutables qui font continuellement pression sur lui et qui opposent à la « vérités » scientifiques des « vérités » d'un tout autre genre aux enseignes les plus hétérogènes (*Le livre du philosophe*, tr. A. K. Marietti, Aubier, p. 193-195) (*MB*, 313).

What needs protection as philosophy or science is likely very close to what protects as philosophy or science. And what announces the threatening as philosophy or science is likely very close to being the threatening as philosophy or science. Surely the philosophical ground reveals itself divided up in ways other than purely formal ones. And surely it is inhabited at least on its boundaries by an uncontrollable part of truth-telling which demands the greater freedom for itself as well as the possible sacrifice of itself.

Derrida's analysis of Bachelard's discussion of metaphor takes up, as already mentioned, most of the fifth section. Now insofar as this approach is epistemological and presumably remains so even when taken up by Derrida, and, furthermore, insofar as it purports to be non-metaphysical, scientific, and psychoanalytic,<sup>40</sup> the inquiry into it seems to have little to do with the

---

40 "Mais, d'une part, la psychanalyse de la connaissance objective doit dénoncer surtout les « métaphores immédiates » (« Le danger des métaphores immédiates pour la formation de l'esprit scientifique, c'est qu'elles ne sont pas toujours des images qui passent; elles poussent à une pensée autonome; elles tendent à se compléter, à s'achever dans le règne de l'image », c'est le *système* des métaphores qui, nous le verrons, intéresse d'abord Bachelard); d'autre part, la métaphore non immédiate, construite, est utile quand elle vient « illustrer » un savoir conquis sur la mauvaise métaphore. Sa valeur est alors essentiellement pédagogique: « Une psychanalyse de la connaissance objective doit donc

title of the section which, in and of itself, suggests that metaphor is intimately connected to the possibility of metaphysics and therefore far from being a scientific object. On the other hand, it may very well be that devoting so much of the final section to these relatively orthodox matters rescues the last few pages of Derrida's essay from, because of their relative obscurity, being ill-received.

As the final coda of his essay, there is the apt but also antipathetic account of what he calls the two paths of metaphorical self-destruction. The first path is the way of metaphysics and the way of philosophy. It is the arresting, the stopping short, the freezing and congealing of metaphorical play. Here the poetic and the philosophical are already to be found in their kinship and antagonism. The second path of metaphor follows the first path but always as the barely discernible outside or other of philosophy. Here there is the breakdown of the concept, the fraying at its edges, the return not to full meaning or presence but always the escape beyond them.

The first path of metaphorical self-destruction corresponds to the birth of philosophy. The second path corresponds to its death. Or, to be more precise, Derrida recognizes two ways in which philosophy perishes. The first death is what it lays to rest of itself as a sort of completion or accomplishment. The second death is what drops away from it without obvious counsel, consciousness, or consensus. The death of philosophy is a double genitive.

Homonymie en laquelle Aristote sut reconnaître – alors sous les traits du sophiste – la figure même de ce qui double et menace la philosophie: ces deux morts se répètent et se simulent l'une l'autre dans l'héliotrope. Héliotrope de Platon ou de Hegel d'une part, l'héliotrope de Nietzsche ou de Bataille d'autre part . . . ( 324).

Here then for Derrida is the philosophical sun, Platonic or Hegelian, which reveals "everything" and here also the anti-philosophical sun, Nietzschean or Bataillean, which "engenders" everything. These two suns can only be one and the same – forever alternating – in the discourse of philosophy which is also the discourse *on* philosophy.

---

s'appliquer à décolorer, sinon à effacer, ces images naïves. Quand l'abstraction aura passé par là, il sera temps d'*illustrer* [Bachelard souligne] les schémas rationnels. En résumé, l'intuition première est un obstacle à la pensée scientifique; seule une illustration travaillant au-delà du concept, en rapportant un peu de couleur sur les traits essentiels, peut aider la pensée scientifique » (*La formation de l'esprit scientifique* [Paris: J. Vrin, 1967], 78-81) (*MB*, 309-310).

## 2.10. The Rhetorical Remainder

The response which Derrida gives to the question of the adequacy or inadequacy of his own project seems to be divided. On the one hand, it seems to be the recognition that his inquiry is, insofar as it is the recognition of the inadequacy of all such inquiries, adequate. On the other hand, it seems to be the recognition that his inquiry, insofar as it is implicated in what it recognizes as inadequate, is itself necessarily inadequate. To find an illustration of this divided recognition or self-recognition, it is perhaps not necessary to look further than the opening lines. Here a dual but uncertain control is set up in that, while this earliest exposition exhibits its own effects and influences, it still remains marginal to the inquiry. At the same time, there is something registered in this opening passage which escapes Derrida's own best intentions or which he himself thinks must escape them and which, for lack of a better word, should be called metaphor.

De la philosophie, la rhétorique. D'un volume, à peu près, plus ou moins – faire ici une fleur, l'extraire, la monter, la laisser, plutôt, monter, se faire jour – se détournant comme d'elle-même, révolutée, telle fleur grave – apprenant à cultiver, selon le calcul d'un lapidaire, la patience... (249).

The metaphor here – the metaphor of metaphor which is the image of a live flower and the image of an engraved flower – is a *mixed* metaphor. After seventy-five pages of analysis and at the close of his essay, Derrida resorts to a similar metaphor which, like the first, paints before the eyes (despite being a "bad" metaphor) metaphor's relation to philosophy.

Telle fleur porte toujours son double en elle-même, que ce soit la graine ou le type, le hasard de son programme ou la nécessité de son diagramme. L'héliotrope peut toujours se relever. Et il peut toujours devenir une fleur séchée dans un livre. Il y a toujours, absente de tout jardin, une fleur séchée dans un livre; et en raison de la répétition où elle s'abîme sans fin, aucun langage ne peut réduire en soi la structure d'une anthologie. Ce supplément de code qui traverse son champ, en déplace sans cesse la clôture, brouille la ligne, ouvre le cercle, aucune ontologie n'aura pu le réduire.

A moins que l'anthologie ne soit aussi une lithographie. Hélotrope nomme encore une pierre: pierre précieuse,

verdâtre et rayée de veines rouges, espèce de jaspe oriental (324).

Now what confronts PS in this most uncertain of all areas of interpretation is to somehow make the case, however slight, that the opening and closing passages of Derrida's essay are examples or demonstrations in a performative sense of what the essay and its contents are in a constative sense. Perhaps this can be achieved by saying that these passages are, in and of themselves, both an integral part of the inquiry *and* a dispensable part. Derrida's resorting to figurative language is, on the one hand, a rhetorical stopgap or complement, a filling in of what otherwise cannot be said, an artistic stratagem in the manner of, for example, the myths of Plato's dialogues. On the other hand, his employing poetry on the margins of his inquiry is not meant to replace argument or analysis, but only to be a subsidiary part of it which, if considered to be philosophically insecure or dubious, can be safely ignored or, if considered to be "evidence" of the inadequacy of Derrida's own inquiry, incorporated into the analysis.

While it is true that there is some difficulty in labelling as inadequate an inquiry which carries itself off so artfully, it is also true that a difficulty persists nonetheless as the epistemological commitment which is the desire to grasp the truth about metaphor and not to have this truth dispersed, rendered uncertain, or occulted at the deepest level. In the face of Derrida's artful way of philosophizing, no critical philosophy can enter too far into its web without becoming irremediably stuck. Nor can it simplify it or reduce it without changing it beyond recognition. It therefore remains impenetrable to critique and stands as a sort of counter to the hegemony of the true/false opposition. At the very deepest level, Derrida affirms neither the true nor the false but only what them into operation, into opposition, and into question.

But as suggested earlier, truth-telling can only have significance as the socially valued and accepted. What constitutes the socially valued for philosophical truth-telling is the requirement of two conditions: a plurality of discourses in fair exchange with one another and certain discourses' winning or gaining precedence over other discourses in a consensual way. Now whether these conditions are actually grounded in their impossibility, the fact is that they have an indispensable life in the practise of philosophy. This practical life quite likely involves forgetting or not recognizing the possibility that these conditions are grounded in their impossibility. Derrida's project, insofar as it shares in this practical life, must also forget or not recognize this impossibility. But of course this impossibility is also what it proclaims and in a sense is its formal program.

There is a social imperative in Derrida's project which is as much the condition of the possibility of this project as the asocial or egocentric one.

Being thus divided between the social and the asocial imperatives, the condition of this project's possibility is also the conflict between its truth maintained in principle – the truth which accords a certain privilege to the impossibility of truth – and its truth maintained in practice and which accords a certain privilege to its possibility. In PS's section 2.1, it was pointed out that, in the round table discussion, Derrida emphatically agreed with Ricoeur when the latter impressed upon him the need for various theories. He thus acknowledged a conventional commitment to tell the truth in philosophy even while, with his exposé and other parts of his discussion, he clearly call this same commitment into question.

Now the above discrepancy cannot simply be explained away by the fact that Derrida's project, even while it affirms the impossibility of theory, is also an account of its possibility. The reason is that his accounting for the possibility of theory is not the same as his agreeing with Ricoeur and *calling for* theory. His calling for it can only be his recognition of a certain kind of commitment – the conventional commitment of philosophical truth-telling – of which he himself is effectively incapable. Thus the conflict between affirming the possibility and impossibility of truth, along with its being the condition of the possibility of Derrida's project, is also what puts it in the awkward position of having to preach what it does not practise.

In a similar way, the traditional opposition between true and false makes its claim on Derrida's project insofar as the latter is the commitment to the tell the truth about metaphor, metaphor's relation to philosophy, metaphor's relation to philosophy as virtually unlimited problematic, and Western philosophy as ongoing process of idealization. As thesis or even anti-thesis, it sets itself up as the true grasp of the tradition which eludes the tradition's own grasp. Insofar then as Derrida's project cannot avoid the opposition between true and false, it is one with the tradition. On the other hand, insofar as it disrupts even itself or calls itself into question, insofar as it introduces uncertainty at its margins, and insofar as it defines itself as being both inside and outside the tradition, it secures itself with a certain insecurity, a certain play which stretches it beyond the epistemological dilemma always threatening it. It does so even while veering towards the univocal as "critique" of the tradition by veering away from it as "self-critique."

But the dilemma which it cannot entirely avoid and which is both ethical and epistemological is that the tradition, by continually asserting itself as the univocal and even as the *right* to the univocal, always makes the equivocal response unsatisfactory and something to be negated. Inasmuch as Derrida's project must then affirm itself, its repeated response to this attempt to negate it is, by dint of rigorous analysis and further exploration, the re-registering of the equivocal. But this re-registering is not apart from

the struggle with some element which is never completely mastered or controlled by it, some element (social) which is of its very self and which is even addressed to itself and yet which runs against itself. This element is some tension, force, or strife which is both beyond this discourse and within it: *some call to order*.<sup>41</sup>

---

41 There is a sense in which Derrida's "Le retrait de la métaphore," an exposé which certain people agreeing with S. H. Clark's assessment would say "derives from the most decadent and obscurantist aspects of the late Heidegger," is also a project of clarification. This is to say that the more polemical part of this exposé – the part which is Derrida's response to Ricoeur's critique of "La mythologie blanche" and which is distinct from the analysis of Heidegger – is dedicated to correcting Ricoeur's "misreading" of the earlier work. But this correcting is a certain call to order which, apart from how it redounds to Ricoeur (and however much it is effaced by the later analysis of Heidegger), is Derrida's *own* reading or rereading of "La mythologie blanche." Now, inasmuch as Derrida's rereading of his own essay is a simplification and even oversimplification of it (after all, it is done in the context of a conference), it testifies to a social imperative which Derrida himself cannot avoid and which must traverse his over-complicating operation time and time again.

### Chapter III

#### **Ricoeur's Commitment to Tell the Truth about Metaphor as *Indirect* Encounter with Derrida's Project**

If there were to arise from the tradition a project opposing itself to Derrida's and targeting his anti-thesis by way of taking on the negative thesis, it would have to be a discourse on metaphor and metaphor's relation to philosophy. And if it were to be as fair and as accommodating and as scrupulous as possible even while being this indirect yet wide-ranging assault, then it would have to coincide with it and reach into it as far as possible.

Of course, it is PS's contention that Ricoeur's project opposes itself in such a way and to such an extent to Derrida's. But what was stated earlier about Derrida's indirect encounter with Ricoeur also holds here, namely, that making this case for the long-distance and circuitous targeting of Derrida's project rests upon a large amount of circumstantial evidence. At the same time, for the very reason that it is circumstantial and is opposed to or goes well beyond the testimony of Ricoeur himself, it likely will shake but never dislodge the contrary conviction. What further counts against the case being made here (which may also be thought to be the case against Ricoeur if not in this chapter than in Chapter IV and at the end of Chapter V) is that his critical analysis of "La mythologie blanche" only takes up twelve of the four hundred pages of *La métaphore vive*. Not only does it seem then that Derrida's essay is examined only in passing or as a supplement to a long, exhaustive, diligent, equanimous, and non-fractious investigation of metaphor, but also that Ricoeur's eye is on many other issues besides dead metaphor, issues which, if not burning more brightly for him, burn much longer.

Another important consideration is how close Ricoeur brings his conception of metaphor to Derrida's not only in the First Study but also in the Sixth where he provides an abbreviated version of what he calls in the First Study his most extreme hypothesis.<sup>1</sup> It is the notion that all semantic

---

<sup>1</sup> What Ricoeur calls "l'audace de notre hypothèse la plus extrême" (*MV*, 33) refers to the following:

Une troisième hypothèse, plus aventurée, pointe à l'horizon de la précédente. Si la métaphore relève d'une heuristique de la pensée, ne peut-on supposer que le procédé qui dérange et déplace un certain ordre logique, une certaine hiérarchie conceptuelle, un certain classement, est le même que celui d'où procède toute classification? Certes, nous ne connaissons pas d'autre fonctionnement du langage que celui dans lequel un ordre est déjà constitué; la métaphore

fields and hence the very network of concepts constituting speculative discourse arise from an original metaphorical play, an original metaphoricity (Ricoeur cites Gadamer here) wherein no difference is possible between proper and improper or literal and figurative. Standing outside his own theory of live metaphor and, indeed, theory in general, Ricoeur's hypothesis is only a hair's breath away from Derrida's deconstruction of the concept of metaphor. But this difference of a hair's breath, if examined more closely, still turns out to be significant and perhaps even abysmal to the extent that, first of all, Ricoeur's version of quasi-metaphoricity involves a genesis of meaning and language, that is, an original chaos replaced by order, and therefore a teleological and dialectical process. Secondly, this difference is likely more a point of contention or division than it seems to be because, even though Ricoeur's hypothesis falls in the vicinity of Derrida's project in more ways than one, Ricoeur himself makes no connection between them. Or, to put it another way, he does not draw himself closer to Derrida at this point even though he has just finished dealing with him (albeit critically) in two lengthy footnotes.<sup>2</sup> Nor does it seem that Ricoeur has simply forgotten

---

n'engendre un ordre nouveau qu'en produisant des écarts dans un ordre antérieur; ne pouvons nous néanmoins imaginer que l'ordre lui-même naît de la même manière qu'il change? n'y a-t-il pas, selon l'expression de Gadamer, une « métaphorique » à l'oeuvre à l'origine de la pensée logique, à la racine de toute classification? Cette hypothèse va plus loin que les précédentes, qui présupposent, pour la fonctionnement de la métaphore, un langage déjà constitué. La notion d'écart est liée à cette présupposition: mais aussi l'opposition, introduite par Aristote lui-même, entre un langage « courant » et un langage « étrange » ou « rare »; et, à plus forte raison, l'opposition introduite ultérieurement entre « propre » et « figuré ». L'idée d'une métaphorique initiale ruine l'opposition du propre et du figuré, de l'ordinaire et de l'étranger, de l'ordre et de la transgression. Elle suggère l'idée que l'ordre lui-même procède de la constitution métaphorique des champs sémantiques à partir desquels il y a des genres et des espèces (MV, 32).

<sup>2</sup> Besides the two successive footnotes in the First Study where Ricoeur, among other things, critiques Derrida's interpretation of the key terms, *kurion* and *idion*, there are three other brief references to him. In one of these references, Ricoeur approves of Derrida's interpretation of the difference between *dianoia* and *lexis* in Aristotle's theory of tragedy. In another of these references, he cites a passage from "La mythologie blanche" in which Derrida links Aristotle's metaphorology and metaphysics to onto-theology and humanism. Finally, in another reference, he makes what surely is, given his endorsement of Aristotle's theory of metaphor and his critical account of Derrida's and Heidegger's allegedly Platonic conception of metaphor, a passing swipe at both of them. "On pourrait être tenté, à la suite de Heidegger et de Derrida (cf. ci-dessous, viii Étude, sec. 3), de détecter ici quelque reste honteux de platonisme" (MV, 50). Ricoeur is referring here to Aristotle's description of metaphor as animating the inanimate. He then goes on to affirm that this description

him since, when he gives his account of his most audacious hypothesis, he uses Derrida's "watchword" twice.<sup>3</sup>

It may well be asked at this point: if Ricoeur's encounter with Derrida is really an epic and not an incidental struggle, why does he not acknowledge it as such? What purpose is served by making it seem peripheral or something that only needs to be dealt with in passing or even as something which comes to him as an afterthought?

PS can only offer the following as a hypothesis which, of course, is already governing the analysis. Ricoeur proceeds in the best and perhaps the only way he can. He cannot confront Derrida both directly and on a broad front without either relinquishing the resources of the tradition which he marshals against him or else abandoning the act of recognition which is also the most fair and just hearing of Derrida. With respect to the first option which is really no option, a direct and exhaustive recognition of Derrida's project would necessarily entail calling into question the very presuppositions which allow Ricoeur's project to oppose it. For if the recognition of Derrida's project is so direct and exhaustive as to be itself a calling into question of these presuppositions, then there is no possible basis on which to be critical of it in the sense of refuting it.

With respect to the second option (which is, again, no option), matters turn on the fact that the resources of the tradition are not sufficient to meet Derrida's challenge without being updated and replenished. Since the challenge posed here is essentially one of a discourse on metaphor extending to the very heart of philosophy, the tradition falls short by having no corresponding discourse. Without this corresponding discourse, the tradition meets Derrida's challenge not by being particularly fair and just to his project, but by attempting to turn it to scorn. To reduce it to a philosophy of rhetoric or a rhetoric of philosophy results in two convenient ways to dismiss it: first, by treating it as a project which, whether being a philosophical study of rhetoric or a rhetorical study of philosophy, is marginal to the principal aims and interests of philosophy and, secondly, by treating it as a project which still operates with a conventional thesis and hence is involved in a performative contradiction.<sup>4</sup>

---

entirely agrees with Aristotle's metaphysic as things in act which itself is distinguishable from the Platonic metaphysic of visible and invisible worlds.

<sup>3</sup> The first occasion comes slightly before the "troisième hypothèse" passage cited above.

"La méprise catégoriale serait alors l'intermède de *déconstruction* entre description et redescription" (Italics added, *MV*, 32). The second occasion comes shortly after it.

Commenting on Aristotle's remark that to metaphorize well is to perceive resemblances well, Ricoeur asks: "Ne sommes-nous pas ici au plan de la trouvaille, c'est-à-dire de cette heuristique dont nous disions qu'elle ne viole un ordre que pour en créer un autre, qu'elle ne *déconstruit* que pour redécrire?" (Italics added, *MV*, 33).

<sup>4</sup> For the sake of economy and certainly not to settle here the matter of justice and fair play,

A critique of Derrida which wishes to do him justice must therefore be more subtle, circumspect, and circuitous. It must be the recognition and non-recognition which comes from being a secret appropriation of him. Such an appropriation must take the risk of coming as close as possible to Derrida without the appropriating discourse's collapsing into the appropriated one. To the extent that such an appropriation is successful, it becomes impossible to announce or acknowledge it. At least, such an acknowledgment cannot be an integral part of the critique which accompanies the appropriation and yet which turns its back on it in order to register itself as the one true measure of doing justice and giving a fair hearing. Were it otherwise – were the appropriation recognized – this recognition as self-recognition would divert attention away from the critique of Derrida and towards the critique of the appropriation itself. For Ricoeur, this self-critique would also be self-destruction in the sense of its being a calling into question of the very presuppositions which Derrida himself calls into question.

It is the case then that, despite secretly appropriating Derrida for the purpose of giving him a fair and just hearing – for the purpose of recognizing him in a way which is also a valorizing of him – Ricoeur cannot avoid giving him a sort of rigged trial and committing an injustice which is itself, strangely enough, inseparable from the immense work of overhauling the tradition in order to better recognize Derrida's challenge and yet, at the

---

the following is an example of Derrida's reaction to these hasty and often ill-considered attacks on him. It should go without saying that the rightness of his stand does not rule out the possibility of his committing a return injustice. For example, one might very well ask: Is he right in speaking, as he does below, of his work having theses rather than only negative theses and anti-theses?

What is going on at this moment, above all, around "deconstruction," to explain this fear and this dogmatism? Exposed to the slightest difficulty, the slightest complication, the slightest transformation of the rules, the self-declared advocates of communication denounce the absence of rules and confusion. And they allow themselves then to confuse everything in the most authoritarian manner. They even dare to accuse the adversary, as Habermas does me, of "performative contradiction." Is there a "performative contradiction" more serious than that which consists in claiming to discuss rationally the theses of the other without having made the slightest effort to take cognizance of them, read them, or listen to them? I invite interested readers – or whoever may still have doubts about what I have just said – to read for themselves this chapter by Habermas [ i.e., his "Excursus on Leveling the Genre Distinction between Philosophy and Literature" in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990), 185-210] which claims to criticize me, naming me for twenty-five pages without the slightest reference and without the slightest citation (*Limited Inc* [Evanston, Il: Northwestern University Press, 1988], 158).

same time, to defeat it. Furthermore, Ricoeur cannot engage Derrida very deeply or at least as deeply as philosophical thought can plummet without ultimately being less critical of his adversary and more critical of himself. At the same time, this injustice which he commits towards Derrida is inseparable from doing him – at least in the context of safeguarding the tradition – broad justice.

### **3.1. Metaphor, Subject, Discourse**

As large as metaphor looms in *La métaphore vive*, it is relentlessly shadowed by the subject of discourse. Discourse is, indeed, a shadowing subject to the extent that, unlike its status in Ricoeur's "Discours et communication,"<sup>5</sup> it no longer occupies centre stage. And yet, despite this apparent shift to the sidelines, there are not simply one but two important ways that it is present and even casts its shadow beyond metaphor.

Both ways of thematising discourse are of course related to and a relating of it to metaphor. The first way is by analysing and elaborating metaphor's role or operation. The idea of metaphor's having an influence and effect which is much larger than traditionally recognized is explicit throughout *La métaphore vive*. It is most widely represented by Ricoeur's ongoing insistence that metaphor is predicative and, only in this way, semantic. But by the time of the Seventh Study, Ricoeur has extended it even further to include discourse as whole texts and, in particular, literary or poetic ones.

Or la postulat de la référence exige une élaboration distincte lorsqu'il concerne les entités particulières de discours qu'on appelle des « textes », donc des compositions de plus grande extension que la phrase. La question relève désormais de l'herméneutique plutôt que de la sémantique, pour laquelle la phrase est à la fois la première et la dernière entité (276).<sup>6</sup>

With respect to the second way of thematising discourse, what is at issue is philosophy's exerting a certain control over other discourses and over metaphor. To begin with, the First Study opens not with a discussion of metaphor, but with a discussion of three discourses in the context of discussing Aristotle: philosophy, rhetoric, and poetics. Ricoeur is concerned with historical developments which go back to Aristotle and which affect the

---

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 2 on page 72.

<sup>6</sup> All cited passages in Chapters III and IV refer to Ricoeur's *La métaphore vive* unless otherwise indicated.

relationships between these discourses. He is also concerned with the decline of rhetoric resulting from its break from philosophy's tutelage. Due to its unfortunate abandonment of the theory of argumentation and persuasion which in Aristotle is under the guidance of "*une théorie du vraisemblable, qui armerait la rhétorique contre ses propres abus*" (17), the later rhetorical tradition or, more precisely, its argumentative branch gives up the most rigorous commitment to truth, knowledge, logic, proof, evidence, etc. Deprived then of philosophy's theoretical sustenance and guidance, its field of study inevitably shrinks.

. . . vidée de son dynamisme et de son drame, la rhétorique est livrée au jeu des distinctions et des rangements. Le génie taxinomique occupe la place désertée par la philosophie de la rhétorique (17).<sup>7</sup>

With respect to the relationship between philosophy and rhetoric, Ricoeur notes that the former, while generally helpless against the latter as use and abuse of power, can at least exert a theoretical or normative influence over it and, as such, employ the only kind of control which is not a use of force. "*Son discours n'est lui-même qu'un discours parmi d'autres et la prétention à la vérité qui habite son discours l'exclut de la sphère du pouvoir*" (16). Here it seems that philosophy is, contrary to being valued over rhetoric, put on an equal footing with it and all other discourses. At the same time, it is distinguished as the commitment to truth, non-violence, and non-deception, and, as such, it is fit to tutor rhetoric which, close to ordinary speech, is by nature undisciplined. Not only this, rhetoric has the potential to be reformed and taken up into philosophy on a serious or full-time basis.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> "Or la logique offrait une solution de secours, qui rejoignait d'ailleurs une des plus vieilles intuitions de la rhétorique; celle-ci avait dès ses origines, reconnu dans la terme *to eikos* – le vraisemblable – un titre auquel pouvait prétendre l'usage public de la parole. Le genre de preuve qui convient à l'éloquence n'est pas le nécessaire mais le vraisemblable; car les choses humaines, dont tribunaux et assemblées délibèrent et décident, ne sont pas susceptibles de la sorte de nécessité, de contrainte intellectuelle, que la géométrie et la philosophie première exigent. Plutôt donc que de dénoncer la *doxa* – l'opinion – comme inférieure à l'*épistêmê* – à la science, la philosophie peut se proposer d'élaborer une théorie du vraisemblable qui armerait la rhétorique contre ses propres abus, en la dissociant de la sophistique et de l'éristique. Le grand mérite d'Aristote a été d'élaborer ce lien entre le concept rhétorique de persuasion et le concept logique du vraisemblable, et de construire sur ce rapport l'édifice entier d'une rhétorique philosophique" (MV, 16-17).

<sup>8</sup> "Ce que nous lisons aujourd'hui sous le titre de la *Rhétorique* est donc le traité où s'inscrit l'équilibre entre deux mouvements contraires, celui qui porte la rhétorique à s'affranchir de la philosophie, sinon à se substituer à elle, et celui qui porte la philosophie à réinventer la rhétorique comme un système de preuve de second rang. Au point de rencontre de la puissance dangereuse de l'éloquence et de la logique du vraisemblable se situe une rhétorique que la philosophie tient sous surveillance" (MV, 17).

Philosophy's non-forceful control over rhetoric seems analogous to rendering the subject of metaphor subject to philosophy. Although this analogy between rhetoric and metaphor in the context of a certain call to allegiance is never thematised by Ricoeur, it is safe to say that his book bears many signs of it. First among the many indications of metaphor's being called to philosophical allegiance is that *La métaphore vive* begins with Aristotle and ends with him. In between, there are numerous metaphorical theories but, however important they are, Ricoeur only recognizes them in the context of Aristotle's theory of metaphor which dominates the First Study and Aristotle's theory of act/potency which dominates the last section of the Eighth Study.

Apart from this last section where Ricoeur explores the ontological presuppositions of his theory of metaphor, the development of this theory is finished before his last study begins. The Eighth Study is about metaphor only in the context of issues which seriously overshadow it and which primarily concern Ricoeur's encounter with Derrida and Heidegger and his analysis of the interaction or interference between discourses in general.<sup>9</sup> Here the notion of philosophy's having final say over metaphor is thematised as the discontinuity between poetic discourse and speculative discourse. Poetic discourse is the wide-ranging eruption of metaphorical truth into the world which is fluid and which ultimately congeals in speculative discourse. Ricoeur explains that works of literature and poetry, in offering a fictional world comparable to the real one, impinge on the latter. Whereas in poetic discourse there is always a tension or play between language and thought and language and world, in speculative discourse there is, if still a gap between language and world, no gap between language and thought.<sup>10</sup> Both discourse and thought at the level of the inquiry into being are the mind's independent work of finding and founding the ordered truth of the world. This conceptual truth, as opposed to fictional or metaphorical truth, is both first-order truth and final truth in the sense of its being a return to the world as the same or the one.

Ricoeur begins the Eighth Study by making a plea for the discontinuity

---

<sup>9</sup> Although implicit in other parts of *La métaphore vive*, the relationship between poetic discourse and speculative discourse is explicitly analysed in the Eighth Study's fourth section, "L'intersection des sphères de discours," which follows Ricoeur's critical analysis of "La mythologie blanche."

<sup>10</sup> "Que le discours spéculatif trouve dans le dynamisme qu'on vient de décrire quelque chose comme l'esquisse d'une détermination conceptuelle n'empêche pas que le discours spéculatif commence de soi et trouve en lui-même le principe de son articulation. De soi-même il tire la ressource d'un espace conceptuel qu'il offre au déploiement de sens qui s'esquisse métaphoriquement. . . . Elle procède plutôt des structures même de l'esprit que la philosophie transcendantale a pour tâche d'articuler. De l'un à l'autre discours, on ne passe que par une *époque*" (MV, 380).

between poetic discourse and speculative discourse. He also makes a second plea which is the plea for a plurality of discourses. These pleas, if taken, not in isolation but in a certain limited context, could easily raise the question of who, besides Ricoeur himself, is contesting this discontinuity and plurality.<sup>11</sup> After all, his notions of metaphorical truth and split reference<sup>12</sup> certainly suggest that the boundaries between poetry, science, and philosophy are far more fluid or porous than they are normally taken to be. Likewise does his criticizing the positivistic or empirical notions of truth.

Pour autant [que] se ramenait [la distinction entre connotation et dénotation] à l'opposition des valeurs cognitive et émotionnelle du discours, nous ne pouvions y voir que la projection, dans la poétique, d'un préjugé positiviste en vertu duquel seul le discours scientifique dit la réalité (386).

Ricoeur's plea then is perhaps not so much for a discontinuity between poetry and philosophy, but rather for a greater discontinuity than *some* philosophers seem to permit.

On the other hand, it is possible that the issue of discontinuity is a distraction and what is really at issue is, despite Ricoeur's obviously wanting

---

11 Even S. H. Clark who is wholly supportive of Ricoeur's project finds a certain oddity here.

It is a remarkable paradox that a book so committed to demonstrating the fundamental importance of metaphor in human creativity should devote so much of its final chapter to trying to fend off the success of its preceding argument" (PR, 137).

Another relevant point is that, on more than one occasion while developing his theory of metaphor, Ricoeur raises the spectre – but shortly to dismiss it – of philosophy's being confounded by all the implications of his vastly extended theory. In the last section of the Eighth Study, he raises once again this spectre and, after citing all the metaphysical oppositions which his theory must dispense with, articulates the general fear:

C'est ici que, comme nous le craignons, l'instance critique semble se convertir en plaidoyer pour l'irrationnel. Avec la suspension de la référence à des objets faisant face à un sujet *jugeant*, n'est-ce pas la structure même de l'énonciation qui vacille? Avec l'effacement de tant de distinctions bien connues, n'est-ce pas la notion même de discours spéculatif qui s'évanouit, et avec cette notion la dialectique du spéculatif et du poétique? (MV, 388).

12 Ricoeur's theory of metaphor as theory of split reference takes up the whole of the Seventh Study. In brief, he describes the copula of the metaphorical proposition as being both an *is* and an *is not*.

to portray it otherwise, an ordering of discourses. This ordering is not some brute grasp for power but rather is intimately connected to philosophy's control of itself. Since philosophy's self-control is inseparable from its control of metaphor and rhetoric, what is at stake is not simply the truth about them, but the very *ideal* of truth. It is these higher stakes which generate Ricoeur's concern for philosophy's influence and operation in the Eighth Study.

It is not only fair to say that Ricoeur is committed to protecting the most basic presuppositions of philosophy, but that he is also committed to calling other presuppositions into question. Perhaps the boldest move along these lines is his doing away with, at least in a qualified sense, the fiction/truth opposition. It is Aristotle's theory of mimesis on which Ricoeur first relies in order to rethink the relationship between the virtual world of art and the actual world of day-to-day. The first imitates the second but also returns to it as a redescriving or recreating of it. Much later on in his book, Ricoeur examines the use of models in science which certain theorists compare to metaphor as a way to explain natural phenomena. Here the integration of a certain fiction in the scientific explanation can be so successful as to render the former indistinguishable from the latter.<sup>13</sup>

Ricoeur in a certain sense carries on his own deconstructive project when he calls into question such oppositions as proper/improper, visible/invisible, and "inside"/ "outside." *"D'autres distinctions vacillent en chaîne. Ainsi la distinction entre découvrir et créer, entre trouver et projeter. Ce que le discours poétique porte au langage, c'est un monde pré-objectif . . ."* (387). It is clear then that he shakes up in some sense the traditional areas of epistemology and ontology. His repeated criticism of empiricism and positivism is part of a comprehensive theory of interpretation which permits little data to be called hard or to escape being challenged and subject to revision. Also revealing in terms of his deconstructive bent is the way he characterizes the very last section of his book where he examines the ontological presuppositions of his theory. Here he describes this task in a way which bears an uncanny resemblance to Derrida's *modus operandi*:

---

13 "Cet enjeu épistémologique est bien mis en relief par Mary Hesse: « Il faut, dit-elle, modifier et compléter le modèle déductif de l'explication scientifique et concevoir l'explication théorique comme la redescription métaphorique du domaine de l'*explanandum* ». Cette thèse porte deux accents. Le premier accent est mis sur le mot explication; si le modèle, comme la métaphore, introduit un nouveau langage, sa description vaut explication; ce qui signifie que le modèle opère sur le terrain même de l'épistémologie déductiviste pour modifier et compléter les critères de déductibilité de l'explication scientifique tels qu'ils sont énoncés par exemple par C. G. Hempel et P. Oppenheim" (MV, 304-305).

Dès lors, ce ne peut être que sur le mode exploratoire et non point dogmatique, sur un mode où l'on n'affirme plus qu'en questionnant, que l'on peut tenter une interprétation de la formule: signifier l'acte (391).

Rather than hard knowledge or truth, it is the pure form of meaning and intention which Ricoeur seeks to preserve and which are, of course, inseparable from having at least some metaphysical oppositions in place and ones, moreover, which ground philosophy's independence from poetry. Of these oppositions, the one which is most explicitly laid out and endorsed by Ricoeur is the semiotic/semantic one. He pays a great deal of attention to this opposition because it is inseparable from his project of enlarging metaphorical theory from denomination to predication and from word to sentence. It is on the basis of this opposition that Ricoeur allows no more than virtual meaning to the sign or lexicalized word while claiming that meaning proper is only to be found at the level of the sentence. Meaning then belongs to a referring which is also an intending.<sup>14</sup>

### **3.2. Mobilizing the Tradition: Critique, Correction, Protection**

PS's hypothesis is that Ricoeur provides a large-scale response to Derrida's project which marshals the whole tradition in a highly complex way. This response is one with his immense concern for the tradition and for comprehending it as well as possible. Given the huge mass of material to be mobilized, the great challenge to Ricoeur is to coordinate it and, at the same time, to develop a theory of metaphor. The most important coordinating principle for Ricoeur's project is the line which runs from Aristotle in the First Study to Aristotle in the Eighth Study.

This first coordinating principle makes Ricoeur's marshalling of the tradition a metadiscourse which is both resourceful and full of resources. It is full of resources in the sense that, like Derrida, Ricoeur takes Aristotle to be fundamental to all later metaphorical theory. Aristotle's philosophy therefore can operate for Ricoeur as the broad basis on which to critique and correct

---

14 "On peut rattacher à ce premier couple [l'événement et le sens] les distinctions introduites par Paul Grice, dans sa théorie de la signification, entre la signification de l'énoncé, la signification de l'énonciation, et la signification de l'énonciateur. Il est précisément de l'essence du discours de permettre ces distinctions. On en trouve le fondement dans l'analyse de Benveniste, lorsqu'il parle, d'une part, de l'instance de discours, comme on vient de voir, et, d'autre part, de l'intenté du discours, qui est tout autre chose que le signifié d'un signe isolé; le signifié est seulement, comme l'a bien dit Ferdinand de Saussure, la contrepartie du signifiant, une simple différence du système de la langue; l'intenté est « ce que le locuteur veut dire ». Le signifié est d'ordre sémiotique, l'intenté d'ordre sémantique: c'est lui que P. Grice vise dans son analyse" (*MV*, 93).

the theories which follow. It is also resourceful in the sense that, as an Aristotelian-based project which takes on another project, it pits itself against one which, because it is also an analysis of Aristotle, is inevitably an *interpretation* of him and, as interpretation, vulnerable.<sup>15</sup>

The second coordinating principle is Ricoeur's deployment of what is already implicit in Aristotle: the semiotic/semantic opposition. In the context of interpreting Aristotle, Derrida and Ricoeur both agree that, in his theory of diction (*lexis*), some linguistic units such as letter, syllable, preposition, etc. fall below the level of meaning and others such as noun, verb, sentence, etc. attain it. They also agree that metaphor in Aristotle belongs to the semantic level of discourse and not to the semiotic or syntactic level of language.

The third coordinating principle is the division between the philosophical and rhetorical study of metaphor. For Ricoeur, the rhetorical study is essentially the theory of metaphor as theory of substitution. According to this theory, metaphor is not propositional, predicative, and discursive, but simply a single-word movement or effect. It is a word which, replacing another word, offers no additional meaning. Rhetoric thus reduces metaphor to ornament and to a linguistic element or event which, in its diversity, simply needs to be classified. Ricoeur argues that this reduction of metaphor to ornament is not simply the case with the Classical Rhetoric of the nineteenth century but with structural semantics and the New Rhetoric (Group Mu).<sup>16</sup>

---

15 Aristotle's ontology, which receives extensive treatment in the Eighth Study, is in the First Study only dealt with, on the one hand, in an implicit way and, on the other hand, in a marginal way. The subject makes its first appearance in the first of two long footnotes in which Ricoeur critiques Derrida's interpretation of Aristotle. In the first footnote, Ricoeur takes issue with Derrida's grounding Aristotle's theory of metaphor in his theory of the analogy of being.

Quant à l'analogie de l'être, c'est à strictement parler une doctrine médiévale, fondée en outre sur une interprétation du rapport de la série entière des catégories à son terme premier, la substance (*ousia*). Rien n'autorise le court-circuit entre métaphore de proportionnalité et analogie de l'être. 3) La notion de sens « courant » (*kurion*) ne conduit pas, comme on le verra plus loin, à celle de sens « propre », si l'on entend par sens propre un sens primitif, originel, indigène. 4) L'ontologie de la métaphore que paraît suggérer la définition de l'art par la mimesis et sa subordination au concept de *phusis* n'est pas nécessairement « métaphysique », au sens que Heidegger a donné à ce mot. Je proposerai, au terme de cette première Étude, une interprétation de l'ontologie implicite de la *Poétique* d'Aristote qui ne met aucunement en jeu le transfert du visible à l'invisible . . . (MV, 26).

16 In the following passage, Ricoeur describes New Rhetoric and how he relates Group Mu to it.

To give an explanation of the metaphorical production of new meaning is the fourth coordinating principle. The call to provide this explanation gives the final boost to Ricoeur's own proper theory and allows it in some sense to escape the gravitational pull of the tradition. Indeed, if one bears in mind the problematic sun-metaphor in Derrida's analysis of Aristotle and also Ricoeur's negative reaction to it, then one is almost inclined to think that Ricoeur sets up his grand theory of metaphor as the philosophical sun which shines so brightly as to obliterate Derrida's problematic one. Certainly there is a sense in which he not only provides a metadiscourse on metaphor but also a meta-theory of sorts. Despite his strongly opposing theory of metaphor-sentence to theory of metaphor-word, theory of predication to theory of denomination, and theory of interaction to theory of substitution, none of the second-named are lost or entirely rejected. On the contrary, Ricoeur in the Fourth Study, "La métaphore et la sémantique du mot," reintegrates them back into a grand theory of metaphor which assigns to them their proper place. In this sense, Ricoeur's theory, operating in what is normally a marginal area, is a gigantic taking in and ordering of all. In order to take a closer look at this immense operation, it will be necessary to examine each coordinating principle in turn.

### 3.3. The Aristotelian Basis: Act/Potency

Ricoeur gives no single project besides his own more attention than Aristotle's. Setting aside twenty pages for Fontanier's *Les figures du discours* in the Second Study,<sup>17</sup> he devotes more than twice as many to Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*. In addition, there are numerous references to Aristotle in the following studies.

---

Les travaux de la nouvelle rhétorique auxquels cette [cinquième] étude est consacrée ont l'ambition commune de rénover l'entreprise essentiellement taxinomique de la rhétorique classique en fondant les *espèces* de la classification sur les *formes* des opérations qui se jouent à tous les niveaux d'articulation du langage. La nouvelle rhétorique est tributaire à cet égard d'une sémantique portée elle-même à son plus haut degré de radicalité structurale.

La période considérée étant trop courte et les travaux trop récents, on s'attachera moins à l'enchaînement historique des thèses qu'à leurs grandes articulations théoriques, en prenant pour repère terminal la *Rhétorique générale*, publiée par le Group u (*Centre d'études poétiques, Université de Liège*) (MV, 173).

17 Ricoeur accords to Fontanier's theory of tropes and figures a certain exemplary status. "Le traité de Pierre Fontanier, *les Figures du discours* (1830), constitue l'effectuation la plus rapprochée du modèle rhétorique que nous avons construit systématiquement" (MV, 68).

Despite Ricoeur's extensive reliance on Aristotle, there are two closely related issues in the *Poetics* which he critiques and considers to have far-reaching consequences. The first is the status which Aristotle seems to accord to the noun in his definition of metaphor and the second the status he accords to the noun in his theory of diction (*lexis*).

Le terme commun à l'énumération des parties de l'élocution et à la définition de la métaphore est le nom (*onoma*). Ainsi est scellé pour des siècles le sort de la métaphore (20).

While Aristotle's numerous remarks on metaphor suggest that metaphor is predicative and discursive, he defines it as the transfer of a word from one object to another. Ricoeur takes this short definition to be implying that a theory of metaphor is a theory of denomination. On the other hand, he argues that Aristotle's full definition describes metaphor as predication. All four species of metaphor in this definition necessarily involve two terms which form a subject-predicate relation. Moreover, the resulting sentence is in part a transgression of linguistic and logical boundaries. There is a negative or "deconstructive" moment of the metaphorical function which Ricoeur calls, borrowing from Gilbert Ryle, a category-mistake.<sup>18</sup> Opposed to the latter is of course the positive or reconstructive moment which reveals hitherto unperceived relations resulting in the discovery and founding of the categories themselves.

The pivotal role which Aristotle assigns to the word or noun in his theory of diction comes about from his defining it in such a way that it is the dividing line between the semantic and the semiotic or syntactic. The result is that the description of the noun rounds off Aristotle's discussion of the smaller units such as letter, syllable, preposition, conjunction, etc. The noun is then not properly integrated into a theory of the sentence and in turn a theory of discourse. By largely looking on the sentence as the linguistic unit which is meaningful only by being constituted by the smaller semantic units such as noun and verb, Aristotle fails to observe or at least fails to *emphasize* the fact that there is an interaction between sentence and noun which ultimately makes the role of the former the more important one.

Aristotle's misplaced emphasis on the word or noun both in his definition of metaphor and his theory of diction operates as a sort of fault

---

<sup>18</sup> Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1949). "Aristote n'a pas lui-même exploité l'idée d'une transgression catégoriale que quelques modernes rapprocheront du concept *category-mistake* chez Gilbert Ryle. Sans doute parce qu'Aristote est plus intéressé, dans la ligne de sa *Poétique*, au gain sémantique attaché au transfert des noms qu'au coût logique de l'opération" (MV, 31).

line which extends throughout the later tradition. On one side of this line is the rhetorical tradition and on the other side is the philosophical. Nowhere is this more explicitly recognized by Ricoeur than at the beginning of the Second Study. Here he carries on what is essentially a critique of the rhetorical tradition which has its roots in the opening section of the First Study. It is Ricoeur's contention that the New Rhetoric of France (Genette)<sup>19</sup> is mistaken when, looking back into the tradition, it claims that rhetoric's decline in the nineteenth century is attributable to its having severed itself from philosophy. To be sure, Ricoeur more than acknowledges the historical separation of rhetoric from philosophy and the resulting harm to the former. In his estimation, however, the problem which lies at the heart of the short-lived but major taxonomic efforts of the nineteenth century is the taking of the noun or word as primary unit of meaning.

Le déclin de la rhétorique résulte d'une erreur initiale qui affecte la théorie même des tropes, indépendamment de la place accordée à la tropologie dans le champs rhétorique. Cette erreur initiale tient à la dictature du mot dans la théorie de la signification (64).

It is on this split Aristotelian basis with its one division resulting in a miscarriage of the tradition and its other division being true and corrective that Ricoeur begins his examination of later theories of metaphor. As one of the most prominent and influential of these later theories, Fontanier's theory of tropes and figures falls on the side of the tradition which miscarries. At the beginning of the Second Study, Ricoeur lists all the key traits assigned to metaphor by the rhetorical tradition or, as he calls it, the rhetoric of tropology (*rhétorique de la tropologie*). After providing this list of traits (one of which is that metaphor is merely ornamental or decorative), Ricoeur admits that all of these traits can be found in the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*! Of course, he adds that they are subsidiary to Aristotle's theory of metaphor which emphasizes the predicative, semantic, heuristic, analogous, and so on.<sup>20</sup>

It must be then that there is an ambiguity in the way rhetoric is connected to Aristotle and, more generally, philosophy. On the one hand, rhetoric strays from what is proper to Aristotle's theory of metaphor by, first

---

19 For this view of rhetoric's decline, Ricoeur specifically refers to Gérald Genette's "La rhétorique restreinte" *Communications*, 16 (Paris: Seuil, 1970), 158-171.

20 "Ainsi, tout en étant l'initiateur du modèle qui triomphera dans la rhétorique finissante, Aristote fournit aussi quelques-uns des arguments qui mettront en échec ce modèle. Mais ce n'est pas parce que sa rhétorique est plus vaste qu'une théorie de l'élocution, mais parce que la *lexis*, explicitement centrée sur le nom, repose implicitement sur une opération prédictive" (*MV*, 67).

of all, ignoring what is both implicit and explicit in his theory, namely, metaphor as predication and, secondly, by only attending to what is explicit in a limited or truncated sense, namely, metaphor as denomination. It therefore strays from what is proper only because there must be something not quite right about this theory even if this "not quite right" is limited to its laying a certain momentary or unintentional stress on the word as key linguistic unit. While attributing this originating fault to Aristotle's lack of clarity and precision in this particular area (at least, so it seems), Ricoeur attributes the secondary or derivative fault, which is the tradition's, to a certain lack of interpretative caution or perspicacity. He then goes on to suggest that a better interpretation of Aristotle is required, one which shows the breakaway tradition of rhetoric its proper roots in philosophy and even its innate tendency to rejoin it. This play between a rhetoric which goes astray and yet is already programmed to return to philosophy is analogous to Ricoeur's account of live metaphor.

In Fontanier, Ricoeur finds the traces of this internal distress in a theory of tropes which, basing itself on a theory of thought, also bases itself on a certain tension or play between ideas and judgement. Although Fontanier's theory designates that tropes replace literal or proper words and that there is a one-to-one correspondence between words and ideas, the thought which contains these ideas is essentially propositional or judgmental.<sup>21</sup> Thus the static tropological account of Fontanier's theory which is of course the official, formal, or intended one is implicitly supported by a dynamic account which, as the registering of judgmental thought, is also the registering of the need for a theory of metaphor which is also a theory of predication. A little further on, when commenting on a certain remark by Fontanier to the effect that metaphor, unlike metonymy and synecdoche, can encompass all different types of words such as verb, adjective, and participle,<sup>22</sup> Ricoeur explicitly affirms this internal need in Fontanier's theory:

Pourquoi la métaphore joue-t-elle ainsi sur toutes les sortes de mots, alors que la métonymie et la synecdoque n'affectent que la désignation par les noms? On peut se

---

21 "Il est alors possible de retranscrire toutes les distinctions entre espèces de mots en fonction de leur rôle dans la proposition: l'idée substantive, considérée dans le jugement, devient le sujet de la proposition, l'idée concrète est ce qu'on appelle l'attribut et le rapport de coexistence, exprimé par le verbe être, est ce qu'on appelle la copule" (MV, 70).

22 These non-nouns remain metaphors in the Aristotelian sense because, as Derrida points out, they still are nominalizable. "Parmi les mots correspondant aux « idées d'objet » – qui se laissent naturellement nominaliser –, on range les *noms*, tous les mots « employés substantivement » (*le beau, le vrai, le juste; le manger, le boire, le dormir; le pour, le contre; le devant, le derrière; le pourquoi, le comment; le dedans, le dehors; les mais, les si, les car, les quand*) et les participes actifs ou passifs" (MB, 280-281).

demander si cette extension ne préfigure pas un déplacement plus important qui ne sera reconnu que dans une théorie proprement prédicative de la métaphore (78).

While the dozen or so references to Aristotle in the Third and Fourth Studies are slight, it is certainly not due to any shifting away from the Aristotelian basis. On the contrary, there are two schools of thought which Ricoeur examines and which he brings closer together and plants more firmly on this basis.<sup>23</sup> One is the Anglo-American school with its theory of interaction and the other is the Continental or structuralist school with its theory of substitution. Ricoeur, rather than rejecting the latter, seeks to bring it, in a manner of speaking, under the rule of the Anglo-American school. Due to the split in the Aristotelian basis between the properly philosophical tradition and the improperly rhetorical tradition, Ricoeur uses the former, largely represented by the Anglo-American school, to rectify the latter, largely represented by the Continental school.<sup>24</sup>

---

23 While Ricoeur clearly puts New Rhetoric in line with Classical Rhetoric and the rhetorical tradition per se, he has a much different way of looking at the work of I. A. Richards (*The Philosophy of Rhetoric* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936]), the first of the interactive theorists whom he examines in the Third Study.

I. A. Richards emprunte sa définition de la rhétorique à un des derniers grands traités du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle anglais, celui de l'archevêque Whateley [*sic*]: la rhétorique, déclare celui-ci, est « une discipline philosophique visant à la maîtrise des lois fondamentales de l'usage du langage ». On le voit, l'amplitude de la rhétorique grecque est restituée par chacun des éléments de cette définition. En mettant l'accent sur l'emploi du langage, l'auteur situe la rhétorique au plan proprement verbal de la compréhension et de la communication; la rhétorique est la théorie du discours, de la pensée comme discours. . . . Enfin, le caractère philosophique de cette discipline est assuré par le souci majeur de remédier à la « perte de communication », plutôt d'assigner à la rhétorique le souci de persuader, d'influencer et, finalement, de plaire, souci, qui, de proche en proche, a coupé dans le passé la rhétorique de la philosophie (*MV*, 100-101).

24 "Cette permanence de la thèse de la métaphore-mot et cette fidélité de la néo-rhétorique à la théorie de la substitution étonnent moins quand on considère la différence des contextes historiques. L'analyse des Anglo-Saxons doit infiniment moins à la linguistique des linguistes, que bien souvent même elle ignore souverainement, qu'à la logique et plus précisément la logique propositionnelle, laquelle impose d'emblée le niveau de considération de la phrase et invite spontanément à traiter la métaphore dans le cadre de la prédication. La néo-rhétorique, au contraire, s'édifie sur les bases d'une linguistique qui, de plusieurs façons, conduisait à renforcer le lien entre métaphore et mot et corollairement, à consolider la thèse de la substitution" (*MV*, 130).

But while it is true that the bulk of Ricoeur's critical and corrective attention goes to the Continental school, the Anglo-American school is not entirely spared. At the beginning of the Third Study, Ricoeur makes a distinction which tends to redeem Aristotle's troubled definition of metaphor and, at the same time, acts as a counter to the Anglo-American school's tendency not only to slight the role of the metaphorical noun or word, but also to reject outright the theory of substitution. Following Leibniz, Ricoeur claims that there are two kinds of definition: *nominal* and *real*. The nominal definition is Aristotle's definition of metaphor as identification of metaphor per se. It belongs to the task of classification. The real definition is Aristotle's description of metaphor which explains how metaphor comes to be or how it operates. It belongs to a theory of discourse and a theory of the production of metaphorical meaning. Ricoeur's concern, of course, is to point the way to a union between the theory of substitution with its emphasis on metaphor-word and its nominal status and the theory of interaction with its emphasis on metaphor-sentence and its real status.

Apart from critiquing its tendency to dismiss the role of the word in the metaphorical operation, Ricoeur aims at least one other Aristotelian-based criticism at the Anglo-American school. When Monroe Beardsley claims that the metaphorical operation takes in the whole poem or literary work, he relates this extended operation only to a literary or fictional world. Ricoeur identifies this move as a common one by literary theorists who, unlike Aristotle, separate *muthos* from mimesis and, of course, then from *phusis*. By doing so, Ricoeur suggests that the Anglo-American theorists once again miss an opportunity to account for the metaphorical production of new meaning.

La théorie de la métaphore de Beardsley conduit donc un degré plus loin dans l'investigation de la métaphore neuve; mais à son tour, elle bute sur la question de savoir d'où viennent les significations secondes dans l'attribution métaphorique (126).

The Sixth Study is Ricoeur's sustained defence of the theory of metaphor as theory of resemblance. It is also the continuation of the complex operation which is the bringing together of the Continental and Anglo-American schools. Mention of Aristotle comes early here and, when it does, Ricoeur is dealing with the issue of the traditional connection between metaphor and simile. While Aristotle defines simile as extended metaphor, the later tradition defines metaphor as abbreviated simile. Despite this difference and the sway of the theory of substitution, the Aristotelian tradition implicitly holds here with Aristotle on the vital point that metaphor

is predicative. What preoccupies Ricoeur, here as elsewhere, is the establishment of a theoretical background which brings together the Anglo-American and Continental schools by overcoming the former's opposition to metaphor as simile or analogy and therefore to the theory of resemblance and the latter's opposition to metaphor as predication.

The dilemma which confronts Ricoeur by the time of the Sixth Study then is that while he, following Aristotle, naturally upholds the theory of resemblance, the school which he most strongly supports, namely, the Anglo-American, rejects this theory and the one which he most strongly critiques, namely, the Continental, supports it. In order to do away with this dilemma, Ricoeur not only must demonstrate that the theory of resemblance is integral with the theory of interaction and, as a consequence, not adequately explained by the Continental school, he must also demonstrate that the theory in and of itself is viable. Giving the critics of the theory of resemblance (e.g., Black and Beardsley) their due, Ricoeur admits that Aristotle's discussion of metaphorical resemblance is sometimes vague. For instance, it seems difficult to reconcile Aristotle's comments about the sensible aspect of metaphor as to be found in such remarks as "To metaphorize well is to paint before the eyes" and those about its informative, heuristic, and epistemic role. Also Ricoeur agrees that, if, as the Anglo-American school argues, metaphor is the perception of resemblance only to the extent that this perception is the *effect* of the metaphorical operation, then it is not truly part of this operation. On the other hand, if it is the *cause* of this operation, then this operation as semantic operation becomes problematic. Ricoeur's response to these objections is the systematic examination of numerous Continental theories which support metaphorical resemblance. Taking up better than half of the Sixth Study, it is essentially the argument that, first, there is a moment of imaginative input in the metaphorical operation which is not opposed to the linguistic and semantic dimension of metaphor but rather one with it and that, secondly, the semantic and the perception of resemblance are compatible as the logic of perceiving sameness in difference.

It is at this stage that Ricoeur brings up once again the hypothesis which, in the First Study, he calls his most extreme one. Extrapolating from Aristotle's definition of metaphor as genus-species, species-genus, species-species transfer which is also a definition of metaphor as transgression of logico-linguistic categories, Ricoeur posits an originating metaphorical activity. At the same time, he posits that this metaphorical activity, being at the pre-conceptual level, is discontinuous from the network of concepts derived from it. It follows that, given the meaningful nature of metaphor, its activity after the network of concepts is in place is a transitional zone where there is both a transgression of the old order and a movement to a new one.

In the Seventh Study, Ricoeur makes his own explicit contribution to metaphorical theory with his theory of split reference. Here there are at least three occasions on which Aristotle's support is solicited. In introducing his theory of reference, Ricoeur evokes the latter's theory of analogy.<sup>25</sup>

L'argument est argument de proportionnalité: l'autre référence, celle que nous cherchons, serait à la nouvelle pertinence sémantique ce que la référence abolie est au sens littéral que l'impertinence sémantique détruit. Au sens métaphorique correspondrait une référence métaphorique, comme au sens littéral impossible correspond une référence littérale impossible" (289-290).

Pushing the analogy even further, Ricoeur argues that just as metaphor brings two significations into the proximity of one another, so the corresponding objects in the real world must also share this proximity.

« Voir le semblable », disions nous avec Aristote, c'est « bien métaphoriser ». Comment cette proximité dans le sens ne serait-elle pas en même temps une proximité dans les choses mêmes? (290).

A second instance of Ricoeur's calling on Aristotle in the Seventh Study is a repetition of his account of the theories of mimesis and *phusis* in the First Study. Here as elsewhere, Ricoeur argues that the theory of mimesis is integral with the theory of *muthos* and the two, taken together, are integral with the theory of metaphor. *Muthos* as plot gives shape and definition to the human world and presents it in a more familiar or knowable way. *Muthos* as metaphorical operation at the level of the literary work is ultimately the ground for the metaphorical proposition. At the same time, Ricoeur holds

---

<sup>25</sup> In the first and second sections of the Eighth Study, Ricoeur discusses analogy at great length. In the first section, he defends Aristotle's use of it from "le logicien et le philosophe contemporains [qui] peuvent être justifiés à déclarer que la tentative échoue et que la théorie de l'analogie n'est tout entière qu'une pseudo-science" (MV, 340). Shortly thereafter, he states:

Mon propos exprès est de montrer comment, en entrant dans la mouvance de la problématique de l'être, l'analogie à la fois, apporte sa conceptualité propre et reçoit la qualification transcendante du champ auquel elle est appliquée (MV, 340).

Then he goes on to identify the source of the analogy by proportion as developed by medieval theology and, in particular, Aquinas. "L'application la plus proche est fournie par la définition de la justice distributive dans *Éthique à Nicomaque*, V. 6." (MV, 341).

that Aristotle's theory of mimesis is also a theory of reference. ". . . [P]our parler comme Mary Hesse, la mimesis est le nom de la 'référence métaphorique'" (308). Mimesis is not simply the imitation of the world of human action by the work. It is also the work's inscribing itself into the world or, as Ricoeur puts it, redescribing it.

A point already brought up constitutes a third instance in the Seventh Study of Ricoeur's drawing support from Aristotle. Unlike later rhetoricians, Aristotle did not characterize metaphor as abbreviated simile, but rather simile as extended metaphor. In Ricoeur's estimation, Aristotle's definition is the correct one because, unlike the contrary, it implies that metaphorical meaning is not equivalent to its translation into literal terms but rather exceeds it. "Ainsi nous resterions fidèles à la tradition d'Aristote, non suivie par la rhétorique ultérieure . . ." (312). Then, citing as authority Aristotle's *On Interpretation*, Ricoeur argues that the copula of the metaphorical proposition is not simply relational but also existential. At the same time, this copula is in a state of tension in that, being figurative or fictional, the *is* is also an *is not*. At this point, Ricoeur brings into the picture two schools of thought. The first school, represented by Philip Wheelwright, accredits all value to the *figurative* side of the metaphorical operation in the way of its identifying one thing with another.<sup>26</sup> The second school of thought, represented by Colin Murray Turbayne, accredits all value to the *literal* side of the metaphorical operation in the way of its being a shorthand for comparing two things.<sup>27</sup> In a manner which he claims is comparable to Aristotle's approach to First Philosophy, Ricoeur finds the proper middle ground between the two opposing schools.

Avant toute interprétation proprement ontologique, telle que nous tenterons de l'amorcer dans la huitième étude, nous nous bornerons ici à une discussion dialectique d'opinions, comme Aristote au début de ses analyses de « philosophie première » (313).

In the Eighth Study, "Métaphore et philosophie," there are three areas in which Aristotle's presence either moves into the foreground or rests in the background. In all these areas, there is a shift from critiquing and correcting the tradition to one of "protecting" it. Stated broadly, the first of these areas is Ricoeur's analysis of Aristotle (first section) and his followup analysis of Aquinas (second section). The second area is his analysis of Derrida (third section). The third area is his analysis of Heidegger (third and fifth sections).

---

<sup>26</sup> Philip Wheelwright, *Metaphor and Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968).

<sup>27</sup> Colin Murray Turbayne, *The Myth of Metaphor* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 1970).

It is appropriate to take up now the first and third of these areas and to defer the second to Chapter IV.<sup>28</sup>

The first Aristotelian part of the Eighth Study is a highly complex analysis of Aristotle's and Aquinas's closely related theories of being. It takes up the first two sections which are "La métaphore et l'équivocité de l'être: Aristote" and "La métaphore et l'*analogia entis*: l'onto-théologie." One of Ricoeur's first moves here is to reject the critique of metaphysical concepts based on etymology. The fact that all words can be shown to have a figurative aspect is merely an indication of their past history and polysemous nature. This etymological or genealogical datum in no way impinges on the metaphysical concept which, having been taken up into and ordered by a network of concepts, has its signification – a singular and univocal one – determined by this conceptual network. Ricoeur quickly concludes that, if there is a case to be made that poetry secretly underwrites philosophy, then it must base itself on the equivocal nature of analogy which spans both domains.

For Ricoeur, analogy as it relates to poetic or live metaphor is not itself the production of new meaning. It is only the aftereffect or leftover of this production, the literal or non-dynamic representation of metaphorical meaning. The distinction between metaphor and analogy is the same as the one between metaphor and simile. Simile, being merely a paraphrase of metaphor, falls short of capturing its meaning because metaphor extends this meaning all the way from the sentence to the poetic or literary work and then, from the literary work itself, suffers a *choc en retour*. To put it another way, metaphorical meaning, because it runs all the way to a redescription of the world, is necessarily diffuse. On the other hand, it cannot be overlooked that a parallel situation exists in philosophy, namely, that there is equivocation surrounding the use of analogy in response to the question of being. In Aristotle, the categories of being cannot be brought together as species of a single genus which would be being itself. They can only be roughly ranged in their proximity to substantial being. This means that the strict scientific approach to the question of being is impossible and what in effect happens is that philosophy secretly culls the categories from language itself.

On peut d'abord objecter que les prétendues catégories de pensée ne sont que des catégories de langue déguisée. C'est l'objection de E. Benveniste ( 328).

---

28 With respect to his critical analysis of "La mythologie blanche" in the third section of the Eighth Study, it cannot be insignificant that Ricoeur keeps Aristotle almost out of sight (in contrast with the rest of this study) even though Derrida discusses Aristotle at great length.

But Benveniste himself notes that the response to the question of being is not itself determined by language.

« Tout ce qu'on veut montrer ici est que la structure linguistique du grec prédisposait la notion d'« être » à une vocation philosophique » (328).<sup>29</sup>

As follow-up to all this, Ricoeur notes that the response to the question of being is rendered equivocal only to the extent that being itself is equivocal. What is being sought then by philosophy as a response to this question is essentially a way to deal with this equivocalness: to control the polysemy of being and to avoid an uncontrolled dissemination of meaning. Whatever analogical ordering of being goes on in Aristotle then is not the indication of some poetic rapture or surge of meaning, but rather the effort to contain it.

In the second section of the Eighth Study, Ricoeur deals with the same issue but now with the complications which Aquinas brings to it. Ricoeur contends that, despite the introduction of the concept of God into the question of being, it still remains speculative discourse and hence apart from all biblical hermeneutics and dealings with metaphor and poetry. While it is true that theological metaphysics is a *mixed* discourse, it is also true that it brings together different aims and objectives on a common issue. Here there is a cross-fertilisation of discourses which, along with generating new problems, opens up a new conceptual space. With respect to Aquinas, this new space is equivalent to a second axis of investigation. Not only is there the horizontal one of substance and accidents, but also the vertical one of finite and infinite. The ultimate failure of analogy as response to the question of being is therefore not attributable to metaphysics having one foot in religion but rather the result of what is innate to the always open-ended question of being. "*Le discours de l'être, dès lors, désigne le lieu d'une investigation interminable. L'ontologie reste la « science recherchée »*" (334).

The last section of the Eighth Study is devoted to Aristotle's theory of act/potency. In a first movement which is critical, Ricoeur declares that this theory is insufficiently developed in Aristotle. Not only are the two terms of act and potency circular in their definitions, but also floating and unstable in their significations. Act, while signifying movement in general, can also signify the originating source of activity (*phusis*) and the natural development of a thing towards completion (*entelechy*). Another problem is Aristotle's description of the metaphorical operation as "seeing things in act."

---

<sup>29</sup> Ricoeur's reference to Benveniste is the following: "É. Benveniste, « Catégories de pensée et catégories de langue », *Études philosophiques*, décembre 1958, p. 419-429, in *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, I, Gallimard, 1966, p. 63-74" (MV, 328).

Ricoeur finds this determination of the visual in the deepest processes of being to be an undesirable anthropomorphism. "*En revanche, voir toutes les choses comme des actions, n'est-ce pas aussi les voir comme « humaines, trop humaines »? et, par là, accorder à l'homme lui-même un privilège abusif?*" (391).

In a second movement which is corrective, Ricoeur overcomes the basic problem of Aristotle's account which is the overshadowing or domination of the theory of act/potency by the theory of substance and accidents. In order to bring the first theory properly into the light, Ricoeur emphasizes or even radicalizes it and, at the same time, reforms Aristotle's notion of *phusis* such that it is more dynamic than static or substantial. Accordingly, his crowning move comes when he assimilates Heidegger's *Ereignis* to Aristotle's *energeia* or, more precisely, to an expanded sense of this word.

Pour nous, modernes, qui venons après la mort de la physique aristotélicienne, ce sens de la *phusis* est peut-être à nouveau vacant, comme ce que le langage poétique demande au discours spéculatif de penser. C'est alors la tâche du discours spéculatif de se mettre en quête du lieu où apparaître signifie « génération de ce qui croît ». Si ce sens n'est plus à chercher dans une région d'objets, celle qu'occupent les corps physiques et les organismes vivants, il semble bien que ce soit au niveau de l'apparaître dans son ensemble et comme tel que le verbe poétique « signifie l'acte ». Par rapport à cette acception illimitée, signifier l'action, signifier l'artifice, signifier le mouvement sont déjà des déterminations, c'est-à-dire des limitations et des restrictions, par quoi quelque chose est perdu de ce qui fait signe dans l'expression: signifier l'éclosion de l'apparaître. S'il est un point de notre expérience où l'expression vive dit l'existence vive, c'est celui où le mouvement par lequel nous remontons la pente entropique du langage rencontre le mouvement par lequel nous régressons en deçà des distinctions entre acte, action, fabrication, mouvement.

C'est ainsi la tâche du discours spéculatif de se mettre en quête du lieu où apparaître signifie « génération de ce qui croît ». Ce projet et ce programme nous font à nouveau croiser l'itinéraire de Heidegger, dont la dernière philosophie tente de mettre la pensée spéculative en résonance avec le dire du poète (392).

### 3.4. Semantics versus Semiotics

So much for the analysis of the first coordinating principle which is meant to justify the proposition that Ricoeur's investigation of metaphor is an Aristotelian-based metadiscourse. To give further weight to the hypothesis that Ricoeur mobilises the tradition through this investigation and for reasons not expressly stated or immediately apparent, the matter of the semiotic/semantic opposition must now be taken up. Like the first coordinating principle but in a more discontinuous way, this opposition runs throughout the eight studies. As already mentioned, it begins modestly enough with Aristotle's theory of diction. In the Second Study (Fontanier), this opposition is not so evident but, with the beginning of the Third Study and its first section, "Le débat entre sémantique et sémiotique," it arises with a vengeance and remains a point of reference until the end of the Fifth Study (New Rhetoric). Although explicit mention of it after the Fifth Study is scarce, it continues to offer background support by being integral with Ricoeur's claim that the sentence is the only site of meaning and hence with his much larger claim that metaphor is thoroughly discursive and only in this way dutifully proceeds to its encounter with philosophy.<sup>30</sup>

The initial challenge which confronts Ricoeur and which certainly testifies to his intrepid spirit is that, between the quasi-semantic theories of the Continental or structuralist school and Derrida's quasi-semiotic project, there is a sizeable number of theoretical positions. If examining these positions is an important part of the critiquing and correcting operation which is also the safeguarding of the tradition, then Ricoeur is in need of the

---

<sup>30</sup> The following passage gives perhaps the best example of Ricoeur's affirming the hierarchical opposition between semantics and semiotics. It begins with his citing a line from Benveniste's "La forme et le sens dans le langage" (*Le langage, Acte du XIII congrès de l'association des sociétés de philosophie de langue française* [Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1967], 27-40).

"À aucun moment, en sémiotique, on ne s'occupe de la relation du signe avec les choses dénotées, ni des rapports entre la langue et le monde." Mais il faut aller plus loin que la simple opposition entre le point de vue sémiotique et le point de vue sémantique, et subordonner nettement le premier au second; les deux plans du signe et du discours ne sont pas seulement distincts, le premier est une abstraction du second; c'est à son usage dans le discours que le signe doit en dernière analyse son sens même de signe; comment saurions-nous qu'un signe *vaut pour...*, s'il ne recevait pas, de son *emploi* dans le discours, sa visée, qui le rapporte à cela même *pour quoi* il vaut? La sémiotique, en tant qu'elle se tient dans la clôture du monde des signes, est une abstraction sur la *sémantique*, qui met en rapport la constitution interne du sens avec la visée transcendante de la référence (MV, 274).

semiotic/semantic opposition as an organizing principle. In the Preface, Ricoeur calls his Third Study the key one which argues for the predicative nature of metaphor. "*Elle [cette étude] place provisoirement dans un rapport d'opposition irréductible la théorie de la métaphore-énoncé et la théorie de la métaphore-mot*"(8). The "*provisoirement*" of this passage refers to the fact that, in the Fourth Study, Ricoeur's analysis puts itself in reverse in order to affirm the metaphorical word as focal point of the metaphorical sentence. For example, in the proposition, "man is a wolf," the word *man* metaphorizes as "*wolfman*" and is the effect of the metaphorical proposition. The focal word is what identifies the frame or sentence as figure of speech.

The Fifth Study deals with the New Rhetoric of France. Ricoeur claims that this school, particularly as it is represented by Group Mu, takes the semiotic approach most radically into the realm of semantics. ". . . [E]lle procède d'une révolution dans la révolution, qui confère aux postulats du saussurisme une pureté en quelque sorte cristalline" (174). In Group Mu's seminal work, *La rhétorique générale*, the basic move is one of relating abstract units of meaning or *sèmes* to all the forms and figures of language. These abstract units correspond to and yet can conflict with two principal levels of language: the phonetic units smaller than or equal to the word and the units of speech or writing equal to or greater than the word. In this way, a highly technical account is given of both the literal and figurative uses of language. The level of constituted *sèmes* functions as the basis on which to analyse the figure of speech's semantic deviance from the literal level or level of zero degree rhetoric (*degré rhétorique zéro*).

At the beginning of the Fifth Study, Ricoeur distinguishes between New Rhetoric as it is represented by Group Mu and other theories of metaphor which, taken together, he refers to as structural semantics. He claims that the latter, less radically semiotic, are in keeping with Aristotle to the extent that the word is maintained as primary unit of meaning which divides the semiotic and the semantic. In the case of New Rhetoric or, more properly, the seminal work, *La rhétorique générale*, the semiotic and semantic are run together and, as a consequence, form a homogeneous field of study. As Ricoeur points out, the advantage is that it is able to adopt a more technical and scientific approach to language. It can avoid making the move common to the other structural as well as Anglo-American theories which is the one of resorting to outside fields such as psychology and sociology. It is central to Ricoeur's analysis to show that this outside move is the result of these theories' being not sufficiently developed as theories of meaning and reference.

On the whole, Ricoeur does not seem to view New Rhetoric as having made a substantial contribution to metaphorical theory. His earliest critique of it comes in the Second Study when, discussing its initial plan or earliest

aspirations to arise like a phoenix out of the ashes of the old rhetoric, he comments: "*Mais l'entreprise ne serait pas moins fidèle à l'idéal taxinomique de la rhétorique classique; elle serait seulement plus attentive à la multiplicité des figures*" (64). A question may arise at this point: If New Rhetoric does not add significantly to the theory of metaphor, why does Ricoeur give it so much attention? Perhaps what is not stated but nevertheless at work here it is that, since he does not acknowledge that New Rhetoric is essentially different from the old rhetoric, he must also refuse to acknowledge that it is dissociable from the decline of rhetoric and the reason for this decline which, according to him, is principally the result of the emphasis on the word as primary unit of meaning. If it is the case then that he only recognizes it as being the latest stage of this decline despite its pretensions to renovating the field and to scientific precision, he must view it as being a dangerous rival to his own theory even though its status in this regard must be one of dissimulating its heritage.

With respect to his analysis of the various theories of structural semantics in the Fifth Study, Ricoeur's look at New Rhetoric or, more precisely, Group Mu's *La rhétorique générale* is easily the longest. Although in some sense it stretches as far back as the Second Study and as far ahead as the Seventh Study where Ricoeur discusses New Rhetoric in relation to his theory of reference, it is largely confined to the Fifth Study. The first three sections of this study are devoted to calling into question the basic presuppositions of the structuralist school of linguistics. The first section, "Écart et degré rhétorique zéro," deals with the presupposition of an absolutely non-figurative level of language. Ricoeur argues that the level of zero degree rhetoric in language is not attainable and, as a result, structuralism only operates here with abstract approximations. The second section, "L'espace de la figure," deals with spatial representations or characterizations of language. What is central here both to structural semantics and New Rhetoric is, as two linguistic axes, a linear dimension of speech or writing which is *syntagmatic* and a vertical dimension which is *paradigmatic*. While the linear axis represents syntax, grammar, and logic, the vertical axis represents the interaction between the linguistically actual and virtual or, to put it another way, between speech and writing and language as system or code. While Ricoeur is not expressly opposed to this schema, he raises objections to the structuralist conception of it. The problem for him is that structural semantics inevitably identifies metaphor with the paradigmatic dimension. By disavowing then a theory of metaphor which would throw the emphasis on the syntagmatic dimension, it places the metaphorical operation not along the horizontal axis, but the vertical one. As a consequence, metaphor is inevitably viewed as being one word taken from a pool of possible words which is the code and substituted for another word.

The difference between metaphorical and literal meaning then is essentially null. In the third section, "Écart et réduction d'écart," Ricoeur examines a principle which is of central importance for structural semantics and New Rhetoric, namely, *deviance*. Here he gives special attention to Jean Cohen whom he finds to be most in agreement with the Anglo-American school. Unlike the authors of *La rhétorique générale*, Cohen takes deviance not to be simply linguistic but the first phase of metaphorical predication. Ricoeur finds him to be very close to such advocates of the interaction theory as Beardsley who describes metaphor as logical absurdity. At the same time, Cohen, still holding to the syntagmatic/paradigmatic opposition, identifies metaphor with the substitution of one word for another and the meaning of metaphor with a change brought about in the code. Although Ricoeur considers Cohen to be in good company with Aristotle, he criticizes him for relying on a theory of substitution which cannot explain metaphorical meaning without going outside semantics and appealing to some psychological change in the reader or auditor.

The fourth section, "Le fonctionnement des figures: l'analyse sémiologique," deals strictly with Group Mu's *La rhétorique générale* and is almost equal in length to the first three sections of the Fifth Study. On the opening page of the Fifth Study, Ricoeur declares that all the problems which are dealt with in the first three sections will be gathered together in the final one. The result is that his critique of this work, despite its length and specificity, does not differ in essentials from the critique which precedes it. At the beginning of the Fifth Study, Ricoeur makes a reference back to the Third Study and to its first section, "Le débat entre sémantique et sémiotique." Citing Benveniste once again, Ricoeur opposes the latter's conception of a radical discontinuity between word and sentence to New Rhetoric's conception of a homogeneous linguistic field. The fatal mistake of New Rhetoric is not to recognize properly this discontinuity and, as a consequence, to exaggerate the significance of the word. Ricoeur argues that, because the analyses which New Rhetoric carries out still rely on actual speech, its theory of *sèmes* as theory of abstract units does not free it from what this theory itself implicitly demands, namely, a theory of discourse. The only positive note Ricoeur sounds while analysing *La rhétorique générale* comes at the very end of the Fifth Study. Here he observes that Group Mu examines more extended figures of speech which it calls *métalogismes* and which it distinguishes from *métasémèmes*. The latter includes metaphor and is intralinguistic; the former includes allegory and is extralinguistic. By taking its analysis of tropes and figures to the level of discourse, Group Mu, without knowing it, stumbles onto the proper ground of metaphorical theory. Were it to have placed its own theory of metaphor in the larger landscape of *métalogismes* (i.e., in the area of allegory, parable, and fable), it would not have tried to

explain deviance in terms of perceiving resemblance at the linguistic level only, but also at the level of reality and the world.<sup>31</sup>

### 3.5. Interaction “versus” Substitution

Just as Ricoeur largely approves of the theory of interaction and associates it with semantics, so he largely disapproves of the theory of substitution and associates it with semiotics. Although this “axiomatic” way of looking at matters is continuous in *La métaphore vive*, it nonetheless takes place only at the most formal or thematised level. At another level, certainly less obtrusive, Ricoeur assimilates the theory of substitution to the theory of interaction. Insofar as this move is successful or the minor theory is not simply obliterated by the major one, the theory of substitution both unites with and is subordinated to the theory of interaction. At the same time, the theory of substitution becomes a part of Ricoeur’s semantics even though, at the most formal or thematised level, this semantics is opposed to the theory of substitution.<sup>32</sup>

With the possible exception of the Eighth Study, the interaction versus substitution axiomatic covers the whole of *La métaphore vive*. At the most elementary level, it is the opposition between metaphor-sentence and metaphor-word. It is at this level that one encounters it in the First Study and, more precisely, in Ricoeur’s analysis of Aristotle’s theory of diction (*lexis*). Even though the interaction and substitution theories are not expressly named here, it would seem that Ricoeur is staking out the ground for them. By contrasting Aristotle’s full description of metaphor to his “abbreviated” definition, Ricoeur puts the opposition of metaphor-sentence/metaphor-word in place. It is not until the Second Study that this opposition as dialectical or dynamic operation becomes evident. As theory of single-word trope, Fontanier’s theory of metaphor is both criticized by Ricoeur for its limitations and given a vote of confidence in the very act of correcting it or, more precisely, uncovering its inherently predicative nature.

One of the clearest indications of this dialectical ordering of the two theories is that Ricoeur takes the opportunity to refer in the Fontanier study

---

31 Ricoeur’s analyses of Fontanier and New Rhetoric both follow the same pattern of ending on a positive note which is the look at their respective theories of extended figures. His shift from the critical to the corrective mode in both cases is equivalent to first negating each one’s theory of metaphor and then cancelling this negation in the way of preserving this theory as an incorporated part of each one’s theory of extended figures.

32 This opposition between the theory of substitution and semantics is ambiguous in Ricoeur. Insofar as this theory is identified with the sign-system which falls *below* the level of the word, Ricoeur strongly opposes it to semantics. But insofar as this theory is identified with the word itself, then Ricoeur recognizes that the theory of substitution has some legitimacy because the semiotic as word unites with or crosses over into the semantic.

to the Anglo-American school. When discussing the implicitly predicative nature of Fontanier's theory, and more precisely, his definition of metaphor as one idea's being transposed onto another idea, Ricoeur compares this operation to the interaction between vehicle and tenor which are key terms in I. A. Richards' theory.<sup>33</sup> Even further in this direction is his analysis of Fontanier's theory of figures of speech. Here the taxonomic project goes beyond the level of simple word-substitution to a more complex level where it is implicated in predication and makes explicit what is already implicit in Fontanier's theory of metaphor.

There is a difference in the way Ricoeur treats the theory of substitution at the beginning of the Third Study and the way he treats it at the beginning of the Second Study. In the case of the latter, he fits substitution into a list of traits which he draws up in order to describe the rhetoric of tropology.<sup>34</sup> Even before he begins his analysis of Fontanier and well before the theory of interaction is introduced, the theory of substitution is thus presented as being in solidarity with rhetorical waywardness. By contrast, the theory of substitution at the beginning of the Third Study seems to move towards respectability when Ricoeur associates it with a

---

33 Ricoeur also refers back to Fontanier when he discusses Richards' theory in the Third Study. After specifying that this theory describes a semantic transaction between contexts, Ricoeur goes on to state:

A ce stade de la description, le danger serait plutôt inverse de celui auquel l'excessive minutie de la tropologie exposait. Tout couple de pensées abrégé en une unique expression ne constitue-t-il pas une métaphore? C'est ici que I. A. Richards introduit un facteur distinctif qui joue le rôle de différence spécifique par rapport au concept générique de « transaction entre contextes ». Dans la métaphore, les deux pensées sont en quelque sorte dénivelées, en ce sens que nous décrivons l'une sous les traits de l'autre. Fontanier en avait aperçu quelque chose dans sa définition de la métaphore « présenter une idée sous le signe d'une autre...»; mais il n'avait pu en tirer toutes les conséquences, faute d'une théorie adéquate du discours. I. A. Richards propose d'appeler « teneur » (*tenor*) l'idée sous-jacente, et « véhicule » (*vehicle*) l'idée sous le signe de laquelle la première est appréhendée. Mais il importe de bien noter que la métaphore n'est pas le « véhicule »: elle est le tout constitué par les deux moitiés (*MV*, 105-106).

34 The following sums up the series of postulates which, according to Ricoeur, constitute the implicit model of tropology: postulate of the proper and improper, postulate of the semantic lacuna, postulate of the borrowed term, postulate of deviation, *axiom of substitution*, postulate of the paradigmatic character of the trope, postulate of the exhaustive paraphrase, postulate of nil information. "Le trope, n'enseignant rien, a une simple fonction décorative; il est destiné à plaire en ornant le langage, en donnant de la « couleur » au discours, un « vêtement » à l'expression nue de la pensée" (*MV*, 64-66).

nominal definition of metaphor which cannot be dispensed with and which is even to be found in Aristotle.

Anticipant sur une analyse qui sera faite dans la cinquième étude, disons dès maintenant que la définition réelle de la métaphore en termes d'énoncé ne peut éliminer la définition nominale en termes de mot ou de nom, parce que le mot reste le porteur de l'effet de sens métaphorique; c'est du mot qu'on dit qu'il prend un sens métaphorique; c'est pourquoi la définition d'Aristote n'est pas abolie par une théorie qui ne concerne plus le lieu de la métaphore dans le discours, mais le procès métaphorique lui-même . . . (88).

While Ricoeur is mainly concerned in the Third Study with demonstrating the merits of the theory of interaction, he takes time in its first section, "Le débat entre sémantique et sémiotique," to look ahead and offer a preview of the Fifth Study. Employing the terminology of structural semantics, he then makes a distinction between the theory of metaphor as paradigmatic or semiotic theory and the theory of metaphor as syntagmatic or semantic theory. Claiming that he opposes the dominance of the first and favours the second, Ricoeur then endorses the theory of substitution insofar as it is restricted to a classificatory or nominal role. But it may be suspected that the theory of substitution is effectively undone at this point insofar as, for one thing, Ricoeur offers no precise account of the relationship between it and the other theory and, for another, does not stop referring to the theory of substitution as the rival of the theory of interaction even after he has subordinated the first to the second and dialectically related them.<sup>35</sup>

In continuation with the Third Study, the Fourth Study's first section, "Monisme du signe et primat du mot," is devoted to an analysis of semiotics. Here Ricoeur makes explicit reference to the theory of substitution when he analyses the theory of metaphor in contemporary structuralism. He claims that this structural theory of metaphor is the historical outgrowth of Saussurian semiotics which relayed to contemporary linguistics the rhetorical tradition's theory of metaphor.

---

<sup>35</sup> This return to old ground is most apparent at the beginning of the Sixth Study. Here the theories of substitution and interaction are opposed to one another while the theory of resemblance, in historical solidarity with the first, is weaned from it and transferred to the second. "Cela veut-il dire que la ressemblance soit solidaire exclusivement d'une théorie de la substitution et incompatible avec une théorie de l'interaction? Telle est la question qui nous occupera dans cette étude. Je dirai par anticipation que je me propose de dissocier le sort de la ressemblance de celui de la théorie de la substitution . . ." (MV, 221).

La sémantique structurale, au contraire, s'est progressivement édifiée sur le postulat de l'homogénéité de toutes les unités du langage en tant que signes. . . . L'examen de la rhétorique ancienne et classique avait déjà montré le lien entre la théorie de la métaphore-substitution et une conception du langage où le mot était l'unité de base; seulement ce primat du mot n'était pas fondé sur une science explicite des signes, mais sur la corrélation entre le mot et l'idée. La sémantique moderne, à partir de F. de Saussure, est capable de donner un fondement nouveau à la même description des tropes, parce qu'elle dispose d'un concept nouveau de l'entité linguistique de base, le signe (130-131).

The recent turn to studying language as extensive sign-system therefore did not do away with the primacy of the word but rather reinforced it. The key feature of semiotics, the binary opposition of signifier-signified, is conducive to a theory of denomination while effectively blocking the path to a theory of predication.

The rest of the Fourth Study is taken up with the examination of certain theories of metaphor which are precursors of New Rhetoric (Group Mu) and yet which are more amenable to being coordinated with the semantics of the sentence. One of these theories is to be found in Stephen Ullman's *The Principles of Semantics*.<sup>36</sup> Unlike later structural theoreticians who take linguistics to be a completely homogeneous field, Ullman extends his theory of semantics to psychology. It is in this attempt to deal with problems bordering on the realm of the cognitive that Ricoeur finds much of the ground on which to critique and correct Ullman. It is also in this area that he first sees a resemblance between Ullman's theory of metaphor and the theory of interaction insofar as the latter is also a theory of speech and communication.

Cette médiation psychologique entre sémantique et rhétorique mérite attention. Le bénéfice de l'opération est très positif, quelles que soient les réserves que nous soyons amené ultérieurement à faire. D'abord, un pont est jeté entre l'activité individuelle de parole et le caractère social de la langue; les champs associatifs fournissent cette médiation . . . (152).

But before beginning this particular part of his analysis, Ricoeur finds it

---

<sup>36</sup> Stephen Ullmann, *The Principles of Semantics* (Glasgow: Jackson & Oxford, 1959).

necessary to examine the semiotic basis of Ullman's theory and raise some objections against the fundamental tenet of his theory, namely, that the word and not the sentence is the primary unit of meaning. Ricoeur repeats his argument that it is only the sentence which delivers the word from its polysemous state and grants it a proper signification. He also looks at the signifying relation of name and sense in Ullman's theory which is a direct descendent of Saussure's signifier-signified opposition.

The psychological dimension of Ullman's theory is represented by associative fields; one field is attached to the "name" pole and the other to the "sense" pole of the name-sense opposition. These fields in turn operate on two axes: the contiguous or metonymic axis and the similar or metaphorical axis. Covering all language and polysemy of words, these metonymic and metaphorical axes are then taken to be the basis of all substitutions both at the name-level and the sense-level. But because Ullman provides his semantics with neither a theory of predication nor a theory of reference, it must fall short of explaining the metaphorical production of new meaning. This is to say that, in its striving to account for linguistic innovation, it can only tap into the rich ambiguity of both individual expression and social activity by being a cross-disciplinary effort. At the same time, because all signification in Ullman's theory of metaphor turns on acts of denomination, the metaphorical perception of resemblance is entirely constrained to the level of words. The "sense" pole of the name-sense opposition falls short as explanation because, lacking worldly reference, it cannot give an account of this perception as truly innovative or creative act.

Despite these objections, Ricoeur argues in the fifth section, "Le jeu du sens: Entre la phrase et le mot," that the theory of metaphor-sentence is compatible with the theory of metaphor-word. Once again, it is stated that it is the contextualizing role of the sentence which gives to the word its proper or unique sense. At the same time, the word as lexicalized unit brings to the sentence a potential meaning which the latter actualizes. Then, towards the end of the fifth section, Ricoeur evokes the theory of interaction by repeating the argument at the beginning of the Third Study, namely, that the rapport between metaphor-sentence and metaphor-word is equivalent to the interaction between frame and focus in Black's theory and tenor and vehicle in Richards' theory.

In the Fifth Study there is a long analysis of Jean Cohen's theory of metaphor in *Structure du langage poétique*.<sup>37</sup> At the end of it, Ricoeur identifies one and only one of the basic tenets of structural linguistics with the theory of interaction, namely, paradigmatic deviance which, according to him, is equivalent to the effect of the metaphorical sentence on the metaphorical word.

---

<sup>37</sup> Jean Cohen, *Structure du langage poétique* (Paris: Flammarion, 1966).

Ainsi remis à sa place, l'écart paradigmatique retrouve toute sa valeur: il correspond dans la théorie de l'interaction, au phénomène de *focalisation* sur le mot que nous décrivions au terme de la précédente étude. Le sens métaphorique est un effet de l'énoncé entier, mais focalise sur un mot qu'on peut appeler le mot métaphorique. C'est pourquoi il faut dire que la métaphore est une novation sémantique à la fois d'ordre prédicatif (nouvelle pertinence) et d'ordre lexical (écart paradigmatique). Sous son premier aspect, elle relève d'une dynamique du sens, sous son deuxième aspect, d'une statique (200).

In the Sixth Study, "Le travail de la ressemblance," there is a return to depicting the relationship between the theories of substitution and interaction as oppositional. In the opening paragraph, Ricoeur claims that the theory of resemblance, rather than being, as has traditionally been the case, in solidarity with the theory of substitution, belongs more properly to the theory of interaction. In the first section, "Substitution et ressemblance," he gives an account of this traditional solidarity and of how it is reinforced by structural linguistics. As on many other occasions, Ricoeur, in order both to explain and critique structural principles, relies on the influential works of Roman Jakobson.<sup>38</sup> Here he notes that, no matter how many adjustments are made to it, the metonymic contiguity/metaphorical resemblance opposition proves incoherent. One of the difficulties is that the notion of metonymy mixes together two qualitatively different phenomena on the syntagmatic axis: the concatenation of phonemes in morphemes and the logico-grammatical ordering of a sentence.

Just as the first section of the Sixth Study is critical of the traditional solidarity between the theories of resemblance and substitution, so the second section, "Le moment « iconique » de la métaphore," brings about a new association between the theories of resemblance and interaction. With his examination of Paul Henle's essay "Metaphor,"<sup>39</sup> Ricoeur begins a long analysis which relies on many diverse sources such as Immanuel Kant,

---

<sup>38</sup> Roman Jakobson also figures prominently at the beginning of Ricoeur's exposé, "Discours et communication." (See footnote 2 on page 72.) In *La métaphore vive*, his works are extensively referred to but never cited at length. These works are: "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasia Disturbances" in *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague: Mouton, 1956), "Results of the Conference of Anthropologists and Linguists" in *Supplement to the International Journal of American Linguistics* (19/2, 1953), and "Closing Statements: Linguistics and Poetics" in *Style in Language* (Cambridge, Technical Press of MIT, 1960).

<sup>39</sup> Paul Henle, "Metaphor," *Language, Thought, and Culture*, ed. Paul Henle (Ann Harbour: University of Michigan Press, 1958), 173-195.

Charles Sanders Peirce, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Northrop Frye, Owen Barfield, and Nelson Goodman and takes up the rest of the Sixth Study with its third section, "Le procès fait à la ressemblance," fourth section, "Plaidoyer pour la ressemblance," fifth section, "Psycho-linguistique de la métaphore," and, finally, sixth section, "Icône et image." Wishing to avoid psychologisms but not the psychical domain per se, Ricoeur demonstrates that there is a moment in the metaphorical operation which is, first, pre-conceptual or pre-objective, second, both verbal and sensible as perception of resemblance, and, third, the work of the productive imagination. It very well seems then that Ricoeur is denying the sensible/sense opposition to poetic discourse.

### **3.6. The Production of New Meaning**

According to the analysis of PS, Ricoeur's reordering of the theory of substitution and the theory of interaction paves the way for the development of his own theory of metaphor. This is to say that it provides the means by which to transfer the work of resemblance from the theory of substitution to the theory of interaction presumably without giving up the technical precision or explanatory value which comes with the theory of substitution. In this way, he puts a necessary check on the indefinite or expansionist nature of his theory by providing it with a "surveying" role or responsibility, an ongoing capacity to critically and correctively refer back to metaphor as simple word-substitution.

For the most part, Ricoeur has identified the rhetorical tradition with a non-informative or non-heuristic concept of metaphor. At the same time, there often appears in this tradition a need to explain the apparent richness of metaphor as a sensible or affective moment. Most often, this need results in an appeal to some non-linguistic or non-semantic explanation. Ricoeur notes that there are a number of times in metaphorical theory when, for example, the distinction is made between a denotative and a connotative signification. The first represents the literal or non-figurative meaning of metaphor and the second its effect on the reader or auditor. Ricoeur also finds the same distinction being made not only in the rhetorical tradition *stricto sensu* but also in the ranks of the Anglo-American school. While he considers the latter to be on the right path to comprehending metaphor, he also views it as being necessarily restricted by the epistemological and ontological limitations of semantics. In order to carry out a full investigation here, it is necessary to ask the basic philosophical questions about truth and reality.

To say it again, Ricoeur endorses Aristotle's inclusion of his theory of metaphor not only in his theories of diction (*lexis*), imitation (*mimesis*), and

plot or structure (*muthos*), but also his theory of nature (*phusis*).<sup>40</sup> As a consequence, even when restricting himself to an analysis of Aristotle's theory of metaphor, Ricoeur finds many indications of an operation stretching beyond language. Very early in the First Study, he describes Aristotle's full definition of metaphor as signifying a "category mistake" ultimately taking thought towards a new logical and conceptual grasp of reality. Metaphorical meaning is illustrated then only in a limited way by simile and analogy which are snapshot views of what is ultimately a diachronic operation. On many occasions, Ricoeur distinguishes between the rhetorical tradition's definition of metaphor as abbreviated simile and Aristotle's definition of simile as extended metaphor. Upholding Aristotle's definition, Ricoeur calls simile a weakened metaphor, a paraphrase of metaphor, a merely static record of the metaphorical perception of resemblance. The simile's simple declaration of likeness between things is not equivalent to disclosing – to sketching out in rough – the sameness of different things. It is precisely metaphorical identification as vehement commitment to reference and reality which precipitates thought in the direction of a conceptual articulation of this sameness.<sup>41</sup>

This sameness for Ricoeur is truth, reality, and the world which is integral with ever-changing but progressive knowledge. Metaphor itself is the medium by which the manifold aspects of the world are taken up by a pre-conceptual or pre-objective grasp of them and delivered over to speculative discourse as updated knowledge gleaned from the myriad subtleties which elude science, logic, and empiricism. Metaphorical theory cannot therefore be restricted to linguistics or even to semantics but must be extended to the things themselves. Here truth as the telos of knowledge becomes complicated by being not just a static target which knowledge aims at, but rather a moving target whose very movement metaphor discloses repeatedly.

The Seventh Study, "Métaphore et référence," is entirely devoted to Ricoeur's theory of metaphorical reference. He begins by drawing a distinction between a semantic and a hermeneutic study of reference. While the former restricts itself to the word and sentence, the latter "*s'adresse à des entités de plus grande dimension que la phrase*" (273). At the same

---

40 "Mais, dira-t-on, aucun exégèse de la *mimêsis*, fondée sur son lien avec le *muthos*, ne supprimera le fait majeur que le *mimêsis* est *mimêsis phuseôs*. Il n'est donc pas vrai que la *mimêsis* soit le dernier concept atteint par la remontée vers les premiers concepts de la *Poétique*. L'expression « imitation de la nature » semble-t-il, fait sortir du champ de la *Poétique* et renvoie à la *Métaphysique*" (MV, 58).

41 PS apologizes for the repetitious aspect of some of this coverage of Ricoeur's project. Nonetheless it is largely unavoidable given that, first, the investigation of the coordinating principles necessarily involves returning to old ground and, secondly, Ricoeur reargues his main points in many different contexts.

time, Ricoeur holds fast to Frege's distinction between meaning (*Sinn*) and reference (*Bedeutung*). The truth of a proposition depends upon the reference's being the complement to and completion of its meaning. Yet Ricoeur takes a further step by claiming that, along with scientific discourse's having this structure and relation to the world, poetic discourse has an analogous structure and relation. To make the common assumption that poetic discourse is non-referential is only the error of mistaking a suspended reference for no reference. Making the distinction between a first-order reference and a second-order reference, Ricoeur then argues that the suspension of the first permits the second or, to put it another way, the reader experiences the possible world of the literary work as taking up the foreground while the actual world recedes to the background. The bracketing of the actual world by the possible world is a cognitive operation which is counterbalanced by the ontological operation of the possible world's being bracketed by the actual. This latter operation is mimesis as both imitation of the world and redescription of it.

Much further along, in the Eighth Study's fourth section, "L'intersection des sphères de discours," Ricoeur gives an account of the metaphorical production of new meaning at the ultimate level of its transfer from poetic discourse to speculative discourse. Referring to Jean Ladrière's theory of signification,<sup>42</sup> he associates metaphor with an incessant competition between sense and reference which, in their drive to outdo yet complete one another, form ever-new significations. While the new and unfamiliar reference calls on the understanding for a corresponding concept, the freshly emergent concept in turn seeks anchorage in some new empirical or transcendental reference. With respect to metaphorical reference, there is of course the complication of its *is/is not* status. It is up to interpretation, a discourse which mediates between the poetic and the speculative, to determine the specificity of the metaphorical *is* while not losing sight of the *is not*. At the same time, speculative discourse relays the diffuse aim of poetic discourse as sharpened by interpretation to its own independent domain where metaphorical perception is integrated with the logical space of universal principles.<sup>43</sup>

---

42 Jean Ladrière, "Discours théologique et symbole," *Revue des sciences religieuses*, nos.1-2, 1975, 120-141.

43 "L'attraction que le discours spéculatif exerce sur le discours métaphorique s'exprime dans le procès même de l'interprétation. L'interprétation est l'oeuvre du concept. Elle ne peut pas ne pas être un travail d'élucidation, au sens husserlien du mot, par conséquent une lutte pour l'univocité. Alors que l'énonciation métaphorique laisse le sens second en suspens, en même temps que son référent reste sans présentation directe, l'interprétation est, par nécessité, une rationalisation qui, à la limite, évacue l'expérience qui, à travers le procès métaphorique, vient au langage. . . . On peut concevoir un style herméneutique dans lequel l'interprétation répond à la fois à la notion du concept et à celle de l'intention

## Chapter IV

### Ricoeur's Commitment to Tell the Truth about Metaphor as *Direct Encounter with Derrida's Project*

Accrediting to Ricoeur a vast mobilisation of the tradition which operates in the guise of being an ambitious and wide-ranging investigation of metaphor and which, as the defensive and offensive movements of philosophy, is the surreptitious bid to subdue a seditious element, cannot help but also be a certain discrediting of him. For this reason alone – for the reason that it implicates him in a certain amount of ruse and deception – the analysis of Chapter III may be rejected and it may be said that, although there is little doubt that Ricoeur guides his project with the Aristotelian tradition of philosophy dialectically opposed to the quasi-Aristotelian tradition of rhetoric, there are few signs that this elaborate working out of a longstanding problem is not what it declares itself to be, namely, the attempt to arrive at a better understanding of metaphor. It would seem then that much of what is being brought forward to demonstrate that Ricoeur wages an undeclared war against anti-philosophy turns on whether the Eighth Study is to be viewed as being accidental or essential to the seven studies which precede it.

It has already been noted that, along with his extensive survey of metaphorical theory, Ricoeur has more or less completed his theory of live metaphor by the beginning of the Eighth Study. This "more or less" is significant in the present context because it fills in the gap between Ricoeur's extending his theory to an account of metaphorical truth and reality and his recognizing an obligation to reveal "*la philosophie [qui] est impliquée dans le mouvement qui porte la recherche de la rhétorique à la sémantique et du sens vers la référence*" (323). Specifically, what is at issue here is that he refers at the beginning of the Eighth Study to the presuppositions or operative concepts which undergird all philosophical theory and which, according to him, cannot be thematised immediately but which must be investigated in due course and as well as possible.

Nul discours ne peut se prétendre libre de presuppositions, pour la raison simple que le travail de pensée par lequel on thématise une région de pensable met en jeu des concepts opératoires qui ne peuvent, dans le même temps, être thématisés. Mais, si nul discours ne

---

constituante de l'expérience qui cherche à se dire sur le mode métaphorique. L'interprétation est alors une modalité de discours qui opère à l'intersection de deux mouvances, celle du métaphorique et celle du spéculatif" (MV, 382-383).

peut être radicalement dénué de présuppositions, du moins nul penseur n'est-il dispensé d'explicitier les siennes, autant qu'il le peut (323).

In this regard, it is precisely the last study of *La métaphore vive* which Ricoeur chooses as the forum of this deferred but by no means dispensable task.

As far as his investigation of presuppositions or operative concepts goes, it seems that what Ricoeur essentially has in mind is his ontology which, unquestionably Aristotelian, is taken up in the final section of the Eighth Study. Now although Heidegger, whom Ricoeur strongly associates with Derrida, is discussed at length in this section, the latter is not mentioned once. On this basis alone, it may be suspected that Ricoeur's critical analysis of "La mythologie blanche" is not essential to his project as investigation of presuppositions. On the other hand, Ricoeur himself expressly connects this analysis to it even though he does not investigate this connection in and of itself.

En outre, cette phase proprement polémique de mon argument [qui va à l'encontre de thèse derridienne] est inséparable de la clarification positive de l'ontologie impliquée par la théorie de la métaphore dans le reste de la présente étude (368).

Given this state of affairs, it is possible to think either that his judgement is faulty in this area and that the critical analysis of Derrida's essay is not part of a vital concern or that it is related to it in a way which Ricoeur himself does not articulate.

But even if it is admitted that Derrida's project and, along with it, Heidegger's pose a serious challenge to Ricoeur's project, it may be thought that, on the basis of his long deferral in taking up this challenge, Ricoeur does not find it as worrisome as the semiotic-structural one. After all, the latter receives a tremendous amount of attention in the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Studies and, to a lesser degree, in the Sixth and Seventh Studies. But if Ricoeur's semantic theory is essentially a theory of discourse and, at the same time, supportive of his theory of metaphor, and if, furthermore, both the semiotic-structural and the Derrida-Heidegger connections are threats to it, then the fact that the former is largely confined to a discussion of metaphor and the latter to a discussion of discourse (with metaphor as a secondary consideration) seems to go in the contrary direction. In point of fact, Ricoeur disarms the threat of semiotics almost immediately by placing it in opposition to his theory of semantics. While the former is of course

found to be problematic in relation to the latter, the latter itself is never considered to be problematic (which is part of Derrida's project) in relation to the former.

But to return to the matter of presuppositions, perhaps what Ricoeur means by thematising them is something which is inseparable from an affirmation of them. If the issue of examining presuppositions is only this pre-determined securing of them, then it cannot be, from an epistemological standpoint, of much interest. On the other hand, if it is not the epistemological but the *ethical* which prevails here, then this examination is of primary significance for the reason that it "secures" these presuppositions. From such a standpoint then, what ultimately counts is not good argument in the traditional sense, but the tradition itself as "good" argument.

The tradition itself as "good" argument would simply be its re-production or re-presentation. With its presuppositions already in place as the very basis of any self-examination or self-exploration, it of course would receive its tremendous force as self-affirmation or self-confirmation from an immense circularity. But even without this self-examination which would be necessarily self-justifying, its presuppositions would receive indirect justification simply on the basis of proving themselves to be indispensable. The very length and comprehensiveness of Ricoeur's analysis as historical survey and encounter with various theories which, despite their differences, occupy a certain shared ground, implies a large-scale consensus on what is most fundamental. On the other hand, if these presuppositions were secure simply by being in operation or valid simply as support, it would be superfluous to justify them or to take seriously any challenge to them. On this point, there seems to be a profound tension or ambiguity in that while Ricoeur stands firmly behind his theory of metaphor, he only explores his presuppositions or at least some of them "*sur un mode où l'on n'affirme plus qu'en questionnant . . .*" (391).

#### **4.1. From Polyphile to Derrida and Heidegger (*peut-être*)**

Ricoeur's critical analysis of "La mythologie blanche" takes up most of the third section, "Méta-phorique et méta-physique." Besides the critical analysis of Derrida's essay, there is of course a number of related discussions. At least some of these discussions are what might be called Ricoeur's quasi-direct encounter with Derrida. On this point, the first observation to make is that he considers Derrida's project to be a radicalized version of Heidegger's. Now, of course, Ricoeur makes no declaration that his encounter with Derrida or, for that matter, Heidegger is the culminating point of his book and, in fact, he restricts it mainly to one section which he describes as being

his "second navigation" of the discontinuity issue. This second navigation results from Ricoeur's extending his plea for the discontinuity between poetic discourse and speculative discourse from a discussion of Aristotle and Aquinas to a discussion of Derrida and Heidegger. But the discussion of Heidegger in the third section, coming directly before the critical analysis of Derrida's essay, is minor compared to the latter.

At the beginning of the Eighth Study, Ricoeur announces that the first three sections deal with some erroneous ways, essentially two,<sup>1</sup> of relating poetic discourse to speculative discourse.

Les trois premières sections sont un plaidoyer pour la discontinuité entre discours spéculatif et discours poétique et une réfutation de quelque-unes des manières erronées, à notre avis, de comprendre le lien d'implication entre discours métaphorique et discours spéculatif (324).

Ricoeur first distinguishes between these two erroneous ways by calling the second the reverse of the first. "*Une modalité toute différente – et même inverse – d'implication de la philosophie dans la théorie de la métaphore doit être considérée*" (324). The first erroneous way is the claim that metaphor and poetic discourse are at the origin of speculative discourse. The second erroneous way is the theory or project which puts "*les présuppositions philosophiques à l'origine même des distinctions qui rendent possible un discours sur la métaphore.*" (324). At first glance, this second erroneous way is puzzling because it seems to be entirely in agreement with Ricoeur's own conception of philosophy as metadiscourse. Yet, in the next passage, he indicates that, according to the second erroneous way, these philosophical presuppositions are already infiltrated by "*le jeu inaperçu de la métaphore*" (325). But if this follow-up description of the second erroneous way is the correct one, then it becomes difficult to see why it should be called the reverse of the first.

At this point, it is worthwhile to observe that there is an ideal candidate for representing the first erroneous way whom Ricoeur must have

---

<sup>1</sup> With respect to what Ricoeur calls the erroneous ways of conceiving the relationship between the poetic and the speculative, he presents three which correspond to the first three sections of the Eighth Study. The first section deals with Aristotle and the possibility of deception by way of thinking that poetic intention is simply transferred to the level of speculative discourse on the basis that the latter uses analogy and is equivocal as the inquiry into being. The second section deals with Aquinas and the possibility of deception on the basis of the same problematic but with the complication that speculative discourse is now yoked to theology. This section then is not essentially different from the first section since both concern the issue of thinking that philosophical intention with respect to knowing, encountering, or describing the transcendent is essentially the same as poetic intention.

encountered in "La mythologie blanche" but never mentions. It is Polyphile who argues in *Le jardin d'Épicure* that metaphysics is itself a kind of mythology by making and effacing metaphors in order to span the visible and invisible worlds. Further to this is the fact that, rather than implicating metaphor in the very presuppositions of philosophy which is the second erroneous way, Polyphile himself relies on these presuppositions. What is surely not insignificant here is that Ricoeur, by never mentioning Polyphile, never need mention Derrida's critique of him. And by never having to mention this critique, he avoids the difficulties which would result from having to explain its relation to the two erroneous ways.

Another point to consider here is that there is yet another way in which Ricoeur defines the opposition between these erroneous ways. While he takes the second to be describing the operation of philosophical metaphor at the level of the unintentional which is "*le jeu inaperçu de la métaphore*," he takes the first to be describing it at the level of the intentional which is to "*reproduire au plan spéculatif le fonctionnement sémantique du discours poétique*" (324). Now this opposition between an "unintentional" theory of philosophical metaphor and an "intentional" theory of philosophical metaphor happens to be analogous to the difference which Derrida makes between his own position and Polyphile's. Polyphile's claim that metaphysics takes up into itself a mythology corresponds to the intentional dimension which Ricoeur attributes to the first erroneous way and which, to say it again, he describes as the semantic function of poetic discourse's being reproduced at the level of speculative discourse. This semantic function is described, if not at the beginning of the Eighth Study than elsewhere, as the Platonic transfer of meaning and reference from the sensible to the suprasensible realm. At the same time, Ricoeur identifies this transfer with both Derrida and Heidegger as "*le noyau théorique commun à Heidegger et à Derrida, à savoir la prétendue connivence entre le couple métaphorique du propre et du figuré et le couple métaphysique du visible et de l'invisible*" (373). What Ricoeur seems to do then is, by implicitly equating Derrida's and Heidegger's positions with Polyphile's position or at least what has every reason to be identified as Polyphile's, unite the two erroneous ways which he explicitly opposes. Thus Ricoeur implicitly makes Derrida and Heidegger representatives not only of the second erroneous way, but also the first. In short, it would seem that Ricoeur identifies both Derrida's and Heidegger's position with the very one which Derrida himself critiques and which, instead of calling metaphysical presuppositions into question, naively relies on them.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Ricoeur's "secret" identification of Derrida's and Heidegger's position with Polyphile's position is what has led some commentators to think that Ricoeur has exposed these deconstructors in much the same way that Derrida does Polyphile, that is, as closet

## 4.2. Aristotle and Equivocation

According to the above analysis, there is a certain amount of confusion in Ricoeur's account of the two erroneous ways which perhaps is not entirely inadvertent or even wholly distinguishable from good argument. And yet, were this confusion to be recognized by Ricoeur himself, there is no question that he would attempt either to correct it or to clear the whole of it away. On this point, there seems to be a blind spot not only in Ricoeur's but in philosophy's way of proceeding which has to do with multiple and even competing objectives. Because of ongoing delays in achieving the ideal of fully realized intention, philosophy is never under the control of a single aim except in a protracted, prescribed, or programmed sense. One of the most striking features of the Eighth Study is the contrast between, on the one hand, the rather banal and even unnecessary plea for a discontinuity between poetry and philosophy (Ricoeur ends up admitting that Heidegger keeps them apart) and, on the other hand, all the various signs of its being a high-stakes affair. Because the reasons for Ricoeur's plea for a discontinuity between poetry and philosophy are not fully evident and because his two erroneous ways themselves are not clear, the constant reiteration of this plea in the Eighth Study suggests that its most important role is to bring otherwise intractable material onto the field.

Equivocation is not only the essence of the metaphorical "power" which Ricoeur unleashes in his theories of resemblance and reference; it is also the essence of the metaphorical "explosive" which Derrida unleashes as the catachrestic movement at the heart of philosophy. The difference between Ricoeur's and Derrida's approach to equivocation is the difference between, on the one hand, finding it outside of and yet still at work for philosophy and, on the other hand, finding it at work *in* philosophy. Finding it in philosophy is a threat to philosophy because it is the implicit admission that equivocation is the work of philosophy which philosophy itself does not

---

metaphysicians. In "Metaphor in the Modern Critical Arena" (*Christianity and Literature* 33, No. 1, Fall, 1983), Roger Lundin describes Derridean deconstruction "as an assault upon philosophy and its privileged status as a rational discourse" (24). Shortly thereafter, he states:

Paul Ricoeur sees in the deconstructionist line a continuation of the dominant Western tendency to view metaphor as a "guilty" substitution of figurative for proper meaning (*The Rule of Metaphor*, 284-289). . . . Thus behind the deconstructionist attack upon the truthfulness or significance of metaphor we find, curiously enough, a metaphysics of the proper, a view of language which claims that metaphor, in doing its work of bearing, transferring, carrying over, does nothing more than make a transfer from the realm of the proper, the sensible, the real into the realm of illusion (25).

control.

With respect to this difficult area of investigation, the challenge to Ricoeur is threefold. First, there is the matter of giving sufficient recognition to equivocation which is not only at work outside philosophy, but also inside it. Secondly, there is the matter of demonstrating that, despite this work of equivocation in philosophy, it does not involve metaphor. And, thirdly, there is the matter of, on the basis of distinguishing philosophical from metaphorical equivocation, countering the claim or the suspicion that the former is out of control.

Contrary to finding a certain amount of equivocation in Aristotle as Derrida does in "La mythologie blanche," Ricoeur demonstrates how Aristotle controls equivocation. According to Ricoeur's analysis in the first section, "La métaphore et l'équivocité de l'être: Aristote," equivocation is only what originates with the subject matter of philosophy. More precisely, it originates with philosophy's primary task which is the question of being. This question, along with philosophy's own response to it in the form of the theory of substance and accidents, both delimits the philosophically equivocal and is the basis of predication and the univocal.

Despite this philosophical response, a threat still persists in the fact that, while metaphor is not, strictly speaking, out of control, it contains a moment of errancy. Now, should this moment be admitted as a veritable part of philosophical discourse, it would no longer be possible to hold that equivocation in philosophy is simply the result of its own subject matter. To bar the admission then of such a moment is not to condemn entirely the use of metaphor in philosophy, but rather to condemn its abuse. On this point, Ricoeur gives the example of Aristotle's condemnation of Plato. According to Aristotle, the latter constructs his world of eternal forms by way of empty words and poetic metaphors.

L'équivocité réglée doit se substituer à la participation platonicienne, laquelle n'est que métaphorique: « Quant à dire que les idées sont des paradigmes et que les autres choses participent d'elles, c'est se payer de mots vides et faire des métaphores poétiques » (*Métaphysique*, A 9, 991 a 19-22; trad. Tricot, I, 87-88). Donc, la philosophie ne doit ni métaphoriser ni poétiser, même quand elle traite des significations équivoques de l'être (327).

It must be said at this point that Ricoeur's extremely long and detailed demonstration of philosophical control over equivocation seems to be preemptive of engaging Derrida in this area. It appears to be a strategy of fundamental avoidance, an advance sidelining of his project in the sense that

the prolonging of this issue beyond the analyses of Aristotle and Aquinas could easily be judged tiresome. By the time Ricoeur turns his attention to Derrida in the third section, philosophical equivocation is no longer an issue and what replaces it is dead metaphor.

Perhaps at bottom no serious or deep encounter with Derrida is aimed at by Ricoeur. If his overriding preoccupation is the task of affirming the unmediated foundation of philosophy as self-presence, as dominant discourse, as unique response to the question of being, then the difference between going as far as possible in the direction of confrontation and refutation and the *semblance* of going as far as possible becomes virtually nil.

Of course, the thrust of Ricoeur's analysis is to demonstrate that, while Aristotle does not provide the most satisfactory or fully developed answer to the question of being, it is one which nonetheless is systematic, anti-metaphorical, logical, and logically analogical. He notes that in the *Categories* – which agrees with the *Metaphysics* on this point – Aristotle is intent on controlling the semantic spread between the absolute univocity of the synonym and the full-fledged equivocity of the homonym. Ricoeur locates this will to master philosophical equivocation in Aristotle's discussion of *paronym*. Here the orderly spread of significations is conceived on the basis of a single root term: "« [A]insi de *grammaire* vient *grammairien*, et de *courage*, *homme courageux* » (*Categories*, 1 a 12-15)" (329). According to Ricoeur, Aristotle's ordering of the multiple significations of being is itself an example of paronym which at the same time is unique: the root term is *being* and the conjugates are the various modes of being. Yet Ricoeur also describes this primary schema as being analogical in the sense that the criteria by which the multiple significations of being are ordered are progressively weakened in order to accommodate the largest possible number of significations.

L'analogie désigne virtuellement cet affaiblissement progressif de la précision de la fonction prédicative, à mesure qu'on passe de la prédication primordiale à la prédication dérivée, et de la prédication essentielle à la prédication accidentelle (qui est paronymique) (332).

### **4.3. Aquinas, Analogy, and Onto-theology**

Although Ricoeur gives greatest attention to equivocation in the first section, he nonetheless extends it to the second section, "La métaphore et *l'analogia entis*: L'onto-théologie." Conversely, the issue of analogy, while analysed at length in this section, is already launched and well underway in

the first. Of course, what formally links and orders these sections is his demonstration that the discontinuity between poetry and philosophy disqualifies the thesis that the semantic aim of the first is transferred to the second.

Given that the first section on Aristotle, besides being a critique of the first erroneous way, is inevitably a critique of "*le noyau théorique commun à Heidegger et à Derrida*" (373), the following section on Aquinas must be a continuation of the same. Here Ricoeur's demonstration is essentially that philosophical equivocation, even if transferred to theology, is still a matter inherent to and controlled by speculative discourse. It therefore is non-metaphorical and, being purely the result of raising and answering the question of being, is unique and not influenced from the outside.

Medieval metaphysics is a fundamental complication of the issue of philosophical equivocation because, although based on Aristotle, it does not operate solely along the horizontal axis of substance and accidents, but also along the vertical axis of Creator and creation. Moreover, this second operation is as at least in part a return to the Platonic metaphysic of a suprasensible world grounding the imperfect, sensible world. Taking into consideration Aristotle's critique of this Platonic metaphysic (which theology appropriates), Ricoeur admits that there is a need to counter the suspicion that theology smuggles metaphor back into metaphysics.

According to Aquinas's version of the Platonic metaphysic, the imperfect creatures of this world participate in a perfect being, a divine Creator, from whom they receive their essence. Viewed in isolation and apart from his own modifications, this metaphysic is, along with being quasi-poetic or quasi-mythical, problematic on two counts. First of all, it effectively separates itself from the metaphysic of substance and accidents and, secondly, it denies the incommensurable distance between infinite and finite being. In order to address these difficulties, Aquinas, following Aristotle's lead, conceives God as the supreme substance and first cause. But given that this first cause is now taken to be act rather than agent, the way is open to a non-anthropomorphic conception of divine being. Countering the Platonic and poetic dimension while seemingly doing away with the accompanying difficulties, Aquinas hierarchically relates the infinite and finite dimensions of being by using the analogy of proportionate relations.

On voit l'avantage pour le discours théologique. Entre le créé et Dieu, en effet, la distance est infinie: *finiti ad infinitum nulla est proportio*. Or la ressemblance proportionnelle n'institue aucun rapport déterminé entre le fini et l'infini, puisqu'elle est indépendante de la distance. Elle n'est pas pourtant pas absence de rapport.

Il est encore possible de dire: ce que le fini est au fini, l'infini l'est à l'infini. Transcrivons: la science divine est à Dieu ce que la science humaine est au créé (349).

Following the pattern of his earlier analysis of Aristotle, Ricoeur observes that Aquinas is also concerned with philosophical equivocation when he sets up a polar opposition between univocity and equivocity. Instead of univocity's being, as in Aristotle, defined as synonymy and the word's one-to-one correspondence with the object, it is now defined as divine being in its relation to itself. The univocity of this divine being is then contrasted with the equivocity of being in its general dispersion. Ricoeur's observation of this similarity between Aristotle's and Aquinas's conception of the equivocal nature of being is part and parcel of what is a primary consideration for him in the Eighth Study, namely, to illustrate that different discourses, even while successfully maintaining their integrity, conduct fruitful exchanges with one another. This, in turn, is tied to the basic argument of his analysis of Aquinas, namely, that, although medieval metaphysics is "*un mode de discours qui est déjà lui-même un mixte d'ontologie et de théologie*" (344), its speculative dimension is nonetheless independent. Although this speculative dimension is influenced by the general discourse on God, it is still essentially the response to the question of being. Here as elsewhere, Ricoeur insists that semantic intention is the basis of discursive discontinuity. The following passage provides a striking example of this insistence:

Du moins la bataille pour un concept toujours plus adéquat d'analogie reste exemplaire sur un point: son refus de tout compromis avec le discours poétique. Ce refus s'exprime par le souci de toujours marquer la différence entre l'analogie et la métaphore. Pour ma part, je vois dans ce souci le trait distinctif de la visée sémantique du discours spéculatif (353).

If it is the case that philosophy cannot be dissociated from even a theological use of its own basic tenets, then Ricoeur's demonstration of the discontinuity between metaphor and metaphysics runs the risk of being both excessively wide-ranging and excessively limited: excessively wide-ranging in that philosophy and theology are brought together by him in order to make common cause against unlicensed metaphorical play in philosophy; excessively limited in that he correspondingly rules that whatever metaphorical play there is in philosophy must be a holdover from Platonism.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> There is a discontinuity between how Ricoeur refers to Plato in the first seven studies of *La*

Along the same lines, Ricoeur makes a brief but telling reference to Heidegger at the beginning of the second section and an equally brief but telling reference to Derrida at the end of it. When giving his description of medieval metaphysics as the combination of a vertical or transcendental axis and a horizontal or empirical one, Ricoeur identifies Heidegger as the philosopher who, following Kant, labels this discourse onto-theology. "*Depuis Heidegger, qui suit lui-même Kant, on l'appelle par abréviation onto-théologie*" (344). Since, first of all, Ricoeur himself acknowledges that the rudiments of onto-theology are to be found in Aristotle<sup>4</sup> and, secondly, since he also links Plato to this onto-theology and, finally, since he associates Heidegger's critique of metaphor with his Platonic conception of metaphor, there is reason to suspect that, in referring to Heidegger at this juncture,

*métaphore vive* and how he refers to him in the Eighth Study. In the case of the first set of references to Plato which is half the size of the second, Ricoeur mainly draws support from him on the semantic front, namely, on the issue of the sentence's being the primary unit of meaning rather than the word. In the Eighth Study, the references are to Plato's metaphysics or ontology (called "theological") which is treated by Ricoeur as something like a false start by philosophy. "S'il est vrai, comme le soutient Aubenque, que c'est du dehors que ce discours reçoit sa « perspective », son « idéal », son « programme », à savoir de *la théologie héritée du platonisme*, l'urgence devient plus grande, pour l'ontologie, de répondre à cette sollicitation externe avec ces ressources propres" (Italics added, *MV*, 335). On the following page, Ricoeur continues this treatment of Plato as initial problem to be overcome. "Du même coup, la rencontre, chez Aristote, entre un problème ontologique de l'unité – issue du dialogue avec la sophistique – et *un problème théologique de la séparation – issue du dialogue avec le platonisme* – fournit un exemple en quelque sorte paradigmatique de l'attraction entre sphères différentes de discours" (Italics added, *MV*, 336). Further on in the Eighth Study, Ricoeur associates Heidegger and, by implication, Derrida with Platonism. "J'ai évoqué, dès l'introduction, l'adage fameux de Heidegger: . . . Plusieurs choses sont ainsi affirmées: d'une part, que l'ontologie implicite à toute la tradition rhétorique est celle de *la « métaphysique » occidentale de type platonicien et néo-platonicien*, où l'âme se transporte du lieu visible dans le lieu invisible . . ." (Italics added, 357). Other references of a similar sort follow. But Ricoeur reverses direction at the end of his analysis of "La mythologie blanche." Plato is now no longer one who is misled by metaphor, but one who consciously uses it. "Ce n'est donc pas la métaphore qui porte l'édifice de la métaphysique platonisante: c'est plutôt celle-ci qui s'empare du procès métaphorique pour le faire travailler à son bénéfice" (*MV*, 374).

<sup>4</sup> Ricoeur agrees with Pierre Aubenque (*Le Problème de l'être chez Aristote. Essai sur la problématique aristotélicienne*, [Paris: PUF, 1962]) that Aristotle's ontology is inflected by a theology inherited from Plato.

J'entre d'autant plus volontiers dans cette problématique de la rencontre entre discours théologique et discours ontologique, qu'Aubenque oppose à l'hypothèse d'une simple succession chronologique entre deux états du système d'Aristote (hypothèse introduite, comme on sait, par Werner Jaeger), que j'y trouve l'illustration saisissante de ma propre thèse de la pluralité des sphères de discours et de la fécondité de l'intersection entre leurs visées sémantiques (*MV*, 336).

Ricoeur is signalling that the whole theological tradition has been wrongly associated with a metaphysical misunderstanding or misuse of metaphor which rightly belongs not to Aristotelianism, but to Platonism.

Ricoeur's reference to Derrida at the end of the second section is a rather out-of-character and obscure remark<sup>5</sup> which is only accompanied by a short, identifying footnote: "*Ah, le soleil!, oh, le feu! l'héliotrope n'est pas loin, où se dénonce tout trope par ressemblance!*" (353). Immediately before this remark, Ricoeur raises once again the spectre of Platonism or, more precisely, onto-theology's having recourse to Platonic participation and thereby smuggling in metaphor. Following Aquinas, Ricoeur then, raising this spectre only in order to dismiss it, compares the sun's relation to the earth as single and unique progenitor to God's relation to all earthly creatures as source of their "perfections." After briefly signalling that the analysis of Derrida is near at hand, Ricoeur, still following Aquinas, then examines metaphor and analogy in their greatest proximity, namely, the relationship between metaphor by analogy (poetic) and *analogia proportionalitas* (philosophical). Here the task is to describe the attributes of God along two parallel lines. One of these lines is the metaphorical line of signification which, as the perception of the lesser known by the better known, refers to the attributes of God by referring to some earthly thing (e.g., "lion" as in *God is a lion*). By contrast, the analogical line of signification is a direct reference to God which is also the attributing to Him of what is infinite (e.g., His wisdom) and what is only to be found in finite form at the human level. Unlike metaphor by analogy, *analogia proportionalitas* is signification produced by and incorporated into a pre-existing system of concepts. Given that the latter includes the concept of God as infinite being, what is attributed to God analogically by theology is also what logically supercedes its finite form and content.

Like Ricoeur's reference to Heidegger at the beginning of the second section, his reference to Derrida at the end of it suggests that the latter's conception of metaphor is Platonic. Of course, Ricoeur rejects the Platonic conception of metaphor and, by doing so, he also rejects whatever critique of Aristotelian metaphysics is based on it. At the same time, his repudiation of this conception is itself based on demonstrating that Aristotelian metaphysics is, among other things, in control of itself. It would seem then that, if Derrida were claiming or even implying the contrary, Ricoeur has found a way in the first and second sections to counter this charge and even to deliver perhaps a preliminary counter-critique. The latter would be that Derrida only comes to his anti-philosophical stance because he has improperly grasped the nature of metaphor and philosophy's primary question.

---

<sup>5</sup> S. H. Clark calls it "a rare joke" (*PR*, 139).

#### 4.4. The Heidegger Connection<sup>6</sup>

In the Eighth Study, Ricoeur's analysis of Heidegger comes in the third section, "Méta-phorique et méta-physique," and in the fifth section, "Explicitation ontologique du postulat de la référence." In the third section, Ricoeur associates Heidegger with Derrida explicitly and in the fifth section, does not mention the latter at all. But not mentioning Derrida does not necessarily mean that he is not present in this section and, because Ricoeur does in fact associate these two at the most fundamental level, PS will assume that he is present in the final section. Besides this complication then, there are two others. The first additional complication is that, while the explicit association of Derrida with Heidegger is made on the basis of Ricoeur's critique of the Platonic conception of metaphor, the implicit or covert one is made on the basis of his defence of the Aristotelian conception of being. The second additional complication is that, in both the third and fifth sections, Ricoeur also implicitly *dissociates* Heidegger from Derrida. This simultaneous countermove is largely the result of, while taking Heidegger to be more in line with the tradition than he realizes, considering Derrida to be essentially committed to its disruption or even destruction.

Cette tactique déroutante, on l'a compris, n'est qu'un épisode dans une stratégie plus vaste de la déconstruction qui consiste, en tous temps et en tous cas, à ruiner par l'aporie le discours métaphysique (365).<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> In the First Study, Ricoeur brings Derrida and Heidegger together only once and in passing. Nevertheless, this single instance is highly charged given that its basis is the claim made explicit in the Eighth Study that Derrida and Heidegger both have a Platonic conception of metaphor. "On pourrait être tenter, à la suite de Heidegger et de Derrida (cf. ci-dessous, viii Étude, sec. 3), de détecter ici quelque reste honteux de platonisme" (*MV*, 50). In addition, Ricoeur connects Heidegger to dead metaphor in the Preface. "Aucune philosophie ne procède non plus de la poétique par voie indirecte, même sous le couvert de la métaphore « morte » dans laquelle pourrait se conclure la collusion dénoncée par Heidegger entre méta-physique et méta-phorique" (*MV*, 11). Finally, Ricoeur connects Heidegger to the Platonic conception of metaphor in one of the early footnotes of the First Study. "L'ontologie de la métaphore que paraît suggérer la définition de l'art par la mimesis et sa subordination au concept de *phusis* n'est pas nécessairement « métaphysique », au sens que Heidegger a donné à ce mot. Je proposerai, au terme de cette première Étude, une interprétation de l'ontologie implicite de la *Poétique* d'Aristote qui ne met aucunement en jeu le transfert du visible à l'invisible" (*MV*, 26).

<sup>7</sup> In the first section of *Temps et récit: Tombe I* (Paris: Seuil, 1983) called "Les apories de l'expérience du temps," Ricoeur views aporia as a constructive force in philosophy. Speaking of Augustine's treatment of time, he states: "Certes, ce mode aporétique diffère de celui des sceptiques, en ce sens qu'il n'empêche pas quelque forte certitude. Mais il diffère de celui des néo-platoniciens, en ce sens que le noyau assertif ne se laisse jamais appréhender dans sa nudité hors des nouvelles apories qu'il engendre" (20). Perhaps the difference between

While Ricoeur brings together Derrida and Heidegger very briefly in the First Study, it is only in the Eighth Study's third section that he finally analyses their discourses on metaphor. Coming directly before his analysis of "La mythologie blanche," Ricoeur's analysis of Heidegger is less than half as long and, apart from its own merits, effectively ushers in the analysis of Derrida's essay. At the beginning of the Eighth Study, Ricoeur describes the third section as follows:

Plaçant en épigraphe l'affirmation de Heidegger que « *la métaphorique n'existe qu'à l'intérieur de la métaphysique* », on prendra pour guide de cette « seconde navigation » la « Mythologie blanche » de Jacques Derrida (325).

It would seem that, according to Ricoeur, Heidegger's position on metaphor serves as the basis of Derrida's. On the other hand, Ricoeur chooses Derrida and not Heidegger as the guide for this second navigation. In order to account for this preference for Derrida, it must surely be that either he in some way supplements Heidegger's position or that Heidegger in some way weakens his own. But to go back briefly to the first consideration, namely, that Heidegger's position serves as the basis of Derrida's, Ricoeur, it will be remembered, explicitly identifies both Derrida and Heidegger with a Platonic conception of metaphor. Since Ricoeur takes this conception to be at odds with the Aristotelian tradition, it follows that, rather than some supplement to or weakening of Heidegger's position, what is primarily at issue is the shared position of Derrida and Heidegger.

Yet one of Ricoeur's first moves is to undermine this notion of a shared position. Claiming that Heidegger's use of metaphor is more important than what he says about it, he argues that, although such comments as metaphor exists only inside metaphysics seem impressive, they are really only marginal. Besides the fact that they occur only in two texts, *Der Satz vom Grund* and *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, they are tightly controlled by their contexts.

Chez Heidegger lui-même, le contexte limite considérablement la portée de cette attaque contre la métaphore, au point qu'on peut penser que l'usage constant que Heidegger fait de la métaphore a finalement plus d'importance que ce qu'il dit incidemment contre la métaphore (357).

---

the way Ricoeur views aporia in the context of Augustine on time and in the context of Derrida on metaphor is the difference between keeping the conversation in philosophy going and turning this conversation against itself.

Upon examining these contexts, Ricoeur concludes that Heidegger's concern is really not to condemn metaphor, but rather to defend his particular use of it. Even while continuing to insist that Heidegger's conception is Platonic, Ricoeur now maintains that his philosophical use of it is not Platonic which is to say that it is a proper use or, to risk belabouring this point, a non-reliance on the visible world/invisible world opposition. Ricoeur holds then that Heidegger distinguishes live metaphor without recognizing it as such from purely metaphysical or dead metaphor.<sup>8</sup> The first implication of this analysis then is that, when Heidegger identifies metaphor with metaphysics and, furthermore, when he declares that metaphysics is something to be surpassed, he does not recognize that Platonic metaphysics with its doctrine of dead metaphor has already been surpassed as the tradition's own *Aufhebung* of itself. The second implication is that, even while Heidegger wrongly takes the tradition to be Platonic rather than Aristotelian, his position on metaphor is not fundamentally different from Aristotle's. Finally, the third implication is that Derrida is more of a threat because, unlike Heidegger, he does not simply assert the Platonic conception of metaphor but argues for it.

On peut distinguer deux affirmations dans l'entrelacs serré de la démonstration de J. Derrida. La première porte sur l'efficace de la métaphore usée dans le discours philosophique, la seconde sur l'unité profonde du transfert métaphorique et du transfert analogique de l'être visible à l'être intelligible (362).

While the first and second of these implications, namely, that Heidegger wrongly diagnoses the tradition and that he does not recognize his allegiance to Aristotle turn out to be theses of a sort in the fifth section,<sup>9</sup> the third implication, namely, that Derrida reaffirms the Platonic side of the

---

<sup>8</sup> For the most part, Ricoeur treats speculative discourse or philosophy as the recipient of metaphorical meaning through poetic discourse. Otherwise, he only occasionally remarks that a certain philosophical use of metaphor is unavoidable, appropriate, and unproblematic. What is difficult to understand is how these metaphors as *live* metaphors can be both poetic and philosophical or, if they are not poetic, how they can be live metaphors. And, if they are not live metaphors but dead metaphors, then, according to Ricoeur himself, they are not really metaphors. It would seem then that what Ricoeur does without expressly admitting it is that, in the case of someone like Heidegger, he views him as playing the role of poet (even if only in a subordinate role and in collaboration with, for example, Hölderlin) in order to, in his *dominant* role as philosopher, appropriate his own metaphorical meaning.

<sup>9</sup> While Ricoeur implicates Heidegger in a rare critique of Aristotle which, in the Eighth Study, is over the theory of substance and accidents, the context of this critique is wholly Aristotelian in that it is the latter's own theory of act/potency which is called upon in order to cancel and supercede his other theory.

tradition is, strictly speaking, never developed. What is likely one reason for this is that Ricoeur limits his analysis of the relationship between Platonic metaphysics and Aristotelian metaphysics to a few lengthy footnotes. No doubt the marginalization of this issue reflects his primary concern which is to demonstrate that Aristotelian metaphysics surpasses its predecessor. As a consequence, his efforts do not go in the direction of demonstrating how and why Derrida's conception of metaphor is Platonic. What is likely another reason is that, while Ricoeur unquestionably views Heidegger's fundamental ontology as essentially one with Aristotle's inquiry into being, he finds Heidegger's insistence to the contrary to be troublesome. The result is that, rather than pursuing matters on some deeper level, he sets his sights on a further encounter with Heidegger which cannot be described as being anywhere near as probing as his inquiries into Aristotle and Aquinas.

Coming in the form of a harsh indictment (*"je déplore la position prise par Heidegger"* [395]), this encounter takes the form of two major objections. The first objection is that Heidegger, by labelling all Western thought metaphysical, makes a blanket critique of it which slights the contributions of his predecessors. *"Mais pourquoi cette philosophie devrait-elle refuser à tous ses devanciers le bénéfice de la rupture et de la novation qu'elle s'octroie à elle-même?"* (396). In addition, Ricoeur goes on to argue that Heidegger's own contribution, however original it may be, does not strongly differ from earlier ones. *"Quelle philosophe digne de ce nom n'a pas, avant lui, médité sur la métaphore du chemin et ne s'est pas tenu pour le premier à se mettre sur un chemin qui est le langage lui-même s'adressant à lui?"* (396). Finally, Ricoeur adopts a pronounced moral tone when he accuses Heidegger of betraying a certain vengefulness and will to power.

Je ne puis voir dans cet enfermement de l'histoire antérieure de la pensée occidentale dans l'unité de « la » métaphysique que la marque de l'esprit de vengeance auquel cette pensée invite pourtant à renoncer, en même temps qu'à la volonté de puissance dont ce dernier lui paraît inséparable (395).

The second major objection is that, by continually opposing his philosophy to metaphysics, Heidegger eventually takes it to the point of obscurity and no return. In his last few works there is, according to Ricoeur, *"une suite d'effacements et d'abolitions, qui précipitent la pensée dans le vide, la ramènent à l'hermétisme et à la préciosité, et reconduisent les jeux étymologique à la mystification du 'sens primitif'"* (397). In sum, Heidegger is accused of having abandoned the propositional form – the very basis of

philosophical or speculative discourse – and either striving to express the ineffable or else despairing of language altogether.

C'est ainsi que cette philosophie redonne vie aux séductions de l'inarticulé et de l'inexprimé, voire à quelque désespoir du langage, proche de celui de l'avant-dernière proposition du *Tractatus* de Wittgenstein (397-398).

Before beginning the examination of Ricoeur's critical analysis of Derrida's essay, it is worthwhile to note again that, although Derrida is left well behind by the time the above objections against Heidegger are made, they are not of such a nature as not to be intended to reach him. While it is true that at no time does Ricoeur claim that Derrida's work is obscure or despairing of language, it is also true that in the First Study he makes a number of remarks which, by referring to an untamed rhetoric and sophistry which dangerously rivals philosophy, seem very much to reflect on someone of Derrida's style and philosophical persuasion. Furthermore, along with claiming that Derrida has "*une pensée plus subversive que celle de Heidegger*" (362), Ricoeur puts the former squarely in the camp of the latter when he claims that Derrida is motivated by "*l'universelle suspicion à l'endroit de la métaphysique occidentale*" (362). It must be then that, even though Ricoeur reserves for Heidegger or, more precisely, the late Heidegger some of the most severe of his criticisms, he means to hit Derrida with them because the latter, as Ricoeur himself claims, is the extension and radicalisation of Heidegger.<sup>10</sup>

#### **4.5. The Critical Analysis of "La mythologie blanche": Part One**

According to everything that has been said so far, the culminating point of *La métaphore vive* is the critical analysis of "La mythologie blanche." Here Ricoeur's whole enterprise achieves its critical mass and, no longer guided by the aim of critiquing, correcting, and contributing to metaphorical theory, stands opposed to the project which, *via metaphor*, challenges philosophy as theory, ideal, truth, metaphysics and metadiscourse.

It is necessary to begin this section with a look at how the first part of Ricoeur's critical analysis is related to the second part or, rather, how the

---

<sup>10</sup> In "Le retrait de la métaphore," there are echoes of Ricoeur's critique of Heidegger in Derrida's defence of his essay. For example, Ricoeur's polemic against Heidegger at the end of the Eighth Study largely centres on the claim that he treats Western philosophy as a unity. In his response to Ricoeur, Derrida counters this objection as if it had been directly levelled at him.

second part bears upon the first part.<sup>11</sup> First of all, it should be noted that the first two statements of the *second* part introduce two key terms.

Les *remarques critiques* que je propose ici ne peuvent bien évidemment atteindre le programme entier de la déconstruction et de la dissémination, mais seulement l'argumentation tirée de la collusion de la métaphore usée et du thème métaphysique de l'analogie (Italics added, 368).

En outre, cette phase proprement *polémique* de mon argument est inséparable de la clarification positive de l'ontologie impliquée par la théorie de la métaphore dans le reste de la présente étude (Italics added, 368).

Since Ricoeur uses the word "polemic" in no other part of *La métaphore vive*, it seems that he considers his critical remarks here of a somewhat different order than they are elsewhere, that is, somewhat harsher or more confrontational. Furthermore, it is likely that he wishes to distinguish the second part of his critical analysis from the first part which is presumably an impartial examination from which the second part – constituted by the critical remarks – devolves. Yet it might be suspected that, unlike the examination of evidence and testimony in the legal or judicial sphere, this process in philosophy is hardly ever begun so far as any single work goes without a conclusion or condemnation already in sight. It would be a rare thing if Ricoeur or any other philosopher risked the possibility of, while undertaking the inspection of some other analysis, challenging or seriously undermining the very inspection itself.

Turning now to the *first* part of Ricoeur's critical analysis, it is worthwhile to note that Ricoeur bestows another dubious distinction on Derrida's project. Unlike all the other ones, including Heidegger's, Derrida's is defined as being in opposition to the *whole* of Ricoeur's project.

On peut distinguer deux affirmations dans l'entrelacs serré de la démonstration de J. Derrida. . . . La première affirmation prend à revers tout notre travail tendu vers la découverte de la métaphore vive (362).

Directly attributing this opposition to Derrida's conception of metaphor as dead metaphor, Ricoeur claims that it results in a "*metaphoricité sans borne de la métaphore*" (363). This unlimited metaphoricity is a surreptitious

---

<sup>11</sup> These parts are both six pages long and separated by a single space.

movement in or behind discourse which extends the range and power of metaphor beyond "*les ressources d'une sémantique historique et diachronique, ainsi que celles de la lexicographie et de l'étymologie*" (363). Now given that the greater part of *La métaphore vive* is, while certainly not a lexicographical or etymological study, a semantic one, it is likely that Ricoeur views Derrida as a threat to one of his basic notions: that the aim or intention of a discourse is what ultimately distinguishes it from another discourse.

Another point is that Ricoeur associates Derrida's opposition to his project with an opposition to metaphysics or philosophy in general. According to Ricoeur, Derrida's analysis of dead metaphor is intended to "*raviver la métaphore [et] démasquer le concept*" (363). It is thereby suggested that the concept is something fraudulent in Derrida's eyes and that, as a consequence, his primary objective is to unmask it by demonstrating that it is essentially metaphorical. While at no point does Ricoeur accuse Derrida of trying to unmask philosophy or portray it as being fraudulent, he nonetheless attributes some rather dark motives to "*La mythologie blanche,*" namely, that, besides attempting to demonstrate that "*la métaphoricité est non-maîtrisable absolument,*" it is also "*une oeuvre qui fomenté bien d'autres manoeuvres subversives*" (365). Moreover, he claims that it is part of a larger project whose aim is "*en tous temps et en tous cas, à ruiner par aporie le discours métaphysique*" (365).

Since all these highly charged remarks come in the first half of the critical analysis of "*La mythologie blanche,*" it is not unreasonable to think that the second half, the critical or polemical part, is already at work in the first half. If it is the case that the second half precedes and determines the first half, then the first half must be a certain interpretation of "*La mythologie blanche.*" Moreover, it would be an interpretation which is preparatory to the second half by opening up the essay to a more explicit or trenchant critique. Confirmation of this comes from the fact that, in order to describe Derrida's project, Ricoeur resorts to referring it to a thesis or theory of metaphor *which Derrida himself does not declare as his thesis or theory.* Thus it is that, without explaining this discrepancy (which bears on the intentions of philosophers), Ricoeur continually refers to dead metaphor and, moreover, identifies it on at least two or three occasions as Derrida's thesis or watchword (*mot d'ordre*). While it is true that, in the early part of his critical analysis, Ricoeur identifies dead metaphor (*métaphore usée* or *métaphore morte*) with *usure* in a way which preserves the latter's equivocity, it is also true that this equivocity is soon forgotten and, as a consequence, dead metaphor takes over the field and is consistently treated as having only one sense or signification.

Ricoeur goes on to make three other moves which undermine his initial

recognition of usure as signifying both figurative loss and semantic gain. The first move is that, like dead metaphor, usure is taken by Ricoeur to be Derrida's very own conception of metaphor rather than his conception of the traditional or epochal understanding of metaphor. His second move is not to recognize or at least not recognize consistently that, for Derrida, usure signifies not metaphor in general but philosophical metaphor. Strictly speaking, poetic metaphor which bulks so largely in *La métaphore vive* is not the point at issue in "La mythologie blanche." Finally, the third move which Ricoeur makes to counter the double sense of usure is that, in giving his initial account of it, he interprets it as signifying, besides wearing away, a linguistic gain which, though forming the concept, is something apart from the concept's own grasp and control. (363). ". . . [S]uivant la même ligne d'assonance, on soupçonnera que la métaphore puisse être la « plus-value linguistique » fonctionnant à l'insu des locuteurs . . ." (363). Somewhat earlier, at the beginning of the third section and before his analysis of Heidegger, Ricoeur refers to the unsaid of metaphor which operates behind the back of philosophy. "Entre philosophie et métaphore, une implication d'un tout autre genre vient au jour, qui les enchaîne au niveau de leurs présuppositions cachées, plutôt qu'à celui de leurs intentions déclarées" (357). By stating the relationship between metaphor and concept here so unilaterally and in a way which assumes a strong opposition between intention and non-intention or consciousness and non-consciousness, Ricoeur forecloses on the possibility that Derrida does not claim that philosophy has no control over metaphor, but only that there is a *point of no control* where metaphor and concept no longer oppose each other or are even to be distinguished from one another.

Just as Ricoeur's project is torn between indirectly appropriating Derrida's project and directly confronting it and between recognizing and not recognizing it, so it is torn between being precise in its analysis of it and putting this project in its place. On at least two occasions, one of which must necessarily be still a matter of conjecture and the other much less so, this dilemma manifests itself as the identification of Derrida's project with other projects which the latter brings into the proximity of his own and which, as may be said, are inescapably analogous or similar to it. The dilemma is also in a sense the resolution of the dilemma by collapsing one project which is Derrida's into the other project which is the analogous one.

With respect to what has already been posited and argued for, namely, that Ricoeur identifies Derrida's project with Polyphile's position, there are four main points. The first point is that Ricoeur never explicitly refers to Polyphile's arguments even though Derrida's citations from *Le jardin d'Épicure* as well his commentary and analysis take up nearly the whole of the first section of "La mythologie blanche." The second point is that, as

already mentioned, Derrida raises an objection to Polyphile's arguments. The third point is that, despite raising this objection, Derrida treats Polyphile's arguments as having a certain validity. The fourth point is that Ricoeur picks up on this affinity between Derrida and Polyphile but then, by ignoring Derrida's objection to Polyphile's project, turns this affinity into an identity. Although the indications of Ricoeur's having done this – of having turned Derrida into the anti-metaphysical but Platonic Polyphile – are part and parcel of his overall treatment of him in the Eighth Study, there is nonetheless a more concrete piece of evidence. Ricoeur cites a line from "La mythologie blanche" as if it were one of the more figurative or colourful instances of Derrida's stating his own thesis of dead metaphor. In fact, it belongs to Derrida's analysis of Polyphile.

D'où le titre même de l'Essai « Mythologie blanche »: « La métaphysique a effacé en elle-même la scène fabuleuse qui l'a produite et qui reste néanmoins active, remuante, inscrite à l'encre blanche, dessin invisible et recouvert dans le palimpseste » (364).

Just as Derrida is guilty of associating himself too closely with Polyphile by appropriating the latter's watchword, so Ricoeur condemns him for this association by taking Polyphile's position to be the more legible and straightforward version of Derrida's.

Ricoeur's identification of Derrida's project with Polyphile's position is still operative when Hegel's opposing view arrives on the scene. Complicating matters here is the fact that Ricoeur now associates Derrida with Hegel, but only in the sense of attributing to Derrida this association. This is to say that Ricoeur takes Derrida to be looking for support for his dead metaphor thesis by attaching it in some way to Hegel's theory of *Aufhebung*.

L'usure de la métaphore se dissimule dans la « relève » du concept. Par « relève », J. Derrida traduit très heureusement l'*Aufhebung* hégélienne. . . . Derrida s'appuie ici sur un texte particulièrement éloquent de Hegel dans l'*Esthétique* . . . (363).

But, of course, Ricoeur's association of Derrida with Hegel is only the first of two moves. The second move is to dissociate him from Hegel or, more precisely, to critique Derrida's seeking support from him by way of oversimplifying his theory of *Aufhebung*.

Là où Hegel voit une novation de sens, Derrida ne voit que l'usure de la métaphore et un mouvement d'idéalisation par dissimulation de l'origine métaphorique (364).

Since Ricoeur takes Derrida's notion of idealization to be signifying the continuous transfer of metaphorical meaning to the conceptual realm, there is for him an irreconcilable difference between this idealization and the metaphorical production of new meaning which is actualized at the conceptual level.

To take an overall view, it seems that the only way open to Ricoeur in his struggle to rein in Derrida is to bring his analysis as close as possible to the latter's project and, at the same time, keep this same project out of focus. Along with absorbing as much of it as he can, Ricoeur conducts an attentive and conscientious study of it in a way which, paradoxically enough, guarantees its not being the most scrupulous.

On peut distinguer deux affirmations dans l'entrelacs serré de la démonstration de J. Derrida. La première porte sur l'efficace de la métaphore usée dans le discours philosophique, la seconde sur l'unité profonde du transfert métaphorique et du transfert analogique de l'être visible à l'être intelligible (362).

As guiding principles of Ricoeur's critical analysis, the dead metaphor thesis and the Platonic conception of metaphor presuppose that Derrida's project is a theory of metaphor, that it is a commitment to the determinable, the definable, the univocal, and so on. It is to presuppose that, rather than taking the subject of metaphor beyond itself, it takes it to be something which, even in its own deconstructive mood or mode, can be examined and critiqued. At the same time, by treating Derrida's project as theory of metaphor, Ricoeur must treat it as very *bad* theory. Stripped down to its basics, it is a blatant contradiction: it declares that metaphor disappears and dies in the concept and then that metaphor reveals itself and is alive in the concept. Of course, if Ricoeur were to settle for this simplistic depiction of Derrida's project, he would not only do it a grave injustice but also undermine the integrity of his own. In order to overcome this both ethical and epistemological problem, Ricoeur's analysis must shuttle back and forth between the two poles of "very bad theory" and "more than theory."

The "more than theory" pole is everything in Derrida's project which Ricoeur recognizes as a demonstration of the aporetic and paradoxical nature of metaphor. On at least two or three occasions in the first part of his

critical analysis, Ricoeur shifts towards this “more than theory” pole. The first time he does so, it is but a gesture. He begins by acknowledging that Derrida’s conception of metaphoricity extends to the figurative aspect of philosophy’s basic concepts but, instead of following Derrida further in this direction, Ricoeur assimilates this metaphorical aspect of philosophemes – a dimension which properly goes beyond metaphor – to the theory of dead metaphor. He then goes on to cite a passage from Nietzsche which, as a description of metaphorical effacement, bears a striking resemblance to Polyphile’s in *Le jardin d’Épicure*. In both cases, the wearing away of metaphor is represented by the figure of a coin’s being polished and effaced by much handling. Unlike Polyphile, however, Nietzsche extends the sense of metaphor beyond metaphysical oppositions by including, as part of his meaning of metaphor, perceptual and phonic significations. By ignoring this extension of meaning and by simply not citing the appropriate passages,<sup>12</sup> Ricoeur can include Nietzsche among those who uphold the theory of dead metaphor.

Very shortly after, Ricoeur gives a resume (which may count as the second shift to the “more than theory” pole) of what is essentially Derrida’s negative thesis: the condition of the impossibility of defining philosophical metaphor. He reports that, given that the basic concepts and primary principles of philosophy are themselves metaphorical, what is being defined is always part of the defining. Ricoeur calls this epistemological dilemma the “*paradoxe de l’auto-implication de la métaphore*” (364).<sup>13</sup> But in a second

---

12 In “On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense,” (“*From On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense*,” *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann [New York: Penguin Books, 1982], 42-47), Nietzsche remarks: “What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms . . .” (46). Shortly before this remark, he characterizes metaphorical movement as being at the pre-semantic level: “A nerve stimulus, first transposed into an image – first metaphor. The image, in turn, imitated by a sound, second metaphor. . . .” (46). By ignoring the above passages and similar ones which are all extremely close to the passage he cites, Ricoeur gives the impression that Nietzsche restricts his meaning of metaphor to the semantic and symbolic level only.

13 In the following passage, Ricoeur gives a precise reading of the beginning of the second section of Derrida’s essay.

Le paradoxe est celui-ci: il n’y a pas de discours sur la métaphore qui ne se dise dans un réseau conceptuel lui-même engendré métaphoriquement. Il n’y a pas de lieu non-métaphorique d’où l’on aperçoit l’ordre et la clôture du champ métaphorique. La métaphore se dit métaphoriquement. Aussi bien le mot « métaphore » et le mot « figure » témoignent-ils de cette récurrence de la métaphore. La théorie de la métaphore renvoie circulairement à la métaphore de la théorie, laquelle détermine la vérité de l’être en terme de présence. Dès lors, il ne saurait y avoir de principe de délimitation de la métaphore, pas de définition dont le définissant ne contienne le

move, he turns his back on this reading in order to attack Derrida's project in terms of its motives ("Cette tactique déroutante," etc. [365]). The issue of the self-implication of metaphor, although soon taken up in some detail, is ultimately deferred to the end of the second part of the critical analysis where it is submerged in the dead metaphor thesis *and* the theory of live metaphor.

Now what is strange from the point of view of bothering with Derrida's essay in the first place but not strange from the point of view of tactfully subverting it is a certain lacuna or oversight in Ricoeur's analysis which pertains to a definite move he could make and which would overthrow Derrida's project immediately. After having given his resume of the negative thesis and, furthermore, after having characterized this thesis as being the attempt to ruin metaphysics, Ricoeur makes no issue of the fact that, according to his own analysis, Derrida carries out his both deconstructive and destructive mission on a metaphysical basis. By raising no issue about this discrepancy, it would seem that Ricoeur's analysis benefits to the extent that a play is kept going between the two poles of "very bad theory" and "more than theory."

At the end of the first part of Ricoeur's critical analysis, this combination of over-simplified theory and sophisticated riddle is more discernible if still veiled. The first time is when Ricoeur compares, first, two theories of resemblance, namely, what is suggestive of being or, rather, not being a theory of resemblance in Derrida's essay and the theory of resemblance developed in the Sixth Study. Secondly, Ricoeur also compares at least implicitly two theories of analogy, namely, a rudimentary theory of analogy in Derrida's essay and Aristotle's theory.

Pour comprendre la force de cette affirmation [celle de Derrida], reportons-nous à nos propres analyses sur le jeu de la ressemblance. Il n'est pas rare que ce jeu ait été rapporté à l'analogie, soit que l'analogie signifie très particulièrement proportionnalité, comme dans la

---

défini; la métaphoricité est non-maîtrisable absolument. Le projet de déchiffrer la figure dans le texte philosophique se détruit lui-même; il faut plutôt « reconnaître en son principe la *condition d'impossibilité* d'un tel projet ». La couche des premiers philosophèmes, étant elle-même métaphorique, « ne se domine pas ». Cette strate, selon une expression heureuse de l'auteur, « s'empporte donc elle-même chaque fois qu'un de ses produits – ici le concept de métaphore – tente en vain de comprendre sous sa loi la totalité du champ auquel il appartient ». Réussirait-on à ordonner les figures, une métaphore au moins échapperait: la métaphore de la métaphore, laquelle serait la « métaphore en plus ». Et de conclure: « Le champ n'est jamais saturé » (MV, 364-365).

*Poétique* d'Aristote, soit qu'elle désigne, moins techniquement, tout recours à la ressemblance dans le « rapprochement » de champs sémiologiques « éloignés ». La thèse que nous considérons maintenant revient à dire que tout usage de l'analogie, en apparence neutre au regard de la tradition « métaphysique », reposerait à son insu sur un concept métaphysique d'analogie qui désigne le mouvement de renvoi du visible à l'invisible; la primordiale « iconicité » serait ici contenue: ce qui, fondamentalement, fait « image », ce serait le visible tout entier; c'est sa ressemblance à l'invisible qui le constituerait comme image; conséquemment, la toute première transposition serait le transfert du sens de l'empirie dans le « lieu intelligible » (366).

As Ricoeur relates in the first and second sections of the Eighth Study, the task of metaphysics is to control the equivocal nature of being by way of an adequate theory of analogy. By contrast, Derrida's thesis, according to Ricoeur, is that there is an invisible world which is somehow perceived as resembling the visible world and that, furthermore, the invisible world is constituted by the direct transformation of metaphors into concepts. Of course, as demonstrated in the Sixth Study, the theory of live metaphor is, unlike the theory of dead metaphor, a highly sophisticated one. It therefore seems to be implied that, if Derrida is to successfully demonstrate the universality of metaphor, he must have a theory of resemblance with a level of sophistication at least comparable to Ricoeur's.

Derrida's "thesis" as sophisticated riddle is, once again, the paradox of using metaphor in order to define and describe it. As mentioned earlier, Ricoeur identifies Derrida's conception of metaphor with what Derrida himself analyses as the traditional or epochal understanding of metaphor. This "misidentification" of Derrida's project is what allows Ricoeur to recognize it not as a project dealing with the problematic of metaphor, but only with the *paradox* of metaphor. It is effectively his recognition of it not as a project which goes beyond the tradition and which views the tradition itself as problematic, but as one which is, despite itself, wholly in the tradition and simply a problem for it. For Ricoeur then, there is only live metaphor and dead metaphor and nothing in-between. Dead metaphor is all that there is behind Derrida's claim that the *definiendum* of philosophical metaphor is implicated in the *definiens*.

According to Ricoeur, the Platonic conception of metaphor takes shape in Derrida's project by way of "*quelques métaphores clés, qui ont le privilège de recueillir et de concentrer le mouvement de la « relève métaphysique »*"

(366). The foremost of these key metaphors is the sun and Ricoeur notes that, for Derrida, it appears as a problematic figure already in Aristotle.

Chez Aristote déjà, le Soleil fournit une métaphore bien insolite (*Poétique*, 1457 b), puisque, pour dire sa puissance d'engendrement, il manque un mot que la métaphore de l'ensemencement supplée. Pour J. Derrida, c'est là le symptôme de quelque trait décisif; par son insistance, le « mouvement qui fait tourner le soleil dans la métaphore » s'avère être celui qui « tournait la métaphore philosophique vers le soleil » (367).<sup>14</sup>

Two points should now be made which, in illustrating the selective nature of Ricoeur's critical analysis, also point to the dilemma of his having both to recognize and not recognize Derrida's project. The first point is that the above passage and its immediate context is the only place in Ricoeur's critical analysis (apart from the two footnotes in the First Study) where he acknowledges that Derrida's inquiry into philosophical metaphor is also an analysis of Aristotle. This lapse is likely not insignificant insofar as Ricoeur's project is Aristotelian and might prove vulnerable to Derrida's deconstruction of Aristotle. The second point is that Ricoeur transfers Aristotle's sun metaphor from its context in "La mythologie blanche" where it is viewed by Derrida as illustrative of the ultimately insoluble problem of distinguishing between good and bad metaphor to the context of his presumed attempt to unmask the use of analogy in metaphysics.

Ainsi donc, qu'on parle du caractère métaphorique de la métaphysique ou de caractère métaphysique de la métaphore, ce qu'il faut appréhender, c'est l'unique mouvement qui emporte les mots et les choses au-delà..., *méta* ... (366).

As a consequence of this removal of the sun-figure from the good metaphor/bad metaphor problematic and the transfer of it to the dead metaphor thesis, it is not necessary for Ricoeur to recognize the dual nature of Derrida's analysis which is that it also takes the sun to be the paradigm of the sensible. The enigma of the sun is not simply illustrative of the problem

---

<sup>14</sup> In giving his account of Derrida's analysis of the metaphor of the Sun, Ricoeur strings together a dozen or so very short passages ("sound-bites") which are scattered throughout the second and third sections of "La mythologie blanche." If, as Ricoeur seems to admit, Derrida's analysis is fairly complex, then such an operation cannot be one of preserving the context of the passages in question.

of metaphor, but also of the proper/improper opposition and hence the whole of language.

The sun-figure is dominant despite other paradigmatic metaphors or metaphors of metaphor which Ricoeur only mentions in passing such as ground-foundation (*sol-fondement*) and home-return (*demeure-retour*). Derrida links the sun-figure to light in general and to Descartes' *lumen naturale* in particular. Ricoeur dutifully notes that, for Derrida, the sun is a figure for all theoretical viewing and, in the case of Descartes' *lumen naturale*, for the ultimate knowledge towards which philosophy strives. On the other hand, home is a metaphor for the return to self, sameness, meaning, presence, *phusis*, etc. But Ricoeur does not delve too far in this direction before returning briefly to the paradox of metaphorical self-implication. He ends the first part of his critical analysis of "La mythologie blanche" by concluding that metaphors of metaphor are demonstrations par excellence of metaphorical self-implication.

En figurant l'idéalisation et l'appropriation, lumière et séjour figurent le processus même de la métaphorisation et instaurent la récurrence de la métaphore sur elle-même (368).

Thus, as it seems, he leaves this problem still as something to be resolved.

#### **4.6. The Critical Analysis of "La mythologie blanche": Part Two**

In order to carry out his strategy of doing broad justice to Derrida while safeguarding the tradition and probably what is really at stake here, the *integrity* of the tradition, Ricoeur had to perform two operations: take metaphorical theory as close as possible to Derrida and take Derrida as close as possible to metaphorical theory. With respect to the first operation, it was necessary for Ricoeur to join forces with Aristotle and demonstrate that metaphor ranges far beyond what is normally taken to be the case. With respect to the second operation, it was necessary to take into consideration at some level or other that Derrida stands as much in opposition to semiotic theory and structuralism as he does to semantic theory. Given this equivocal, in-between, or non-theoretical status of Derrida's project, Ricoeur could only recognize it as the univocal dead metaphor thesis.

On the basis of the above-mentioned operations, there are two primary moves which Ricoeur makes and which determine the second part of his critical analysis. The first move is that he both implicitly and explicitly associates Derrida's project with semiotics. The second is that he reiterates and reaffirms his own project in order to repudiate Derrida's. The two moves

appear together almost immediately.

L'hypothèse d'une fécondité spécifique de la métaphore usée est fortement contrebattue par l'analyse sémantique exposée dans les études antérieures. Cette analyse incline à penser que les métaphores mortes ne sont plus des métaphores, mais qu'elles s'adjoignent à la signification littérale pour en étendre la polysémie. Le critère de délimitation est clair: le sens métaphorique d'un mot suppose le contraste d'un sens littéral qui, en position de prédicat, offense la pertinence sémantique. A cet égard l'étude de la lexicalisation de la métaphore, chez Le Guern par exemple, contribue grandement à dissiper la fausse énigme de la métaphore usée. (368).

A little further on, Ricoeur adds:

L'efficace de la métaphore morte ne peut-être majorée, me semble-t-il, que *dans des conceptions sémiotiques* qui imposent le primat de la dénomination, donc de la substitution de sens, condamnant ainsi l'analyse à passer à côté des véritables problèmes de la métaphoricité, liée, on le sait, au jeu de l'impertinence et de la pertinence sémantiques (*Italics added*, 368-369).

When describing the semiotic conceptions which invest Derrida's thought, Ricoeur refers only to the substitution of meaning and the primacy of denomination. He thus leaves out a dimension of semiotics which bulks large in Derrida's project and which falls outside both semantics and denomination. Thus he treats the demonstration of these semiotic conceptions as being a decisive ruling against Derrida on the basis that the semiotic/semantic issue has already been settled in the Third and Fourth Studies. But in these studies semiotics are not simply treated as the substitution of meaning and the primacy of denomination, but as the vast realm of signification below and inclusive of the word.

Ricoeur admits that the theory of dead metaphor is genuinely seductive and, in order to dispel its fascination, he begins by noting that there are numerous terms in philosophical discourse which are figurative both in a strong and a weak sense.

Contrairement à ce qu'on dit bien souvent, note Le Guern, « la lexicalisation n'entraîne la disparition totale de

l'image que dans des conditions particulières ». Dans les autres cas, l'image est atténuée mais reste sensible; c'est pourquoi « presque toutes les métaphores lexicalisées peuvent retrouver leur éclat primitif » (370).

In the case of the terms which are weakly figurative, their frequency is due to the fact that philosophy is always in a state of semantic deficiency. Because of its ongoing questioning and concept-formation, philosophy always stands in need of new signifiers which it must draw from the bank of lexicalized words. "*Mais comme Fontanier l'avait parfaitement aperçu, il s'agit d'un trope « par nécessité et par extension pour suppléer aux mots qui manquent à la langue pour certaines idées... » (Les figures du discours, 90); bref, il s'agit d'une catachrèse . . .*" (369). When speaking of metaphor in philosophy then, "*il faut entièrement distinguer le cas, relativement banal, d'un usage « extensif » des mots du langage ordinaire en vue de répondre à une carence de dénomination, du cas, singulièrement plus intéressant à mon sens, où le discours philosophique recourt, de façon délibérée, à la métaphore vive . . .*" (370).

In line with the above then and with respect to more noticeable or obtrusive figures in philosophy, Ricoeur claims that the prestige which the theory of dead metaphor enjoys is based on a case of mistaken identity. "*La fécondité occulte de la métaphore morte perd encore plus de son prestige*" (371) when it is realized that the work of dead metaphor is really the work of live metaphor. More precisely, it is the revitalization of dead metaphor in and by philosophy – a deliberate move on philosophy's part – which is behind the secret fecundity of dead metaphor. But in explaining the figurative dimension of philosophy in this way, Ricoeur once again looks into the problem only so far. While the resilience of the figurative presence in the concept is wholly acknowledged, it remains for him essentially a non-issue. Yet, of course, if it were entirely so, there would be no reason for him to recognize it or to repudiate the project which seeks to make it otherwise. At the same time, the slightest formal recognition of this issue going beyond the recognition that it should be rendered null and void would entail asking the question: how does the virtual as code or sign-system erupt into speculative discourse in a way which both undesirably influences it and is independent of this discourse's aim or intention?

In the second part, Ricoeur returns to his critique of Derrida's interpretation of Hegel but without any significant additions. Two other issues which are also carried over are the self-implication of metaphor and the Platonic conception of metaphor. With respect to the first, Ricoeur argues that metaphors in, for example, the definition of metaphor itself (*epiphora* transport) have been torn from their metaphoricity by being inserted into a

conceptual network which makes them literal or univocal terms. "L'épiphora est ainsi arrachée à sa métaphoricité et constituée en sens propre, bien que « la surface de ce discours, comme dit Derrida, continue d'être travaillée par une métaphorique »" (372). In addition, certain metaphors have been purposely chosen to produce new meaning and, as such, are the live metaphors of the philosopher.

Loin donc que le concept de métaphore s'avère n'être que l'idéalisation de sa propre métaphore usée, le rajeunissement de toutes les métaphores mortes et l'invention de nouvelles métaphores vives qui redécrivent la métaphore permettent de greffer une nouvelle production conceptuelle sur la production métaphorique elle-même (373).

With respect to the issue of Platonic metaphor, Ricoeur repeats the claim which has already been noted several times, namely that both Derrida and Heidegger ground their theories of metaphor in the proper/improper and visible/invisible oppositions.

Ricoeur manages to add only one new argument at this stage which is that there are many examples of metaphor which do not conform to the Platonic conception. Citing from Fontanier, he claims:

« Le cygne de Cambrai, l'aigle brillant de Meaux », « le remords dévorant... », « le courage affamé de péril et de gloire », « ce que l'on conçoit bien s'énonce clairement... », etc.; ces exemples se laissent tous interpréter en termes de teneur et de véhicule, de foyer et de cadre (373).

But shortly after this brief addition, Ricoeur once again associates Derrida's and Heidegger's projects with the theory of substitution and single-word trope. It is therefore a simple matter to reject them by invoking earlier arguments. "Si donc la théorie de la métaphore-substitution présente quelque affinité avec la « relève » du sensible dans l'intelligible, la théorie de la tension retire à cette dernière tout privilège" (373-374).

Towards the end of his critical analysis, Ricoeur makes a few remarks which suggest that his concerns go beyond metaphorical theory. The first of these comes directly after his rejection of Derrida's interpretation of Hegel. "Si ces deux opérations n'étaient pas distinctes, on ne pourrait pas non plus parler du concept d'usure, ni de concept de métaphore; il n'y aurait, à vrai dire, pas de philosophèmes" (371). The second comes when Ricoeur declares that the etymological retrieval and revival of the figure in the

concept is in and of itself neither a refutation nor an explanation of the concept. ". . . [C]ette démonstration n'est plus de l'ordre de la métaphorique, mais de l'analyse conceptuelle" (372). The third comes directly after Ricoeur charges that Derrida ignores the difference between Idea in Plato and Idea in Hegel.

Aucun discours philosophique ne serait possible, même pas un discours sur la déconstruction, si l'on cessait d'assumer ce que J. Derrida tient à juste titre pour « l'unique thèse de la philosophie », à savoir « que le sens visé à travers ces figures est d'une essence rigoureusement indépendante de ce qui la transporte » (372).

Finally, Ricoeur's critical analysis ends with his picking up on an earlier remark:

Quant au privilège conféré au discours métaphysique lui-même – privilège qui règle la découpe de la zone étroite de métaphores où ce discours se schématise –, il paraît bien être le fruit de soupçon qui règle la stratégie de la déconstruction (374).

#### **4.7. Dogmatic Remainder**

The complication of philosophical truth-telling is also the complication of the philosophical good. Order, control, and clarity as the means of truth-telling and knowledge as its end cannot constitute the whole of this good since the first is always open to coercion and the second to falsehood. Because truth-telling must always be the examination of itself or, more precisely, its means and its end, and, furthermore, because it can hardly be an abandonment of them, it is always in the position of both affirming and denying them. That truth-telling is divided against itself implies that it divides the philosophical good and, in dividing it, is essentially the whole of it.

If truth-telling were entirely the affirmation of its means and its end, it would not be truth-telling for the reason that it would not be absolutely free and independent or at least as free and independent as possible. It would only move in the sphere of the already programmed: the well-established, well accepted, well received, well run, and so on. Such an overdetermination of truth-telling as institutionalized ideal is always already a falling away from it because the ideal is not dependent simply on material

support, but requires the sustenance which comes from extraordinary devotion to it.

It is only the division of truth-telling which can generate this devotion. Because it is *the* vital problem which, on the one hand, demands to be inquired into in the name of truth and, on the other hand, overcome or resolved in the name of truth, the inquiry into it is always indirectly calling for the resolving of it and the resolving of it, because it is inseparable from covering it over again, is always indirectly calling for the inquiry into it.

## Chapter V

### Derrida's Commitment to Tell the Truth about Metaphor as *Direct Encounter with Ricoeur's Project*

Before plunging into Derrida's infinitely complicated discussion of Heidegger's metaphors, PS would like to extend a bit further the analysis of Ricoeur by proposing that, just as there is a way in which the latter, although far from advocating Aristotle's theory of substance and accidents, still aligns himself with it,<sup>1</sup> so there is a way in which he transfers substantial being from First Philosophy to post-Kantian and post-Hegelian philosophy. This transferred or transformed substance would no longer be a certain purity of matter but a certain purity of thought: the form or act of speculative discourse, the commitment to truth-telling which precedes all else, the *visée sémantique* giving meaning to philosophy's contents before these contents can give meaning to themselves. It would be the conceptual realm realized and established not as individual but as collective holding and trust: the intersubjective ethos of the philosophical community.

Now insofar as this transcendental dimension, this *visée sémantique*, this formal meaning of philosophy is also an a priori determination of meaning, it would rest as much on belief as knowledge, that is, it would rest on the hypothesis that philosophical meaning only becomes meaning as truth-telling. With no formal ground for what is itself the formal ground of meaning, this hypothesis must receive its support from some outside source which is likely its value as institution.

Just as the commitment to truth-telling is dependent on its meaning as content, so this meaning itself would be dependent on the pure form or act of meaning which is inseparable from its institutional life and therefore from an underlying commitment to uphold, safeguard, cherish, and protect it.<sup>2</sup>

---

1 In the final section of the Eighth Study, Ricoeur cites from Uwe Arnold's *Die Entelechie* ([Vienna and Munich: Oldenbourg, 1965], 141-170) in order to "souligne fortement l'extrême radicalité de la théorie de l'entéléchie par rapport à l'analyse catégoriale" (*MV*, 389). In conformity with his usual way of proceeding, Ricoeur does not repudiate the theory of substance and accidents but simply subordinates it to the theory of act/potency. He then cites approvingly from Arnold when the latter claims that substance is mediate rather than immediate presence. On the other hand, Ricoeur seems to be far from underplaying the role of substance in the Third Study when, in discussing the distinctive traits of discourse, he focuses on the importance of reference and, in the case of P. F. Strawson's contribution in this area ("On Referring," *Mind*, LIX, 1950), the sharply contrasting roles of the subject and predicate. While the latter is the designation of non-existent universals which qualify the subject, the subject itself is the identification of the proposition to a singular existent.

2 The uniting of the pure form of meaning asserted to be independent in and of itself with the support or call for support which suggests that it is not so independent is to be found in statements such as the following: "Sans aller jusqu'à la conception suggérée par

Yet, in order to be truly effective, this second commitment would not be able to acknowledge itself for, if it were to acknowledge itself, it would be implying that the meaningful content of the first commitment is not essentially secure and independent. Insofar then as the underlying commitment is itself dependent on the first commitment, it must only support it without calling attention to itself as outside support or additional commitment. This is to say that, in order to come across as being homogeneous with the first commitment, the second commitment would have to present itself – at least for the most part – as being not a valorizing or ethical, but only an argumentative or epistemological commitment. Here, then, the ethical constituent of philosophical discourse would be what it is by virtue of a certain concealment, its nature being more practical or performative – indeed, more rhetorical – than theoretical or constative.

To treat the commitment to tell the truth in philosophy as homogeneous is to treat it as ideal. At the same time, this ideal, being never fully secure or certain, is united with an ongoing maintenance and protection which is also an ongoing battle with what erodes, fractures, and fissures it. Yet, strangely enough, this ideal would also be behind what moves against it and most radically calls it into question. For what is at stake here is not just the ideal of the meaningful form and content, but also the ideal that truth is separate from all other concerns including its own institutional survival. If such were not the case, if the meaningful form and content of truth-telling were completely opposed to raising a suspicion against themselves and, in particular, their dissimulating nature, then philosophy would lose itself entirely in the inauthentic mode of holding back on or stopping short of its own commitment to truth-telling.

On the other hand, the project which Ricoeur often refers to as the hermeneutics of suspicion does not seem to be without its own devices and masks. As a discourse largely beyond good and evil, it would still be both good and evil in practise or in a contingent sense and in a way which forbids both its good and its evil – and its good no less than its evil – to be fully acknowledged. Principally, what is meant here is that, if it were not to deny or at least disguise its aggressive or subversive intentions – if it were not to at least partially conceal its nature as disruptive or even destructive force – it would alienate itself from the philosophical project in general. On the other hand, if it were not to deny or at least to disguise its quest for the truth in the form of the radical valorization of truth-telling, it would alienate itself from itself. This is to say that, if it were to openly attach itself to the good – to an ideal which necessarily overflows its boundaries in multiple and diverse

---

Wittgenstein d'une hétérogénéité radicale des jeux de langage . . . il importe de reconnaître dans son principe, la *discontinuité* qui assure au discours spéculatif son autonomie" (MV, 324). The key words here are *importe*, *reconnaître*, *assure*, and *autonomie*.

ways – it would undermine its “good” which can only come from not compromising itself with whatever is quick to call itself the good. It would seem that Derrida’s highly refined and complex response to Ricoeur’s critical analysis is this double dissimulation, this partial concealment of moral extremities.

Three years after the publication of *La métaphore vive*, a conference took place in Geneva (1978) whose theme was metaphor and philosophy. Both Derrida and Ricoeur participated at this conference and, while Ricoeur presented an exposé which no doubt bore on his theory of metaphor,<sup>3</sup> Derrida presented one which essentially challenged the possibility of having such a theory. To describe “Le retrait de la métaphore” as difficult, complex, convoluted, compact, equivocal, paradoxical, and so on is simply to give some idea of the challenge which it poses to analysis. Going further than even “La mythologie blanche” in the articulation of quasi-metaphoricity (which is not a term to be found in the earlier essay), Derrida cannot avoid pushing comprehension towards incomprehension. Indeed, he himself intimates this on more than one occasion or, rather, his whole exposé is full of diverse and multiple signs of thought’s exploring its outermost limits.

What promotes or assures the abysmal course of Derrida’s project is his following the already abysmal path which Heidegger sets. In an “enlightening” reflection on Heidegger’s project, Derrida questions whether it can only have before it the alternative fates of self-destruction or endless repetition in a hermeneutic circle. Yet the very undecidability of this question looms large before him when he admits:

Je ne sais pas si c’est là une alternative, mais si c’en était une, je ne pourrais pas répondre à cette question, et non seulement pour des raisons de temps: un texte, par exemple celui de Heidegger, comporte et croise nécessairement en lui les deux motifs (82).<sup>4</sup>

It would seem that this remark is only a response to the question to the extent that it complicates and defers it. With Derrida as with Heidegger, this question is truth itself being called into question because being itself is called into question: truth and being are one as the truth of being which is their dissimulation as much as their revelation.

That Derrida prefers the philosophical question to the philosophical

---

<sup>3</sup> According to the records at the University of Geneva, this exposé was entitled “Métaphore et symbole.”

<sup>4</sup> All page numbers of cited passages in Chapter V refer to Derrida’s “Le retrait de la métaphore” (in *Psyché: Invention de l’autre* [Paris: Galilée, 1987]) unless otherwise indicated.

answer – that he prefers its radical demands to the equally challenging but different ones of the answer – is indicated by the two opening questions which set up and frame his exposé: "*Qu'est-ce qui se passe, aujourd'hui, avec la métaphore?*" and "*Et de la métaphore qu'est-ce qui se passe?*" (63).<sup>5</sup> To provisionally simplify, these questions never receive a proper answer from him and, furthermore, their subject, metaphor, is soon revealed to be everything which escapes control and yet which, being one with the possibility of control, is a controlling factor itself. To the question, *Qu'est-ce qui se passe, aujourd'hui, avec la métaphore?*, Derrida responds everything. And to the question, *Et de la métaphore qu'est-ce qui se passe?*, he responds nothing. Between this everything and this nothing stretches the kind of inquiry which, according to Ricoeur, "*renverse la manière d'argumenter en philosophie*" (MV, 325) and which "*redonne vie aux séductions de l'inarticulé et de l'inexprimé*" (MV, 397). Certainly this inquiry has gone awry in the sense of its being so assured of itself as argument that it pushes towards the bottomless depths as both basis and loss of it together.

Yet even though this form of inquiry soars beyond the strictest reaches of metaphysics, it can never entirely escape it. On the one hand, this means that it is always subject to being challenged, put down, put aside, dismissed, distorted, denied, etc. and, on the other hand, that it is always suffering, just as projects of clarification do, from an internal dilemma. This dilemma is

---

<sup>5</sup> An ethico-political statement about the philosophical question is to be found at the beginning of Derrida's essay, "Violence et métaphysique."

Peut-être même ces questions ne sont-elles pas *philosophiques*, ne sont-elles plus *de la philosophie*. Elles devraient être néanmoins les seules à pouvoir fonder aujourd'hui la communauté de ce que, dans le monde, on appelle encore les philosophes par un souvenir, au moins, qu'il faudrait interroger sans désespérer, et malgré la diaspora des instituts ou des langues, des publications et des techniques qui s'entraînent, s'engendrent d'eux-mêmes et s'accroissent comme le capitale et la misère. Communauté de la question, donc, en cette fragile instance où la question n'est encore assez déterminée pour que l'hypocrisie d'une réponse se soit déjà invitée sous le masque de la question, pour que sa voix se soit déjà laissé articuler en fraude dans la syntaxe même de la question. Communauté de la décision, de l'initiative, de l'initialité absolue, mais menacé, où la question n'a pas encore trouvé la langue qu'elle a décider de chercher, ne s'est pas encore en lui rassurée sur sa propre possibilité. Communauté de la question sur la possibilité de la question. C'est peu – ce n'est presque rien – mais là se réfugient et se résument aujourd'hui une dignité et un devoir inentamables de décisions. Une inentamable responsabilité (*L'écriture et la différence* [Paris: Seuil, 1967], 118).

that, inasmuch as this inquiry stands as argument and must engage and be engaged by other arguments, it totters even while it stands because it has already entered into the realm of beyond-argument or the realm which is the quasi-ground of argument. For to speak about quasi-metaphoricity is, as Derrida himself admits, to speak about nothing. Now, while this nothing lends itself to being articulated, it does not lend itself to being argued for. In short, it lends itself to a certain kind of *thinking* – a certain kind of equivocal thinking – about the nothing in question.

As this internal dilemma manifests itself in “Le retrait de la métaphore,” it leads to what might be called two performative contradictions. The first one is that, Derrida, while following and even deepening Heidegger’s discussion of language as it relates to some of Heidegger’s own comments on metaphor, takes his own discussion of metaphor and, more precisely, the *retrait* of metaphor beyond the possibility of debating it. More precisely, the lexicon which he adopts for his inquiry into Heidegger and which of course has as its principal term *retrait* is highly specific to this inquiry. Yet, when taking up Ricoeur’s critical analysis “*pour mieux éclairer les prémisses de la lecture de Heidegger que je tenterai tout à l’heure*” (69), he does not recognize the impossibility of debating it. On the contrary, he declares that, not wishing to polemicize or to have the last word on metaphor, he seeks to open up the subject for possible debate. “*Je me limiterai, pour l’exemple, à deux des traits les plus généraux, ceux qui flèchent toute la lecture de Ricoeur, pour re-situer le lieu du débat possible, plutôt que pour l’ouvrir et encore moins pour le fermer*” (69). The second performative contradiction is that, while Derrida denies looking into Ricoeur’s critical analysis of his essay “*par esprit polémique*” (69), he devotes at least one-fifth of his exposé to challenging it.

### **5.1. The Impossible Subject**

In the answers which he gives to his opening questions, it is perhaps possible to detect the eternal mockery or self-mockery of philosophy: philosophy as the saying of everything which perhaps says nothing or at least says nothing about everything. For, while the prospect with Derrida is certainly not one of thinking that, if everything is quasi-metaphorical, then everything is nothing, it certainly is the one of thinking that, if everything is “transported,” “translated,” “transcribed,” and so on, then everything is the eternal and ephemeral no longer opposed to one another. On the other hand, the crossing of these two at infinity still allows for some extremely large contexts.

Derrida declares that there is drama in metaphor and that, as quasi-metaphor, it is even catastrophic. The meaning of this catastrophic,

catastrophic, or catachrestic event is that, unlike the traditional conception of metaphor as transfer of sense from the known to the unknown by way of the poetic or pre-conceptual perception of resemblance, quasi-metaphor is meaning's being transferred from the unknown "source" to the known or to-be-made-known "object." Quasi-metaphor is always below meaning as conceptual meaning and yet always at the centre of this meaning. The known is heterogeneous and occupied in advance by what it is not and what is already forgotten as what is "alien" to it. Here one might think of the proper or literal term whose etymological origin is in sight but whose "origin" before or beyond this etymological one is entirely out of view. Just as quasi-metaphoricity signifies for Derrida this "origin," so it is also signifies for him the *retrait* of metaphor which is also, in his tracing of Heidegger's path, the retreat or withdrawal (*Verborgenheit*) of being. "*On en parlera toujours quasi-métaphoriquement, selon une métaphore de métaphore, avec la surcharge d'un trait supplémentaire, d'un re-trait*" (80).

Derrida's identification of quasi-metaphoricity with Heidegger's notions of the withdrawal of being and the onto-ontological difference affirms the conception of being as simultaneous revelation and concealment. Being is not simply an *éclosion*, a genesis, a first movement which, complete unto itself, stretches from a primordial pre-conceptual obscurity to a civilized conceptual clarity. It is rather a conceptual clarity forever in debt to or implicated in a pre-conceptual obscurity. What is expressed both by Derrida and Heidegger in one way or another is that metaphysics, which is the thought of beings mainly as physical and spiritual entities is forever at a remove from the thought of being as *the being of thought*. As the being of thought, the thought of being is also the thought of beings but only with the thought that these beings are implicated in the being of thought and language.

Derrida follows Heidegger along the increasingly uncertain path of thinking the being of thought as the being of language. Although this path is to a certain extent discernable from the very beginning of the exposé, it becomes increasingly marked out before losing itself once again as a sort of Heideggerian *Holzweg* when he characterizes metaphysics as being at a tropic remove from being or, to put it differently, as being in a "metaphoric" or "metonymic" relation to being. Metaphysics, as this quasi-metaphorical shift of being, contains the concept of metaphor in the way of this concept's already being infiltrated and inflected by what it presumably isolates and identifies. Here Derrida is more or less restating the negative thesis of "La mythologie blanche" which is the condition of the impossibility of defining philosophical metaphor. Yet there is a difference in this later reiteration of the negative thesis in that, with respect to the earlier one, its central argument is more Aristotelian than Heideggerian. With this more or less

conventional argument in the background, "Le retrait de la métaphore" seems to have a certain reliance on "La mythologie blanche" and particularly in light of the fact that, with the exception of its middle part which is his response to Ricoeur, Derrida's exposé has the appearance of being either cryptic assertion or idiosyncratic interpretation. On the other hand, what is being relied on here is the irrefutable argument that philosophical metaphor cannot be adequately or completely defined. Derrida must then think it necessary to conduct a discussion of metaphor in Heidegger's text in a region which is carved out while still being thought.<sup>6</sup>

After his two opening questions, Derrida devotes a number of pages to describing and demonstrating the uncontrollable nature of metaphor.

C'est un très vieux sujet. Il occupe l'Occident, il habite ou se laisse habiter: s'y représentant comme une énorme bibliothèque dans laquelle nous nous déplacerions sans en percevoir les limites, procédant de stations en stations, y cheminant à pied, pas à pas, ou en autobus (nous circulons déjà, avec l'« autobus » que je viens de nommer, dans la traduction et, selon l'élément de la traduction, entre *Übertragung* et *Übersetzung*, *metaphorikos* désignant encore aujourd'hui, en grec, comme on dit, moderne, ce qui concerne les moyens de transport). *Metaphora* circule dans la cité, elle nous y véhicule comme ses habitants, selon toute sorte de trajets, avec carrefours, feux rouges, sens interdits, intersections ou croisements, limitations et prescriptions de vitesse. De ce véhicule nous sommes d'une certaine façon – métaphorique, bien sûr, et sur le mode de l'habitation – le contenu et la teneur: passagers, compris et déplacés par métaphore (63).

By a disconcerting move which, as will be seen, is forwarded to Derrida's investigation of Heidegger (last eighteen of thirty pages), Derrida mobilises a number of words which, as he puts it, are neither metaphorical nor literal. Challenging the traditional conception of philosophical metaphor, he begins his exposé with an articulation of what is at the same time part of this

---

<sup>6</sup> "[E]n raison de cette invagination chiasmatisque des bords, et si le mot *retrait* ne fonctionne ici ni littéralement ni par métaphore, je ne sais pas ce que je veux dire avant d'avoir pensé, si on peut dire, le retrait de l'être *comme* retrait de la métaphore. Loin que je procède à partir d'un mot ou d'un sens connu ou déterminé (le retrait) pour penser ce qu'il en est de l'être et de la métaphore, je n'en viendrai à comprendre, entendre, lire, penser, laisser s'annoncer le retrait en général que depuis le retrait de l'être comme retrait de la métaphore dans tout le potentiel polysémique et disséminé du retrait" (*RM*, 81-82).

articulation. For example, no sooner does he arrive at the third or fourth paragraph of his exposé than he shifts the scene from the modern city to open water.

Je viens de changer d'élément et de moyen de transport.  
Nous ne sommes pas dans la métaphore comme un pilote  
en son navire. Avec cette proposition, je dérive (64).

The drifting or *déravage* motif, initiated by the pilot in the boat trope, continues in Derrida's exposé as the extended figure of a vessel which, although anchored or having its motor shut off, is never entirely stilled. Metaphor as transport is clearly not only the subject of Derrida's exposé, but it is this exposé itself as the object of its own study.

While the urban site of metaphor suggests its ubiquitous, teeming, transporting, regulating, and automatic or semi-automatic nature, the marine site suggests its adventurous or unpredictable course. "*Le drame, car ceci est un drame, c'est que même si je décidais de ne plus parler métaphoriquement de la métaphore, je n'y arriverais pas . . .*" (65). Becoming a model of plain-speaking in philosophy will clearly not halt the movement of metaphor. The figurative aspect of words is already at work suggesting and provoking a direction before there is a logical or conceptual determination. While it is true that in philosophy the improper or errant aspect of metaphor is strictly monitored, it is also true that it can impose itself surreptitiously and then be re-christened *après-coup* the very proper and precise term of philosophy.

The human subject is part of the subject of metaphor as well as being subject to metaphor. The subject controls metaphor insofar as it forgets that it is subject to metaphor and that metaphor is implicated in its very constitution and condition. That the notion of subject is not far removed from the notion of soul, and soul from the notion of spirit, and spirit from the notion of invisible forces suggests that its historical path is no less capricious than continuous. This tension or play between the metaphorical control of the human subject and the human control of the metaphorical subject is no doubt what Derrida wishes to register at the beginning of his exposé. In order to express the subject's control of metaphor, Derrida relies on the word *us*.

La métaphore n'est peut-être pas seulement un sujet *usé*  
jusqu'à l'os, c'est un sujet qui se sera entretenu d'un  
rapport essentiel à l'*us* . . . Or ce qui peut paraître usé  
aujourd'hui, dans la métaphore, c'est justement cette  
valeur d'*us* qui a déterminé toute sa problématique

traditionnelle: métaphore morte ou vive (67).

Metaphor, he declares, is a very old subject continually worked and reworked on the principle of metaphorical use or usefulness. Under this rubric also falls *usure* which, in "La mythologie blanche," signifies the traditional conception of metaphorical loss and conceptual gain. Now it is precisely this value of *us* which Derrida suggests is a worn-out conception. Yet to say that it is worn-out does not mean to say that it is exhausted for, with the present-day resurgence of interest in metaphor, ("*au cours des derniers mois il y a eu au moins trois colloques internationaux à ce sujet*" [66]), this very old subject proves to have tremendous staying power. In the face of this present-day resurgence of interest, Derrida raises once again the question: *Qu'est-ce qui se passe, aujourd'hui, avec la métaphore?* What he is really asking in this context is perhaps: What is happening today with the traditional conception of metaphor? If such is the case, then the answer which he does not explicitly provide but intimates everywhere is that it is being seriously challenged.

On the other hand, if the subject of metaphor is being seriously challenged and yet continues to rejuvenate and reinvent itself, it must be in some way up to meeting this challenge. Even though Derrida is in large measure himself committed to this challenge, it must be that he is also committed to recognizing the tradition's resilience and response to it. Perhaps the first indication of this double commitment is that *us*, although identified with the traditional conception of metaphor and its worn-out condition or tired status, is used by Derrida himself to launch his latest challenge to this conception. More precisely, he takes up as an issue the figurative use of language by Heidegger in conjunction with Heidegger's own semi-hostile remarks on metaphor which seem to contradict this use.

With the declaration that Heidegger's text is, despite its highly limited treatment of metaphor, indispensable for the study of "*cette époque de la métaphore*" (67), Derrida is ready to turn his attention to the important link between Heidegger, Ricoeur, and himself. Now the defence of "La mythologie blanche" which follows and yet which Derrida resists calling a polemic should even now raise a suspicion about the status of the opening part. Although there is no mention of Ricoeur here, there is at least two possible references to his theory of metaphor. The first possible reference comes very early with Derrida's suggestion that quasi-metaphor as the *retrait* of metaphor "*n'a plus de nom, de sens propre ou littéral . . .*" (65). This notion of quasi-metaphor's being both non-metaphorical and non-literal or non-proper, is, along with being developed broadly in the exposé, repeated in this explicit way several times throughout it. Now, along with the fact that Ricoeur's theory of metaphor relies on this opposition, there is also the fact that the

latter assumes that his theory can take in and account for Heidegger's metaphors. Evidently, then, Derrida is already at odds with the very basis of Ricoeur's theory and, in particular, how this theory is deployed in the Eighth Study. What adds to the "hostile" resonances here is the fact that Ricoeur relies on the literal/metaphorical opposition in order to condemn the dead metaphor thesis which, along with the proper/improper and visible/invisible oppositions, he attributes to Derrida. Ricoeur's attributing the proper/improper opposition to Derrida soon surfaces as a sore point with the latter and it is worthwhile to note that, in contrast to his earlier essay, Derrida no longer relies so heavily on this opposition in order to describe the traditional conception of metaphor.

The fact that Ricoeur is sitting in the audience when Derrida presents his exposé would seem to be integral with the second possible reference. This reference shortly follows the first one and bears not only on the way in which Ricoeur critiques Derrida's project, but also on the way in which he most strongly distinguishes his project from Derrida's, namely, by opposing his theory of live metaphor to Derrida's dead metaphor thesis. In his short discussion of *us* as the value which has determined the traditional conception of metaphor, Derrida states that, if he is tempted to call metaphor an old subject, it is because of "*une valeur d'épuisement apparent qu'il m'a paru nécessaire de reconnaître une fois de plus*" (66). Clearly implying here *usure* which, of course, Ricoeur associates with dead metaphor, Derrida goes on to list other conjugates of *us* such as *usage*, *usuel*, *utile*, *utilité*, etc. Then his final remark bears directly on the live metaphor/dead metaphor opposition.

Or ce qui peut paraître usé aujourd'hui, dans la métaphore, c'est justement cette valeur d'*us* qui a déterminé toute sa problématique traditionnelle: métaphore morte ou vive (67).

A question which may impose itself now is: Can Derrida's disruption of both metaphysics and metaphoricity be, if not intentionally opposed to theory in the strong sense, unintentionally so in the weak sense? The answer to this question perhaps bears on the internal dilemma which afflicts his project and which succeeds in making it both strongly yet tactfully offensive and tactfully yet weakly defensive. While the first is largely the challenge to the tradition which does best without polemics or at least polemics in any overt sense, the second is largely that to which Derrida accedes at certain points and for reasons which no doubt pertain to the protection of his own project. While the first largely manifests itself in the opening and Heideggerian parts of the exposé, the second largely manifests itself in the Ricoeurian part. Now, with

respect to the above question, it may be answered that, although Derrida himself has no reason not to let theory be what is and even to celebrate its inevitability, he still rules against it from the point of view that theory or rather the ideal of theory is never wholly secure and demands support from the philosophical community.

With his two initial questions awaiting answers that are effectively no answers and his highly figurative and unorthodox way of boarding the subject of metaphor (which, of course, dispenses with the customary assumption that the philosopher is in control "*comme un pilote en son navire*" [64]), the opening of Derrida's exposé obviously mimics its theme of metaphorical *déravage*. But what is also suggested in the form of the three figures – the three metaphors of metaphor which rapidly succeed one another, giant library, city transportation system, and drifting vessel out at sea, is the dissemination of metaphor. If the opening of his exposé then is not entirely cut off in spirit from his defence of "La mythologie blanche," it is very likely that it is the implicit critique of Ricoeur's whole project from which the explicit one, out of a certain scruple or *délicatesse*, refrains.<sup>7</sup>

## 5.2. Pro Domo

With the declaration that he will privilege the Heideggerian text in order to deal with the question, *Qu'est-ce qui se passe, aujourd'hui, avec la métaphore?*, Derrida admits that there is a paradox which must be addressed. In a manner which is remindful of Ricoeur's approach to *l'auto-implication de la métaphore*, he now turns his attention to dissipating this paradox. What is primarily at issue is the puzzling connection between Heidegger's reliance on metaphor and his reticence in discussing it. "*On cite toujours deux lieux (Der Satz vom Grund et Underwegs zur Sprache) où il semble prendre position quant à la métaphore – ou plus précisément quant au concept rhétorico-métaphysique de la métaphore –, et encore le fait-il comme au passage, brièvement, latéralement, dans un contexte dont la métaphore n'occupe pas le centre*" (67). Derrida then observes that the demands of investigating this complicated issue are out of keeping with the constraints imposed upon him by the conference. As a consequence, he will offer only a brief note on it or, more properly, "*une note sur une note*" (68).

The note which is to be supplemented by another note is a footnote in "La mythologie blanche" and bears directly on one of Heidegger's brief but

---

<sup>7</sup> This scruple which is also a certain *politesse* is no doubt the one of not alienating one's audience beyond a certain point. "Je regrette de devoir me limiter, faute de temps, à quelques indications principales; il me sera impossible de mesurer mon argumentation à toutes les richesses de *La métaphore vive*, et par une analyse de détail, dût-elle accentuer le désaccord, de témoigner ainsi de ma reconnaissance envers Paul Ricoeur" (RM, 69).

trenchant comments on metaphor: "*Das Metaphorische gibt es nur innerhalb der Metaphysik.*" Now, strangely enough, Derrida's attempt to limit the investigation of Heidegger by relying on this note immediately becomes a complicating of the investigation insofar as this note is closely related to Ricoeur's critical analysis of Derrida's project. In other words, the initiative to expedite matters here turns out to be an additional task which is the challenging of Ricoeur's critical analysis and, more precisely, the latter's claim that there is a "*noyau théorique commun à Heidegger et à Derrida*" (MV, 373).

Derrida begins by citing a passage from the Eighth Study where Ricoeur identifies his project with Heidegger's. After protesting Ricoeur's hasty identification, Derrida refers to the note in "La mythologie blanche" on which his investigation of Heidegger is supposed to be but a further note. Citing from the first note, Derrida claims that it proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is not in agreement with Heidegger on the very point which Ricoeur uses to identify his project with Heidegger's. In fact, Derrida claims that, insofar as his disagreement with Heidegger is the recognition of some problem in the traditional conception of metaphor which Heidegger himself does not recognize, he is in agreement with Ricoeur.

Cette assimilation continuiste ou cette mise en filiale m'a surpris. Car c'est justement au sujet de ces couples et singulièrement du couple visible/invisible, sensible/intelligible, que, dans ma note sur Heidegger, j'avais marqué une réserve nette et sans équivoque; et même une réserve qui, dans la lettre du moins, ressemble à celle de Ricoeur (70).

It will be necessary to return to this part of Derrida's response but, before doing so, it is best to report on the whole of it. Next on the agenda for him is to take issue with Ricoeur's analysis of *usure* by noting that the latter, while initially recognizing the double signification of this word, goes on very shortly to replace it with the univocal terms *métaphore usée* and, shortly afterwards, *métaphore morte*. In order to correct Ricoeur's reading, Derrida now cites a passage from "La mythologie blanche" which is critical (or quasi-critical) of the very theory being attributed to him by Ricoeur.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> More precisely, Derrida critiques the signification of *usure* which is in agreement with the theory of dead metaphor, namely, erosion, loss, wearing away, etc. *Usure's* other signification, profit, gain, plus-value, etc. is not put to use in this context because the critique of *usure* is meant to apply to Polyphile's anti-metaphysical yet "symbolist" conception of metaphor which denies plus-value, profit, or true conceptual gain.

Il fallait aussi proposer à l'interprétation cette valeur d'*usure*. Elle paraît avoir un lien de système avec la perspective métaphorique. On la retrouvera partout où le thème de la métaphore sera privilégié. C'est aussi une métaphore qui importe avec elle une *présupposition continuiste*: l'histoire d'une métaphore n'aurait pas essentiellement l'allure d'un déplacement, avec ruptures, réinscriptions dans un système hétérogène, mutations, écarts sans origine, mais celle d'une érosion progressive, d'une perte sémantique régulière, d'un épuisement ininterrompu du sens primitif (*MB*, 256; *RM*, 71-72).

Further along in this cited passage, Derrida states that *usure* "n'appartient sans doute pas à une configuration historico-théorique étroite mais plus sûrement au concept de métaphore lui-même et à la longue séquence métaphysique qu'il détermine ou qui le détermine" (72). As a consequence of coming across the expression, "longue séquence métaphysique," Derrida takes the opportunity to defend himself from another of Ricoeur's charges, namely, that he treats the tradition as a homogeneous unity. First, he notes that, if from time to time he uses the expression, "*la métaphysique*," (with the emphasis on "*la*"), it is merely as shorthand in well-defined contexts. Secondly, he notes that there are numerous references in his other writings ("*Je pourrais multiplier les citations, depuis La différence . . .*" [72]) to the tradition's heterogeneity. Finally, he claims that it is the tradition's own self-conception which is homogeneous as onto-encyclopaedic logic.

La représentation d'une clôture linéaire et circulaire entourant un espace homogène, c'est justement, tel est le thème de ma plus grande insistance, une auto-représentation de la philosophie dans sa logique onto-encyclopédique (72).

Shortly after the above remark, Derrida cites another long passage (most of which is reproduced below) from "La mythologie blanche."

Comme il va de soi, nulle pétition ici de quelque continuum homogène qui rapporterait sans cesse à elle-même la tradition, celle de la métaphysique comme celle de la rhétorique. Néanmoins, si l'on ne commençait par prêter attention à telles contraintes plus durables, exercées depuis une très longue chaîne systématique, si l'on ne prenait pas la peine d'en délimiter le

fonctionnement général et les limites effectives, on courrait le risque de prendre les effets les plus dérivés pour les traits originaux d'un sous-ensemble historique, d'une configuration hâtivement identifiée, d'une mutation imaginaire ou marginale. Par une précipitation empiriste et impressionniste vers de prétendues différences, en fait vers des découpages principiellement linéaires et chronologiques, on irait de découverte en découverte. Une rupture sous chaque pas! On présenterait par exemple comme physionomie propre à la rhétorique du « XVIII siècle » un ensemble de traits (tel privilège du nom) hérités, quoique sans droite ligne, avec toute sorte d'écarts et d'inégalités de transformation, d'Aristote ou du Moyen Age. Nous sommes ici reconduit au programme, tout entier à élaborer, d'une nouvelle délimitation des corpus et d'une nouvelle problématique des signatures (72-73).

During the course of citing the above passage, Derrida once again comes across an expression, this time, "*privilège du nom*" which triggers another parenthetical remark. Protesting Ricoeur's identifying him with a conception of metaphor which, according to Ricoeur, belongs to the rhetorical tradition and which takes metaphor to be an act of denomination, Derrida states:

. . . [J]'ai constamment, dans *La mythologie blanche* et ailleurs, avec une insistance qu'on peut juger lassante mais qu'en tout cas on ne peut négliger, mis en question le privilège du nom ou du mot, comme toute ces « conceptions sémiotiques qui, dit justement Ricoeur, imposent le primat de la dénomination » (73).

Once again, he protests that Ricoeur reprimands him for having a position which is not greatly different from his own and that the confusion is the result of the former's attributing to him a thesis which is the very object of his deconstructive reading. Before citing yet a third passage from "*La mythologie blanche*," Derrida protests Ricoeur's interpretation of his analysis of the two deaths of metaphor.

Dire, comme le fait Ricoeur, que *La mythologie blanche* fait de la mort ou de la métaphore morte son mot d'ordre, c'est abuser en la marquant de ce dont elle se démarque clairement, par exemple en disant qu'il y a deux morts ou

deux auto-destructions de la métaphore (et quand il y a deux morts, le problème de *la* mort est infiniment compliqué) . . . (73).

The final paragraph of the middle or Ricoeurian part of the exposé is significant in that it captures the tension which not only is present, although less apparent, in the rest of this part, but also belongs to the opening and the Heideggerian parts. It is the tension between the need to engage in a verbal dispute and the need to have the truth of metaphor as infinite complication in sight. The truth to which Derrida is committed really has no proper dealings with argument in the sense of justifying itself in an oppositional sort of way. On the contrary, this truth must break with argument – in principle if not in practice – because it is the very condition of both its impossibility and possibility. On the other hand, inasmuch as this truth must take a propositional form, it cannot help but fall back into the argumentative mode and thus be subject to its exigencies. Hence Derrida is forced to protest Ricoeur's analysis of his essay even while struggling to keep off this ground and even, in fact, while denying or dissimulating his presence on it.

J'ai dit tout à l'heure pourquoi il m'avait paru nécessaire, hors de tout plaidoyer *pro domo*, de commencer par resituer la note sur Heidegger que je voudrais aujourd'hui annoter et relancer. A montrer en quoi, dans ses deux prémisses les plus générales, la lecture de *La mythologie blanche* par Paul Ricoeur me paraissait, disons, trop vivement métaphorique ou métonymique, je ne voulais, bien entendu, ni polémiquer, ni étendre mes questions à une vaste systématique qui ne se limite pas plus à cette *Huitième Étude de La métaphore* vive que *La mythologie blanche* ne se ferme sur les deux affirmations isolées que Ricoeur a bien voulu lui prêter. Pour reprendre le mot d'ordre de Ricoeur, l'« intersection » que je viens de situer ne rassemble pas en un point toute la différence, voire l'éloignement incommensurable des trajets qui se traversent là, comme des parallèles, dira tout à l'heure Heidegger, peuvent se recouper à l'infini. Je serais le dernier à rejeter une critique sous prétexte qu'elle est métaphorique ou métonymique ou les deux à la fois. Toute lecture l'est de quelque façon et le partage ne passe pas entre une lecture tropique et une lecture appropriée ou littérale, juste et vraie, mais entre des capacités

tropiques. Laissant donc de côté, en sa réserve intacte, la possibilité de toute autre lecture des deux textes, *La mythologie blanche* et *La métaphore vive*, j'en viens enfin à la note annoncée sur une note (74).

Not least among the indications of Derrida's being beset by conflicting demands is, first, his claim that his lengthy defence of "La mythologie blanche," an essay which, according to him, Ricoeur has abused "*en la marquant de ce dont elle démarque clairement*" (73), is not motivated by any desire to polemicize and, secondly, his drawing his earlier work into the present one in order to "*mieux clarifier les prémisses de la lecture de Heidegger que je tenterai tout à l'heure*" (69).

. . . [J]e ne [me] reporte pas [à *La mythologie blanche*] comme un auteur qui se cite pour reconduire indécement à lui-même. Mon geste est d'autant moins complaisant, je l'espère, que c'est d'une certaine insuffisance de ladite note que je prendrai mon départ (68).

According to Derrida then, there is a certain insufficiency in the footnote on Heidegger in "La mythologie blanche," which renders his defence of this essay necessary but only secondary or subordinate to his bringing this note into view as the clarifying basis of the second or additional note on Heidegger which, of course, is the pending investigation of him. Yet it is far from clear how his defence of "La mythologie blanche" – or at least this defence in full – serves to make the later analysis of Heidegger more manageable or accessible because, first of all, the footnote on Heidegger is limited to Heidegger's argument that the inquiry into being requires the use of a vocabulary which, although appearing to be full of metaphors, renders vacuous or obsolete the traditional conception of metaphor. Now even if this issue is perfectly in accord with Derrida's own declaration about metaphor and his demonstration of metaphor from the beginning of his exposé, it does not need to be assimilated – at least for any heuristic reasons – to the issue of Ricoeur's critical analysis of "La mythologie blanche." In fact, this assimilation goes the other way by subjecting the exposé to extraneous material in that, once it is set down that figurative terms in philosophy are neither metaphorical nor literal, then such issues as dead metaphor versus live metaphor and denomination versus predication are no longer relevant.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Everything here hinges on the fact that, while Ricoeur's conception of live metaphor falls inside the teleological metaphysics of act/potency, Derrida's conception of quasi-metaphor falls *outside* it as the non-teleological condition of the possibility of metaphysics.

That the choice between disputing and not disputing with Ricoeur is a struggle for Derrida is also evident in his backtracking at the end of his series of protests or, more precisely, in his granting to Ricoeur a certain interpretative licence. Derrida ends his apparent *pro domo* with the complaint that "*la lecture de La mythologie blanche par Paul Ricoeur me paraissait, disons, trop vivement métaphorique ou métonymique*" (74). Then he adds a few sentences later: "*Je serais le dernier à rejeter une critique sous prétexte qu'elle est métaphorique ou métonymique ou les deux à la fois. Toute lecture l'est de quelque façon et le partage ne passe pas entre une lecture tropique et une lecture appropriée ou littérale, juste et vraie, mais entre des capacités tropiques*" (74).

Given the above considerations, the footnote on Heidegger seems not only to fit in well with Derrida's present inquiry, but also to offer an economical means to counter Ricoeur's critical analysis. Since this analysis is at bottom the claim that Derrida's conception of metaphor rests on the opposition between visible and invisible being, Derrida is able to unsettle this claim by citing the note, the first two lines of which follow:

Cela explique la méfiance qu'inspire à Heidegger le concept de métaphore. Dans *Le principe du raison*, il insiste surtout sur l'opposition sensible/non-sensible, trait important mais non le seul ni sans doute le premier venu ni le plus déterminant de la valeur de métaphore (70).

What Derrida does not cite in his exposé but which follows the above remarks is a long passage from *Der Satz vom Grund* or, more precisely, its French translation as *Le principe du raison* in which Heidegger declares that the concept of metaphor is confined to metaphysics and, a fortiori, to the sensible/non-sensible opposition. Since this passage, due to its weight and complexity, tends to overshadow Derrida's brief remarks at the beginning, there is some reason to think that he is being more polemical than precise when he claims that these remarks mark "*une réserve nette et sans équivoque; et même une réserve qui, dans sa lettre du moins, ressemble à celle de Ricoeur*" (70).

Besides the above passage, there are other instances where Derrida uses "clear" and "unequivocal" in order to characterize his calling into question the sensible/non-sensible opposition, the semiotic conception of metaphor, and the tradition as homogeneous unity. Now the fact that he couples these words with calling the above issues into question is itself something which should be called into question because, after all, the act of calling into question – the act of raising a doubt or suspicion – is itself not clear and unequivocal. Secondly, the fact that Derrida insists more on his

agreement than disagreement with Ricoeur suggests that he likens his project of calling into question the tradition with Ricoeur's project of critiquing and correcting it. Now, while it is true that he associates the sensible/non-sensible opposition with the traditional conception of metaphor, it is by no means clear that he is critiquing this same conception. In fact, for Derrida to critique it, he would need to have a theory of metaphor or at least some thesis on metaphor and be suggesting, as does Ricoeur, how to correct and replace it. Moreover, the conception of metaphor which he in fact does embrace and which renders metaphor a virtually unlimited problematic cannot be said (except in a more "ethical" than "epistemological" sense) to be opposed to the traditional conception but only to be different from it: different as the thought of quasi-metaphor which is the condition of the impossibility of philosophical metaphor and the condition of the possibility of poetic metaphor.

Derrida's insistence that he is quite clear and unequivocal about a project which does not lend itself to clarity and univocity is likely the symptom of his having to yield to the exigencies of argumentation. This yielding is also an economy of sorts which consists of trying to neutralize Ricoeur's critique in the context of a conference and in the context of this critique's having been disseminated. A major part of this economy must then be to put the equivocal nature of his discourse on hold because, even though it is proper to the discussion of quasi-metaphor, it is improper to disputing and defending it. At the same time, Derrida's project, being essentially equivocal, inhibits this operation and makes it subject to tactical retreats. As a consequence, the truly confrontational part of "Le retrait de la métaphore" is not where Derrida protests Ricoeur's critique, but rather the opening and the Heideggerian parts. There is reason then to suspect that, when Derrida says that he does not want to "*étendre mes questions à une vaste systématique qui ne se limite pas plus à cette Huitième Étude de La métaphore vive*" (74), he has already surreptitiously extended these questions in the opening part and will continue to do so in the Heideggerian part.

### **5.3. The *Re-trait* of Heidegger**

Towards the end of his defence of "La mythologie blanche," Derrida cryptically refers to Ricoeur's *mot d'ordre*.

Pour reprendre le mot d'ordre de Ricoeur, l'« intersection » que je viens de situer ne rassemble pas en un point toute la différence, voire l'éloignement incommensurable des trajets qui se traversent là, comme des parallèles, dira tout

à l'heure Heidegger, peuvent se recouper à l'infini (74).

While it is far from certain that *intersection* is Ricoeur's mot d'ordre, it is definitely the key term of the Eighth Study's fourth section, "L'intersection des sphères de discours." Although Ricoeur begins this section by saying that he will develop "*une théorie générale des intersections entre sphères de discours*" (374), the following analysis focuses on the relationship between poetic discourse and speculative discourse. Poetic discourse is the supplier to the other discourse of a special kind of raw material – pre-conceptual experience – which is then turned into conceptual truth. Despite speculative discourse's being forever in debt to poetic discourse for its growth and prosperity, Ricoeur insists that it is essentially independent from it.<sup>10</sup> Derrida's cryptic remark about an "*éloignement incommensurable*" and *trajets qui peuvent se recouper à l'infini*" perhaps points to the ambiguity of this essential independence which seems hardly different from an essential dependence. What is then incommensurable to philosophy as this ambiguous residue or remainder of its essentiality always runs alongside it like its shadow and threatens to be identified with it.

It would probably be more accurate to say that Ricoeur's watchword is his continual refrain throughout *La métaphore vive*: the production of new meaning. In a way, this refrain is also Derrida's and Heidegger's, but there is a difference between Ricoeur's project and Derrida's and Heidegger's projects which only cross, as Derrida suggests, at infinity. How this intersection of the two or three projects is found in Heidegger is a complicated business which, as the business of language itself, is of course no transaction in any conventional sense. Derrida makes his first move in the investigation of Heidegger by declaring that his problem is one of economy.

---

10 In accordance with what was said earlier, Ricoeur's insistence that speculative discourse is independent from poetic discourse is equivalent to implying that it has a sort of formal purity.

Il peut être montré, d'une part, que le discours spéculatif a sa *possibilité* dans le dynamisme sémantique de l'énonciation métaphorique, d'autre part, que le discours spéculatif à sa *nécessité* en lui-même, dans la mise en oeuvre des ressources d'articulation conceptuelle qui sans doute tiennent à l'esprit lui-même, qui sont l'esprit lui-même se réfléchissant. Autrement dit, le spéculatif n'accomplit les requêtes sémantiques du métaphorique qu'en instituant une coupure qui marque la différence irréductible entre les deux modes de discours. Quel que soit le rapport ultérieur du spéculatif au poétique, le premier ne prolonge la visée sémantique du second qu'au prix d'une transmutation résultant de son transfert dans un autre espace du sens (*MV*, 375).

Mon problème est: l'économie. Comment, suivant les contraintes, d'abord temporelles, de ce colloque, déterminer le fil conducteur le plus rassemblant et le plus enchevêtrant possible à travers tant de trajets virtuels dans l'immense corpus, comme on dit, de Heidegger, et dans son écriture enchevêtrée? Comment ordonner les lectures, interprétations ou réécritures que je serais tenté d'en proposer? (74-75).

After briefly entertaining the idea of using *Geflecht* (weave) as a centralizing and circumscribing principle, Derrida decides that, although its importance in Heidegger's "Der Weg zur Sprache" (in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*) is undeniable, he must "*laisser ce thème en retrait: il n'aurait pas été assez économique*" (75).

Derrida's second move in his investigation of Heidegger is to identify the four factors or demands which constrain him to a certain economy. The first demand is to take a fresh look at the value of *us* as key figure or feature of the metaphorical problematic and, more particularly, the value of *usure* as production of new meaning. The second demand is to take a fresh look at the notion of the proper which, as evidenced by its implication in Du Marsais' figure of metaphor as borrowed home (*demeure empruntée*), plays an equivocal role in the traditional conception of metaphor. The third demand is "*mettre le cap, si on peut dire, sur cette valeur d'Ereignis, si difficilement traductible, et dont toute la famille (ereignen, eigen, eigens, enteignen) se croise, de façon de plus en plus dense, dans les derniers textes de Heidegger, avec les thèmes de propre, de la propriété, de la appropriation ou de la dé-appropriation d'une part, avec celui de la lumière, de l'éclaircie, de l'oeil d'autre part (Heidegger dit sous-entendre Er-aügnis dans Ereignis) et enfin, dans son usage courant, avec ce qui vient comme événement: quel est le lieu, l'avoir-lieu, l'événement métaphorique ou l'événement du métaphorique?*" (75-76).<sup>11</sup> Finally, the fourth demand is to take into account the Heideggerian notion of language as way-making, as *frayage*, and, as a related matter, the implication of translation (*Übersetzen*) in metaphorical

---

11 Cf. Ricoeur's account of *Ereignis* in the Eighth Study:

Que l'*Ereignis* ait même visée de sens que ce qui fut autrefois pensé comme acte/puissance, est attesté aussi bien négativement par le refus d'en réduire l'amplitude à l'événement (*Geschehnis*) ou au procès (*Vorkommnis*) que, positivement, par le rapprochement de l'*Ereignis* avec le *es gibt* qui, sous l'aspect du don, annonce toute éclosion d'apparaître. *Ereignis* et *es gibt* marquent l'ouverture et le déploiement à partir de quoi il y a les objets pour un sujet jugeant (MV, 393).

transfer (*Übertragung*). As a followup to this motif of metaphorical transfer as translation, Derrida proposes to give his own discourse the title of *retrait*.

Derrida's third move in his investigation of Heidegger is to ask: "*Pourquoi retrait et pourquoi retrait de la métaphore?*" (76). His response to this question is roughly divided into two parts: the first part, rather diffuse, consists of opposing the language of the mother to the language of the father. Explicitly identifying both these languages with Heidegger's own terminology, Derrida views the first as native dialect or *Mundart* and the second as what falls "*sous les noms de « métalangage »* (Metasprache, Übersprache, Metalinguistik) – *ou de Métaphysique*" (76). In the case of the language of the mother, Derrida cites from Heidegger: "Die Mundart ist nicht nur die Sprache der Mutter, sondern zugleich und zuvor die Mutter der Sprache" (76). Seizing upon this example of Heidegger's use of metaphor, Derrida cites Heidegger's own observation that the meaning here is less one of grasping the meaning of language through the figure of the mother than to grasp the meaning of the mother through the figure of language, that is, through *Mundart* or *Muttersprache*. Given that Derrida identifies the language of the father with metadiscourse and metadiscourse in turn with the impossible and monstrous project (*ce projet impossible et monstrueux*) of the mastery of form for form's sake, the language of the mother must be the more tractable *material* or *matter* (*mère, mutter, mater*) of a local and familiar way of speaking.

Of course, it is the tractable aspect of his own mother tongue which leads Derrida away from German to the word *retrait*. "*Sans m'enfoncer dans toutes les questions qui se pressent ici, je remarque d'abord que dans « ma langue » le mot retrait, se trouve doté d'une assez riche polysémie*" (77). By taking advantage of all the polysemous resources of *retrait*, Derrida admits that he risks separating himself from Heidegger's meaning. Nevertheless he justifies this risk by claiming that his objective is, given the constraints of the conference, to achieve quickly the greatest possible precision over a large area and, at the same time, employ a language or lexicon which is demonstrative of the *déravage* of metaphor.

Le mot *retrait* – à la fois intact, et forcé, sauf dans ma langue et simultanément altéré –, je l'ai présumé le plus propre à capter la plus grande quantité d'énergie et d'information dans le texte heideggerien à l'intérieur du contexte qui est ici le nôtre, et seulement dans les limites de ce contexte (77).

Derrida's fourth move in the investigation is to deal with *retrait* in the sense of testing its possibilities as vehicle for interpreting and translating the

Heideggerian text. This text has two dimensions: the first is as a discourse on metaphor and the second is as a metaphorical discourse itself. Determining the relationship between Heidegger's few statements about metaphor and his seemingly abundant use of it is a task which, to say the very least, is convoluted. Meant to facilitate matters, retrait inevitably runs the risk of complicating them. Derrida's first schematic response is the following: according to Heidegger, being is always in withdrawal even as it permits beings to manifest themselves as beings. Metaphysics then – the opening by which beings manifest themselves – is already at a remove from being or the thought of being. Consequently, the concept of metaphor is itself at a remove from being and, as such, is always already a "primordial" shift, a "figurative" movement which it cannot itself grasp or define. This withdrawal of metaphor to a position essentially behind the subject or the study of it is what Derrida means by the retrait of metaphor.

In the case of Heidegger, Derrida's position is that the figures which he uses are neither metaphorical nor literal. Since being, as opposed to beings, is nothing, it cannot be signified on the basis of this metaphysical opposition. In order to articulate the in-between status of Heidegger's figures, Derrida initiates a second meaning for retrait which follows in the wake of its first meaning as withdrawal. This second meaning (which Derrida likens to a returning wave on a beach) is the virtually simultaneous signification of retrait as *re-trait*: as retracing or backtracking.

On en parlera toujours *quasi* métaphoriquement, selon une métaphore de métaphore, avec la surcharge d'un trait supplémentaire, d'un *re-trait*. Un pli supplémentaire de la métaphore articule ce retrait, répétant en la déplaçant la métaphore intra-métaphysique, celle-là même que le retrait de l'être aura rendue possible (80).

Insofar as metaphysics always exceeds its borders or, to put it another way, always is metaphorical, it is implicated in quasi-metaphoricity and, as such, implicated in what is, strictly speaking, neither metaphorical nor literal. In order to articulate this in-between status of quasi-metaphoricity, it is necessary to situate philosophical inquiry at more or less the same level.

Still staying with the subject of retrait, Derrida makes the fifth move of his investigation by offering two provisional conclusions. The first is that retrait is not too abusive as the translation of Heidegger's *Entziehung* and that, furthermore, what compensates for any possible abuse is its concentrated work load: retrait not only signifies the withdrawal of being, but, as *re-trait*, a return over the very same ground, a return which is the quasi-metaphorical's advancing as the metaphysical. The second provisional

conclusion is that the meaning of retrait as both withdrawal of being and advance of metaphysics is inseparable from the exploitation of its polysemous and disseminating possibilities. Not being itself a metaphor, retrait does not follow the prescribed path which is to take thought from the known – in this case, the idea of withdrawal or retreat – to the unknown which is the thought of being. On the contrary, the thought of being leads to a new way of thinking retrait.

Or ce qui survient ici, c'est que pour une fois nous ne pouvons penser le trait du re-trait que depuis la pensée de cette différence ontico-ontologique sur le retrait de laquelle se serait tracée, avec la bordure de la métaphysique, la structure courante de l'usage métaphorique (82).

Derrida's sixth move of the investigation is to bring into greater focus the relationship between Heidegger's seeming aversion and seeming attraction to metaphor. To be carrying on this sort of investigation is to be confronted with "*la catastrophe généralisante*" of metaphor which is a metaphoricity overflowing its borders and which, at least in the context of investigating Heidegger on metaphor, is the systematic disruption of metaphor and concept alike. Derrida goes on to say that he will draw "*deux exemples parmi d'autres possibles. Il s'agit toujours de ces moments typiques où, recourant à des formules qu'on serait tenté de recevoir comme des métaphores, Heidegger précise qu'elles n'en sont pas et jette la suspicion sur ce que nous croyons penser d'assuré et de clair sous ce mot*" (82-83). Taking one of his examples which is a figurative phrase or sentence from "*Brief über den 'Humanismus,'*" Derrida determines this sentence to be neither judicative nor constative: "*Das Denken baut am Haus des Seins.*" To read this sentence simply as a statement about the house-like nature of being which thought would constitute in some way – found, furnish, and so on – is to read it contrary to Heidegger's own directive. What is to be thought most deeply here is not the meaning of being, but the meaning of the house. That the house no longer remains quite so known, fixed, and limited when the thought of being initiates thinking about it is perhaps the more precise understanding of house.

The second example which Derrida provides of Heidegger's denying or discouraging the view that his language is metaphorical is somewhat different from the first.

1. Dans *Das Wesen der Sprache* (1957-58), elle [une autre occurrence] précède le passage cité tout à l'heure

sur « *Worte wie Blumen* ». 2. Elle ne concerne pas seulement la prétendue métaphoricité de certains énoncés sur le langage en général et, en lui, sur la métaphore. Elle vise d'abord un discours prétendument métaphorique portant sur le rapport entre pensée et poésie (*Denken und Dichten*). 3. Elle détermine ce rapport comme *voisinage* (*Nachbarschaft*), selon ce type de proximité (*Nähe*) qu'on appelle *voisinage*, dans l'espace de la demeure et l'économie de la maison. Or là aussi, appeler métaphore, comme si on savait ce que c'était, telle valeur de voisinage entre poésie et pensée, faire comme si on était d'abord assuré de la proximité et du voisinage du voisinage, c'est se fermer à la nécessité de l'autre mouvement. Inversement, c'est en renonçant à la sécurité de ce qu'on croit reconnaître sous le nom de métaphore et de voisinage qu'on s'approchera peut-être de la proximité du voisinage (85).

As to be expected with an investigation which dares to confront a generalizing catastrophe, Derrida's next moves grow increasingly obscure. Despite his expressed aim to open things up for a possible debate, these moves have all the earmarks of closing one down.

Précipitant ma conclusion . . . je voudrais maintenant en venir non pas au dernier mot, mais à ce mot pluriel de *trait* lui-même. Et non pas y venir mais y revenir. Non pas au retrait de la métaphore mais à ce qui pourrait d'abord ressembler à la métaphore du retrait. N'y aurait-t-il pas en dernière instance, derrière tout ce discours, le soutenant plus ou moins discrètement, en retrait, une métaphore du retrait, qui autoriserait à parler de la différence ontologique et à partir d'elle du retrait de la métaphore? (86).

Here Derrida raises the suspicion that his own analysis might be relying inadvertently on a dominant metaphor. In order to eliminate this possibility, he abandons his use of *retrait* and replaces it with another term, a word which perhaps is more common, ordinary, or literal: *trait*. *Trait* is pressed into service by Derrida as a sort of generic term in order to deal with and coordinate two clusters of related words in Heidegger which interweave and cross and are neither metaphorical nor literal. What follows as the seventh move of the investigation is that Derrida identifies *trait* with two families of

words which, as he claims, have been present and operative in Heidegger's writings since *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*.

Deux familles, pour ainsi dire, de mots, noms, verbes et syncatégorèmes, viennent s'allier, s'engager, se croiser en ce contrat du trait dans la langue allemande. C'est d'une part la « famille » de *Ziehen* (*Zug, Bezug, Gezüge, durchziehen, entziehen*), d'autre part la « famille » de *Reissen* (*Riss, Aufriss, Umriss, Grundriss, etc.*) (86).

In order to be economical in demonstrating the performative side of Heidegger's text which is the subtle interplay between the two families of words, *Ziehen* and *Reissen*, Derrida includes in his analysis the thematic side of this text by focussing on Heidegger's description of the interplay between *Denken* and *Dichten*. This second interplay is identified by Heidegger as a process of differentiation which makes it at least analogous to Ricoeur's notion of an interaction and discontinuity between poetic discourse and speculative discourse.<sup>12</sup>

Remarquons d'abord quelque chose du trait *avoisinant*. Le voisinage entre *Denken* et *Dichten* nous donnait accès au voisinage, à la proximité du voisinage, selon un chemin qui, n'étant pas plus métaphorique que littéral, rouvrirait la question de la métaphore. Or le trait avoisinant, disons le trait *approchant*, le trait propre qui rapporte (*bezieht*) l'une à l'autre *Dichten* (qu'il ne faut pas traduire sans précaution par poésie) et pensée (*Denken*) en leur proximité avoisinante, qui les *partage* et que les deux *partagent*, ce trait commun différentiel, qui les attire réciproquement, tout en signant leur différence irréductible, ce trait, c'est le *trait: Riss*, tracement de frayage qui incise, déchire, marque l'écart, la limite, la marge, la marque . . . Et ce trait (*Riss*) est une *coupe* que se font, quelque part à l'infini, les deux voisins, *Denken und Dichten*. A l'entaille de cette coupe, ils s'ouvrent,

---

12 Cf. Ricoeur's assessment of this proximity between Heidegger and him.

Pour finir, je voudrais ne retenir, de dernier Heidegger, que cette admirable déclaration: « Entre elles deux, pensée et poésie, règne une parenté plus profondément retirée, parce que toutes deux s'adonnent au service du langage et se prodiguent pour lui. Entre elles deux pourtant persiste en même temps un abîme profond, car elles demeurent sur les monts les plus séparés » (*MV*, 398).

pourrait-on dire, l'un à l'autre, ils s'ouvrent de leur différence et même, pour me servir d'un mot dont j'ai d'ailleurs (dans *Glas*) tenté de régler l'usage, se recourent de leur trait et donc de leur retrait respectif. Ce trait (*Riss*) de recoupe rapporte l'un à l'autre mais n'appartient à aucun d'eux. C'est pourquoi ce n'est pas un trait commun ou un concept général, ni davantage une métaphore. On dirait du trait qu'il est plus originaire que les deux (*Dichten* et *Denken*) qu'il entaille et recoupe, qu'il est leur origine commune et le sceau de leur alliance, restant en cela singulier et différent des deux, si un trait pouvait être quelque chose, pouvait être proprement et pleinement originaire. Or s'il fraye un écart différentiel, un trait n'est ni pleinement originaire et autonome, ni, en tant que frayage, purement dérivé. Et dans la mesure où un tel trait fraye la possibilité de nommer dans la langue (écrite ou parlée au sens courant de ces mots), il n'est lui-même nommable, en tant qu'écartement, ni littéralement, ni proprement, ni métaphoriquement. *Il n'a pas d'approchant en tant que tel* (87).

In his analysis of Heidegger's account of the interaction between *Dichten* and *Denken*, Derrida identifies the "chosen" word – the word which largely determines the putting into play of several conjugate terms – as *Aufriss* (cut, incision). As Derrida explains it, Heidegger is called upon by language to call up a name for that which, properly speaking, does not and cannot have a name. Although *Aufriss* is commonly rendered *gravure* or *tracé-ouvrant* by French translators of Heidegger, Derrida chooses to render it *entame* because the trait is – so Derrida himself is called upon by language to name it – the cutting into as well as the cutting out of the differential between *Dichten* and *Denken* which is also their difference in their very proximity. This incising is also the formation of what is proper to the two as the very constituting of the proper itself. As such, Derrida identifies *entame* with Heidegger's *Ereignis*, the event of appropriation. *Ereignis* in turn is identified with *re-trait* as return or resurgence of metaphor since this return is the metaphysical counterpart of metaphor's withdrawal beyond metaphysics.

After illustrating the interplay between the *Ziehen* family of words and the *Reissen* family of words in Heidegger's description of *Sprache*, Derrida goes on to stress – and by way of a certain self-reference and self-implication – the disturbance in language which is also the work of language.

Nous devons encore, ici même, performer, [*sic*] entamer, tracer, tracter, traquer non pas ceci ou cela mais la capture même de ce croisement d'une langue dans une autre, la capture (à la fois violente et fidèle, passive pourtant et laissant *sauf*) de ce croisement alliant *Reissen* et *Ziehen*, les traduisent déjà *dans* la langue dite allemande. Cette capture affecterait le capteur lui-même, le traduisant dans l'autre, puisque *retrait*, en français, n'a jamais voulu dire, selon l'usage, re-tracement. Pour entamer cette captation compréhensive et cette tractation ou cette transaction avec la langue de l'autre, je soulignerai encore ceci: que la tractation *fait oeuvre*, elle est à l'oeuvre déjà dans la langue de l'autre, je dirai dans les langues de l'autre (90-91).

After this eighth move of the investigation, Derrida carries out one other. The ninth move is to refer to a particularly troublesome statement in Heidegger's *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* which sums up the generalizing catastrophe of metaphor: *Die Wahrheit ist Un-wahrheit*. The analysis of the *Ziehen* family of words and the *Reissen* family of words is now carried over to an analysis of Heidegger on truth and art. The combat between truth as work of art and non-truth as concealment is also the dual struggle between light and darkness and world and earth. It is infinitely complicated by the work of art's drawing up into itself this non-truth as concealment and by its struggling to reveal it.

Or ce combat n'est pas un trait (*Riss*) comme *Aufreissen* ouvrant un simple gouffre (*blossen Kluft*) entre les adverses. Le combat attire les adverses dans l'attrait d'une appartenance réciproque. C'est un trait qui les attire vers la provenance de leur unité à partir d'un fond unis, *aus dem einigen Grunde zusammen*. En ce sens il est *Grundriss*: plan fondamentale, projet, dessein, esquisse, précis. S'impriment alors une série de locutions dont le sens courant, usuel, « littéral » dirait-on, se trouve réactivé en même temps que discrètement réinscrit, déplacé, remis en jeu dans ce qui fait oeuvre en ce contexte. Le *Grundriss* est *Aufriss* (entame et, au sens courant, profil essentiel, schéma, projection) qui dessine (*zeichnet*) les traits fondamentaux (*Grundzüge*, et ici se croisent les deux systèmes de traits pour dire *trait* dans la langue) de l'éclaircie de l'étant. Le trait (*Riss*) ne fait pas

se fendre les opposés, il attire l'adversité vers l'unité d'un contour (*Umriss*) d'un cadre, d'une charpente (au sens courant). Le trait est « *einheitliches Gezüge von Aufriss und Grundriss, Durch- und Umriss* », l'ensemble unis, ajointé (*Ge-*) des traits rassemblés, la contraction ou le contrat entre toutes ces formes de traits, ces apparentes modifications ou propriétés de *Riss* (*Auf-*, *Grund-*, *Durch-*, *Um-*, etc.) entre tous ces traits du trait qui ne lui surviennent pas comme des modifications prédicatives à un sujet, une substance ou un étant (ce que le trait n'est pas) mais qui ouvrent au contraire la dé-limitation, la démarcation depuis laquelle le discours ontologique sur la substance, le prédicat, la proposition, la logique et la rhétorique peuvent alors s'enlever (91-92).

The nine moves of Derrida's investigation are a complicated effort to be as thorough as possible in the analysis of the status of Heidegger's metaphors. But because this analysis is also abysmal, it cannot be deepened but only disputed or rejected. While all the weight of "formal" opinion is likely thrown behind the effort to prove such an analysis non-receivable, all the weight of "informal" opinion is likely the insinuation of its immoral or unethical status.<sup>13</sup>

Given that Derrida is aware that his investigation of Heidegger is abysmal and that he nonetheless desires it to be "well-received," it is likely that he must jockey between two conflicting demands. One of these demands would be in line not only with his declaration that he wishes to open up the discussion for possible debate, but with his numerous references to the economic and schematic nature of his investigation which imply that there is room for further development. At the same time, Derrida chooses a terminology for his analysis of Heidegger's metaphors which, as he himself admits, is proper only to a specific context. The question then arises: what sort of debate does Derrida have in mind if replacing these terms with other ones is only possible in the context of continuing the investigation of Heidegger's metaphors as quasi-metaphors?

This question seems to be particularly relevant with respect to the penultimate paragraph. After declaring that "*le trait n'est donc rien*" (92), Derrida inquires about the possibility of further study in this area. "*Comment en parler? Quelle écriture faut-il ici inventer?*" (92). Admitting that it is

---

<sup>13</sup> If Derrida's project is taken to be not simply his discussion of metaphor but his entire works, there are many examples of such an insinuating effort. A good source is *Jacques Derrida: An Annotated Primary and Secondary Bibliography*, ed. William R. Shultz and Lewis L. B. Fried (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992).

always possible for a new rhetoric or meta-rhetoric to arise, he also declares that it would be assigned to its own impossibility.

La rhétorique ne pourra alors s'énoncer elle-même, et sa possibilité, quand s'emportant dans le trait supplémentaire d'une rhétorique de la rhétorique, et par exemple d'une métaphore de métaphore, etc. (92).

Next he states: "*Quand on dit trait ou retrait dans un contexte où il y va de la vérité, 'trait' n'est plus une métaphore de ce que nous croyons usuellement reconnaître sous ce mot*" (92). Now, if what is truly debatable in this context is in fact not the status of Heidegger's metaphors but the very issue of truth's being in question, then Derrida's calling for a debate without clarifying its nature suggests that a confusion reigns here which permits the confrontational possibilities normally associated with debate to be registered in an area of investigation which effectively denies them.

If there is a sense in which Derrida closes down debate even while claiming to open it up, there is also a sense in which he carries on a debate even after having shut it down. After having protested Ricoeur's reading of "La mythologie blanche" and begun the investigation of Heidegger, he still refers to Ricoeur although, to be sure, in ways which seem inconsequential. On the other hand, if scrutinized more closely and taken into consideration with other factors, it will not be so difficult to think that the Eighth Study and, in particular, Ricoeur's investigation of Heidegger are not far removed from Derrida's investigation of him.

Although there are only three later references to Ricoeur which are explicit (or at least quasi-explicit), two of them are unquestionably a continuation of Derrida's mid-exposé protests. The first comes very shortly after he has ended his defence.

Or c'est économiquement d'économie que je dois parler ici. . . . Économie pour articuler ce que je vais dire avec l'autre possible tropique de l'*usure*, celui de l'intérêt, de la plus-value, du calcul fiduciaire ou du taux usuraire, que Ricoeur a désigné mais laissé dans l'ombre . . . (75).

The second explicit reference to Ricoeur comes when he identifies the two brief remarks by Heidegger on metaphor which seem to draw the most interest and critical attention. Once again, he uses this opportunity to supplement his defence.

Sans doute à cause de leur forme univoque et sentencieuse, ces deux passages ont constitué l'unique foyer de la discussion qui s'est engagée sur la métaphore chez Heidegger, d'une part dans un article de Jean Greisch, « Les mots et les roses: La métaphore chez Martin Heidegger » (*Revue des sciences théologiques et philosophiques*, 57, 1973), puis d'autre part dans *La métaphore vive* (1975). Les deux analyses s'orientent différemment. L'essai de Greisch se dit plus proche du mouvement amorcé par *La mythologie blanche*. Néanmoins les deux textes ont en commun les motifs suivants que je rappelle très vite sans revenir sur ce que j'ai dit tout à l'heure de *La métaphore vive*. Le premier motif, sur lequel je ne me sens pas du tout d'accord mais sur lequel je ne m'étendrai pas . . . c'est le motif onto-anthologique de la fleur. Greisch et Ricoeur identifient ce que je dis des fleurs séchées à la fin de *La mythologie blanche* avec ce que Heidegger reproche à Gottfried Benn de dire pour transformer le poème de Hölderlin en « herbier » et en collection de plantes desséchées. Greisch parle d'une parenté entre l'attitude de Benn et la mienne. Et Ricoeur utilise ce motif de l'herbier comme une transition vers le propos de *La mythologie blanche*. Pour de multiples raisons que je n'ai pas le temps d'énumérer, je lirais cela tout autrement (78).

With respect to providing evidence that a polemic is secretly at work in the Heideggerian part of Derrida's exposé, the above references no doubt are weak and limited. But it should be remembered that, besides their apparent isolation and random occurrence, they belong to the "inept" defensive side of Derrida's project which ranges between statements which tend to clarify it by over-simplifying it and others which tend to endorse, if weakly, Ricoeur's position. It is therefore only in conjunction with numerous other references of a more implicit nature that the ones already mentioned strongly suggest Ricoeur's lingering presence (as target) in the exposé.

First of all, it is not so easy to ignore the frequency in "Le retrait de la métaphore" of the references to the literal/metaphorical opposition in conjunction with the subordination of the proper/improper opposition which is prominent in "La mythologie blanche." Except for one reference to the proper/improper opposition which comes at the beginning, all the rest – numbering close to a dozen – come in the Heideggerian part. Furthermore, when Derrida does use the word proper, it is always in the company of the

word literal as if to suggest that he is simply covering all possibilities of the non-metaphorical. Now, even if it may be allowed that *proper* in some sense signifies for Derrida the primitive or original sense of a word, it is clear that he does not want this signification to be dissociated from literal, current, or non-metaphorical. That he shows himself to be sensitive on this point throughout the exposé suggests that his dispute with Ricoeur is not forgotten simply because he is no longer engaged in it.

Derrida most explicitly protests (this is the *third* explicit reference) Ricoeur's attributing to him the notion of the proper as original or primitive sense shortly after he takes up the issue of Heidegger's comments on metaphor.

D'une part, on doit pouvoir [se] passer [de la métaphore] parce que le rapport de la métaphysique (onto-théologique) à la pensée de l'être, ce rapport (*Bezug*) qui marque le retrait (*Entziehung*) de l'être, ne plus être nommé – *littéralement* – métaphorique dès lors que l'usage (je dis bien l'usage, le devenir-usuel du mot et non pas son sens originel auquel personne ne s'est jamais référé, en tout cas moi) s'est fixé à partir de ce couple d'opposition métaphysique pour décrire des rapports entre des étants (80).

In order to show that Derrida's remark, "*je dis bien l'usage, le devenir-usuel du mot et non pas son sens originel auquel personne ne s'est jamais référé, en tout cas moi,*" is not fully accurate, it is only necessary to look at one of the passages from "La mythologie blanche" which he cited before the above passage.

L'histoire d'une métaphore n'aurait pas essentiellement l'allure d'un déplacement, avec ruptures, réinscriptions dans un système hétérogène, mutations, écarts sans origine, mais celle d'une érosion progressive, d'une perte sémantique régulière, d'un épuisement ininterrompu du sens primitif (72).

Even though it is Polyphile's position in *Le jardin d'Épicure* which Derrida is describing, he is not in disagreement with it insofar as it affirms the implication of metaphor in the concept. His repudiation of the proper as primitive then in favour of the literal in order to signify the non-metaphorical seems once again to be more polemical than precise because *primitive* or *original* can be, as Derrida often does with these and other words, placed in

quotation marks in order to signify their equivocal status. "Primitive" or "original" would then refer to the etymological trace of what is neither metaphor nor concept and neither figure nor non-figure.

While it is true that, unlike "La mythologie blanche," Derrida's exposé offers little or no discussion of the concept, it is also true that, by describing metaphysics as being in a sort of metaphoric or metonymic relation to being, he is once again insisting that the concept is implicated in its other and suffering from some impurity or internal distress. Now, given that nothing could be more disruptive of Ricoeur's theory of metaphor than this ongoing and repeated diagnosis, it is difficult to see how Derrida's exposé is not only hostile to Ricoeur's project, but also to Ricoeur personally as one who participates at the conference.

It is now time to present the best evidence that there is an extended polemic which goes largely unannounced in "Le retrait de la métaphore." The basis of this evidence is that, along with reserving a special place for Derrida in the Eighth Study, Ricoeur reserves a special place for Heidegger. With one or two exceptions, the issues taken up in the Eighth Study as they bear on Heidegger are more or less the same ones taken up in "Le retrait de la métaphore." Accordingly, to list these issues as transfers from Ricoeur to Derrida is to come up with something like the following: 1) Heidegger's last texts which, for Ricoeur, are marred by an invincible ambiguity are, for Derrida, works which, due to the nature of their undertaking, are necessarily difficult and dense, 2) Heidegger's homogeneous conception of the tradition which, for Ricoeur, indicates a will to power is, for Derrida, an indispensable epochal understanding of Western philosophy,<sup>14</sup> 3) Heidegger's two comments on metaphor, "*Das Metaphorische gibt es nur innerhalb der Metaphysik*," and "*Wir blieben in der Metaphysik hängen, wollten wir dieses Nennen Hölderlins in der Wendung 'Worte wie Blumen' für eine Metapher halten*," which Ricoeur treats as being largely sufficient in order to interpret Heidegger's position on metaphor is, for Derrida, material which needs to be supplemented, 4) Heidegger's reproach to Godfried Benn that his comment on Hölderlin's poem turns it into a herbarium or a collection of dried plants is, insofar as it is picked up later both by Jean Greisch and Paul Ricoeur and critically turned against Derrida translated by Derrida himself into a wrong interpretation of his essay, 5) Heidegger's discussion of the relationship between *Dichten* and *Denken* which, for Ricoeur, largely corresponds to his own plea for the discontinuity between poetic discourse and speculative discourse is, for Derrida, Heidegger's non-metaphorical and non-literal use of

---

14 "Le texte heideggerien a paru incontournable, à d'autres et à moi-même, dès lors qu'il s'agissait de penser l'époque mondiale de la métaphore dans laquelle nous disons que nous sommes, alors même que Heidegger n'a que très allusivement traité de la métaphore comme telle et sous ce nom" (RM, 67).

language, 6) Heidegger's discussion of *Ereignis* which, for Ricoeur, exhibits the "même visée de sens que ce qui fut autrefois pensé comme acte/puissance" (MV, 393) is, for, Derrida, a restatement of the ontological difference.

Given that both Derrida's and Ricoeur's inquiries into metaphor are also inquiries into philosophy and at least to some degree the issue of how to do philosophy, their commitment to tell the truth about metaphor must be inseparable from putting the ideal of truth-telling either into play as question or to work as answer. This putting it into play or putting it to work is what PS has been calling the ethical constituent of philosophical discourse. That the ethical constituent is normally occulted by the epistemological and yet that this occultation is itself ethical to the extent that it is the preservation of the truth-telling ideal as homogeneity is what was earlier suggested as Ricoeur's path. On the other hand, when philosophy turns to investigating itself and even if this investigation is ultimately meant to justify itself, the occulting of the ethical is likely weakened and becomes less of a commitment than the contrary one which would be to show some vital signs of its ethical life. In the case of Ricoeur, his treatment of Heidegger culminates in a strong condemnation of him for undervaluing the philosophical tradition and for attempting to overcome it or leave it behind. That this condemnation may be in conflict with other of Ricoeur's espoused values is at least something to consider.

Immediately before taking up Heidegger in the Eighth Study, Ricoeur, following Husserl,<sup>15</sup> compares the traditional view of philosophy's being entirely responsible and measuring up to its own intentions to "*une manière « généalogique » d'interroger les philosophes, qui ne se borne pas à recueillir leurs intentions déclarées, mais les soumet au soupçon et en appelle de leurs raisons à leurs motifs et à leurs intérêts*" (357). Although Ricoeur does not explicitly disapprove of this genealogical way of doing philosophy, the context of these remarks which is the Eighth Study leaves little doubt that it is the first way which he prefers and which, with respect to philosophy's unique question, the question of being, is likely the only way. Here a philosopher's motives and his reasons should be treated as virtually one and, if it were to fall out otherwise, it would seem that either the

---

15 "La querelle de l'*analogie entis* n'épuise pas les possibilités d'échange entre discours spéculatif et discours poétique. La discussion, en effet, n'a mis en jeu que les intentions sémantiques de l'un et de l'autre discours susceptibles d'être assumées réflexivement, comme en témoigne le terme même d'intention ou de visée sémantique, emprunté à la phénoménologie husserlienne. C'est bien pour une conscience qui entend « se-justifier-soi-même », « se-fonder-ultimement » et, ainsi, se tenir pour « entièrement responsable de soi » que les raisons invoquées par la pensée consciente d'elle-même sont équivalentes à ses motifs réels" (MV, 356-357).

philosopher whose motives are singled out and criticized for their own sake is not worthy and should not have been discussed in the first place or else the philosopher who makes an issue of them has become, despite his declared intentions to the contrary, a genealogist.

In the same way as does Derrida, Heidegger confronts Ricoeur as one both to recognize as far as possible and not to recognize.

À vrai dire, la philosophie de Heidegger se propose, à l'avant-dernier stade de cette enquête, indivisément comme une tentative et comme une tentation incontournables. Une tentative dont il faut s'inspirer, toutes les fois qu'elle contribue manifestement à édifier la pensée spéculative selon la visée sémantique qui animait déjà la recherche d'Aristote sur les acceptions multiples de l'être –, une tentation qu'il faut écarter, dès lors que la différence du spéculatif et du poétique se trouve à nouveau menacée (MV, 393).

*C'est ici, PS l'avoue, qu'elle déplore la position prise par Ricoeur.* Even while recognizing the latter's good intentions and the limited ground on which he can manoeuvre, it must also be recognized – at least from this corner – that a certain amount of violence and abuse is present here. Distinguishing between a "good" Heidegger who can be assimilated to the Aristotelian tradition and a "bad" Heidegger who cannot and therefore should be rejected, Ricoeur not only devalues Heidegger's declared intentions by glossing over them, but offers no account as to why they should be devalued which goes beyond his limited analysis of Heidegger on metaphor. This analysis purports to demonstrate that Heidegger is mistaken when he sets himself apart from the tradition because his Platonic conception of metaphor is outmoded and not relevant to his use of live metaphor which itself is commensurate with the tradition. If nothing else, Derrida's exposé shows that this interpretation of Heidegger's use of metaphor is dubious and certainly not the bedrock upon which to drive a wedge between Heidegger's motives and his reasons. When Ricoeur says that Heidegger is vengeful, driven by a will to power, seeks a certain ascendancy or superiority over other philosophers, and is inclined to a certain intellectual laziness,<sup>16</sup> his reaction to Heidegger's project is tolerable only from the point of view that it is the human all too human in philosophy as everywhere else.

---

<sup>16</sup> The following comment is of a generalizing nature but falls in the midst of Ricoeur's discussion of Heidegger's vengefulness and philosophical hubris. "Le moment est venu, me semble-t-il, de s'interdire la commodité, devenue paresse de pensée, de faire tenir sous un seul mot – métaphysique – le tout de la pensée occidentale" (MV, 396).

Another consideration along these lines is that, while declaring his opposition to the attempt to do away with the difference between poetry and philosophy, Ricoeur seems to have great difficulty not doing away with this difference himself.<sup>17</sup> On the one hand, he is willing to allow Heidegger tremendous latitude even while insisting that, when Heidegger interweaves his thought with the poetry of Hölderlin, he still manages to keep poetry and philosophy separate.

Ce qui est remarquable, dans ce petit texte [*Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*], c'est que le poème n'y sert pas d'ornement à l'aphorisme philosophique, et que celui-ci n'y constitue pas la traduction de poème: poème et aphorisme sont mutuellement dans une accord de résonance qui respecte leur différence. A la puissance imaginative de la poésie pensante, le poète répond par la puissance spéculative de la pensée poétisante (*MV*, 394).

The last line of the above passage is intriguing because, if taken out of context, it could easily pass for the kind of merger of poetry into philosophy or vice versa which Ricoeur struggles so hard to prevent. On the other hand, it cannot be said that Ricoeur demonstrates how, if Heidegger does in fact take inappropriate risks and come close to collapsing poetry into philosophy, he manages to do so beyond what Ricoeur has already licenced for him.

It has been PS's contention all along that, when Ricoeur objects to any move to obliterate or even to blur the difference between poetry and philosophy, he is actually targeting the project or projects which call into question the ordering and identification of poetry by philosophy and therefore philosophy's own self-ordering and self-identification. Certainly he expresses many times over that the relationship between poetry and philosophy is one of the latter's taking up the former into itself as potential meaning in order to give the most up-to-date and accurate report on reality. Insofar as truth and knowledge are concerned then, this relationship is a hierarchy and inseparable from philosophy's integrity.

Quand le philosophe lutte sur deux fronts, contre la séduction de l'ineffable, contre la puissance du « parler

---

<sup>17</sup> In order to keep the difference between poetry and philosophy going even when it looks like it is not, Ricoeur insists that Heidegger uses philosophical metaphors as opposed to poetic ones. The analysis of the difference between these two species of live metaphor is limited to claiming that the first are deliberately chosen and put into the service of speculative thought. Since it may be equally asserted that the poet deliberately chooses his metaphors, the analysis does not rule out the possibility of poetry's and philosophy's converging at some level other than conscious deliberation.

ordinaire » (*Sprechen*), bref pour un « dire »" (*Sagen*) qui ne serait ni le triomphe de l'inarticulé, ni celui de signes disponibles au locuteur et manipulables par lui, n'est-il pas dans une situation comparable à celle du penseur d'Antiquité ou du Moyen Age, cherchant sa voie entre l'impuissance d'un discours livré à la dissémination des significations et la maîtrise de l'univocité par la logique du genre? (*MV*, 393-394).

In the above passage, Ricoeur discreetly announces what the philosopher properly does ("*une situation comparable à celle du penseur d'Antiquité ou du Moyen Age*") and should be doing ("*le philosophe lutte . . . contre la séduction de l'ineffable*"). While giving a reasonably restrained response to Ricoeur's critical analysis of "La mythologie blanche," Derrida also responds to this discreet announcement by Ricoeur, by, with equal discretion, marshalling his exposé in order to repudiate it in the most tactfully unrestrained way.<sup>18</sup> Far from being a discourse which guards itself against the ineffable and the disseminating, it attempts to demonstrate that philosophy is afflicted by its very own discourse which is the ineffable and the disseminating in language itself. If what is finally at stake in Derrida's and Ricoeur's dispute with one another is the honour and integrity of philosophy, then surely it is a certain *lack* of honour and integrity which is the ground of their both recognizing them and striving after them. This lack is the essential division of truth-telling into two ethical domains: the honour and integrity which perceives that not to perceive this essential lack is itself a lack of honour and integrity and the honour and integrity which perceives that to perceive this lack as essential is to effectively do away with – honour and integrity.

#### **5.4. PS**

The following was initially the first paragraph of the Abstract. It was deleted in order not to alienate the reader right at the outset. By making it

---

<sup>18</sup> If one takes into consideration only the vehemence (not to mention vengefulness) and energy which can be brought to a dispute, then Derrida's response to Ricoeur's critique of "La mythologie blanche" pales by comparison with his response to John Searle's critique of Derrida's earlier essay, "Signature, événement, contexte" (1971). Obviously taking to heart one of the leading statements of Searle's article ("Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida." [*Glyph* 2, 1977]), namely, that he has a "penchant for saying things that are obviously false," Derrida responds with a matching article which, over the course of a great deal of analysis infused with many stinging remarks, ends up citing almost in its entirety Searle's article. See Derrida's *Limited Inc*, ed. Gerald Graff (Evanston, IL.: Northwestern University Press, 1990).

now the *last* paragraph of PS, the aim is not so much to round off and conclude the analysis as to draw attention once again to the inevitable effacement of certain intentions. In the present instance, it is the one of trying to tell the truth about the over-complication of philosophical truth-telling without “excessively” complicating it.

The analysis of the *dynamics* of the deep disagreement between Derrida and Ricoeur over metaphor and its relation to philosophy is inevitably double-focussed and dispersed. Along with being the examination of a wide range of issues (metaphor, discourse, meaning, philosophy, being, etc.), it must also be the study of, as far as possible, the complication and even over-complication of truth-telling in philosophy. Because philosophical truth-telling in principle is that it is not or should not be over-complicated, the proposition that it *is* implies that it is irreducibly involuted and agonistic. Not only contesting and contradicting its abysmal condition, it puts into play different valuations which, insofar as they come together and form a dominant position or disposition, constitute the both implicit and explicit demand that truth-telling should not be obfuscation or the attempt to say the ineffable, that it should not risk a general despair of language and breakdown of communication. In response to this demand that truth-telling not be over-complicated are the projects of clarification which, by and large, are a call to order and an inherent securing of the tradition as well as its presuppositions and ideals. But this is still over-complication because these projects of clarification are ones which simplify and even over-simplify. There is then a contrary demand which these projects evoke and which pertains to what is doubtful in this area.



## – Bibliography

<b>I. Works Cited</b> .....	219
<b>II. Other Works on or by Derrida and Ricoeur (Metaphor)</b> .....	221
<b>III. Other Works on the Derrida-Ricoeur Conflict (Philosophy)</b> .....	222
<b>IV. Miscellaneous</b> .....	224

### **I. Works Cited**

**Bouchard**, Guy. *Le procès de la métaphore*. Ville Lasalle, Québec: Hurtubise HMH, 1984.

**Clark**, S. H. *Paul Ricoeur*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.

**Derrida**, Jacques. "La mythologie blanche: La métaphore dans le texte philosophique." *Marges de la philosophie*. Paris: Minuit, 1972. 247-324. Also in *Poétique*. 5, 1971: 1-52.

"White Mythology." *Margins of Philosophy*. Trans. Alan Bass. Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press Limited, 1982. 207-271.

"Le retrait de la métaphore." *Psyché: Invention de l'autre*. Paris: Galilée, 1987. 63-93.

*Limited Inc.* Evanston, Il.: Northwestern University Press, 1988.

"Philosophie et communication (avec Paul Ricoeur)." *La Communication: Actes du XVe congrès de l'association des sociétés de philosophie de langue française: Tome I*. Montréal: Montmorency, 1971. 393-431.

"Signature événement contexte." *La Communication: Actes du XVe congrès de l'association des sociétés de philosophie de langue française: Tome I*. Montréal: Montmorency, 1971. 49-76. Also in *Marges de la philosophie*. Paris: Minuit, 1972. 365-393.

"Violence et métaphysique." *L'écriture et la différence*. Paris: Seuil, 1967. 117-228.

**Gasche**, Rodolphe. *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986.

**Gisel**, Pierre. "Paul Ricoeur: Discourse between Speech and Language." *Philosophy Today*. 21, 1977: 446-456.

**Joy**, Morny. "Derrida and Ricoeur: A Case of Mistaken Identity (and Difference)." *Journal of Religion*. 68, No. 4, 1988: 508-526.

**Lawlor**, Leonard. "Dialectic and Iterability." *Philosophy Today*. 32, Fall, 1988: 181-194.

*Imagination and Chance: The Difference between the Thought of Ricoeur and Derrida*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1992.

**Lundin**, R. "Metaphor in the Modern Critical Arena." *Christianity and Literature*. 33, No. 1, Fall, 1983: 19-35.

**Nietzsche**, Friedrich. "From On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense," *The Portable Nietzsche*. Ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Penguin Books, 1982. 42-47.

**Ricoeur**, Paul. "Civilisation universelle et cultures nationales." *Histoire et vérité*. Paris: Seuil, 1964. 286-300.

"Discours et communication." *La Communication: Actes du XVe congrès de l'association des sociétés de philosophie de langue française: Tome I*. Montréal: Montmorency, 1971. 23-48.

*La métaphore vive*. Paris: Seuil, 1975.

"Philosophie et communication (avec Jacques Derrida)." *La Communication: Actes du XVe congrès de l'association des sociétés de philosophie de langue française: Tome I*. Montréal: Montmorency, 1971. 393-431.

*Temps et récit: Tome I*. Paris: Seuil, 1983.

**Siscar**, Marcos. *Jacques Derrida: Rhétorique et philosophie*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998.

**Stellardi**, Giuseppe. *Heidegger and Derrida on Philosophy and Metaphor:*

*Imperfect Thought*. Amherst, New York: Humanities Books, 2000.

## **II. Other Works on or by Derrida and Ricoeur (Metaphor)**

**Casenave**, Gerald. "Heidegger and Metaphor." *Philosophy Today*. 26, 1987: 140-147.

**Dauenhauer**, B. P. "Ricoeur's Metaphor Theory and Some of its Consequences." *Southern Journal of Philosophy*. 12, Spring, 1983: 1-12.

**Dubois**, J., Edeline, F., Klinkenberg, J-M., Minguet, P. (Groupe u) "Miroirs rhétoriques: Sept ans de réflexion." *Poétique*. 29, 1977: 1-19.

**Gerhart**, Mary. "The extent and limits of Metaphor: Reply to Gary Madison." *Philosophy Today*. 21, 1977: 431-436.

"The Live Metaphor." *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur* (The Library of Living Philosophers, Vol. XXII). Ed. Lewis Edwin Hahn. Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1995. 215-232.

**Haase**, Ullrich, M. "From Name to Metaphor . . . and Back." *Research in Phenomenology*. 26, 1996: 230-260.

**Lawlor**, Leonard. "A Little Daylight: A Reading of Derrida's 'White Mythology.'" *Man and World*, 1991: 285-300.

**Madison**, G. B. "Reflections on Paul Ricoeur's Philosophy of Metaphor." *Philosophy Today*. 21, 1977: 424-430.

**Novitz**, David. "Metaphor, Derrida, and Davidson." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. 44, 1985: 101-114.

**O'Hara**, Daniel T. "Paul Ricoeur and the Ironic Style of Postmodern Criticism." *Philosophical Approaches to Literature*. Ed. William E. Cain. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1984. 183-201.

**Olson**, Alan. "Myth, Symbol, and Metaphorical Truth." *Myth, Symbol, and Reality*. Ed. Alan Olson. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1980. 99-125.

**Pellauer**, David. "A Response to Gary Madison's 'Reflections on Paul

Ricoeur's Philosophy of Metaphor." *Philosophy Today*. 21, 1977: 437-445.

**Raphael**, Louis Nicholas. "The Philosophy of Hidden Rhyme." *Literature as Philosophy/Philosophy as Literature*. Ed. Donald G. Marshall. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1987. 67-79.

**Ricoeur**, Paul. "Creativity in Language: Word, Polysemy, Metaphor." *Philosophy Today*. 17, No.2/4, Summer, 1973: 97-111.

"La métaphore et le problème central de l'herméneutique." *Revue philosophique de Louvain*. 70, 1972: 93-112.

"The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling." *On Metaphor*. Ed. Sheldon Sacks. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979. 141-157.

*The Rule of Metaphor*. Trans. Robert Czerny. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977.

**Steinmetz**, Rudy. "De la métaphore restreinte à la métaphore généralisée." *Les styles de Derrida*. Bruxelles: De Bieck-Wesmael, 1994. 141-170.

**Stoddard**, Eve W. "Reason on Trial: Legal Metaphors in *The Critique of Pure Reason*." *Philosophy and Literature*. 12, 1998: 245-260.

### **III. Other Works on the Derrida-Ricoeur Conflict (Philosophy)**

**Bourgeois**, Patrick L. "Ethics at the Limit of Reason: Ricoeur and the Challenge of Deconstruction: "Philosophy at the Limit: Deconstruction and a Ricoeurian Extension." *Southwest Philosophy Review*. 13 (2), 1997: 153-170.

"Ricoeur and Marcel: An Alternative to Postmodern Deconstruction." *Bulletin de la société américaine de philosophie de langue française*. 7 (1-2), 1995: 164-175.

"Semiotics and the Deconstruction of Presence: A Ricoeurian Alternative." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*. Vol. LXVI, No. 3, 1992: 361-379.

"Trace, Semiotics, and the Living Present: Derrida or Ricoeur." *Southwest*

*Philosophy Review Journal*. 9 (2), 1993: 43-63.

**Buchanan**, James. "The Rhetoric of Appropriation/Transgression: Postmodernity and Religious Discourse." *Essays in Phenomenological Theology*. Ed. Steven W. Laycock. Albany, NY: Suny Press, 1986. 187-207.

**Ferrari**, Donald. "Object and Phenomenon and the Deconstructed Present." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*. Vol. LXVII, No. 2, 1993: 247-251.

**Greisch**, Jean. "La crise de l'herméneutique. Réflexions méta-critiques sur un débat actuel." *La crise contemporaine*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1973. 135-190.

**Gyllenhammer**, Paul. "From the Limits of Knowledge to the Hermeneutics of Action (from Derrida to Ricoeur)." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*. Vol. LXXII, No. 4, 1998: 559-580.

**Kearney**, Richard. "Derrida's Ethical Return." *Poetics of Modernity: Towards a Hermeneutic Imagination*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1995. 148-167.

"Derrida's Ethics of Dialogue." *Poetics of Modernity: Towards a Hermeneutic Imagination*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1995. 168-177.

**Palmer**, R. E. "Hermeneutics." *Contemporary Philosophy: A New Survey*. Vol. 2. Ed. Guttorm Fløistad. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982. 453-505.

**Schweiker**, William. "Beyond Imitation: Mimetic Praxis in Gadamer, Ricoeur, and Derrida." *Journal of Religion*. 68, 1988: 21-38.

**Stewart**, D. "Language and/et langage (on French Contemporary Philosophers of Language as J. Derrida, P. Ricoeur et al.)" *Philosophy Today*. 18, No. 2, Summer, 1974: 87-105.

**Sukdara**, Rajan, R. "Aspects of the Problem of Reference." *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*. Vol. XVIII, No. 3, July, 1991: 431-460.

#### **IV. Miscellaneous**

**Abel**, Olivier. *Paul Ricoeur: La promesse et la règle*. Paris: Michalon, 1996.

"Ricoeur's Ethics of Method." *Philosophy Today*. 37, No. 1, Spring (1993): 23-30.

**Anderson**, Pamela Sue. "Agnosticism and Attestation: An Aporia Concerning the Other in Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another*." *The Journal of Religion*. 74, 1994: 65-76.

*Ricoeur and Kant: Philosophy of the Will*. Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1993.

**Beardsworth**, Richard. "Deconstruction and Tradition." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*. Vol. 26, No. 3, 1995: 279-292.

**Beaulieu** D. and Mavrikakis, C. M. "De Derrida à la mode." *Études françaises*. 20, 2, 1984: 19-27.

**Bennington**, Geoffrey and Derrida, Jacques. *Jacques Derrida*. Paris: Seuil, 1991.

**Bernstein**, Richard J. "An Allegory of Modernity/Postmodernity: Habermas and Derrida." *Working through Derrida*. Ed. Gary B. Madison. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993. 204-229.

"Serious Play: The Ethico-Political Horizon of Jacques Derrida." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. Vol. 1. No. 2, 1987: 93-117.

**Bien**, Joseph. "Ricoeur as Social Philosopher." *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur* (Library of Living Philosophers, Vol. 22). Ed. Louis Edwin Hahn. Chicago: Open Court, 1995. 287-302.

**Bourgeois**, Patrick L. "The Limits of Ricoeur's Hermeneutics of Existence." *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur* (Library of Living Philosophers, Vol. 22). Ed. Louis Edwin Hahn. Chicago: Open Court, 1995. 549-566.

**Bruns**, Gerald. "Against Poetry: Heidegger, Ricoeur, and the Originary Sense of Hermeneutics." *Meanings in Texts and Actions: Questioning Paul Ricoeur*. Ed. David E. Klemm and William Schweiker. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1993. 26-46.

**Cassardi**, A. J. "Skepticism and Deconstruction." *Philosophy and Literature*. 8, 1984: 1-14.

**Clayton**, Philip. "Ricoeur's Appropriation of Heidegger: Happy Marriage or Holzweg?" *Journal for the British Society for Phenomenology*. Vol. 20, no. 1, 1989: 33-47.

**Clifford**, Michael R. "Crossing (out) the Boundary: Foucault and Derrida on Transgressing Transgression." *Philosophy Today*. 31, 1987: 223-233.

**Cumming**, Robert Denoon. "The Odd Couple: Heidegger and Derrida." *Review of Metaphysics*. 34, 1981: 487-521.

**Daigler**, Matthew A. "Being as Act and Potency in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur." *Philosophy Today*. (42) 4, 1998: 375-385.

**Dastur**, Françoise. "Paul Ricoeur. Le soi et l'autre . L'altérité la plus intime: la conscience." *Paul Ricoeur: L'herméneutique à l'école de la phénoménologie* (Philosophie: Institut Catholique de Paris). Paris: Beauchesne, 1995. 59-71.

**Derrida**, Jacques. "Afterword: Toward an Ethic of Discussion." *Limited, Inc.* Ed. Gerald Graff. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1988. 111-160.

"Chaire vacante: Censure, maîtresse et magistralité." *Du droit à la philosophie*. Paris: Galilée, 1990. 343-370.

"Comme si c'était possible, 'within such limits' . . ." *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*. (52) 205, 1998: 497-529.

*Deconstruction in a Nutshell*. Ed. John D. Caputo. New York: Fordham University Press, 1997.

*De la grammatologie*. Paris: Minuit, 1967.

"De l'économie restreinte à l'économie générale." *L'écriture et la différence*. Paris: Seuil, 1967. 369-407.

"Demeure: Fiction et témoignage." *Passions de la littérature*. Paris: Galilée, 1996. 13-73.

"Les tours de Babel." *Psyche: Invention de l'autre*. Paris: Galilée, 1987. 203-235.

*D'un ton apocalyptique adopté naguère en philosophie*. Collection Débats. Paris: Galilée, 1983.

"Entretien avec Jacques Derrida." *Diagraphe*. 41, 1987: 14-27.

"Force et signification." *L'écriture et la différence*. Paris: Seuil, 1967. 9-49.

"'Genèse et structure' et la phénoménologie." *L'écriture et la différence*. Paris: Seuil, 1967. 229-251.

"Hors livre." *La dissémination*. Paris: Seuil, 1972. 9-67.

"La différence." *Marges de la philosophie*. Paris: Minuit, 1972. 1-29.

"La double séance." *La dissémination*. Paris: Seuil, 1972. 199-317.

"Le puits et la pyramide." *Marges de la philosophie*. Paris: Minuit, 1972. 79-127.

"Les fins de l'homme." *Marges de la philosophie*, Paris: Minuit, 1972. 129-164.

"Le supplément de copule." *Marges de la philosophie*. Paris: Minuit, 1972. 209-246.

"Ousia et gramme." *Marges de la philosophie*. Paris: Minuit, 1972. 31-78.

"My chances/mes chances: A Rendez-vous with Some Epicurean Stereophonies." *Taking Chances: Derrida, Psychoanalysis, and Literature*. Ed. Joseph H. Smith, M.D. and William Kerrigan, PhD. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1984. 1-32.

"Passages – Du traumatisme à la promesse." *Points de suspension*. Paris: Galilée, 1992. 385-409.

"Popularité: Du droit à la philosophie du droit." *Du droit à la philosophie*. Paris: Galilée. 1990. 525-535.

"Privilège." Titre justificatif et remarques introductrices." *Du droit à la*

*philosophie*. Paris: Galilée, 1990. 9-108.

"Psyche: Invention de l'autre." *Psyche: Inventions de l'autre*. Paris: Galilée. 1998. 11-61.

"Qui a peur de la philosophie?" *Du droit à la philosophie*. Paris: Galilée, 1990. 109-279.

"Théologie de la traduction." *Du droit à la philosophie*. Paris: Galilée, 1990. 371-394.

"Tympan." *Marges de la philosophie*. Paris: Minuit, 1972. i-xxv.

"Une folie doit veiller sur la pensée." *Points de suspension*. Paris: Galilée, 1992. 349-375.

**Dunne**, Joseph. "Beyond Sovereignty and Deconstruction: The Storied Self." *Philosophy and Social Criticism*. Vol. 21, No. 5/6, 1995: 137-157.

**Ferry**, Luc and Renaut, Alain. *La pensée 68*. Paris: Gallimard, 1985.

**Gasché**, Rodolphe. "Du trait non adéquat: La notion de rapport chez Heidegger." *Les fins de l'homme*. Ed. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy. Paris: Galilée, 1981. 133-161.

**Giovannangeli**, Daniel. "Le retard de la conscience." *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*. 3, (205), 1998: 367-375.

**Greisch**, Jean. "Les mots et les roses: La métaphore chez Martin Heidegger." *Revue des philosophiques et théologiques*. 57, 1973: 433-445.

"Testimony and Attestation." *Philosophy and Social Criticism*. Vol. 21, no. 5/6: 81-98.

"Vers une herméneutique du soi." *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*. Paris: A. Colin, 1993: 413-427.

**Habermas**, Jürgen. "Beyond a Temporalized Philosophy of Origins: Jacques Derrida's Critique of Phonocentrism." *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Trans. Frederick G. Lawrence. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990. 161-184.

"Excursus on Leveling the Genre Distinction between Philosophy and Literature." *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Trans. Frederick G. Lawrence. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990. 185-210.

**Heidegger**, Martin. *On the Way to Language*. Trans. Peter D. Hertz. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.

**Hesse**, Mary B. "The Cognitive Claims of Metaphor." *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. 2, 1988: 1-16.

**Jervolino**, Domenico. *The Cogito and Hermeneutics: The Question of the Subject in Ricoeur*. Trans. Gordon Poole. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990.

"The Depth and Breadth of Paul Ricoeur's Philosophy." *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur* (Library of Living Publishers, Vol. 22). Ed. Louis Edwin Hahn. Chicago: Open Court, 1995. 533-539.

**Kockelmans**, J. J. "Heidegger on Metaphor and Metaphysics." *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 47, 1985: 415-450.

**Lawlor**, Leonard. "Distorting Phenomenology: Derrida's Interpretation of Husserl." *Philosophy Today*, Summer, 1998: 185-193.

**Levinas**, Emmanuel. "Tout autrement." *L'Ark*. 54, 1973: 33-37.

**Lloyd**, Genevieve. "Texts, Metaphors and the Pretensions of Philosophy." *The Monist*. 69. 1, 1986: 87-102.

**Madou**, Jean-Paul. "Trait, retrait, voisinage." *Cahiers internationaux desymbolisme*. 1983: 45-47, 139-151.

**McCarthy**, Thomas. "The Politics of the Ineffable: Derrida's Deconstructionism." *The Philosophical Forum*. Vol. XXI, Nos. 1-2, 1989-90: 146-168.

**Meyer**, Michael. "From Grammatology to Problematicity." *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*. 52 (205), 1998: 367-375.

**Michelfelder**, Diane P. and Palmer, Richard E., ed. *Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1989.

**Mongin**, Olivier. *Paul Ricoeur*. Paris: Seuil, 1994.

**Muldoon**, Mark. "Ricoeur's Ethics: Another Version of Virtue Ethics? Attestation is not a Virtue." *Philosophy Today*. 42 (3), 1998: 301-309.

**Norris**, Christopher. "Deconstruction, Ontology, and Philosophy of Science: Derrida on Aristotle." *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*. 52 (205), 1998: 411-449.

*Derrida*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987.

**Novitz**, David. "The Rage for Deconstruction." *The Monist*. 69, 1986: 39-55.

**Plotnitsky**, Arkady. "Points and Counterpoints: Between Hegel and Derrida." *Revue de Philosophie*. 52 (205), 1998: 451-476.

**Ponton**, Lionel. "L'anti-hégélianisme politique de Paul Ricoeur dans *Soi-même comme un autre*." *Laval théologique et philosophique*. 52 (2), 1996: 473-487.

**Reagan**, Charles E. *Paul Ricoeur: His Life and Works*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.

**Ricoeur**, Paul. "Appendix: From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language." *The Rule of Metaphor*. Trans. Robert Czerny. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977. 315-322.

"Approches de la personne." *Lectures 2: La contrées des philosophes*. Paris: Seuil, 1992. 203-221.

*Autrement: Lecture d'autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence d'Emmanuel Levinas*. Paris: PUF Coll. Les essais du collège international de philosophie, 1997.

"Culpabilité, éthique et religion." *Le conflit des interprétations*. Paris: Seuil, 1969. 416-430.

*De l'interprétation: Essai sur Freud*. Paris: Seuil, 1965.

*Du texte à l'action*. Paris: Seuil, 1986.

"Emmanuel Lévinas, Penseur du témoignage." *Lectures 3: Aux frontières de la philosophie*. Paris: Seuil, 1992. 83-105.

"Entre éthique et ontologie: la disponibilité." *Gabriel Marcel*. Ed. M. Sacquin. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1989. 157-165.

"État et violence." *Histoire et vérité*. Paris: Seuil, 1964. 246-259.

"Ethics and Culture: Habermas and Gadamer in Dialogue." *Political and Social Essays by Paul Ricoeur*. Ed. David Stewart and Joseph Bien. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974. 243-270.

"Éthique et morale." *Lectures 1: Autour du politique*. Paris: Seuil, 1991. 256-266.

"Faith and Culture." *Political and Social Essays by Paul Ricoeur*. Ed. David Stewart and Joseph Bien. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974. 125-133.

*Finitude et culpabilité. I. L'homme faible*. Paris: Aubier, 1960.

*Finitude et culpabilité. II. La symbolique du mal*. Paris: Aubier, 1960.

"Fragility and Responsibility." *Philosophy and Social Criticism*. Vol. 21, no. 5/6, 1995:15-22.

"Hegel et Husserl sur l'intersubjectivité." *Du texte à l'action*. Paris: Seuil, 1986. 281-302.

"Heidegger et la question du sujet." *Le conflit des interprétations*: Paris: Seuil, 1969. 222-232.

"Intellectual Autobiography of Paul Ricoeur." *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*. (Library of Living Philosophers, Vol. 22). Ed. Louis Edwin Hahn. Chicago: Open Court, 1995. 1-53.

"La question du sujet: Le défi de la sémiologie." *Le conflit des interprétations*. Paris: Seuil, 1969. 233-264.

"L'attestation: Entre phénoménologie et ontologie." *Paul Ricoeur: Les métamorphoses de la raison herméneutique*. Ed. Jean Greisch and Richard Kearney. Paris: Cerf, 1992. 381-403.

"Le mal: Un défi à la philosophie et à la théologie." *Lectures 3: Aux frontières de la philosophie*. Paris: Seuil, 1992. 211-233.

"Le socius et le prochain." *Histoire et vérité*. Paris: Seuil, 1964. 99-111.  
*L'idéologie et l'utopie*. Paris: Seuil, 1997.

"L'image de dieu et l'épopée humaine." *Histoire et vérité*. Paris: Seuil, 1964. 112-131.

"Logique herméneutique." *Contemporary Philosophy: A New Survey*. Vol. 1. Ed. G. Fløistad. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981. 179-223.

"Négarivité et affirmation originaire." *Histoire et vérité*. Paris: Seuil, 1964. 336-360.

"Philosopher après Kierkegaard." *Lectures 2: La contrée des philosophes*. Paris: Seuil, 1992. 29-45.

"Religion, athéisme, foi." *Le conflit des interprétations*. Paris: Seuil, 1969. 431-457.

*Soi-même comme un autre*. Paris: Seuil, 1990.

*Temps et récit. Tombes 1-3*. Paris: Seuil, 1983-1985.

"The Crisis of the Cogito." *Synthese*. 106 (1), January, 1996: 57-66.

"The Project of a Social Ethic." *Political and Social Essays by Paul Ricoeur*. Ed. David Stewart and Joseph Bien. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974. 160-175.

"The Tasks of the Political Educator." *Political and Social Essays by Paul Ricoeur*. Ed. David Stewart and Joseph Bien. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974. 271-293.

"Vérité et Mensonge." *Histoire et Vérité*. Paris: Seuil, 1964. 165-197.

"Vrai et fausse angoisse." *Histoire et Vérité*. Paris: Seuil, 1964. 317-335.

"What does Humanism Mean?" *Political and Social Essays by Paul Ricoeur*. Ed. David Stewart and Joseph Bien. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974. 68-87.

"Ye Are the Salt of the Earth." *Political and Social Essays by Paul Ricoeur*. Ed. David Stewart and Joseph Bien. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974.

105-124.

**Riddell**, Joseph N. "From Heidegger to Derrida to Chance: Doubling and (Poetic) Language." *Boundary 2*. 42, 1976: 571-592.

**Rochlitz**, Rainer. "Proposition de sens et tradition: L'innovation sémantique selon Paul Ricoeur." *"Temps et récit" de Paul Ricoeur en débat*. (Procope). Ed. Ch. Bouchindhomme and R. Rochlitz. Paris: Cerf, 1990. 139-162.

**Rorty**, Richard. "Deconstruction and Circumvention: A Reply to Norris" *Essays on Heidegger and Others*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. 85-106.

"Two Meanings of Logocentrism." *Essays on Heidegger and Others*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. 107-118.

"Is Derrida a Transcendental Philosopher?" *Essays on Heidegger and Others*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. 119-128.

**Sacks**, Sheldon, ed. *On Metaphor*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979.

**Scherer**, René. "Cloture et faille dans la phénoménologie de Husserl." *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*. 73, 1968: 344-360.

**Schouwey**, Jacques. "De la possibilité d'une herméneutique philosophique de la religion: A propos d'un ouvrage de Paul Ricoeur." *Revue de théologie et de philosophie*. 127 (4), 1995: 357-367.

**Shultz**, William R. and Fried, Lewis L. B., ed. *Jacques Derrida: An Annotated Primary and Secondary Bibliography*. New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992.

**Thein**, Karel. "La décision de l'analogie: remarque sur Derrida, lecteur de Platon." *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*. 52 (205), 1998: 377-396.

**Valdes**, Mario J., ed. "The Conflict of Interpretations: Debate with Hans-Georg Gadamer." *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. 216-241.

**Waldenfels**, Bernard. "The Other and the Foreign." *Philosophy and Social Criticism*. Vol. 21, No. 5/6, 1995: 111-124.

**Wheeler**, Samuel C. "The Extension of Deconstruction." *The Monist*. 69, 1986: 3-21.

**Wood**, David. *Philosophy at the Limit: Problems of Modern European Thought*. London: Unwin-Hyman, 1990.

**Ziarek**, Ewa Plonowska. "Rhetoric of Failure and Deconstruction." *The Rhetoric of Failure: Deconstruction of Skepticism, Reinvention of Modernism*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996. 71-122.



– Appendix –

**Honour and Integrity in Philosophy: Are They Possible?**

Honour and integrity in philosophy: *are they possible?* Is this a proper question? (And it might already be asked: is this a *serious* question?) I was thinking it might not be. I was thinking it was improper but not in any conventional sense. I was thinking rather that it was out of focus or imprecise. Not that I am saying now that this is not the case or, for that matter, that the question is not improper. But what I'm saying – what I came to realize – is that, in a certain sense, the question *is* proper for all the reasons which seem to weigh against it.

But this will take some explaining and it is best to start with the objection which is most likely to be raised against it before all others: *that it takes on too much*. How can such a question, already admitted to be faulty and uncertain, take on the honour and integrity of philosophy? For if it is seriously asked, *Are honour and integrity in philosophy possible?*, then does it not become impossible to take this question itself seriously? *Oh, but perhaps this is not serious enough!* Perhaps it is necessary to say that, if this question is meant to raise a suspicion and make it possible to doubt the very possibility of honour and integrity in philosophy, then it is not only guilty of taking on too much, but of being foolish, wasteful, and certainly at odds with its presumed subject.

I admit there is something to this objection which has to do with my initial worry about the question's being out of focus or imprecise. At least, I admit this is the case insofar as the objection of taking on too much is abandoned and gives way entirely to the objection of not having a serious question. For, contrary to what might be expected, the question takes on what it should take on and I would like to demonstrate this. On the other hand, I must admit that, from the strictest but not necessarily the most serious point of view, the question lacks a certain "seriousness" or "rigour." It was never my intention to call into question the very possibility of honour and integrity in philosophy, but only to look into the *nature* of this possibility. So in this way the question's being imprecise or out of focus is equivalent to its being, at the most "serious" or "rigorous" level, a bit of a feint or an amusement.

But does this feint or amusement still not detract from an overall honour and integrity, an overall "seriousness" which, to come closer to the meaning of this equivocal word as it is now being used, is both the respectability and responsibility of philosophy and which, even if I am now calling it in

question, is nonetheless proper to it? On the basis of a certain amount of good will on the part of the reader, I think the answer will be "no" *if* I can perfectly justify this feint or amusement and promise that no other will take place with or without an accompanying acknowledgement which, as it seems, is meant to justify or at least partially justify it. In spite of such a kindly response and tolerant attitude, I well understand the expectation if not the demand which must attend it, namely, that after having justified or having tried to justify the initial proceedings and their waywardness, I should carry on in an orderly fashion and lay one proposition after another. I well understand this expectation and yet I am not sure it can be justified or at least that it can be justified any better than the way I'm proceeding and, for that matter, will continue to proceed. After all, if what is being addressed here is honour and integrity in philosophy and, more precisely, their possibility, then surely this matter involves at least *some* practical concerns which never quite make it into theory and therefore at least some elements which escape the straight and narrow.

To speak properly about this subject then is to speak about it as comprehensively as possible and to risk some infelicities in order to all the better catch sight of them. For it should not be decided beforehand that these infelicities have nothing to do with the honour and integrity of philosophy – honour and integrity *in* philosophy – as these, and it is difficult to say what they are at this point but let us now call them foundational or highest principles, come to be assumed or asserted. Of course, the prevailing point of view is that these principles, foundational or otherwise, are installed in philosophy not as possibility but as necessity. Philosophy would not be philosophy without them, so the thinking goes: it would not be possible without their being necessary. From the prevailing point of view then, there is no issue here or at least none which is of central importance to philosophy.

From the prevailing point of view, to be as comprehensive as possible is still to stop short of considering infelicities to be essential (rather than accidental) to philosophy. Where is the *legitimacy* then of my own point of view which goes in the opposite direction? To begin answering this question, I will say that part of my understanding of what it is to be as comprehensive as possible is to look at the meaning of this particular expression. It seems to be wholly at odds with what I'm doing as an admittedly brief and faulty exercise and yet it equally seems to be very much its essence. Is it possible there are *two* ways of being as comprehensive as possible in philosophy? Two senses of this expression which are co-founded, necessarily asymmetric, and eternally irreconcilable? I think these two senses can be spotted if one

thinks of philosophy's being able to examine all subjects only on the basis of skipping at least one which is essentially itself and, on the other hand, philosophy's – or at least something like philosophy's – taking exception even to this essential or basic exclusion.

But it is necessary to go slowly here because it is precisely the notion of two senses of philosophical comprehensiveness which will be contested in one way or another – and not necessarily wrongly or at least not necessarily so in the most "comprehensive" sense – in the name of the honour and integrity of philosophy. This contestation will of course come from the prevailing point of view and the thinking that philosophical comprehensiveness has only *one* sense and that two senses of it must be, if taken as philosophy's essence or overall way of being, nonsensical. I am certainly in no position to raise an objection to this major objection to nonsense except to say that the status of the nonsensical at the very heart of the honour and integrity of philosophy has yet to be determined. But, then again, it will be quickly added that this is already assuming too much or rather not assuming enough in that the heart of philosophy must be deemed *pure* – necessarily pure – in advance. But how pure? How necessarily pure? Certainly reasons and arguments have been handed down throughout the ages that the heart of philosophy is necessarily pure – pure reason – but never conclusively and only continually or consensually, and in the most general or imperfect way. Certainly there is much here that speaks of strength and will and desire and authority but, even according to the proponents of pure reason, even according to their standards, strength and will and desire and authority are themselves not sufficient. Does a long history then of insufficient authority and inconclusive arguments add up to pure reason? It must be so but then only by force of conviction, by a judgement or ruling which has numbers on its side in order to be, as opposed to a more intractable and marginal way of thinking, true, appropriate, correct, legitimate, proper, right, adequate, and so on.

But why this force of conviction and superiority of numbers if not for a fact which, naturally enough, will not be recognized by a great many except in a generous moment and a certain taking in and tolerating of what must be, naturally enough, contested by them? Why this force of conviction and superiority of numbers, to say it again, if not for a fact which is complicated and yet which I insist on calling a fact for the reason that it is empirical and social and yet not separable from another fact which is less of a fact and which belongs to the still to be determined heart of philosophy? Why this force of conviction and superiority of numbers, to say it a third time, if not for the fact that the prevailing view of philosophy – what bears most

generally on what it is to comprehend philosophically and to be philosophically comprehensive – is effectively the basis or at least what seems to be the most solid basis of not only itself, the prevailing point of view and all its manifestations, but any other point of view?

Now it is necessary to go slowly here and, as a cautionary note, say that perhaps many of those who, a moment ago, I said would not recognize the above fact except in a generous moment are even now contesting this assessment because they see no essential problem in recognizing it. But, if so, they are only concentrating on one end of this fact and thinking that all I'm saying here is that the condition of the possibility of a certain philosophical abnormalcy or impropriety is a certain, a much more certain philosophical *normalcy*. Indeed, this is being said but it is also being said or at least implied that it works the other way and that the condition of the possibility of philosophy's wholeness, normalcy, and, just as elastic a notion as these, its honour and integrity, are all its extraordinary, abnormal, improper, objectionable, inside and outside comings and goings, its *disarrangements* which can only be, according to the prevailing point of view, its internal and voluntary *rearrangements*.

If, as I suspect, there is some consternation and perplexity now which does not amount to open and violent disagreement, this is but the fleeting symptom of what always registers itself, to speak most broadly, on two intimate but antagonistic levels: the level of the philosophical comprehension and comprehensiveness which doubles back on itself, overlooks itself, and *checks* itself (with two possible meanings here) and the level of philosophical comprehension and comprehensiveness which, seeing no proper repair or respite or, to speak more positively, *use* for itself at this first level, retreats from it and redeems itself, that is, its own proper level, by denying what always seems to be the self-denial of the first level. And if I say now that it is wrong to think that all is confused and unclear here but that all that is confused and unclear about these levels including, of course, their respective bids for clarity and order is the very *spirit* of philosophy, then do I not say something which, although or rather precisely because it is an affirmation coming from the first level, sounds every bit like a negation from the second (that is, sounds like a denial of philosophy to those who work and thrive on the second level)?

Personally, I see no resolution to this situation but only *resolutions* which, one way or another, constitute the honour and integrity of philosophy. But, of course, one of these resolutions is not just one among many, but *the* resolution of philosophy which identifies it with itself, with something settled,

resolved, out of the way, no longer in question, and no longer in need of being questioned. All of this, to be sure, marks a healthy, active, and onward-going spirit without which philosophy would be entrapped in itself and not be able to go outside itself and into the "world." Who would deny it? Who would deny it except perhaps the *other* part of philosophy (but is this really a denial?) which doubles back on itself and finds a certain lack, a certain anomaly, a certain untruth precisely where philosophy proper has mandated its search for truth?

Perhaps, if assurances are no longer quite what they were, the question, *honour and integrity in philosophy: are they possible?*, is a little closer and more serious now. And yet I do not think, on the basis of how I must immediately qualify this proposal, I will subvert or undercut what I am suggesting about others' coming a little closer to my way of thinking. I mean, when I say, as I must now, that this coming a little closer to the question and taking it more seriously is wholly dependent on the generous moment of these others, the many who, as I mentioned earlier, take in and tolerate to a certain degree the point of view which must be ultimately contested by them. I of course affirm here a gap between them and me which can be never be closed but which does not rule out a partial closing or coming closer.

A gap which, if I may say so and, indeed, I must say so, is a certain *lack* of honour and integrity which exists on both sides and yet which each side must think exists more on the other side or else it wouldn't be truly upholding its point of view. It is the generous moment of the many which empowers me to say this right now and grants me a certain latitude, as I am well aware, as long as I don't abuse it. And yet I *must* abuse it or else what I think about honour and integrity in philosophy or, more precisely, what I think about the *lack* of them, would end up as a feint in the direction of an objectivity – an immaculate conception of honour and integrity – which is precisely the kind of philosophical comprehension and comprehensiveness *I am not after*.

The kind of philosophical comprehension and comprehensiveness I am after admits that it is inescapably a *parti pris* and that, despite this, it still strives for a kind of "immaculate conception." But in order to avoid being a feint in this direction, in order to avoid doing what the *other* side habitually does and act as if it already possessed a core of pure objectivity, a nugget of crystal transparency, it must worry itself about being, as much but no more than the other side, a *parti pris*. *As much but no more than the other side!* I just said that out of courtesy or even a tactical move and now I am forced to

backtrack and admit that I consider the prevailing point of view to be the larger and more deep-rooted prejudice. What does the implicit but the always strongly felt appeal to numbers and duration mean to me if there is never a single argument which can conclusively prove me wrong? And yet, because I admit that my own point of view is a *parti pris*, I gain no major advantage or victory here except the right to affirm this point of view, to voice it abroad, to influence a few others who might be with me more than they know. And if it were asked, to what end goes all this marginal manoeuvring and influencing of a philosophical or half-philosophical nature, I would reply that, despite all the faultiness of myself, my endeavour, and everything attached to it, its end can only be the honour and integrity of philosophy and, more precisely, to make up for – at least in part – the *lack* of honour and integrity in philosophy.

We should all be grateful for this lack, even though we usually are not, even though, in a sense, it would be unnatural to be grateful for it, for it allows us to have whatever we have of honour and integrity. This lack, to say it again, is the gap between the two sides, between the two points of view, between the two levels of philosophical comprehension and comprehensiveness which never can be closed or filled up but, in the very attempt to do so by either one side of the other or both sides at the same time but not with, by any means, the same sort of success, becomes effectively the womb of whatever can be called Right or Wrong: rightly or wrongly, weakly or strongly.

A certain order even at the very heart of order which can only be at the very heart of philosophy is never quite right – never quite wrong but never quite right – and this is perhaps the most courteous but least courageous way to describe the *lack* of honour and integrity in philosophy. I am putting it this way, I am couching it in these terms of *courtesy* and *courage* which I oppose here but which of course can be complementary in other contexts because, one, they are at least representative to some degree of what is at stake here and because, two, order even in philosophy can go beyond having more than a little wrong with it and *with nothing being said about it*. But how can all this of a seemingly wider scope and hinting at the complex relationship between the individual and the polite but policing institution be determined as something not simply accidental to philosophy but as essential to it?

With the objective of answering this question, I have held off on an examination of the terms *honour* and *integrity* in order to allow them to appear here with whatever infelicities cannot be avoided. Now it is time to look at these terms but I wish to do so with some further questions. What happens when, instead of making the usual move of prescribing such and

such definition, one takes into consideration the range of already alive and active ones? What is revealed about the honour of philosophy when it principally attaches itself – and this is certainly a way of *defining* itself – to its good name and reputation, its illustrious past, its declared calling, its many contributions which are of course presumed to be among the best and highest? What is revealed about this *form* of philosophy's honour if one compares it to something else of a definitional character which is of course the *content* of philosophy's honour, that is, its commitment to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

I would say that a division reveals itself for if to tell the truth means to reveal whatever is *bad* along with whatever is good and if, furthermore, it is not right for philosophy simply to assume its own goodness, then its truth-telling commitment is essentially and not accidentally at odds with its promoting itself as the good. For even if the truth-telling commitment and the self-promotion of philosophy tend to overlap a good deal, it is still the independence of the first from the second which ultimately keeps philosophy honest or at least more honest than it otherwise would be.

The form and content of philosophy's honour are essentially at odds and sometimes they are greatly at odds, but this does not mean that one is ever in a position to overpower or stalemate the other. Indeed, it is difficult to know what such an overpowering of form by content or content by form could possibly mean for the division between them is never complete and so is also, in a manner of speaking, their undividedness. For, just as they are never each other at any particular moment, so they *are* each other – or so they become very close to each other and cross each other's path – at many moments. After all, the truth-telling of philosophy which is the questioning of its own good name has no value unless it is somehow anchored in the good which is hardly distinguishable from this good name. And, similarly, the good name of philosophy has no value unless it is somehow anchored in the truth which is principally about itself.

Now, with respect to the word *integrity*, it is often coupled to the word *honour* in order to evoke the highest moral or ethical standards. But what is the significance of this gesture, this coupling when it is done – as is the case here and now – in relation to the very tradition, the very institution which, if not claiming to have originated these standards, purports to know them through and through and to care for them scrupulously? Certainly this sort of gesture (my own, in other words), this questioning of philosophy's very own honour and integrity is no ordinary presumption and may be considered, at least in some quarters, rather indecent and not so far removed from an act

of vengeance or a flight of fancy which takes the whole tradition, the whole series of brilliant philosophical efforts to be something less than itself, something less than calling into question philosophy's honour and integrity.

I mentioned the need at the beginning of this exercise to risk a few infelicities in order to all the better catch sight of them. And I suggested that it should not be assumed beforehand that they have nothing to do with the honour and integrity of philosophy. Since this way of proceeding is far removed from the way philosophy itself proceeds, it is evident that I find something *wrong* with the way philosophy proceeds. Less evident than this side of my way of proceeding, however, is no doubt another side which is that anything that may be considered wrong with the way I proceed is considered justified by me in order that I may justifiably proceed against what I consider to be wrong. Thus I can "safely" say that, if it is a presumption on my part not to assume that philosophy's honour is inclusive of its integrity (this integrity which unfortunately I have not identified but let me now call it philosophy's will to be honest and complete, to be completely honest), then I think it is a presumption whose worth more than makes up for whatever indecency, vengefulness, or egotism may be counted against it.

But I think I have gone as far as I can now in abusing the generous moment of those who have been taking in and tolerating my point of view. And, of course, the fact that they must *not* tolerate it rests well with me for if I were not to meet with their resistance, if I were not given the opportunity to think them wrong but also right in their resistance, and, no less importantly, if I were not given the opportunity to think them *more* wrong than right in their resistance, it would be as if I had never had a point of view. And, similarly, if philosophy proper were never seriously confronted with what it considers to be *improper*, if it were not forced to recognize what was proper in this impropriety even while not recognizing it in the main, it would never have the sense of itself as being the proper and, just as importantly, *justified* as the proper.

The question, *honour and integrity in philosophy: are they possible?*, is the title of the satire which I did not write. Yet I do not deny that it haunts this exercise and it may well be that all that is called philosophical scepticism is marked by a certain mockery and self-mockery. But why should this be a problem for philosophy if truth is its mission and if, in the final analysis, it can never be certain why it set off on it? To be sure, there are all sorts of practical reasons which no doubt stretch further than the eye can see. But if this is all there is, if philosophy were not marked by a *deeper* seriousness which involves in some way or other this more sceptical or satirical look at

itself and which in turn involves a more penetrating and, indeed, more *hurtful* look at itself, it would be wholly established in the business of truth and merely impure rather than *trying to be pure* in its contradictoriness.

\*