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THE TRAGEDY OF NATURE: THE SUNSET AND THE DESTRUCTION OF METAPHOR IN THE WRITINGS OF MALLARMÉ AND DERRIDA

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In his 1971 essay 'La Mythologie blanche'[1], translated by Alan Bass as 'White Mythology'[2], Derrida focuses on the metaphorics of illumination in the philosophical tradition, articulating the "solar system" of metaphysical conceptuality[3]. The essay is concerned with the concept of metaphor as it has been determined by this tradition for which the light of the sun has provided the natural element of thought. Derrida argues that the sun has constituted a natural centre or ground of proper meaning which has assured the stability of the opposition of the proper and the metaphoric, he then seeks to undermine this opposition by showing that this most "natural referent" is itself already "metaphorical". In the course of this analysis Derrida destabilises the metaphysical concept of metaphor through a deconstructive procedure which "explode[s] the reassuring opposition of the metaphoric and the proper"[4], releasing the concept from the constraints of the system in which it is inscribed and re-inscribing it in a general economy of metaphorics.[5]

The above is a sketch of one of the two possible "self-destructions" of metaphor considered by Derrida at the end of his essay. This "self-destruction" implies the opening of the text of dissemination as metaphor is cut loose from a proper ground. There is, however, another self-destruction which constitutes the *metaphysical* end of metaphor. This self-destruction "...follows the line of a resistance to the dissemination of the metaphorical...", it is "...the metaphysical *relève* of metaphor in the proper meaning of Being"[6]. This destruction would be the achievement of the metaphysical project in *parousia*. Here the detour of metaphor would culminate with metaphor "rediscovering the origin of its truth"[7]. It is this trajectory of metaphor which, Derrida argues, has "marked... the man of metaphysics"[8]. In this doubled ending we can read the Nietzschean/Heideggarian inflection of the Derridean text. On the one hand, there is metaphor as it is conceived and considered within the horizon of metaphysics and, on the other, there is metaphor as it breaks with this same horizon.

In Derrida's essay the two ends of metaphor are coordinated with two readings of the sunset. The end characterised as philosophical corresponds to the Hegelian moment. This is articulated in Derrida's text. In a footnote at the end of 'White Mythology' Derrida quotes Hegel's *Lectures on the history of Philosophy*:

> ... by the close of day man has erected a building constructed from his own inner Sun, and when in the evening he contemplates this, he esteems it more highly than the original external Sun. For now he stands in a *conscious relation* to his Spirit, and therefore *free* relation. If we hold this image fast in mind, we shall find it symbolising the course of History, the great Day's work of Spirit.
>
> The History of the World travels from East to West, for Europe is absolutely at the end of History, Asia the beginning... Here rises the outward physical Sun, and in the West it sinks down: here consentaneously rises the Sun of self-consciousness, which diffuses a nobler brilliance[9].

This famous quotation is echoed in Hegel's equally famous statement in the preface to the *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* where he says that "...the owl of Minerva begins its flight only with the onset of dusk".[10] Hegel interpreted world history as the teleological unfolding of reason. Situated at the apotheosis of this development he considered his own speculative system to be the final accomplishment of philosophy. The passage to this achievement takes place in the twilight of world history and the setting sun is the *interiorisation* of this sun in Absolute Knowledge. The history of philosophy would culminate in the speculative assumption of the transcendence of the Platonic *eidos* in the Absolute of the Hegelian *Idea*.

The philosophical end of metaphor is therefore "...not interpreted as a death or dislocation, but as an interiorising anamnesis (*Erinnerung*), a recollection of meaning, a *réleve* of living metaphoricity into a living state of properness"[11].

The *other* sunset, or the passage to the *other* night[12] is in profound complicity with this first, philosophical, dusk. Derrida says that it "...*resembles* the philosophical one to the point of being taken for it"[13]. This *other* self-destruction takes off from the first, it is in "traversing and doubling the first self-destruction" that the *other* "passes through a supplement of syntactic resistance"[14]. It is this "supplement of syntactic resistance" which displaces the closure of metaphysics, which endlessly "opens its circle". Earlier in the essay, Derrida analysed the classical conception of metaphor as it was written into the text of philosophy in Aristotle. In this analysis he highlighted that the concept of metaphor tended to exclude from its field what he refers to as *articulations*. Metaphor operates as the transfer of semantic plenitudes and so reduces or excludes syntactic features of language. Modern linguistics has, however, made Derrida deeply suspicious of the notion of a semantic plenitude; the meaning of a lexeme is not a property of the lexeme itself but is constituted through the differential play of the entire field. The syntactic is no longer reduced to a role of articulating discrete units of constituted meaning but is brought forward as a *constitutive* factor in the *generation* of meaning. This syntactic excess is a "...properly *unnameable* articulation that is irreducible to the semantic *relève* or to dialectical interiorisation"[15], as such it refuses or displaces the closure of metaphysics as it destroys or displaces the metaphysical concept of metaphor.

What interests me here is that this *other* self-destruction of metaphor comes to be thought as a *doubling* of the first. The two sunsets are not separate occurrences; they belong to the same movement. At the very end of 'White Mythology', Derrida mentions Bataille as a "metonymic abbreviation" for the *other* end. This reference draws Derrida's earlier essay, 'From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve' into the immediate context of his discussion of metaphor. In this essay Bataille's "sovereign operation" is understood to transgress the Hegelian closure of metaphysics only because he 'simulates' the closure of Absolute Knowledge:

> Sovereignty transgresses the entirety of the history of meaning and the entirety of the meaning of history, and the project of knowledge which has always obscurely welded these two together. Unknowledge is, then, superhistorical, but only because it takes its responsibilities from the completion of history and from the closure of absolute knowledge, having first taken them seriously and having then betrayed them by exceeding them or by simulating them in play.[16]

This earlier essay is very useful for understanding what Derrida is up to in 'White Mythology'. He is following the trace of a destabilising movement which overtakes metaphysics at its own limit. It is for this reason that the sunset plays a remarkably complex role in 'White Mythology'. It operates on two levels of economy at once, or operates the passage between two economies, *closing* the restricted economy of metaphysics and *opening* the general economy of dissemination. The argument that I would like to put forward in this essay is that this reading of the sunset is rooted in a body of work which is barely mentioned in 'White Mythology' but which discretely organises the work.

'White Mythology' was first published in *Poetique* 5 in 1971. The previous year Derrida had published two essays in *Tel Quel* which constitute his most sustained engagement with the writings of Stèphane Mallarmé. In the second of these two essays, which together make up 'The Double Session'[17], in a famous line of argument which challenges the 'thematic' criticism of J. P. Richard's *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé*, Derrida uses language which is strikingly similar to that used in 'White Mythology':

> The syntax of its folds [the hymen] makes it impossible for us to arrest its play or its indecision, to fix it on any one of its terms, to stop, for example, as Richard has done, on the mental or the imaginary. Such a stopping of the works subsume "*mimique*" within a philosophical or critical (Platonico-Hegelian) interpretation of *mimesis*. It would be incapable of accounting for that excess of syntax over meaning (doubled by the excess of the "*entre*" over the opposition syntactic/semantic); that is for the remarking of textuality.[18]

I would like to propose, therefore, that despite the scant reference to Mallarmé in 'White Mythology'[19], his writings are in fact *the* most important resource for Derrida's deconstruction of the metaphysical concept of metaphor. In order to argue this point it will first be necessary to demonstrate *why* Mallarmé's poetic work brings us to the limit at which metaphor oversteps its metaphysical conception. This will be done through a brief look at Mallarmé's aesthetics as they develop across the crisis inaugurated in the writing of the *Scéne* of *Hérodiade*. A second line of argument will acknowledge the increased critical attention paid to the motif of the sunset in his work, the most important study in this area being Bertrand Marchal's 1988 book *La Religion de Mallarmé*, and then go on to look at how Derrida reads Mallarmé's text as the scene of a crisis for criticism and for rhetoric. At the end of the essay I will return to Derrida's specific reading of the sunset in the crucial passage of 'White Mythology' where the Aristotelian inscription of metaphor as a philosophical concept is radically challenged. It is perhaps fitting given the enigmatic nature of the sun which "can always not be present in act or in person" that this essay is dealing with a reference which does not show itself as such but which is elliptically evoked; the glimmer of a distant star which is invisible to a direct gaze or the barely visible scintillation of a diamond buried in the face of a rock.

PART I: MALLARMÉ'S AESTHETICS

In the introduction it was noted that the sunset plays a complicated role in Derrida's argument, being at the same time the *closure* of the restricted economy of metaphysics and the *opening* of the general economy of dissemination. It was then suggested that in order to account for this double role it would be necessary to take a closer look at Mallarmé's aesthetics. Why is this the case?

In his reading of Bataille in 'From a Restricted to a General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve' Derrida is at pains to emphasise that in order for Bataille to disrupt the Hegelian system it was necessary for him to take Hegel seriously, to take Absolute Knowledge seriously. It was necessary for Bataille to accompany Hegel to the end of the system in order that he affirm that excess which cannot be incorporated into the system and which therefore disrupts its closure. Derrida's strategy when reading Mallarmé is different; he indicates *textual evidence* in Mallarmé's writings, highlighting the re-mark of a syntax which is irreducible to any "semantic *relève* or dialectical interiorisation". My interest in this section is in what is already assumed by Derrida's reading. How is it that Mallarmé's work comes to be marked by this syntactic excess? This essay is concerned with the *passage* to a general economy of metaphorics; Mallarmé's writings have been identified as playing a crucial role. My argument is that if Mallarmé's text is able to play this role, if Derrida's reading is possible, then this is because Mallarmé's text, like Bataille's, is situated at the extreme limit of metaphysical thought. Since it is

Hegel who inscribed reason in history and then his own work at the end of that developmental process, I suggest that Mallarmé's Hegelianism[20] is not simply one aspect of his work, but is something that should be taken very seriously. What follows is therefore a redeployment of Derrida's argumentation in his essay on Bataille in the specific sphere of Mallarméan aesthetics.

It will not be possible in the space of this essay to do more than indicate the broad strokes of Mallarmé's Hegelianism which, in order to be fully demonstrated, would require a lengthier articulation of his writings with Hegel's *Aesthetics*. In this section of the essay it will be sufficient to point out that Mallarmé's *Oeuvre* as he began to conceive it across his work on *Hérodiade* is not, as an initial consideration might suggest, excluded by Hegel's text, but strangely mandated. This amounts to a reconsideration of Mallarmé's *Livre* which will allow us to account for its 'irreducible' position of *passage* between the restricted and the general economy.

Mallarmé's use of Hegelian vocabulary in *Igitur*[21] has always seemed a little enigmatic. Surely, in thinking that a work of art could achieve the Absolute he has mistaken himself for a philosopher. Of course the artwork belongs to one of the three spheres of the Absolute but he must know that it is no longer up to the spiritual task of the age, that it has been superseded by the work of philosophy and is "a thing of the past"[22]. The artwork has no *right* and no business here; it is the owl of Minerva that takes flight at dusk and the artist should retire from his spiritual task. There seems to be a conflict here between Hegel and Mallarmé. This conflict has tended to make Mallarmé's Hegelianism something of a mystery; it has made Mallarmé appear as someone who has taken on board a certain vocabulary but is wilfully misapplying it, the question arises 'to what ends?' and this only serves to make his *Oeuvre* even more enigmatic. The enigma, however, begins to evaporate if we pay attention to a curious subtlety of Hegel's text which has always gone unremarked in Mallarmé commentary.

Hegel's *Aesthetics* runs through the history of art arguing that the spiritual development of the artwork increases in step with world history. From the Symbolic stage, the threshold of art, we pass to the Classical stage, the stage best suited to the sensuous manifestation of Spirit in the anthropomorphic sculpture of ancient Greece. The Classical Ideal is interrupted by the Christian revelation and we pass to the Romantic stage in which the sensuous medium becomes increasingly unsuitable for the increasing spiritual development of the Christian subject. The artwork is no longer adequate to the content it manifests and the Romantic stage is "...the self-transcendence of art but within its own sphere and in the form of art itself"[23]. No longer up to its spiritual task the artwork breaks down, it is at this stage that the higher spheres of Religion and Philosophy can accommodate the spiritual content which is too much for the sensuous medium of the artwork. The artwork withdraws and is considered to be a "thing of the past".

If we remain at this level of Hegel's interpretation, that is to say his introductory comments, then certainly there is no access from here to Mallarmé's Absolute. His evocation of an Absolute achieved in *Igitur* would be incomprehensible in Hegelian terms. If we go further into Hegel's lectures, however, the conflict is dissolved and Mallarmé's Absolute is no longer an aberration but is mandated, even called for by the Hegelian text.

The Romantic stage begins with the transition from sculpture to painting. Painting can capture something of the inner life of its subject and it is entirely appropriate that it should come to the fore as a suitable medium in a Christianised West. Painting is however a transitional stage and is not situated at the end of the development. The highest spiritual content is manifest in poetry. Given that the whole Romantic stage is the self-transcendence of the artwork, the poetic comes to be situated by Hegel at the apotheosis of this process[24]. Hegel writes:

> Only as a result of considering the series of arts in this way does poetry appear as that particular art in which art itself begins at the same time to dissolve and acquire in the eyes of philosophy its point of transition to religious pictorial thinking as such, as well as to the prose of scientific thought. The realm of the beautiful... is bordered on one side by the prose of finitude and commonplace thinking, out of which art struggles on its way to truth, and on the other side by the higher spheres of religion and philosophy where there is a transition to that apprehension of the Absolute which is still further

removed from the sensuous sphere.[25]

Poetry is therefore, at this highest stage of the development, in a thoroughly ambiguous position. Art itself begins to dissolve as it dispenses with its sensuous medium, accessing directly the inner life of the subject. In this way, says Hegel: "poetry destroys the fusion of spiritual inwardness with external existence to an extent that begins to be incompatible with the original conception of art, with the result that poetry runs the risk of losing itself in a transition from the region of sense to that of spirit."[26]

There is no clear dividing line here. Poetry can push through to its own dissolution. It *must*, in a sense, experience its own death. What other movement is Mallarmé describing in *Igitur*? How else are we to understand Igitur's final act where he rolls the dice and lies down on the ashes of his ancestors? *Igitur* describes this final transition and the whole tale constitutes an open syllogism; the act accomplished, and *therefore*... Mallarmé pushes to the extreme the logic of Hegel's *Aesthetics* and does so *in the form of art itself*. This accounts for the crippling and contradictory demands of the *Livre* as Mallarmé conceives it, and also for its questionable ontological status, its quasi-non-existence.[27]

This reading finds confirmation in Mallarmé's correspondence (I have quoted below in French the passage that I will be commenting on here).[28] In a letter to his friend, Eugène Lefébure, written in May 1867, Mallarmé gave an account of how he understood his work to fit into the historical development of art. The schema he supplies would have undoubtedly been familiar to Lefébure, a devoted Hegelian. There have been, he claims, two great "scintillations" of Beauty on this earth. The first of these is the *Venus de Milo*. In this manifestation Beauty is described as "complete and unconscious" and further on he speaks of the "happiness and eternal tranquillity" of the *Venus*. We have already seen that for Hegel sculpture it the most appropriate form for the manifestation of Classical Beauty. In the introduction to his *Aesthetics*, speaking of the Classical form of sculpture he says: "For through sculpture the spirit should stand before us in blissful tranquillity in its bodily form..."[29] and further "...we must claim for sculpture that in it the inward and the spiritual come into appearance for the first time in their eternal peace and essential self-sufficiency"[30]. Later on, in the main body of the work, Hegel writes: "When the classical ideal figure is at its zenith, it is complete in itself, independent, reserved, unreceptive, a finished individual which rejects everything else".[31] The characterisation of Classical Beauty is therefore strikingly similar between Mallarmé and Hegel. But there is more. The second "scintillation" of Beauty is *La Joconde*, the *Mona Lisa*. Since Christianity, Mallarmé says, Beauty has been "bitten in its heart"; Christianity constitutes an interruption of the Classical ideal of Beauty. She is painfully *reborn*, however, but this time with a mysterious smile, in Da Vinci's painting. The correlation with Hegel's history is again striking. Mallarmé echoes the sequence of art-forms moving from sculpture to painting, and he also offers the same explanation for the disruption of the classical ideal - Christianity. The Romantic art form begins, for Hegel, through an external intervention in the Classical ideal: "...this new material [the content of Romantic art] is not brought to our minds by the conceptions of art but is given to art from outside as an actual happening, as the history of God made flesh."[32]

Having given his interpretation of these two earlier manifestations of Beauty, Mallarmé now suggests his own *Oeuvre* as a synthesis, an *Aufhebung*, into a higher more complete manifestation. Beauty can smile again with the tranquillity of the *Venus and* the mystery of the *Mona Lisa*. Having passed through the period that separates Mallarmé's *oeuvre* from the time when the Classical ideal was "bitten in its heart", Beauty has now gained the self-consciousness denied to the *Venus*. In another letter from the period Mallarmé refers to a "supreme synthesis"; writing to Henri Cazalis this time he says that he is slowly recovering strength "après une synthèse supreme"[33]. Interestingly in this same letter he refers to a "terrible struggle with an old and malicious plumage" which he clarifies as a struggle with God. God, he says, has been "terrassé". We should not rush to interpret this struggle, as we might from a contemporary perspective, as the passage to a secular world, or as a simple loss of faith; God has been brought down to earth, not killed off. In *Hérodiade*[34], the poem begun in 1864 and which instigates the crisis under discussion here, Mallarmé has Hérodiade cry to her nursemaid to close the shutters and block out the sky because she hates the "bel azur"[35]. Mallarmé's terrible struggle is with transcendence.

His supreme synthesis, the achievement of a poetic Absolute, corresponds very precisely to what was referred to above as the Hegelian moment; the unconscious ideal of Beauty is alienated from itself with the advent of Christianity, to return through a process of historical development to a triumphant self-consciousness. It has been argued in this section that this synthesis is not excluded by Hegel's text but is rather mandated by his comments on the poetic form as the self-transcendence or the dissolution of the art-work at its highest level of spiritual development.

PART II: MALLARMÉ'S SUNSET

All Mallarméan sunsets are moments of crisis – J. Derrida, 'Mallarmé'

The second half of the twentieth century has seen an increase in the critical attention paid to the motif of the sunset in Mallarmé's poetic production. Chapter IV of Richard's *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé* is entitled 'L'Expérience nocturne' and made some interesting points on this subject, in 1959 Gardner Davies published *Mallarmé et le drame solaire*, in which he set out the case that Mallarmé's poetry returns with an extraordinary frequency to this motif and, in 1988, Bertrand Marchal argued in *La Religion de Mallarmé* that the sunset should be viewed as *the* key to a comprehension of Mallarmé's project. To begin with the sunset seems to confirm a Hegelian comprehension of his aesthetic. This is the reading Richard puts forward in 'L'Expérience nocturne'. With the sunset, Richard says, "we attend a death... In the spectacle of the Mallarméan evening, the catastrophe is the equivalent of an apotheosis."[36] The sunset is the 'death of God' in the Hegelian sense of a death of transcendence as it was examined in the previous section. The poetic 'dream' of the azure is extinguished here. The azure, Richard argues has always "...laid claim to the passage beyond the window... setting up... the existence of an *elsewhere*", and the "vesperal ruination brings an end to all these dreams". In the concluding paragraph of the last section it was noted that Mallarmé's "synthesis" implied a self-consciousness which was impossible for the Classical ideal of the *Venus*; the coming of the night adds, Richard argues, a *tain* to the window and whereas the day permits an undisrupted view onto the azure, the coming of the night reflects the subject back on himself; the vanishing light implies a reflexive turn onto the subject and a consciousness of self.

Mallarmé's experience is, however, troubling. The triumphant achievement of a new self-conscious Beauty is moderated by a "crushing/overwhelming thought"[37]. The work on *Hérodiade* may be exhilarating for the artist but the same work confronts him with two abysses. The first of these abysses is properly speaking *disastrous*[38] and it even makes him abandon his work for a time. The disappearance of the azure is the disappearance of a transcendent measure of value[39]. Mallarmé is confronted with "le Néant", nothingness; a supplementary 'nothing' which is neither inside nor outside the saturated field of the Absolute[40]. With this realisation we encounter the modernist break which was so insistently interrogated in the writings of Blanchot. Mallarmé realises[41] that Beauty cannot be referred to a value exterior to the text he writes and it is precisely here that Blanchot follows the movement of a turn inwards. "Why...," he asks in *The Space of Literature*:

> ...at the moment when through the force of the times art disappears, does it appear for the first time as a search in which something essential is at stake, where what counts is no longer the artist or active labour or any of the values upon which the world is built or even any of the other values upon which formerly the beyond opened? And why is this search nonetheless precise, rigorous, bent upon culminating in a work, in a work which *is*, and nothing more?[42]

"Literature, here, undergoes an exquisite, fundamental, crisis."[43] Mallarmé's 'crisis', initiated in the writing of the *Scéne* of *Hérodiade*, is absolutely a 'crise de vers'. In his short text *Mallarmé*[44], written for the *Tableau de la literature française*[45], Derrida's essay is organised around this Mallarméan crisis. It is, he says, a crisis of criticism: "...which will always use judgement *to decide* (*krinein*) on value and meaning, to distinguish between what is and what is not, what has value and what has not, the true and the false, the beautiful and the ugly, all signification and its opposite."[46]

The displacement of *value* is a crisis moment for criticism. Criticism, Derrida argues, has always presumed that it is in a position to recover the *meaning* of a text, that is to say that in the last instance it has been determined philosophically according to a value of determinable meaning. The assumption of a transcendent measure of value into the imminence of the text produces an extremely disorientating effect. Mallarmé's text operates a kind of decapitation.[47] The *Néant* which Mallarmé discovers in this movement is an 'extra-nothing' which unsettles his project: "This extra nothing, this nothing the more, or more the less, exposes the order of meaning (of that which *is*), even polysemous meaning, to the disconcerting law of dissemination. It gives *place*, out of the protocol of "literary" practice, to a new problematic of meaning and being."[48]

This "extra nothing" is therefore what opens the text of dissemination. But this only *happens* at the extreme limit, at the closure of the philosophical/metaphysical (Hegelian) book. This is why Derrida says in 'Outwork' that 'Mallarmé's Book issues from *The* Book.'[49] Criticism is thrown into crisis because it can no longer continue, according to the regulation of philosophy, to presume a plenitude of meaning which it would be possible to recover. From here on the Mallarméan text will be constrained to interrogate and re-mark the space of its own generation of meaning (for example the *fold* or the *blank*). If criticism attempts to reduce these *re-marks* to *themes* which can be comprehended within a horizon of sense, then it has profoundly missed the radical gesture of Mallarmé's text, and this is precisely the accusation which, in the passage already quoted, Derrida levels at Richard: "Such a stopping of the works subsume "*Mimique*" within a philosophical or critical (Platonico-Hegelian) interpretation of *mimesis*. It would be incapable of accounting for that excess of syntax over meaning (doubled by the excess of the "*entre*" over the opposition syntactic/semantic); that is for the remarking of textuality."[50]

In *Mallarmé*, Derrida hastens to add that this crisis of criticism is also, equally, a crisis of rhetoric "which arms criticism with an entire hidden philosophy. A philosophy of *meaning*, of the *word*, of the *name*."[51] In the discussion of the metaphysical concept of metaphor in the introduction we saw that Derrida notes that for Aristotle metaphor operates as a transfer of semantic plenitudes and that it excludes what Derrida refers to as *articulations* or the syntactic elements of a text. Now, Mallarmé's text is obsessed by its own articulation; if "the word... is no longer the primary element of language" here, then, Derrida argues, the consequences are "far reaching". The *difference* between two terms is irreducible to the notion of a semantic plenitude; modern linguistics has even shown that it is *constitutive* of the meanings of those terms. It is therefore meaningless to speak of the meaning of a differential articulation. Taking the example of the sign *blanc* in Mallarmé's text, Derrida writes:

> '... the sign *blanc* ("white,", "blank," "space"), with all that is associated with it from one thing to the next, is a huge reservoir of meaning (snow, cold, death, marble, etc.; swan, wing, fan, etc.; virginity, purity, hymen.; page, canvas, veil, gauze, milk, semen, Milky Way, star, etc.). It permeates Mallarmé's entire text, as if by symbolic magnetism. And yet, the whites also mark, through the intermediary of the white page, the place of the writing of these "whites"; and first of all the spacing between the different significations (that of white among others), the *spacing of reading*. "The 'whites' indeed, assume primary importance" (*Un coup de dés*, *OC* p.455). The white of the spacing has no determinate meaning, it does not simply belong to the plurivalence of all the other whites. More than or less than the polysemic series, a loss or an excess of meaning, it folds up the text towards itself, and at each moment points out the place (where "nothing will have taken place except the place" [*Un coup de dés*, *OC* 474-75]), the condition, the labor, the rhythm.[52]

In the earlier text of *Dissemination*, Derrida commented specifically on the consequences of the re-mark of the *blanc* for the concept of metaphor:

> The dissemination of the whites (*not* the dissemination of whiteness) produces a tropological structure that circulates infinitely around itself through the incessant supplement of an extra turn: there is *more/no more* metaphor, *more/no more* metonymy [*plus* de métaphore *plus* de métonymie – translation modified]. Since everything becomes metaphorical, there is no longer any literal meaning and, hence,

no longer any metaphor either."[53]

Mallarmé's 'synthesis', we saw, displaces a transcendent measure of value into the immanence of the text, and this movement draws the text into an interrogation of its own genesis. We might credit the writings of Blanchot with being the first place that criticism began to take notice of this strange obsession of the modern 'literary' text. It is in Derrida's work, however, that the consequences of this movement for the philosophical tradition of the West begin to be articulated. The crisis of criticism is also a crisis of rhetoric. For Derrida, the Occident[54] is in the process of negotiating its end and Mallarmé's text is an 'irreducible' reference here. The crisis of rhetoric takes place at sunset but the sunset in Mallarmé's text is no longer strictly speaking a metaphor. It can't be, and this is the radical implication of Derrida's discourse on metaphor. How can you speak *through metaphor* of the closure of a historical epoch in which metaphor itself is inscribed as a concept, without, in the same gesture, making that concept shake. So, where Bertrand Marchal speaks in his book *La Religion de Mallarmé* of a "tragedy of nature" or a "solar catastrophe" which is the "historical accomplishment of that which the Renaissance inaugurated"[55], Derrida, on the same limit, speaks of a *catastrophe*[56] affecting the concept of metaphor itself. Derrida's text is not contradicted by Marchal's thesis but it gets caught up on an issue which Marchal tends to elide; while the issue of metaphor does receive some attention in *La Religion de Mallarmé*[58] it is certainly not treated in the same searching way as it is in *Dissemination* and 'White Mythology'.

In the same way the value of 'nature' is always upheld by Marchal, even when 'nature' is rediscovered beyond the closure of a historical epoch as "...that which presents, in its symbolic dimension, the most fundamental psychic reality of man, the elementary syntax of the human soul"[59]. What is nature here when Mallarmé rediscovers in the sunset the mythic structures of the human imagination, buried in "... the most obscure layers of the spirit, at a depth where history has no hold", structures which are "masked" in society so as to "...privilege the only historic dimension of man identified with reason"[60]? In short, the same goes for the concept of 'nature' as for metaphor. If nature is being referred to a depth at which a history of reason 'has no hold' then it is being re-considered beyond its inscription as a metaphysical concept in a history of reason[61]. I mention this at the end of this section because in Derrida's reading of the sunset in 'White Mythology', the subject of the last section of this essay, the gesture with which he generalises the concept of metaphor also infinitely problematises the value of the 'natural'.

PART III: THE SUNSET IN 'WHITE MYTHOLOGY'

The Western tradition of philosophy was, for Derrida, inaugurated in the writings of Plato. In 'Plato's Pharmacy', for example, he refers to "Platonism" which "sets up Western metaphysics in its conceptuality"[62]. In Plato's *Republic* we find, in the Simile of the Sun, a powerful articulation of the analogy between the sensible sun which allows us to see objects, and the Good which allows us to achieve an intelligible understanding of the objects of thought. The Good permits us to perceive the objects of thought in the same way as the sun permits us to perceive sensible objects, but as well as this, it engenders those same objects: "The good therefore may be said to be the source not only of the intelligibility of the objects of knowledge, but also of their being and reality; yet it is not itself that reality, but beyond it and superior to it in dignity and power."[63]

Glaucon responds to Socrates here, to the general amusement of those gathered round, that "It must be miraculously transcendent". So, the Good is a transcendent measure of value which will orientate '[a]nyone who is going to act rationally either in public or private life'. The path of the philosopher will lead him towards the Good and in the end he will be able to "look directly at the sun itself, and gaze at it without using reflections in water or any other medium, but as it is in itself."[64] Socrates announces here the desire of philosophy to contemplate the Good directly, without recourse to reflection. This would constitute the disappearance of metaphor in the direct contemplation of the ground of truth. It would be the disappearance of the metaphor of the sun; a philosophical sunset.[65]

For Derrida the analogy of the sun is not simply an analogy, the light of the sun constitutes the very "ether" of philosophical thought. The passage of the sun towards its setting in the West and the *consentaneous* rising of a Sun of self-consciousness which Hegel speaks of in the quotation from the *Lectures on the history of Philosophy* given above is not simply a metaphor that the author Hegel *chose* to use. To contemplate the source of the light is a philosophical dream which has traversed the history of philosophy from Plato to Hegel. "Doubtless", Derrida says, "Hegel's Idea... is not Plato's Idea; doubtless the effects of the system are irreducible and must be read as such. But the word *Idea* is not an arbitrary *X*, and it bears a traditional burden that continues Plato's system into Hegel's system"[66] It is not sufficient, however, to point to the etymology of the word *Idea* (from the Greek *eido*, to see) to reveal a metaphorical origin. Again, metaphor belongs to that system as one of its philosophemes and cannot be mobilised unproblematically to explain the origin of the system, it is "derivative of the discourse it would allegedly dominate".[67] The recourse to etymology is therefore reliant on a concept which is produced within the system.

Derrida's strategy is different. He seeks to demonstrate that the philosophical concept of metaphor is sustained by the opposition of the proper and the metaphorical, that metaphor is understood by philosophy as a detour on the way towards the re-appropriation of a proper ground of truth. In this philosophical sunset metaphor destroys itself. On the same limit, however, Derrida argues that another destruction takes place. This time the turn of the sun does not close down the metaphysical project on a proper ground but dislocates that ground by showing it to be *already* metaphorical. This gesture radically problematises the concept of metaphor because it re-inscribes it beyond the opposition which has sustained it in the tradition. This generalisation takes place through a reading of the sunset.

Derrida refers here to the Aristotelian inscription of metaphor in the text of philosophy. This is a privileged moment because although Aristotle "invented neither the word nor the concept of metaphor... he seems to have proposed the first situating of it, which... has been retained as such with the most powerful historical effects". In the first of the two chapters of 'White Mythology' dealing with Aristotle Derrida analyses how the concept of metaphor, as Aristotle inscribes it, excludes what we have been referring to as *articulations*, the syntactic elements of a text, and considers only the *nominisable*, or elements which constitute a semantic plenitude. Only these latter are suitable for metaphoric transfer. For Derrida, this is indicative of the philosophical assumption that a word can have a unique meaning or at least a finite number of meanings. The word is the primary element of language and, as the transfer these semantic plenitudes, metaphor operates in the service of meaning. It does not trouble the potential recovery of full meaning; it works for it. Ultimately this would lead to the philosophical destruction of metaphor as it effaces itself in the movement of idealisation. Derrida notices, however, a problem in Aristotle's discourse. In the second of the chapters dealing with Aristotle, he quotes from the *Topics I*:

> Every object of sensation, when it passes outside the range of sensation, becomes obscure; for it is not clear whether it still exists, because it is comprehended only by sensation. This will be true of such attributes as do not necessarily and always attend upon the subject. For example, he who has stated that it is a property of the sun to be 'the brightest star that moves above the earth' has employed in the property something of a kind which is comprehensible only by sensation, namely 'moving above the earth'; and so the property of the sun would not have been correctly assigned, for it will not be manifest, when the sun sets, whether it is still moving above the earth, because sensation fails us.[68]

Derrida draws two consequences from this. Firstly, Heliotropic metaphors are always imperfect metaphors. Because the sensory sun cannot be known in what is proper to it, because it disappears from view, it cannot provide enough knowledge for a full re-appropriation of meaning. "Every metaphor which implies the sun (as tenor or vehicle) does not bring clear and certain knowledge".[69] The sun produces bad metaphors because it is improperly known. This would not be problematic in itself (there can be bad metaphors) if it were not for the fact that the sun is not just one metaphor among others. "The sun", says Derrida:

> Does not just provide an example, even if the most remarkable one, of sensory Being such that it can always disappear, keep out of sight, not be present. The very opposition of appearing and

> disappearing, the entire lexicon of the *phainesthai*, of *aletheia*, etc., of day and night, of the visible and the invisible of the present and the absent – all this is possible only under the sun.

The sun "structures the metaphorical space of philosophy" and in this respect it "represents what is natural in philosophical language". If philosophy implies a movement towards the intelligible perception of truth then this sunset is a *catastrophic*[70] event. It introduces an irreducible loss, an "extra nothing", into an economy which has always been predicated on a return in full; it opens the passage to a general economy. This catastrophic inversion leads to the second consequence:

> Something has been inverted in our discourse. Above we said that the sun is the unique, irreplaceable, natural referent, around which everything must turn, toward which everything must turn. Now, following the same route, however, we must reverse the proposition: the literally, properly named sun, the sensory sun, does not furnish poor knowledge solely because it furnishes poor metaphors, it is itself solely metaphorical. Since as Aristotle tells us, we can no longer be certain of its sensory characteristics as of its "properties", the sun is never properly present in discourse. Each time that there is a metaphor, there is doubtless a sun somewhere; but each time that there is a sun, metaphor has begun.

The consequence of this, for Derrida, is that the natural light of philosophy is not natural. There is no sensory sun which has not already been affected by metaphor. The sun cannot furnish for philosophy a ground of truth because the same movement that sets up the metaphorical space of philosophy ("The very opposition of appearing and disappearing, the entire lexicon of the *phainesthai*, of *aletheia*, etc., of day and night, of the visible and the invisible of the present and the absent"), the *sunset*, also assures its (the sun's) non-propriety, its metaphoricity (now no longer understood within the philosophical horizon). So Derrida continues: "If the sun is metaphorical always, already, it is no longer completely natural. It is always, already a luster, a chandelier, one might say an *artificial* construction if one could still give credence to this signification when nature has disappeared. For if the sun is no longer completely natural, what in nature does remain natural?"

In the French text of the essay the second sentence of the above quotation reads: "Il est déjà toujours un lustre, on dirait une construction *artificielle* si l'on pouvait encore accréditer cette signification quand la nature a disparu." The presence of the word 'lustre' here is striking. It is a word which has appeared before in Derrida's work, in readings of Mallarmé, notably at the beginning of the first essay of 'The Double Session'. In a preliminary note Derrida asks when describing the scene of the first delivery of the text at a session of the *Group d'Etudes théoriques*: "Is it pointless to add ... that the room was lighted by a sumptuous, old fashioned lustre?"[71] A *lustre* hangs therefore over his discussion of Mallarmé. This is no accident, and a couple of pages later we read: "The title will thus remain suspended, in suspension, up in the air, but glittering like a theatre lustre of which the multiplicity of facets... can never be counted or reduced". The *lustre* stands in for the title, *represents* the suspended title. In the same passage the 'title' is associated with "the head, or the capital..." and in 'Plato's Pharmacy' the 'capital' is associated with the father of the logos precisely in a discussion of the Good in Plato's text: "The figure of the father, of course is also that of the good (*agathon*). Logos *represents* what it is indebted to: the father who is also chief, capital, and good(s). Or rather *the* chief, *the* capital, *the* good(s). *Pater* in Greek means all three at once."[72]

Following this chain around Derrida's text we can begin to glimpse that the *lustre* is no throw away reference here. It is not even simply an oblique reference to Mallarmé's work. It provides the (non-natural) light of dissemination. Through a series of textual referrals it brings us back to the stakes of 'White Mythology'. The sunset is *also* the decapitation of the text: "What ruins the "*pious capital letter*" of the title and works towards the decapitation or ungluing of the text is the regular intervention of the blanks, the ordered return of the white spaces, the measure and order of dissemination, the law of spacing..."[73]

CONCLUSION

This essay has attempted to do two things. Firstly, to show that, despite scant reference to Mallarmé in 'White Mythology', his writings in fact play a crucial role in Derrida's discussion of metaphor. Secondly, I have attempted to show *why* it is that Mallarmé's text has been able to play this role. It was argued that Mallarmé's "supreme synthesis" displaces a transcendent measure of value, the "bel azur", into the immanence of text. This gesture initiates a crisis, a 'crise de vers', which is both a crisis of criticism and a crisis of rhetoric. Mallarmé discovers an "extra nothing" which cannot be incorporated in the saturated field of the Absolute and which, for Derrida, opens the text of dissemination. The sunset was shown to play a complicated role here as it is both the *closure* of the restricted economy *and* the *opening* of the general economy of metaphorics.

At the end of the final section I followed a chain of referral from the evocation of the *lustre* in 'White Mythology' through other texts of Derrida's, published in *Dissemination*, to suggest that the issue of the sunset is indissociable from the issue of the decapitation of the text. It is a sovereign operation, an operation on the sovereign, which, cutting off the King's head, doing away with God's representative, does away with transcendence. Mallarmé's text is revolutionary in the banal sense in which this word is often used, but it also belongs to the Revolution. For Hegel, the Revolution was the passage to the modern state, the *ideal* of Plato's Republic is actualised in the concrete circumstances of World History. This movement is catastrophic in the two senses of the word given in a footnote above. On the one hand, it is "the change or revolution which produces the conclusion or final event", and on the other it is "an event producing a subversion of the order or system of things". There are, then, two sunsets and two catastrophes. This, Nancy says, is where we are:

> ...we can now clarify what we said earlier: ... the world-becoming (detheologization) displaces value – makes it immanent... And this displacement is not a transposition, a "secularisation" of the onto-theological or metaphysical-Christian scheme: it is rather, its deconstruction and emptying out, and it opens onto another space – of place and of risk – which we have just begun to enter.[74]

NOTES

1. First published in Poetique 5 (1971) and then included in *Marges de la philosophie* (Editions de Minuit, 1972)
2. *Margins of Philosophy.* Trans. Alan Bass (Chicago, 1984).
3. "There is no such thing as a metaphysical concept" Derrida wrote in 'Outwork', *Dissemination*, (The Athlone Press, 1981) p. 6. He went on to say that "The 'metaphysical' is a certain determination or direction taken by a sequence of 'chain'". The metaphysical concept does not exist, as such, independent from its inscription in a text. The "textual labour" of deconstruction intervenes to exhibit and open up the "restricted economy" of this metaphysical determination. A metaphysical concept can be destabilised *because* it has no ontological primacy but is produced by dominant forces within a field of thought. For this reason I will often in this essay refer to the 'inscription' of a metaphysical concept.
4. *Marges* p. 270
5. For further discussion of Derrida's discourse on metaphor, see 'Metaphorics and Metaphysics: Derrida's Analysis of Aristotle' by Irene. E. Harvey Chap. 7 in *Jacques Derrida, Critical Thought* . (Ashgate, 2004) and the last section of the chapter entitled 'Literature or Philosophy?' in Rodolphe Gasché's *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection*. (Harvard University Press, 1986)
6. *Marges* p. 268
7. *Marges* p. 268
8. *Marges* p. 268
9. Introduction in *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, G. W. F. Hegel, trans. J Sibree (The Colonial Press, 1900) pp. 109-10.
10. Preface in *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. G. W. F. Hegel, trans H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge University Press, 1991) p. 23
11. *Marges* p. 269
12. 'The *other* night' is intended here as a reference to the work of Maurice Blanchot who's readings of Mallarmé in the 1950s were of considerable importance to Derrida. For more on the '*other* night' see esp. 'Orpheus's Gaze' in 'The Space of Literature' Blanchot, trans. Ann Smock (University of Nebraska, 1982). For a selection of references articulating Blanchot's criticism of the metaphorics of illumination with that of Derrida, see 'Derrida et Blanchot, Quelques citations' by François Brémondy, in *Les Fins de l'homme, Colloque de Cersy*. pp 214-218.
13. *Marges* p. 270
14. *Marges* p. 270
15. *Marges* p. 270
16. 'From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve' in *Writing and Difference*, J. Derrida. Trans. A. Bass. (Routledge, 2001) p. 341
17. Published together as 'La double séance' in *La dissémination* (Editions du Seuil, 1972). Trans. Barbara Johnson as 'The Double Session' in *Dissemination*. (The Athlone Press, 1981)
18. *Diss* p. 231
19. His name is mentioned only once, in the *Exergue*, where Derrida writes: "In the same constellation, but in its own irreducible place, once again we must reread the entirety of Mallarmé's texts on linguistics, aesthetics, and political economy, all that he wrote on the sign *or* [gold], which calculates textual effects that check the oppositions of the literal [*proper*] and the figurative, the metaphoric and the metonymic, figure and ground, the syntactic and the semantic, speech and writing in their classical senses, the more and the less. And does so notably on the page which disseminates its title *or* in the course of "fantasmagoric settings of the sun"". *M* p. 219
20. For more on the question of Mallarmé's Hegelianism see: 'Mallarmé et le rêve du « Livre »' in *Essais sur Mallarmé*, Lloyd James Austin (Manchester University Press, 1995); *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé*. J-P Richard. (Editions du Seuil, 1961) esp. p. 231 where Richard supplies a generous list of further biographical references on this subject.
21. *Oeuvres complètes* p. 433
22. "...art, considered in its highest vocation is, and remains for us a thing of the past" *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art Vol. I*. G.W.F. Hegel. trans. T.M. Knox. (Clarenden Press, Oxford, 1975) p. 11
23. *Aesthetics Vol. I* p. 80
24. For a discussion of the specific position of poetry in Hegel's *Aesthetics*, see J-L Nancy's *Les Muses* (Galilée, 1994) esp. ch. II 'La jeune fille qui succède aux Muses'.
25. *Aesthetics Vol II* p. 968
26. *Aesthetics Vol II* p. 968
27. On this subject see *Le livre à venir* (Gallimard, 1959)'Le Livre à venir' 'Où va la littérature' M. Blanchot. For further discussion of Mallarmé and Hegel see also 'L'Absence de livre', the last chapter of *L'entretien infini* (Gallimard, 1969) M. Blanchot.
28. "Et si je parle ainsi de *moi*, c'est qu'hier j'ai fini la première ébauche de l'œuvre, parfaitement délimitée et impérissable si je ne péris pas. Je l'ai contemplée sans extase comme sans épouvante, et, fermant les yeux, *j'ai trouvé que cela était*. La *Vénus de Milo* – que je me plais à attribuer à Phidias, tant le nom de ce grand artiste est devenu générique pour moi, *La Joconde* du Vinci,

me semblent, et *sont*, les deux grandes scintillations de la Beauté sur cette terre – et cet Œuvre, tel qu'il est rêvé, la troisième. La Beauté complète et inconsciente, unique et immuable, ou la *Vénus* de Phidias, la Beauté ayant été mordue au cœur depuis le christianisme par la Chimère, et douloureusement renaissant avec un sourire rempli de mystère, mais de mystère forcé et qu'elle *sent* être la condition de son être. La Beauté, enfin, ayant par la science de l'homme, retrouvé dans l'Univers entier ses *phases corrélatives*, ayant eu le suprême mot d'elle, s'étant rappelé l'horreur secrète qui la forçait à sourire – du temps de Vinci, et à sourire mystérieusement – souriant mystérieusement maintenant, mais de bonheur et avec la quiétude éternelle de la *Vénus de Milo* retrouvée ayant su l'idée du mystère dont *La Joconde* ne savait que la sensation fatale." letter written to Eugène Lefébure on the 27th May 1867. *Mallarmé Correspondance* (Folio Classique. Gallimard, 1995) p. 349
29. *Aestheetics Vol. I* p. 85
30. *Aestheetics Vol. I* p. 85
31. *Aesthetics Vol. I* p. 532
32. *Aesthetics Vol. I* p. 506
33. *Correspondance* p. 342
34. For more discussion of *Hérodiade*, particularly regarding the poems relationship to *Igitur*, see; *Mallarmé et le rêve d'Hérodiade*. Gardner Davies. (Librairie José Corti, 1978) ; *Le « Mythe de Hérodiade » chez Mallarmé. Genèse et evolution*. Sylviane Hout (AG Nizet, 1977).
35. *OC* p. 48
36. *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé* p. 156 (translations from this work are my own)
37. *Correspondence* p. 297 Letter to Henri Cazalis 28th April 1866
38. In the title of his Blanchot's book *L'ecriture du désastre* 'désastre' is a semi-quotation from Mallarmé who speaks of a 'désastre obscur' in his poem *Le tombeau d'Edgar Poe*. Etymologically the word is interesting 'dés-astre', lack of star. The sunset is a disaster in the sense that it is the disappearance of the measure of value that has guided the West.
39. For a discussion of how this re-evaluation of value has repercussions in the domain of political economy see J-L Nancy's *The Creation of the World* or *Globalisation* trans. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (State University of New York Press, 2007). Esp. Ch. I 'Urbi et Orbi', for example: "...we can now clarify what we said earlier: if the world-becoming (detheologization) displaces value – makes it immanent – before world-forming displaces the production of value – making it universal – the two together displace "creation" into the "without-reason" of the world. And this displacement is not a transposition, a "secularisation" of the onto-theological or metaphysical-Christian scheme: it is rather, its deconstruction and emptying out, and it opens onto another space – of place and of risk – which we have just begun to enter." p. 51
40. "But there is, here I intervene with assurance, something, very little, *a mere nothing*, let's expressly say, *which exists*, for example *equal to the text*" *OC* p. 638. Quoted by Derrida in 'Outwork' *Dissemination*, p. 57
41. Saying that it is Mallarmé who 'realises' this may suggest ignorance of a whole discourse on the 'signature' which is of such importance in Derrida's work. It may also suggest ignorance of Mallarmé's own pronouncements on the depersonalisation of the author of the work. Following protocol I will say that when the use of a proper name seems to indicate reference to an unproblematised notion of subjectivity it should be taken as a 'metonymic abbreviation' for a movement which can be 'read' in the texts bearing that signature.
42. *The Space of Literature* Maurice Blanchot, trans. Ann Smock. (University of Nebraska Press, 1982) p. 220
43. 'Crise de vers' *OC*, *S* Mallarmé p. 360. (my translation).
44. Published in English (trans. Christine Roulston) in *Acts of Literature* (Routledge, 1992)
45. *Tableau de la literature française : De Madame de Stël à Rimbaud* (Gallimard, 1974)
46. *Acts of Literature*, p. 113
47. The scene described in the 'Cantique de Saint Jean', the poem (unpublished in Mallarmé's lifetime) printed as the final part to *Hérodiade* by the editors of Mallarmé's *Oeuvres completes*, unites the motif of the sunset with that of the decapitation of the prophet, recounted from the first person perspective (that is to say that Saint John narrates his own death). This poem re-enacts the overcoming of transcendence as in the final verse Saint John's head refuses the 'above' and gestures towards the earth.
48. 'Outwork' in *Dissemination*, p. 56
49. *Diss* p. 54
50. *Diss* p. 231
51. *Acts of Literature*, p. 113
52. *Acts of Literature*, p. 116
53. *Dissemination*, p. 257
54. Occident – from present participle occidere, *to set* (used of the sun)
55. *La Religion de Mallarmé*, p. 255 (my translation)
56. Derrida speaks of a 'catastrophe' affecting metaphor in his later essay 'The *Retrait* of Metaphor', trans. Peggy Kamuf in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other* (Stanford University Press, 2007)
57. See, for example, the sub-section 'Mythologie et poésie' in the chapter entitled 'Une Théologie des lettres', pp. 450-456

58. *La Religion de Mallarmé*, p. 363
59. *La Religion de Mallarmé*, p. 363
60. See on this subject 'On the Essence and Concept of *Physis* in Aristotle's *Physics B, I*' M. Heidegger in *Pathmarks* (Cambridge University Press)
61. *Diss*, p. 76
62. *The Republic*, Plato trans. Desmond Lee. (Penguin Books, 1987) p. 248
63. *The Republic*, p. 258
64. Hegel defines the artwork as the sensible manifestation of the idea. In his essay 'The Vestige of Art' published in *The Muses*, Nancy says the following: "If we pay attention and weigh words and their history carefully, we will agree that there is a definition of art that encompasses all the others (for the West at least, but art is a Western concept). It is, not at all by chance, Hegel's definition: art is the sensible presentation of the Idea. No other definition escapes this one sufficiently to oppose it in any fundamental way" p. 88. The dissolution of the artwork would correspond to the presentation of the Idea in pure thought as it overcomes its sensible presentation. This accounts for the paradoxical position of poetry in the *Aesthetics* as was noted above. If art "touches an extremity" in the work of Mallarmé, then it finds itself in the strange position of dispatching with its sensible manifestation. This can only be 'figured' as a sunset as the sphere of the sensible annihilates itself and art 'withdraws'. The essay by Nancy just quoted is extremely pertinent for the issues under discussion in this essay.
65. *Marges*, p. 254
66. *Marges*, p. 228
67. *Topics* I, 5, 102a20-22. Aristotle. Quoted by Derrida, *Marges*, 250
68. *Marges*, p. 250
69. *Marges*, p. 251
70. Catastrophe – overturning, sudden turn... 1. 'The change or revolution which produces the conclusion or final event of a dramatic piece'... 3. An event producing a subversion of the order or system of things. (Oxford English Dictionary)
71. *Diss*, p. 173
72. *Diss*, p. 81
73. *Diss*, p. 178
74. *The Creation of the World* or *Globalisation*, p.51