

BETWEEN REALITY AND FICTION:
PAUL RICOEUR'S *LA MÉTAPHORE VIVE*

For Ricoeur, metaphorical discourse offers "a linguistic register suitable for speaking of liberated freedom and liberated man in his existential concreteness and totality" (Jervolino 12). The literary and existential construct which Ricoeur articulates as *la métaphore vive* is therefore an essential component of his anticipated yet never completed project, the poetics of freedom, that is, a hermeneutic which discloses how poetry's imagined variations of reality allow us to understand paradoxical conditions of being.¹ In this article, my aim is to examine Ricoeur's tensional theory of metaphorical truth and the ontology inherent in its depiction of worlds that are intermediary, free of a dichotomized status of true or false. By exploring the paradox which gives life to *la métaphore vive*, specifically its roots in the Aristotelian dialectic of mimesis and poesis, I will explore the ontological bearing of metaphorical discourse's creative imitations of reality, reconfigurations capable of presenting "new ways of being in the world, of living there, and of projecting our innermost possibilities onto it" (Ricoeur 53).²

According to Ricoeur, what establishes language's status as metaphorical, be its discourse oral or written, a line of verse or an entire work of prose, is its production of a world that is intermediary, a world that inhabits a region which I articulate as the poetic space of the in between.³ This is to say that when we as readers enter the text, we do

¹ When referring to Ricoeur's work on metaphor, this study maintains the French title, *La Métaphore Vive*, rather than the English translation, *The Rule of Metaphor*. Similarly, to maintain Ricoeur's notion of the active and life-like discourse of metaphor, throughout this paper I use the French phrase, *la métaphore vive* rather than the English translation of "living metaphor."

² As an exploration into an essential component of Ricoeur's projected poetics of freedom, this article is a step toward developing an interpretive analysis of Ricoeur's work that will seek to examine the potential enactment of his poetics of freedom. Like Jervolino and Pellauer, my perspective of Ricoeur's corpus is one of continuity rather than discontinuity, perceiving a cohesive matrix throughout his various interests in the philosophy of the will, hermeneutics and metaphor. See, Jervolino, Domenico, *The Cogito and Hermeneutics* and Pellauer, David, *Ricoeur: a guide for the perplexed*.

³ The emphasis on a status of in between is alluded to by Ricoeur, but not devel-

not approach its fictional world with an either/or perspective—either this story is true or it is false. In the text, conversely, we encounter a fundamental paradox: a fiction which is not a fiction, a paradox which, for Ricoeur, is grounded in the Aristotelian reciprocity between mimesis, imitation, and poesis, creation. Interpreting *la métaphore vive*'s reciprocity between mimesis and poesis exposes what Ricoeur considers a cognitive function of the imagination. The imagination is crucial to Ricoeur's notion of metaphorical discourse, because it is the faculty through which one comes to believe in and enters into an intermediary region of meaning, thereby enacting what he refers to as an ontological index of metaphor. Through an ontology implicit in *la métaphore vive*, he conceptualizes how the intermediary region between truth and fiction transcribes itself into a region between being and non-being, a region which extends a text's literary reference to an existential reference.

Before discussing the tensional theory of metaphor, which is the foundation of *la métaphore vive*'s in-between status and ontological bearing, I must clarify what is implied by Ricoeur's and my use of the term metaphor. It does not refer to the Ciceronian concept of metaphor: an isolated figure intended to embellish language through a substitution of terms, a function with which studies of rhetoric often equate it.⁴ Ricoeur grounds his notion of metaphor in Aristotle's discussion of its enabling us to see that which otherwise we might not see.⁵ For Ricoeur, what a reader sees in metaphorical discourse is a multi-dimensional innovation of meaning that "brings to language aspects, qualities, and values of reality that lack access to language that is directly descriptive and that can be spoken only by means of the complex interplay between the metaphorical utterance and the rule-governed transgression of the usual meanings of our words" (Ricoeur 1983, xi). *La métaphore vive* is not a neutral figure of language that substitutes one word or phrase for another. This would be a substitution theory of metaphor, which grants no innovative quality to discourse and is therefore "incompatible with

oped as explicitly as it will be here. His terminology refers more to an intersection of semantic fields, which I articulate as the region of the in between.

⁴ For Cicero's discussion of metaphor as *similitudo*, a figure of similitude or of resemblance whose primary function is to embellish a rhetorical style see Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.39.

⁵ See Ricoeur, "Between rhetoric and poetics: Aristotle" in *The Rule of Metaphor*.

⁶ Rather than focus on an innovation of meaning in the mimetic creation that is metaphorical discourse, the substitution theory limits metaphor to a nominal level by considering it a deviation of meaning through naming. The tensional theory holds that "the fact that the metaphorical term is borrowed from an alien domain does not imply that it substitutes for an ordinary word which one could have found in the same place." Ricoeur, 19. For the substitution the-

the tensional theory."⁶ In bringing to life aspects of reality that escape the confines of descriptive language, metaphorical discourse is innovative, because it is dependent upon the transgression of the rule-governed system of discursive language. Be it configured through a phrase, poem, or work of prose, the linguistically structured world is one which establishes a means of perceiving reality from a new and 'living' perspective. Proust's *Recherche* exemplifies why the discourse which enacts this perspective is, for Ricoeur, 'living':

En somme, cet art si compliqué est justement le seul art vivant. Seul il exprime pour les autres et nous fait voir à nous-même notre propre vie, cette vie qui ne peut pas s'<observer> ... Ce travail qu'avaient fait notre amour-propre, notre passion, notre esprit d'imitation, notre intelligence abstraite, nos habitudes, c'est ce travail que l'art défera, c'est la marche en sens contraire, le retour aux profondeurs où ce qui a existé réellement gît inconnu de nous, qu'il nous fera suivre.

In short, this art which is so complicated is in fact the only living art. It alone expresses for others and renders visible to ourselves that life of ours which cannot effectually observe...Our vanity, our passions, our spirit of imitation, our abstract intelligence, our habits have long been at work, and it is the task of art to undo this work of theirs, making us travel back in the direction from which we have come to the depths where what has really existed lies unknown within us. (Proust 254-5)

Metaphorical language opens a new dimension of reality and allows us to see between the dichotomy of truth and fiction. As an *art vivant*, the defining character of *la métaphore vive*'s intermediary status is expressed in Ricoeur's claim that poetry's mimetic function is never limited to a pure copying of reality. He insists that in the *Poetics*, poiesis' use of mimesis involves more than imitation. It points to an inherent tension between imitation and creation as mimesis marks a "submission to reality—to human action—and the creative action which is poetry as such." By representing what occurs in human action and supplementing that representation with creative imagination, mimesis always reciprocates poiesis. Ricoeur writes:

If *mimesis* involves an initial reference to reality, this reference signifies nothing other than the very rule of nature over all production. But the creative dimension is inseparable from this referential movement. *Mimesis* is *poiesis*, and *poiesis* is *mimesis*. A dominant theme in the present research, this paradox is of the utmost import; and it was anti-

one could have found in the same place." Ricoeur, 19. For the substitution theory one word is always interchangeable with another, and thus meaning itself is never dependent on the here and now status of discourse that, according to Ricoeur, is a founding parameter of metaphor.

pated by Aristotle's *mimesis*, which holds together this closeness to human reality and the far-ranging flight of fable making. ... This paradox cannot but concern the theory of metaphor. (Ricoeur 39)

Metaphor's paradox is the conceptual basis of literature itself. Ricoeur's interpretation of Aristotle proves novel, because he does not seek to formulate an isolated study of rhetoric or a literary theory, but his task is to link the creative imitation to ontology. The creative function of *mimesis* is incorporated into a theory of metaphor that seeks to highlight the philosophical implications of that function by unveiling the "ontological index" of metaphorical truth: "To apprehend or perceive, to contemplate, to see similarity—such is metaphor's genius-stroke, which marks the poet, naturally enough, but also the philosopher. And this is what remains to be discussed in a theory of metaphor that will conjoin poetics and ontology" (Ricoeur 27).

To clarify his interpretation of the relational interplay of *mimesis* and *poiesis*, Ricoeur incorporates a narrative's disclosure of plot, the role of *muthos*, into the metaphoric function. He writes that poetry:

teaches us to 'see' human life 'as' that which the *muthos* displays. In other words, *mimesis* constitutes the 'denotative' dimension of *muthos*. ... the *muthos* takes the form of a 'story' and the metaphoricity is attached to the plot of the tale, and because, on the other hand, the referent consists in human action which, due to its motivational course, has a certain affinity to the structure of the story. The conjunction of *muthos* and *mimesis* is the work of all poetry. (Ricoeur 245)

As the French title of one of his works, *Temps et Recit*, suggests, it is in the *recit*, in the enunciation through which a mimetic creation reconfigures a world, that the reciprocity between *mimesis* and *poiesis* actualizes a redescription of the world. With this conjunction of *mimesis* and *muthos* as the work of all poetry, poetics, for Ricoeur, comes to include any form of discourse that simultaneously represents and creates. The world depicted by 'plot' is not a stagnant rule-governed world, but a 'living world,' a notion Ricoeur takes from Aristotle's phrase, *muthos phuseôs*:

the concept of *mimêsis* serves as an index of the discourse situation; it reminds us that no discourse ever suspends our belonging to a world. All *mimêsis*, even creative, -nay, especially creative—*mimêsis*, takes place within the horizons of a being-in-the-world which it makes present to the precise extent that the *mimêsis* raises it to the level of *muthos*. The truth of imagination, poetry's power to make contact with being as such, this is what I personally see in Aristotle's *mimêsis*. ... This is the function of the concept of *phusis* in the expression *mimêsis phuseôs*, to serve as an index for that dimension of reality that does not receive due account in the simple description of that-thing-over-there. (Ricoeur 43)

It is in the presencing of our being-in-the-world that a plot's mimetic quality necessitates a creative act of poesis. The outcome of this reciprocity, which Ricoeur argues is characteristic of metaphorical discourse's very structure, is that poetic language is bound to life. The experiences it configures are always "within the horizons of a being-in-the-world." Yet, if poetry is bound by its task to redescribe life, it is also unrestricted, unbound in its capacity to represent infinite possibilities of being. The world it describes can incorporate various modes of being, presenting an open matrix which our finite or limited perspectives often prevent us from perceiving.

Given its intermediary status, "metaphorical truth" is not cast into a dichotomized stance through which the *recit* is either 'real' or 'unreal,' bound or unbound.' As a manifestation of a region in between, it depicts what was, is, and could be. To take a text intimately concerned with the play between mimesis and poesis, Dante's *Commedia*, for example, enacts this non dichotomized status: in hell, purgatory and paradise perspective shifts between a fictional historical account of what was, is, and will be and through the pilgrim's experience in all three we learn what could be. The 'truth' of Dante's poem is not one imaginative variation of reality or the other, but the relational interplay of these various modalities as we and the pilgrim enter the composite discourse of history and fiction, of mimesis and poesis, accessed in a *muthos phuseôs*, the living enunciation of the journey of *nostra vita*.

The paradoxical nature of poetic language suggests that the relation between mimesis and poesis is indicative of an inherent tension within metaphorical meaning and within a reader's apprehension of that meaning. For, if every redescription implies a new or different perception of being-in-the-world, then the readers' cognitive acceptance of this supposed world is destined to be in conflict with the standards that comprise traditional and discursive notions of reality. As seen in the above passage, Ricoeur, following Aristotle, describes metaphorical discourse as the bringing together of two independent contexts into one new context. The *Commedia's* poetics illustrate this point as well. The silent sun we encounter in the poem's first canto involves the conjoining of a preconceived notion of the sun, both its scientific and culturally symbolic nuances, with the literal and figurative connotations of silence. (Dante *Inf.* I:60) In this composite context there arises a new configuration of being—the pilgrim's desperation upon feeling overwhelmed by his disproportioned self, the feeling of living in a state where the sun is silent. Yet, how can we literally accept that the sun speaks or even that the soul of Virgil, a dead poet, takes Dante on a journey through hell, purgatory and paradise? The truth claim lives in a tension between a literal reading's rejection of it and a figurative reading's acceptance of it.

This play between literal and figurative meanings is summarized by what Richard Beardseley's terms the "logical absurdity" of metaphor: "what is new here is the stress put on the notion of 'logically empty attributions' and—especially among all the possible forms of such attributions—on incompatibility, that is, on 'self-contradictory attribution,' attribution which cancels itself out" (Ricoeur 95). This self-contradiction internal to the very structure of the metaphorical claim "forces the reader to extract from the complete context of connotations the secondary meanings capable of making a 'meaningful self-contradictory attribution' from a self-contradictory statement" (Ricoeur 95). If the metaphorical discourse is to make sense to those who encounter it, then its self-contradiction, the literal meaning, must be held in suspense so that a non-literal mode of perception, what is often referred to as figural meaning, can make sense of the absurd claim. We must allow ourselves to believe that the sun can speak and that a man can journey through the afterworld accompanied by the soul of a dead poet. In assuming such belief, the literal contradiction is not thought of as a proper meaning, but merely the preconceived notion of reality which now confronts a variation of that reality. For lack of a better term, this variation is labeled as 'figurative.' It arises in opposition to the literal reading, but meaning itself does not remain dichotomized. It becomes a potential mode of being that we must learn to see as possible by reason of its logical absurdity. Ricoeur writes:

'Figurative meaning' is then not a deviant meaning of words, but that meaning of a statement as a whole that arises from the attribution of connotative values of the modifier to the principal subject. Consequently, if a 'figurative meaning of words' is still to be spoken of, it can only concern meanings that are wholly contextual, 'emergent meaning' that exists only here and now. (Ricoeur 96)

If the figurative meaning loses its connotation as 'deviant,' it becomes a possible way of seeing the world created when "various catalogued, lexical meanings" of words intersect with one another and contextually redefine themselves.

Ricoeur writes of the tensional interplay through which new contexts arise: "...metaphor is a semantic event that takes place at the point where several semantic fields intersect...Then, and only then, the metaphorical twist is at once an event and a meaning, an event that means or signifies, an emergent meaning created by language" (Ricoeur 96). The metaphorical twist through which literal meaning is suspended to allow for the emergence of the figurative meaning is Ricoeur's notion of the metaphor's *référence dédoublée*, translated as metaphor's "split reference." However, one must not be misled by the English translation's suggestion of a concrete "splitting," because it would sug-

gest a polarity of meaning rather than a tensional interplay. The literal and figurative sense are opposed to one another, but the metaphorical meaning exists in the dialectical space between the real and unreal, in the action of the "dédoublée" which creates a common ground shared by intersecting semantic fields. The readers' entrance into this common ground is what allows them to nourish belief in this new perception of being, accepting the product of the commerce of contexts. For Ricoeur, however, when dealing with the metaphorical truth claim, belief in that claim requires the imagination. Ricoeur asserts that it is "the truth of imagination" that is "poetry's power to make contact with being as such" (Ricoeur 43).

The imagination proves critical to *La Métaphore Vive*, because it is that which prevents against a dichotomizing of meaning into categories of true and false. For Ricoeur, the imagination is the region of thought in which figurative meaning can be accepted in and of itself as metaphorically true, a "realistic intention that belongs to the redescriptive power of poetic language" (Ricoeur 247). Without the mediating role of imagination, reason would deny belief in statements whose logic is absurd. We would be forced to adapt the 'proper' meanings of language and all verbal expression would then be limited to speculative and literal uses, preventing access to the non-discursive modes of our belonging that we endeavor to discover in poetry. Accordingly, Ricoeur writes of the imagination: "the iconic character of resemblance must be reformulated such that imagination becomes itself a properly semantic moment of the metaphorical statement" (Ricoeur 194). If the paradoxical relation between poiesis and mimesis is to be seen as illuminative, the imagination becomes that which converts the paradox into a logical absurdity so that rather than limit meaning to a polarity of true and false significations, a new field is envisioned within which truth and fiction converse and converge, creatively redescribing the world.

To develop the mediating function of the imagination, Ricoeur appropriates the Kantian distinction between the productive imagination's creation of a conceptual schema and the reproductive imagination's formulation of an image.⁷ Kant distinguishes between the two: "The schema is in itself always only a product of the imagination; but since the synthesis of the latter has as its aim no individual intuition but rather only the unity in the determination of sensibility, the schema is to be distinguished from an image" (Kant B179). An image is based in experience, whereas the schema, like Kant's transcendental imagina-

⁷ For Kant, the productive imagination rests on the a priori synthesis through which one arrives at a schema of a concept of understanding whereas the reproductive imagination rests on conditions of experience and intuition. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A118.

tion, establishes a synthesis which pure understanding requires and profits from, even though Kant affirms that the concrete basis of that synthesis is itself a black spot in a luminous vision, "a blind though indispensable function of the soul" which we cannot conceptually grasp (Kant A78).

Ricoeur builds upon the Kantian model of the schematizing imagination to move closer to what he considers a "phenomenology of imagination" enacted in and through metaphorical discourse. In Ricoeur's model, the Kantian distinction between schema and image is rearticulated in terms of the verbal and the non-verbal. The verbal is the linguistic network that is the structure of metaphorical discourse while its counterpart, the non-verbal, is the "imagery understood in the quasi-visual, quasi-auditory, quasi-tactile, quasi-olfactory sense." Just as explanation and understanding occurred through recognition that the linguistic structure points toward the extra-linguistic reference which transcends that structure on the level of figurativization, so does the imagery of the non-verbal dimension arise from and transcend the metaphorical network's verbal structure:

Accordingly, metaphor is established as the schematism in which the metaphorical attribution is produced. This schematism turns imagination into the place where the figurative meaning emerges in the interplay of identity and difference. And metaphor is that place in discourse where this schematism is visible, because the identity and the difference do not melt together but confront each other. (Ricoeur 199)

Ricoeur remains tied to Kant in that metaphorical discourse is first a verbal configuration, an imagined schema; however, for Ricoeur that schema necessarily becomes a non-verbalized depiction of reality that cannot be adequately captured by discursive language. The shift from the verbal to the non-verbal is necessary, because, as Kearney writes, "without any visual aspect, the verbal imagination would remain an invisible productivity" (Kearney 51). When the imagination releases the imagery of the poem, which is to say that it opens the tensional space in between truth and fiction, readers perceive not only a schema, a network of phrases from which one builds a concept, but they receive an image of a world, an variation of reality that is both true and imagined.

Ricoeur finds it necessary to expand upon the Kantian model of the imagination, because, he argues, the schematism is not in itself enough to bring an individual toward self-consciousness. It yields an objectified "schematism of analogy," a verbal formula from which to construct a conceptual understanding of supersensible phenomena, but for Kant, in no way does one "infer by analogy that what pertains to the sensible must also be attributed to the supersensible" (Kant 1996, 6.66). The

schema offers no concrete understanding of the experiences that exceed the confines of ordinary language and vision. In this sense, the schematism of analogy functions more like a substitution of terms that schematizes a concept in order to make it more accessible to an intellect not capable of grasping the concept in itself. Such an innate grasping without the need for the schema remains, however, the Kantian ideal. For Ricoeur, conversely, *la métaphore vive* is not an analogy. Logic can never replace what is envisioned by metaphorical discourse. Its meaning lives in the space between truth and fiction and the image it yields cannot be equivocally replaced by a concept or by another verbal expression. For Ricoeur, although the schema from which that non-verbal dimension originates is first imagined by the author, it is not a mere theorization translated into an analogous form of language as it is for Kant. The poetic schema draws from experience in the world as it reconfigures the world in non-discursive language. Then, a discourse between the reader and the world of the text, the autonomous non-verbal imagery configured by the verbal structure, enacts the hermeneutics of a self through which self-understanding and self-consciousness occur. We read in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*:

In contrast to the tradition of the *cogito* and to the pretension of the subject to know itself by immediate intuition, it must be said that we understand ourselves only by the long detour of the signs of humanity deposited in cultural works. What would we know of love and hate, of moral feelings, and in general, of all that we call the *self* if these had not been brought to language and articulated by literature? Thus what seems most contrary to subjectivity, and what structural analysis discloses as the texture of the text, is the very *medium* within which we can understand ourselves. (Ricoeur 143)

The imagination becomes that which allows us to interact with the signs of humanity deposited in cultural works.

Ricoeur's movement toward a phenomenology of imagination begins to extend *la métaphore vive's* significance to an engagement of "the existential project considered as whole." Ricoeur writes:

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As the schematism gives way to its non-verbal form, in metaphorical discourse there manifests a world in which identity and difference confront each other. Identity being an objective degree of character ana-

lyzed through the "archeology" or hermeneutic of the subject while difference, the counterpart to identity, is the subjective apprehension of that identity, constantly and indefinitely transcended as understanding shifts through the on-going interpretive process of self-discovery.⁸ In *la métaphore vive*, these polarized relations are allowed to confront each other within the place where their interplay is visible. Most importantly, Ricoeur emphasizes that in the space of mimetic creation the conversing of identity and difference do not melt together into an indistinguishable mass. They maintain a tensional status so that the reality the readers perceive is neither true nor false, neither completely alienated nor wholly assimilated, but both as *la métaphore vive* becomes the resolution of the enigmatic and paradoxical play between the real and the unreal: "Metaphorical meaning, as we saw, is not the enigma itself, the semantic clash pure and simple, but the solution of the enigma, the inauguration of the new semantic pertinence. ...Metaphorical meaning as such feeds on the density of imagery released by the poem" (Ricoeur 215). Ricoeur articulates this solution to the enigma of a semantic clash as a "seeing-as." We are not forced into the dichotomous view through which Dante is either a historical man/poet or a fictional character in a journey through the afterworld. He is allowed to be both. In a dialectical space between truth and fiction we see him *as* a poet and *as* a pilgrim. As we read and enter into the imagined space, the non-verbal world, we begin to see reality as the world of the text depicts it. By interpreting and appropriating this world, what was "a new being in language becomes an 'increment to consciousness,' or better, a 'growth of being'" (Ricoeur 215).

Ricoeur's work in hermeneutics is fundamental to his work on metaphor, because through it he concludes that the poetic text's meaning is not fulfilled until its world is appropriated into the reader's perspective such that through a dialectic of explanation, objective analysis of text, and understanding, subjective appropriation of the world exposed through analysis, I the reader step away from myself in order to return to myself by reflecting upon my relation to the world of the text. His hermeneutic model extends to the metaphorical space between truth and fiction. If the textual world encountered is a presentation of a dimension of reality that I have the potential to experience but cannot explain in "ordinary language," then I begin to gain insight into the

⁸ Ricoeur's work *Oneself as Another* more fully develops this dialectic of identity and difference, where identity is referred to as *idem*, the sameness of character, while difference is identified as *ipse*, the fluxuating and growing notions of selfhood that counter identity's sameness: "...I shall henceforth take sameness as synonymous with *idem*-identity and shall oppose to it selfhood (*ipseity*), understood as *ipse*-identity" (Ricoeur, 3).

dimensions of being that exist but exceed the confines of ordinary vision and thought: "Therefore we must reserve the possibility that metaphor is not limited to suspending natural reality, but that in opening meaning up on the imaginative side it also opens it towards a dimension of reality that does not coincide with what ordinary language envisages under the name of natural reality" (Ricoeur 211). The text becomes the medium within which we can understand ourselves, specifically because it is the place in which the interplay of identity and difference, of belonging and alienation, becomes visible such that we learn to see and interpret the cultural matrix to which we belong.

It is in pursuit of discovering the ontological implications of metaphor that Ricoeur's *La Métaphore Vive* is directed. It is not within the scope of this article to investigate fully these implications; however, I will explore *why* perceiving this region opened up by the split reference can potentially allow us to grasp an existential import. Accordingly, I follow Ricoeur in his study of metaphorical discourse's ontological index as he transposes the tensions between literal and figurative meanings, between truth and fiction, and between imitation and creation into a tension between states of being: between an *is* and *is-not* of reality itself.

Ricoeur cites Jakobson's reference to the Majorca storytellers to exemplify metaphorical truth's status between being and non-being. The Majorca claim of their stories, "*Aixo era y no era*" (it was and it was not). This paradoxical twist of a happening which is not happening, for Ricoeur, "contains in nuce all that can be said about metaphorical truth." It brings about the question: "does not the tension that affects the copula in its relational function also affect the copula in its existential function? This question contains the key to the notion of *metaphorical truth*" (Ricoeur 224;248).

Ricoeur's focus on the existential function of metaphorical discourse enacts a shift from a semantics of textual meaning, the tension that affects the copula in its relational or structural function, to disclosing ontological bearing, to the semantics of being. Every figurative claim that a state of being "*is*" so and so is read against an implicit countering "*is not*." Ricoeur writes: "In order to elucidate this tension deep within the logical force of the verb to be, we must expose an '*is not*' itself implied in the impossibility of the literal interpretation, yet present as a filigree in the metaphorical *is*. Thus the tension would prevail between an '*is*' and '*is not*,' this tension would not be marked grammatically..." (Ricoeur 248). This tension extends an ontological index to metaphorical discourse, because it brings into question the very nature of the reality in which we live. For, metaphorical discourse avoids dichotomizing itself between truth and fiction; therefore, when reading

or listening to a *recit*, we do not have to choose if the experience depicted is or is not real. We have to enter the dialectical space in which the experience is both, a task that is much more challenging, because it demands that we set aside the ordinary perception and habits through which we judge the world in predetermined categories of real and unreal. Ricoeur's demand in *La métaphore vive*, namely that ordinary perception be suspended so that we may discover a new spectrum of reality, reveals why Ricoeur argues that we are not interpreting only verbal constructs, but non-verbal references to new modes of being. What we gain from metaphorical discourse is perception of a tensional interplay between being and non-being that returns us to the relationship between mimesis and poiesis, however, now, our understanding of the creative imitation occurs on the level of feeling.

Ricoeur writes: "The paradox of the poetic can be summed up entirely in this, that the elevation of feeling to fiction is the condition of its mimetic use. Only a feeling transformed into myth can open and discover the world" (Ricoeur 245). Mimesis is no longer confined to the redescription of historical events and cultural myths, but it is the representation of living feeling in and through the mediation of poetic creation. This existential index of mimesis explains why Ricoeur terms the manifestation of feeling as metaphor's "ontological vehemence" (*la véhémence ontologique*). In the discourse's space between being and non-being one encounters a voice vehement in the expression it gives to the felt experiences that escape ordinary language and vision. "Feeling" however, does not refer to a purely subjective state, but to "a way of being rooted in reality" offered by the text.

To discuss feeling as that which metaphorical discourse allows us to perceive, Ricoeur embraces Frye's idea of a text's "mood," because it points to the ontological vehemence he considers inherent in the life of metaphorical discourse. He writes: "Northrop Frye is close to the truth when he says the structure of a poem articulates a 'mood,' an affective value. However, this 'mood' is quite a bit more than a subjective emotion. It is a way of being rooted in reality; it is an ontological index. With it the referent returns, but in a radically new sense in comparison to ordinary language" (Ricoeur 148). The existential implication of 'feeling' or 'mood' does not suggest a purely subjective and therefore non-critical status of poetic meaning, a connotation which the term 'feeling' might invoke. The emotive quality of metaphor maintains an intermediary stance, because its depiction of our belonging participates in both objectivity and subjectivity. Ricoeur adds to the notion of mood: "Under the name of mood, an extra-linguistic factor is introduced which is the index of a manner of being (on condition that it is not treated psychologically). A mood or 'state of soul' is a way of finding or sensing one-

self in the midst of reality. It is, in the language of Heidegger, a way of finding oneself among things" (Ricoeur 229). As an index of a manner of being, the mood of poetic discourse is not a poet's recapturing of a past psychological state that we endeavor to 'understand better than the author understood himself.' The belief of the father of modern hermeneutics, Schleiermacher. See Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, 47. This would be a historicist approach to metaphor. The mood is initially created by the poet, but afterwards the text becomes autonomous. Its tensional structure configures a creative representation of how one "finds oneself in the midst of reality": "This is why the phenomenological objectivity of what commonly is called emotion or feeling is inseparable from the tensional structure of the truth of metaphorical statements that express the construction of the world by and with feeling" (Ricoeur 255).

Ricoeur's insistence that an aesthetically mediated mood or feeling does not imply a psychological state, but an objectifiable glimpse of being-in-the-world is comparable to his insisting that interpretation ground itself in critical explanation so that understanding is not eclipsed by subjective prejudice. An apprehension of meaning, be it of a poetic redescription or of a historical account, is always the outcome of a dialectic between objectivity and subjectivity. Once we as readers interpret the world presented in the poetic schemata, we decide for ourselves if that non-verbal and non-discursive phenomenon resonates with our own notions of lived experience. Poetry is not meant to enforce truth, but to help us discover it within ourselves. Accordingly, the schematism necessarily gives way to the non-verbal dimension in which a tensional pull between being and non-being reveals to us a possibility of our own inner life. Given this intermediary status, metaphorical truth remains a "semantic sketch" produced in the intersection of various semantic fields. He writes:

This ontological vehemence cuts meaning from its initial anchor, frees it as the form of a movement and transposes it to a new field to which the new meaning can give form by means of its own figurative property. But in order to declare itself this ontological vehemence makes use of mere hints of meaning, which are in no way determinations of meaning. An experience seeks to be expressed, which is more than something undergone. Its anticipated sense finds in the dynamism of simple meaning, relayed by the dynamism of split meaning, a *sketch* that now must be reconciled with the requirements of the concept. (Ricoeur 300)

Ricoeur concludes that if metaphor is to assist on a journey of self-discovery, the reader must do more than enter into the region of the in between. Through what might be called a hermeneutics of *la métaphore*

vive, the affective plane on which meaning manifests itself must be converted to the cognitive plane, which alone can enable us to acquire a 'conceptual gain.'

Ricoeur writes: "It falls to speculative discourse to articulate with its own resources, what is assumed spontaneously by the storyteller who, according to Roman Jakobson, 'marks' the poetic intention of his tales by saying 'Aixo era y non era'" (Ricoeur 256). What is "assumed spontaneously by the storyteller" I argue, and, although not as immediately by the reader, is the acceptance of the space between being and non-being, the space in which imagination works in conjunction with the affective modality to produce new ways of seeing the world in the story at hand:

If metaphor adds nothing to the description of the world, at least it adds to the ways in which we perceive; and this is the poetic function of metaphor. This still rests upon resemblance, but at the level of feelings. In symbolizing one situation by means of another, metaphor 'infuses' the feelings attached to the symbolizing situation into the heart of the situation that is symbolized. In this 'transference of feelings,' the similarity between feelings is induced by the resemblance of situations. In its poetic function, therefore, metaphor extends the power of double meaning from the cognitive realm to the affective. (Ricoeur 190)

Through metaphorical discourse, one engages a semantic innovation that presents a symbolizing situation: the level of figurativization whose non-verbally configured expression of feeling speaks of inner structures of life. The question now becomes: what occurs when we reflect on the story, when we bring the poetic dimension of meaning into the cognitive plane's speculative dimension in order to achieve a conceptual gain? For, once the poem is brought to the level of explanation and understanding, we as readers leave the poetic dimension and its tensional interplay of poesis and mimesis that extends fiction to feeling. We return to the plane of discursive language in attempt to articulate and understand what has been sketched. *La Métaphore Vive* pursues this notion of the conceptual gain produced by the interpretation of the mimetic creation through its last study's examination of what Ricoeur considers a composite discourse of poetical and philosophical language. It will be the task of future research to extend this article's focus on metaphor's tensional paradox between being and non-being to the composite discourse discussed in *La Métaphore Vive's* final chapter. In doing so, we create a path upon which to redirect *La Métaphore Vive* back to Ricoeur's earlier existential work in the philosophy of the will, a path which has yet to be taken. If we do so, we allow the in between status of poetic discourse to illuminate what he considered an inherent-

ly disproportioned and intermediary status of being. Moreover, we move closer to the poetics of freedom that Ricoeur anticipated through the mimetic creations of *la métaphore vive* as they reveal us to ourselves in existential concreteness and totality.

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