PAUL RICOEUR'S METAPHORIC PROCESS AS THE *KHŌRA* OF THE *TIMAEUS*

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~It is impossible to talk about metaphor non-metaphorically …
the definition of metaphor returns on itself~
Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*[1]

ABSTRACT: In this paper, I offer a comparative study of Paul Ricoeur's analyses of metaphor and the role of the khōra in Plato's Timaeus. My goal is twofold. First, I show that both metaphors and the khōra play a role in the structuration of the world and the possibility of its knowability. This role is much more significant than a merely ornamental or residual or subsidiary function. Second, I argue for a reading of Ricoeur and of Plato on which Ricoeur's metaphorical process and the work of the khōra are closely aligned. The result is that I both offer a new view of the khōra and also explain how and why, on my view, the khōra already contains structural elements of the metaphorical process that Ricoeur works out.

KEYWORDS: Cognition; Metaphor studies; Imagination; Mimesis; Aristotle; Hermeneutics

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I offer a comparative study of Paul Ricoeur's analyses of metaphor and the role of the *khōra* in Plato's *Timaeus*. My goal is twofold. First, I show that both metaphors and the *khōra* play a role in the structuration of the world and

[1] *The Rule of Metaphor: Creation of Meaning in Language*. Costello, J., Czerny, R. and McLaughlin, K. trans. (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 18-19. Hereafter, *The Rule of Metaphor.*

the possibility of its knowability. This role is much more significant than a merely ornamental or residual or subsidiary function. Second, I argue for a reading of Ricoeur and of Plato on which Ricoeur's metaphorical process and the work of the *khōra* are closely aligned. The result is that I both offer a new view of the *khōra* and also explain how and why, on my view, the *khōra* already contains structural elements of the metaphorical process that Ricoeur works out. In his analysis of the *Timaeus*, Ricoeur downplays the role of the *khōra* and focuses on the ideality of "Plato's God" (which, on Ricoeur's presentation, is hardly a demiurgic and is more of a Christian god). Thus, Ricoeur fails to notice the structural affinity between the role of the *khōra* in Plato's *Timaeus* and the work of the metaphor.[2] The reason why it would have been important for Ricoeur to align the two is twofold. First, if Ricoeur were to investigate the space-making, transpositional and transformational, as well as movement-generative power of the *khōra*, then his own theory of metaphor would have been responsive both to Aristotle (with whom Ricoeur is in conversation on the question of metaphor) and to Plato, and thus, more thoroughgoing in its insights into the ancient sources. The second reason is that his reading of the *Timaeus* is likely to have been repositioned in favor of a less monotheistic and Christianized take on the ancient Greek – emphatically pre-Christian – text. It, therefore, would have been more in step with the ancient Greek sensibility and less anachronistic.[3]

The metaphorical process—in its affinity with the very process or the unfolding of life—holds in a productive tension, thereby bringing together and

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[2] Ricoeur's analyses of the *Timaeus* appear in *Being, Essence and Substance in Plato and Aristotle*. Pellauer, D. and Starkey, J. trans. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013). Hereafter, *Being, Essence and Substance.*

[3] I do not deny the tradition of interpretation of Plato's dialogues as proto-Chrisitan, but I do not agree with this approach. An unfolded presentation of the many reasons why Christian readings of the dialogues are in many ways amiss, is beyond the scope of this paper. It is however important to note that Ricoeur, himself, wanted to see a re-examination of Christian faith. As Kearney writes, Ricoeur's was "suggesting that an atheistic purging of the negative and life-denying components of religion needs to be taken on board if a genuine form of faith is to emerge in our secular culture." See Kearney's, "Returning to God After God: Levinas, Derrida, Ricoeur," *Research in Phenomenology* 39 (2) (2009): 167-183), 172. However, this sceptical attitude did not suffice to reposition Ricoeur's reading of the *Timaeus* in favor of seeing how the demiurge need not be possessed of the kind of power that creates the *khōra* and superimposes itself over and above it. That Ricoeur takes the demiurge to be "Plato's God" is clear from his remarks on page 109 in *Being, Essence and Substance.* Moreover, that Ricoeur attributes to this god and his (Ricoeur's pronoun) work not a mythical, but a "philosophical explanation" is apparent from his discussion on pages 105-106. However, see a quotation from Seth Benardete in fn. 56 of this paper, which offers reasons to question Ricoeur's outright denial of a mythological (Ricoeur's language) or fantastical grounding to the excurses on the demiurge and the work that this divinity accomplishes.

unifying the reason and the senses; immateriality and physicality; language and images; non-sense and sense-making; that which is already understood and the creation of new meanings. In this unifying and transformative role, metaphors align with the work of Plato's *khōra*. The latter serves as the ground of the union between the orders of being and becoming; reason and sense; ideal and material worlds; orders of Finality and Necessity; ideal image or paradigm and imitations thereof; as well as lack of sense and the arrival of intelligibility.

A further, and perhaps the most radical affinity shared by the metaphor and the *khōra*, has to do with the fact that both have an ontological dimension and function. I argue against the tradition (to which Ricoeur himself belongs) that sees the *khōra* as subservient to and not on an equal footing with being and show that it is meant as equiprimordial with the order of being. This must be the case in order for the *khōra* to make possible the unification of the orders of Finality and Necessity; of the Mind and the sensible world; as well as of ideality of being with the flux of becoming. Likewise, metaphors, as Richard Kearney's and Douglas McGaughey's interpretation of Ricoeur recommends, exhibit an ontological dimension and a world-revealing or even world-creating function. Both the metaphorical process and the *khōra*, then, have a creative dimension from which arise originary beings and meanings.

Ricoeur's main classical interlocutor on the subject of the metaphorical process is Aristotle. For context, I will elucidate Aristotle's insights into metaphor's capacity to unite disparate ideas and facilitate the emergence of new meaningful cognitive associations and configurations. In order to articulate the deeper strata of metaphoric function, I will retrace historic thinking about metaphor to Plato. Specifically, I will engage with Ricoeur's take on the role of the *khōra* (χώρα)[4] in Plato's Timaeus and argue that the basic structure of the world- and sense-formative process that Ricoeur calls: "metaphorical process"[5] is already indicated in Plato's Timaeus as the work of the *khōra*. Ricoeur's reliance on the monotheistic paradigm in his interpretation of the Timaeus skews his view of the *khōra*, placing it as subsidiary or secondary to the world-originating power of

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[4] I will leave this term untranslated to avoid imposing preconceived ideas on the reader's view of this central element of the *Timaeus*. However, I will give elucidations of the *khōra* in Sections III and IV of this paper.

[5] "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling." *Critical Inquiry*. 5(1): 143-159. Hereafter, "The Metaphorical Process."

God. In my analysis, I situate the *khōra* not in a secondary, but in an essential position. Interpreting the *khōra* as a metaphorical process, I will argue that it carries equal order of priority with the orders of finality (what Ricoeur identifies with the causal nexus of God's power) and the order of necessity (operative in the finite world of existent beings).

In Section II of this paper, I present a discussion of Ricoeur's view of metaphor emphasizing Ricoeur's indebtedness to Aristotle. I also prepare the ground for the comparison with the *khōra* by explaining how it is the case that metaphorical process already entails a world-disclosive and an ontological dimension.[6] In Section III, I offer my analysis of the *khōra* and then lay out Ricoeur's reading of the Timaeus. I argue that, at the speculative level, the *khōra* serves to indicate exactly the kind of metaphoric movement, or as Ricoeur would have it, metaphorical process that relates utterly disparate elements (e.g., final and necessary orders; mind and sense; ideality and materiality; etc.). These elements have to be brought together and united both for the world and for an aware consciousness of the world to emerge. I conclude by offering evidence that reinforces the idea that metaphor, for Ricoeur, serves the same unifying, sense-generative and world-disclosive role as does the *khōra* in Plato.

METAPHOR AS WIDE AS LIFE: THE WORLD-DISCLOSIVE AND WORLD-GROUNDING WORK OF THE METAPHORICAL PROCESS

Ricoeur's *The Rule of Metaphor: The Creation of Meaning in Language* (1977) is an in-depth study of the metaphoric structures and processes.[7] George Steiner

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[6] In the context of the world-disclosive power of metaphor and its sense-making as well as truth-illuminating function, it is instructive to consider Martin Heidegger's analyses of Friedrich Schelling's articulation of the co-primacy and co-primordiality of the manifestation of the world and the possibility of its comprehensibility. Find a succinct analysis of both Heidegger and Schelling on this subject in Marina Marren's "Analysis of Evil in Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* Through Heidegger's Account of Dissemblance and *Αλήθεια*," *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 82.2 (2021): 97-115, esp., 104-107. Hereafter, "Analysis of Evil."
For Heidegger's own analyses of disclosure (*Erschlossenheit*) in relation to the world, see *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1967), esp., 110, 364. For Heidegger's analyses of grounding, see *Der Satz vom Grund* (Clett-Kotta, 2022), esp., 212-220.

[7] Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1977, *La Métaphore vive* (Paris, France: Éditions du Seuil, 1975. Ricoeur speaks about "live metaphor" in contradistinction to the dead metaphors, which Mary Gerhart describes as those "figures [that are] so well known that they have become clichés or parts of the lexicon" ("The Live Metaphor," *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*. Hahn, E. L. ed. Chicago, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1995), 215 – 232, 217.

remarks about the book that it offers "an attempt to bring into collaborative congruence the Anglo-American tradition of linguistic philosophy and poetics…with the main axes of French linguistic and structural thought. The attempted conjunction leads, in turn, towards the German hermeneutic synthesis."[8] To some extent, and especially in the concluding sections, Ricoeur's thinking about metaphor not only explicates its work as a unifying element that weaves together the semantic and the sense-related or the linguistic and the imagistic elements of the subject's interaction with the world, but metaphor also and perhaps surprisingly insinuates itself into the very structure of living beings as such. Ricoeur shows how this might be the case when he comments on Coleridge:

> In a mélange of non-philosophy and Schellingian philosophy, Coleridge proclaims the quasi-vegetal power of imagination, concentrated in the symbol, to draw us to the growth of things: 'While it enunciates the whole, [a symbol] abides itself as a living part of that unity of which it is the representative.'… Thus, metaphor accomplishes an exchange between poet and world, thanks to which individual life and universal life grow together. In this way, the growth of plants becomes the metaphor for metaphorical truth, being itself 'a symbol established in the truth of things' (Coleridge in Richards 111). Just as the plant metaphor and reference reaches towards the light and into the earth and draws its growth from them, and just as 'it becomes the visible organismus of the whole silent or elementary life of nature and therefore, in incorporating the one extreme becomes the symbol of the other; the natural symbol of that higher life of reason' (ibid.), so too the poetic verb enjoins us to participate in the totality of things via an 'open communion.'[9]

In this rather poetic discussion, Ricoeur agrees with Coleridge that metaphors have the capacity to stand-in-for or function in a way that is similar to a vital process. The concentrated life of a future (fully developed) organism empowers the growth and development of a seedling into a mature plant. In their function as symbols, metaphors contain a saturated form of what can then be unfolded into an entire play of discursive meanings. Metaphors as symbols unfold into a wider, more comprehensive articulation of ideas in the self-same way that a plant grows out of or is displayed and articulated in its development from its seed. Ricoeur then goes on to insist that as a whole/part relationship, metaphor contains – as if in a flash of insight – the entirety of that which eventually gets

[8] "Metaphor on the Move." *Times Literary Supplement* (August 1, 1975), 879.
[9] *The Rule of Metaphor* 295-96.

articulated in a more thoroughgoing manner.

If a metaphor is a good one, then it offers heretofore unrealized insights about the relationship between ideas, beings, or phenomena. As such an insight, which can be further explicated in detail, metaphors not only stand in a holistic relationship to their semantic elements, but also hit on new truths. Since metaphors allow for new relations and meanings to emerge, also the truths that they hit upon are new. Moreover, because metaphors avail the metaphor-maker of poetic truths (those truths that are related symbolically, in a congealed, non-yet fully discursively presented, and not-yet fully analyzed manner), the poet—by means of a metaphoric insight—stands in a special relationship to the world. It is as if the poet catches an instance of the whole of truth-making or hits upon the meaning of the very possibility of truth in inventing or discovering a metaphor (Ricoeur insists on destabilizing the difference between these two, i.e., between "invention" and "discovery").[10]

Metaphor allows the poet a momentous glimpse that shows the multitudinous relations of the elements that make up the whole and that can unfold in various meaningful configurations. The metaphorical process relates and meaningfully interweaves the human consciousness and the world, but it also takes us beyond the limits of existing beings. As such, and as Ricoeur himself says, metaphor stands between Being and non-Being.[11] Metaphorical process unifies the disparate elements or classes, interweaving them in such a way as to facilitate the arrival of a world that presents itself as meaningful for us.

McGaughey (1988) follows Ricoeur and offers a defense of this truth-revealing and ontologically significant function of metaphor against such claims that restrict the metaphorical process to the level of linguistics. McGaughey also protests against making metaphor into "merely [an] ornamentation in language."[12] He contends that metaphor plays a much more significant role in the human world and even in the world as such. "Metaphor and symbol," as McGaughey writes, "both have an 'ontological priority' over other elements of discourse and experience. They 'work' because of the event character of both

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[10] Ibid., 291

[11] Ibid., 362-63

[12] Douglas R. McGaughey, "Ricoeur's Metaphor and Narrative Theories as a Foundation for a Theory of Symbol," *Religious Studies* 24(4) (1988): 415-437, 415.

understanding and experience. Understanding," McGaughey continues to say, "(made possible by the dialectic of belonging and distanciation according to Ricoeur) and experience (made possible by temporality, *dynamis*) have event as their condition of possibility."[13] Comprehensibility and the happening or the experiential unfolding of the world—the possibility of meaning and experience—are both, on McGaughey's interpretation of Ricoeur, part and parcel of the process that unites disparate elements into a holistic unity. The analogic work of metaphor extends both to the understanding and to the comprehensible world, as such. The unity inherent in beings—in living beings that are wholes made up of articulable parts—is the unity that understanding avails itself of when it analogically conjoins the various moments of experience available to it into functioning, organic, meaning-engendering relations of parts. However, understanding remains itself in need of a unifying agent—of something that (as Kant similarly shows)[14] would unite it with the world of sense. Therefore, the analogic, unificatory, and unity-enabling work of metaphor allows original arrangements of beings and meanings to emerge, and it can also lend us an insight into the truth of things.

It may be somewhat strange to think of metaphor in its ontological register, as a process that enables not only the making of new meanings, but that also facilitates the unfolding of the experiential world. However, if we turn things around and say that we have attributed this designation: "metaphor" too narrowly to linguistic events, then we can see how metaphor, in fact, can describe a much larger and deeper field of relations, including those that come onto the scene as the world, experience, and the multiplicity of the various forms of life.[15]

The succinct iteration of the analyses with which Ricoeur presents us in *The Rule of Metaphor* appears in the 1978 essay on "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling."[16] I will rely on this piece to explicate Ricoeur's take on the cognition-related role of the metaphorical process. As he sees it, there are two cognition-structuring aspects that are unique to metaphors,

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[13] Ibid.

[14] See "On the Schematism of the Pure Concepts of Understanding" in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (A137/B176-A147/B187).

[15] Jacques Derrida extends the meaning of metaphor in the direction of generativity or life in "Freud and the Scene of Writing," *Yale French Studies* 48 (1972): 74-117, 114-115. The essay is translated by Jeffrey Mehlman.

[16] "The Metaphorical Process."

i.e., the semantic function of metaphor and its psychological work. These two elements are part and parcel of each other. In other words, metaphor relates the untranslatable semantic structures to images and *feelings*. Thus, linguistic or strictly mental meanings acquire a second (but not subservient nor secondary) meaning in that they are related to our imagination and sensibility. In this way, metaphors do not hover in abstraction, but instead offer insights and reveal new meanings for the world-immersed sensibility of an embodied subject.

On the side of language, the imagistic dimension of metaphor surfaces when speech conjures up appearances; when it makes concrete presentations apparent to our mind. Ricoeur calls this phenomenon the "picturing function."[17] On the side of imagination, which Ricoeur closely aligns with feeling, metaphor is also linguistic because it relates new meanings or it, quite literally, *makes* sense by means of what Ricoeur calls "semantic deviation."[18] Semantic deviation breaks the expected dependence between the logical subject and predicate. However, the result is not non-sense, but a new sense. Instead of breaking down the familiar logic of subjects and predicates and leaving it at that—at non-sense or at the "collapse of literal meaning"[19]—imagination cross-pollinates or relates the semantic fields, which otherwise are distant from each other.[20] We go, then, with Ricoeur from semantic deviation to a substitution play or to "semantic innovation,"[21] which is enabled by creative imagination and the imagistic dimension of metaphors. Semantic innovation is the focus of Kearney's (1988) engagement with Ricoeur's notion of metaphor.

Kearney retraces the ontological and the world-creating or, minimally, world-revealing power of the metaphoric play that leads to semantic innovation. According to him,

> The function of "semantic innovation"—which is most proper to imagination—is therefore, in its most fundamental sense, an ontological event. [According to Ricoeur, the] … innovative power of linguistic imagination is not some "decorative excess or effusion of subjectivity, but the capacity of language to open up new

[17] Ibid., 144.
[18] Ibid., 145.
[19] Ibid., 146.
[20] Cf. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, especially page 88. See, also, David Hall's *Paul Ricoeur and the Poetic Imperative: The Creative Tension Between Love and Justice* (New York, NY: State University of New York, 2007), 146.
[21] *The Rule of Metaphor* 4 ff.

> worlds." The function of imagination in poetry or myth, for example, is defined accordingly as the "disclosure of unprecedented worlds, an opening onto possible worlds which transcend the limits of our actual world." To account for this phenomenon of ontological novelty, Ricoeur's hermeneutics of imagination looks beyond the first-order reference to empirical reality—which ordinary language discourse normally lays claim to—to a second-order reference to an horizon of possible worlds. A hermeneutic approach to imagination thus differs from a structuralist or existentialist one in its concentration on "the capacity of world-disclosure yielded by texts." In short, hermeneutics is not confined to the objective structural analysis of texts, nor to the subjective existential analysis of the authors of texts; its primary concern is with the worlds which these authors and texts open up.[22]

First through semantic deviation and then by means of breaking free from common and habitual sense, the metaphoric substitution play (whereby the expected arrangements are substituted with new configurations of relations) and the work of imagination lead to semantic innovation. According to Kearney, this sets Ricoeur's view of imagination and of metaphorical process apart from objective/structuralist and subjective/existential views, placing it within the hermeneutical horizon where possibilities of interpretation become as wide as life. In other words, metaphors do not trace out, in a finer and more attractive ornamentation, the contours of existing life. Metaphors indicate and serve as the ground for the arrival of new configurations of life. On one level this works by the illuminating function of metaphors that shed light on the arrangements of living beings in such a way as to draw back to themselves and relate to us the heretofore incomprehensible arrangements into the configurations of new meanings. In another, more radical sense, the disclosive and illuminating work of the metaphorical process does not only operate at the level of meaning-making and sense, but at the level of the unfolding of life. The possibility of novelty, which is the hallmark of the metaphorical process, is also the hallmark of life itself. Non-living arrangements do not in and of themselves give rise to new configurations of beings. Life in the very process by which beings send forth new beings allows for originary beginnings. With every birth of a living being and every appearance of a new growth, a possibility is nascent for unprecedented, heretofore non-

[22] "Paul Ricoeur and Hermeneutic Imagination," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 14 (2) (1988) 115-145, 119-120.

existent novelty.[23] Through this unfolding that is the metaphorical process by means of which the disparate elements are united in such a way as to allow for entirely unprecedented beings to shine forth, new possibilities accrue to being itself. This disclosure and the making-possible of the originary arrangements of life in the world or, as for Kearney, an "ontological event," is the power that accrues to the metaphorical process.[24]

Another characteristic of productive, imaginative insight, which constitutes the resemblance-act of the metaphorical process, and which points in the direction of a wide, and even life-encompassing, interpretation of metaphor—is tension. By means of the metaphorical process, the differences are not dissolved into an inarticulate, lifeless homogeneity. On the contrary, the "logical structure of likeness,"[25] as Ricoeur points out, is the process by which we see "the *like* … in spite of, and through, the different."[26] Ricoeur calls this generation of similar kinds on the basis and by means of perception of their differences the "war between distance and proximity."[27] A battle image or an image of a competition—of an *agon*—given, especially, Ricoeur's sensitivity to the ancient Greek heritage, indicates that we deal not with the stupor of stasis, but with the unfolding and continuously ongoing activity of life. Thereby, that which is, is kept as it is—self-same and vital—by an underlying, productive tension of opposing

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[23] Hannah Arendt in the *Origins of Totalitarianism* attributes this possibility of originary beginning to human beings, but just as much, the possibility of novelty expands to the entirety of life, including non-human beings. See her *The Origins of Totalitarianism (New Edition)*. Eugene: Harvest Publishing, 1973, 465 – 466.

[24] I will not engage here in the discussion of the difference between the so-called "bare life" and the life of a worldly community. As I show elsewhere [removed in the anonymized copy], the life of a human being and of a human world or *bios* as such and the life of a conscious spirit are thoroughgoingly entwined. To separate the two is to set nature and natural life as below or subservient to and against the human world, which is the very mistake that now presses upon the humanity with all the rage and force of the ecological catastrophe and with the disastrous consequences of this separation to the human spirit. Unlike Heidegger, I do not deny to animals and other living, non-human beings, their many wondrous worlds. Instead, human beings are well-advised to celebrate these multitudinous worlds to the life of which we have been by and large and willfully blind. However, for context regarding the distinction, see Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Daniel Heller-Roazen, trans. (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1998). See also a recent work by Michael Naas, which both delineates and often destabilizes this dichotomy, *Plato and the Invention of Life* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018).

[25] "The Metaphorical Process" 148.

[26] Ibid. See Ricoeur's summary of the basic functions of metaphor, where Ricoeur stresses the importance of tension, in the *Rule of Metaphor* 291-292.

[27] "The Metaphorical Process" 148.

elements.[28]

This element of tension is preserved, also, at the cognitive level of metaphoric operation. In their most fundamental function, metaphors yield insights that lend similarity to semantic fields, which are normally perceived as dissimilar. Ricoeur aligns this element of the metaphorical process with Aristotle's view that the makers of good metaphors contemplate likeness (*theōrein to homoion*).[29] Ricoeur stresses that this "insight into likeness is both a thinking and a seeing"—it is both sensible and intelligible.[30] In his writings on *Hermeneutics* (1972), Ricoeur discusses the "*power* of metaphor"[31] in relation to poetry and, specifically, to the paradigmatic case of linguistic poetic production, namely—tragedy.

Ricoeur follows Aristotle's analyses of tragedy and inserts into these his own view, which presents the connection between metaphor and the "three features"[32] of poetic work. These features are: "*lexis*" or "diction," "*muthos*" or "*plot*," and "*mimesis*" or imitation. The latter, Ricoeur understands as the "'reference' of tragedy" or as the "intentionality of the [poetic] work."[33] For Ricoeur, the metaphorical process does not only have purchase on the various modes of poetic speech or on its *lexis*. Metaphor also serves to transpose the plot, which Aristotle says is "like the soul of tragedy,[34] into the minds of the audience. The act of metaphoric transposition is at the heart of poetic expression. Without it there would be no insight offered by the poetic work, nor any meaningful, revelatory relation of the audience to the work.

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[28] Here it is helpful to hearken to Hegel's notion of determinate negation and the role that it plays in sending forth new shapes of consciousness.

[29] Aristotle, *Poetics. Longinus: On the Sublime; Demetrius: On Style*. Loeb Classical Library No. 199. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 1459a5-10.

[30] "The Rule of Metaphor" 147.

[31] Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013, *Écrits et conferences. 2. Herméneutique* 1972. (Editions du Seuil, 2010), 63.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., 62.

[34] *On Poetics*, Benardete, S. and Davis, M. trans. (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine Press, 2002), 1450a40. A discussion of the play of the prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration or mimesis 1, 2, and 3 is outside of the scope of this paper. Ricoeur offers his theory thereof in relation to plot and metaphor in the *Time and Narrative* volumes, where he is interested, for example, in the "features of the imaginary [as they are] … made explicit by fictional narrative" (*Time and Narrative. Volume 3*. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 185. On the subject of the "metaphorical process that conjoins cognition, imagination, and feeling" (*Time and Narrative. Volume 1*. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 50, Ricoeur refers the reader to what he had "elsewhere suggested" (50). I.e., to his analyses in the "The Metaphorical Process" (242, fn. 44).

In the *Topics*, Aristotle describes the relationship between metaphor and analogy. He says that "metaphor makes what is signified somehow familiar on account of likeness (for everyone in making metaphors does so in conformity with some similarity)."[35] Here is how metaphor works for Aristotle: 1. something that is not yet talked about, something that is not yet manifest, something that is about to be recognized 2. has to become familiar. But how can something that is not yet manifest be familiar? It can be *made* familiar 3. on the basis of likeness. This likeness now becomes a transfer point. Through its work, imagination carries over that which is familiar into an incognito land.[36] Imagination implants a similarity and, thereby, calls up that with which we have not yet reckoned or that which we have not yet realized. Imagination likens that which is yet to be recognized to something already familiar. While he is teaching us about the way that metaphor works with likeness, Aristotle also confirms that simple copy-images do not make good metaphors. Why not? Because copy-images do not generate a reckoning with something heretofore concealed or with something properly new. A copy is merely an iteration of an original, it is not anything new.[37] If copy-making is not the same as metaphorical process because the former fails to engender the movement necessary for the formation and the work of metaphor, then what do we mean, exactly, when we say "metaphor" (hearkening back to the word's Greek origin rooted in the terms for a certain kind of movement, i.e., "*metaphorein*" or "*metaphora*")?

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[35] μεταφορὰ ποιεῖ πως γνώριμον τὸ σημαινόμενον διὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα· πάντες γὰρ οἱ μεταφέροντες κατά τινα ὁμοιότητα μεταφέρουσιν (140a10-12) in *Posterior Analytics. Topica. Loeb Classical Library No. 391*. Forster, S. E. and Tredennick, H. trans. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960). I use the Loeb edition for the Greek, but the Benardete and Davis translation of *On Poetics*, where the passage from the *Topics* is given in a footnote 144 on page 51.

[36] On metaphor in Aristotle see also *On Poetics* 1457b1-30 and *Rhetoric* 1404b, 1406b, 1410b, 1411b.

[37] On Plato's view of *mimesis*, see G. R. F. Ferrari, "Plato and Poetry," *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 92–148; Leon Golden, "Plato's Concept of Mimesis," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 15 (1975): 118-31; W. B. Stanford, "Onomatopoeic Mimesis in Plato *Rep.* 396b–397c." *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 93 (1973): 185-91; Willem Jacob Verdenius, *Mimesis: Plato's Doctrine of Imitation and Its Meaning for Us* (Leiden, 1949). On *mimesis* in ancient literature, see Stephen Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems* (Princeton University Press, 2002).

My own view of *mimesis* in Plato does not agree with the articulations thereof as a kind of copy-image making or imitation whereby the existing world of living beings becomes a copy of the world of Forms/Ideas. My view aligns closely with Claudia Baracchi's insight into the function of poetic *mimesis*. See her essay entitled, "Another Apology," *Retracing the Platonic Text*, John Russon and John Sallis, eds. (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1999) 3-18; esp. 11-15.

The function of poetic mimesis hinges on metaphor's power to produce images, which are akin to the reality of the everyday world, but which are, nonetheless, also different from it; to the point of being sur- or supra-real. Thus, Ricoeur himself urges us to "[l]ink together the *poesis* of the *poem* and metaphor as an emergent meaning [and]…to make sense of both at the same time."[38] Although Ricoeur arrives at this conclusion about the mutually informative character of metaphor and poetic mimesis in Aristotle's *Poetics*, he seems to treat mimesis in his analyses of Plato's *Timaeus* as an act of mediation, but not as a metaphorical process.[39] Ricoeur is right to suppose that on the straightforward exposition of the first third of the *Timaeus*, mimesis looks like copy-work, rather than like the action of the metaphoric creation of new sense and meanings. However, if the canonical interpretation that privileges *nous* and the demiurgic function is set aside in favor of the significance of the *khōra* – an interpretation offered by such thinkers in the continental tradition as Derrida (1968, 1987), Sallis (1999), Caputo (2006), and in the psychoanalytic vein, by Kristeva (1984) – then it becomes apparent that the role and function of the *khōra*, in fact, quite readily aligns with the insights about metaphor that Ricoeur gleans from studying Aristotle.[40] Aside from offering a reading of the *Timaeus* that would have been more sensitive to the cultural background of the text, if Ricoeur would have shifted his focus away from the monotheistic view of the demiurge by ceding the *khōra* its rightful place as being on an equal footing with the order of being, then he would likely have seen the sense-generative and world-disclosive function – the very function that on my analysis belongs to Ricoeur's presentation of the metaphoric process – as belonging to the *khōra*.

THE *KHŌRA* AFTER THE DECONSTRUCTION AND RICOEUR'S READING OF THE *KHŌRA*

Introducing the *khōra*, Timaeus refers to it as the "third kind" (*triton genos* 48e), which must be distinguished in addition to the other "two looks" (*duo eidē* 48e). Namely, in addition to the "paradigmatic look" (*paradeigmatos eidos* 48e) and an

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[38] "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics." *New Literary History* (6)1: 95 – 110, 109.

[39] Ricoeur's analyses of the *Timaeus* appear in *Being, Essence and Substance in Plato and Aristotle*.

[40] On Ricoeur and Aristotle on metaphor, see Graziella Travaglini's "Imagination and Knowledge in Metaphorology of Paul Ricoeur," *Theoria* 85 (5): 383-401.

imitation of that paradigm (*mimēma … paradeigmatos* 48e-49a). Timaeus calls the third kind "a form difficult and obscure" (49a), a "receptacle [*hupodokēn*] of all becoming [and] a sort of wet-nurse [*tithēnēn*]," (49a) as well as a "space" (*khōra* 52d), a "mold" (*ekmageion* 50c), and a "look of the wandering cause" (*planōmenēs eidos aitias* 48a). However, the power that this third kind exhibits has to do with moving and with "being moved" (*kinoumenēn* 52e).

The ceaseless changeability and variability, the mixing and the separating out, the coming to be of something and slipping away from the definiteness of a particular look – all these underlying states of the familiar phenomena, to which Timaeus now draws our attention, are brought to light through the introduction and the discussion of the third kind (52d-e). The *khōra* is distinguished by such "power ... and ... nature" (*dunamin kai phusin* 49a) that it is always on the move (52e). It evades complete conceptual encasement. Not only that, but as Kristeva contends, "[a]lthough our theoretical description of the *chora* is itself part of the discourse of representation that offers it as evidence, the *chora*, as rupture and articulations (rhythm), precedes evidence, verisimilitude, spatiality, and temporality."[41] At least in these pre-temporal and pre-spatial designations, the *khōra* stands as being equiprimordial with the noetic principle of the demiurge.

The noetic paradigm is neither eliminated nor discounted with the arrival of the *khōra*. However, it is now presented as giving way to a grounding moment. Set to the noetic paradigm of the self-same being in the first part of Timaeus' speech, motion was an attribute of the cosmos, of the soul, or of the planetary bodies, for example. Given its dialogical space, however, motion ceases to be a designation of a relocation that is relative to a stationary place. With the arrival of the *khōra*, motion becomes synonymous with spatiality.

The *khōra* can be thought of as a movement of spacing. The ancient Greek words that describe the ways in which the *khōra* causes movement in the *Timaeus* are forms of *planaō* (48a), *seiō* (52e), and *talantoomai* (52e). These terms mean, respectively, to wander (as in: "to stray off course" as well as "to digress"); to quake or shake in agitation; and to oscillate.[42] No term that makes the movement out to be an attribute of something moved, as if movement existed separately from

[41] *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Margaret Waller, trans. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 26.
[42] When speaking of the *khōra*, Timaeus also uses forms of *knieo*. However, choric *kineo*, space-movement is not qualified by *phero*, which characterizes locomotion.

that moved thing, is applied to the *khōra*. Instead, the *khōric* process is a kind of space-making movement, which is described as an occurrence in which it is hard to separate out the movement from the moved. The movement no longer happens in or to something, but it becomes a medium and coincides with the unfolding of something that now moves in a sense of being changed, altered, or even created. This movement that the *khōra* represents is part and parcel of the kind of motion that metaphorical process or metaphoric work accomplishes. No longer seen as an attribute of something being carried, but as a carrying over of sense—as metaphor—the movement of the *khōra* transposes our understanding of relative motion into a non-mechanically or not entirely mechanically proliferative kind.

Derrida stresses the uncanniness of the *khōra* when he indicates that it is, perhaps, not altogether appropriate to call it simply a "place," such a place or space as might have things *in* it.[43] More than that, for Derrida, *khōra* is "sheltered from any translation" and all but erases its own name.[44] Most significantly, the *khōra* "anachronizes being."[45] The ideality of the noetic or of the self-same being that guides the more definite, recognizable looks and states of things is *placed* together with or is *spaced out* through the ongoing, changing fluidity and oscillation of becoming.[46] For Derrida, "*khōra* is neither of the order of the *eidos* nor of the order of the mimesis, that is, of images of the *eidos* … thus," he concludes, it "*is not* and does not belong to the two known or recognized genera of being."[47] Since

[43] *Dissemination*. Barbara Johnson, trans. (London: Athlon Press, 1981), 160. Against the thesis of this paper, Derrida denies that the *khōra* is metaphor. John D. Caputo claims that "[w]hen he [Derrida] says *khora*, he is not simply drawing upon the *Timaeus*, which is the manifest reference, but there is also, for anyone with the ears to hear, an allusion being made to the opening verses of Genesis" See his article entitled "Before Creation: Derrida's Memory of God," *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 39 (3) (2006): 91-102, 92. Hereafter, "Before Creation."

[44] *On the Name*. David Wood, John P. Leavey Jr., David McLeod, trans., Thomas Dutoit, ed., *Khōra*. (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1993), 89-130, 93; Hereafter, *Khōra*. Derrida goes as far as to avoid using a definite article when referring to the *khōra*.

[45] *Khōra* 94.

[46] Derrida denies that the *khōra* is a "support or a subject which would *give* place by receiving or by conceiving" (*Khōra* 95). See also Sallis who accounts for Heidegger's misrepresentation of the *khōra* as "space defined as extension" (111 fn. 22). However, I am not recommending here that the *khōra* is a place or the expanse of existing space. Instead, on my interpretation it is the happening or the unfolding of spatiality; it is the movement of emplacement. Caputo refers to the *khōra* as "elemental spacing" ("Before Creation" 96).

[47] *Khōra* 95.

khōra is not "of being," it *can* obtain a priority that is equal to being. Being and becoming are there prior to the dialogical introduction of the *khōra*; both being and becoming are in the same relation to each other as something changelessness is to change. They necessarily belong together – they share a logic – but otherwise, cannot immediately be related, unless by a grounding, unifying, actualizing third.

The unfolding, moving spatiality, the happening of space, as the *khōra*, allows the atemporal self-sameness to coincide with all that manifests in time. It is not a perfect coincidence. If it were, there would have been no reckoning with the self-same, changeless being, nor with the becoming of change. Spacing enables temporality in all becoming to take its place. Without such placing, the moments of becoming and of change are indistinguishable and are, in effect, as self-same as the changeless being. By means of the work of the *khōra*, the unbreakable, impregnable, and "unbegotten" (*agennēton* 51e), self-same being begins to cast a shadow over becoming, or be the shadow against which, unities arise and recognition thereof works its way into the world of meaning. As such, the *khōra* accomplishes a transpositional and unificatory work whereby the dissimilar elements – being and becoming – are brought together in a manifestation of the world of living, comprehensible beings. Caputo ascribes to the *khōra* this kind of an intermediary or even an antecedent position, whereby it is able to situate both being and becoming in relation to each other. In *Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion Without Religion,* Caputo holds that "[b]y being said to participate in both the sensible and the supersensible without quite being either, *khôra* is given a role interior to philosophy, assigned a proper place inside philosophy."[48] However, it is a peculiar place – it is an ever-moving place because "*khôra* has no meaning or essence, no identity to fall back upon."[49] It enables the becoming of identifiable things and thereby the unfolding of the world as we know it, but it has no identity in and of itself.

Furthermore, as Caputo sees it, "[*k*]*hōra* does not take place but it is what

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[48] Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997; 35. Hereafter, *Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*. See also Richard Kearney's critique of Caputo and of Derrida on the question of the primacy of the *khōra* in "*Khora* or God?" in *A Passion for the Impossible: John Caputo in Focus*, Marc Dolley, ed. (New York: SUNY, 2003), 107-127, 112.

[49] *Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida* 36.

makes it possible for something to take place – or to lose its place."[50] In this designation of making possible both the taking of place and the disappearance, *khōra* performs a transformative function or, we can also call this – a metamorphic function. Thus, the *khōra* allows for alteration and for a metamorphosis whereby being and becoming come together in such a way as for both to give rise to the existing, knowable beings and as to let them diminish and pass out of existence "by receiving them [things] and containing, by letting them be inscribed in its space."[51]

Ricoeur's insight into the active, sense and meaning-generative as well as world-disclosive and creative nature of the metaphor brings his analyses of metaphorical process in the vicinity of not only Aristotle's, but also of Plato's thinking. Ricoeur's insight into the "great find of the *Timaeus*,"[52] is the process of the "intelligible-sensible mediation," and the "genesis of the sensible" that this mediation accomplishes. However, this genesis, according to Ricoeur, "is not possible except beginning from the *All*," which Ricoeur makes out to be "the world" made in the image of god.[53] The mediation, then, is "brought about through the idea of totality, which on the one side precedes its parts and thus clings to the ideal order by its formal character, and on the other side is immanent to its parts and thus inaugurates the sensible order."[54] This interpretation squarely puts mediation between the ideal and the sensible *within* the purview of the ideal and it also privileges the demiurgic work. This focus on the rational, divine (which on Ricoeur's interpretation looks very much like the Christian monotheistic divinity), ideal power that the dialogue offers (and in the first half also upholds), makes Ricoeur downplay the power of the *khōra*. The latter, for him, is merely the "'residue' of the sensible,"[55] which Ricoeur denigrates from the "third kind" (*triton genos* 48e), as it is clearly called in the dialogue, to "that for which there is no longer any genesis."[56] In other words, the *khōra* for Ricoeur is not that which accomplishes the work of mediating between being and becoming or the ideal

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[50] "Before Creation" 98.
[51] "Before Creation" 98.
[52] *Being, Essence and Substance* 104.
[53] *Being, Essence and Substance* 104.
[54] *Being, Essence and Substance* 104.
[55] *Being, Essence and Substance* 102.
[56] *Being, Essence and Substance* 109.

and the sensible orders, but it is demoted to being included within the ideal order, and being derivative of it.

On Ricoeur's interpretation, the *khōra* is produced along with the world through the work of the demiurge. Ricoeur supports this conclusion by the claim that "the artisan does his best [but], he cannot do everything."[57] And so, the *khōra* becomes just a "[p]lace [which] is the lower 'limit' of the labor"; this is what in the work is no longer worked."[58] For Ricoeur, *khōra* is residual and immovable, but this flies in the face of the many designations of motion that are attributed to the *khōra* in the dialogue. Ricoeur's take also goes against my interpretation of the *khōra* as the moving cause that binds and brings together the disparate orders, thus enabling the arrival of the world.

Instead of interpreting the *khōra* as essentially binding and uniting the disparate orders, Ricoeur claims that "[t]he mediation is…brought about through the idea of totality, which on the one side precedes its parts and thus clings to the ideal order by its formal character, and on the other side, is immanent to its parts and thus inaugurates the sensible order [or], more exactly posits it as order and no longer as a chaos of fluctuating and variable images."[59] Ricoeur's focus on the idea of totality is the reason why he misses the fact that the *Timaeus* and, especially, the sections on the *khōra*, present us with nothing other, but what Ricoeur himself articulates as the work of the metaphor.[60] Despite

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[57] *Being, Essence and Substance* 109.
[58] *Being, Essence and Substance* 109.
[59] Ibid.
[60] The reason why the Forms or Ideas, for example, cannot be equated with metaphor and its work is because canonically, the former are motionless, changeless, and ideal. However, metaphor (as I show on the basis of Ricoeur's analyses) and *khōra* (as I argue), both are expressive of movement, transformational and transpositional change (in sense, in meaning, and in terms of the possibility of creativity and originality). Thus, if one does not look at the Forms/Ideas as a metaphor for metaphor, but if, instead, one attempts to establish what work or process defines metaphor, then one realizes that it is the work of the *khōra* that corresponds to metaphoric work.
As far as the difference between metaphor and similie goes, according to Ricoeur, it is "that similie explicitly displays the moment of resemblance that operates implicitly in metaphor" (*The Rule of Metaphor* 27). Benardete offers another take on the difference between metaphor and similie and situates it with respect to Plato's dialogues. He writes,

> The truth juxtaposes a metaphor with a simile. It juxtaposes a phantastic with an eikastic phrase. A metaphor identifies two things; it takes the other for the same. A simile acknowledges a difference in the sameness it has seen. The truth about the likely story Timaeus tells is that as metaphor it is likely (*eikōs*), and as simile it is a phantom image ... Contrary, then, to one's first

Ricoeur's claims, it is the *khōra*, which effectively expresses the dual action of metaphor. The latter acts both at the level of meaning and semantics, or at the level of ideality, as well as at the level of sense or sensibility. Instead of allowing the *khōra* its proper role and significance, Ricoeur follows a totalizing trope, which is expressed as the function of the final cause and of the supreme Being that embodies this final causality. As such, it stands in opposition to the impermanence of the world of becoming, which is internally organized through the causal nexus of necessity. The latter works its way by ordaining operations of physical systems and laws; mechanical interactions of material entities; and it also indicates a deterministic element in the operations of the existing world. The final cause supersedes the piecemeal interactions of perishable beings, extending to the level of scale of eternity. As ordered by the final cause—from and unto all times to come—the unfolding of the world proceeds according to a preordained vision present in the mind of the demiurge. On Ricoeur's reading, this totalizing, divine vision amounts to an omniscient and omnipotent insight and foresight of God.[61]

For Ricoeur, totality is indicated in Timaeus' remarks about the "God who always is"[62] and whom Ricoeur identifies with the productive contemplation of the beautiful and complete order. He sees Timaeus' descriptions of the contemplative, invisible divinity as indicating an order of priority and importance over and above the other two critical elements in the *Timaeus*. These other two notions are the *khōra* and the order of necessity. The latter, as I said, largely reigns in the world of existing beings. This world—our world, that is—is created (on

impression, the phantastics of the second part of the *Timaeus* is eikastical, and the eikastics of the first part phantastical. This turnaround is, as Strauss illustrated, the essential trait of any Platonic argument. If it does not occur, we are still stuck in the Cave and have not yet begun to make an ascent. *The Argument of the Action Essays on Greek Poetry and Philosophy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 392. Hereafter, *The Argument of the Action*.

[61] See Henri Bergson's critique of both the mechanical or necessary and the final causality in the *Creative Evolution*. See a rebuttal of Bergson's critique of finality by G. Watts Cunningham, "Bergson's Conception of Finality," *The Philosophical Review* 23 (6) (1914): 648-663.
[62] *Being, Essence and Substance,* 104. Ricoeur is citing *Timaeus*, line 34a, which in the Greek reads, "οὗτος δὴ πᾶς ὄντος ἀεὶ λογισμὸς θεοῦ" and can be translates as "such was the complete reckoning of the god, whose being is eternal." Plato. *Perseus Digital Library*. Ed. Gregory R. Crane. Tufts University. http://www.perseus.tufts.edu

Ricoeur's reading), as an image of the perfect divine order.[63]

When Ricoeur writes about mediation in the *Timaeus*, he states that the "sacramental identification between the soul and being or the true…is the Gaze that, in the *Timaeus*, joins worker-like causality to exemplary causality."[64] Coming into being of something, as it is generated by the work of the divinity of the *Timaeus* (which is a demiurgic divinity) is bound up with the "exemplary causality"—the one which is otherwise uncaused, or with the "God who always is."[65] Ricoeur inserts an Aristotelian (and even a much later, Christian) notion of God into his analysis of the demiurgic causality in Plato. In this way, Ricoeur makes the divinity of the *Timaeus* into a final cause of everything that is.

Forsyth (1947) explains that on Aristotle's presentation, god "alone can move though it is itself unmoved [and therefore God] is not merely a material or efficient cause but a final cause, or rather a cause that is both efficient and final."[66] Ricoeur picks up this view of God, attributing to God the order of final causality, and further identifies God as the "excellent soul."[67] As the latter, on Ricoeur's reading, God initiates motion and change as the final cause for the sake of which everything changes and moves, and also, as the soul, i.e., as the principle of motion. This reading, as Ricoeur himself admits, is indebted to Platonism and

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[63] Ricoeur is not alone in interpreting the *Timaeus* in this way. See, for example, a recent account that argues the same by Thomas Kjeller Johansen, "Why the Cosmos Needs a Craftsman: Plato, *Timaeus* 27d5-29b1," *Phronesis* 59 (2014): 297-320. More generally, and for classical views on the *Timaeus* and the role of the craftsman God in it, see Taylor (1928), Cornford (1935), Cherniss (1957; both "Timaeus 38A-B5" and "The Relation of the *Timaeus* to Plato's Later Dialogues."). See, further, Victor Ilievsky (2022) for an account which offers reasons to think that it is incorrect to identify the demiurge of the *Timaeus* with the monotheistic divinity of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. See his "The Demiurge and His Place in Plato's Metaphysics and Cosmology," in *Time and Cosmology in Plato and the Platonic Tradition*, Daniel Vázquez and Alberto Ross, eds. (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 2022), 44-77. For a more general treatment of Platonic metaphysics, especially in relation to the visual paradigm, see for example, Jussi Backman, "Towards a Genealogy of the Metaphysics of Sight: Seeing, Hearing, and Thinking in Heraclitus and Parmenides," *Phenomenology and the Metaphysics of Sight*, Antonio Cimino and Pavlos Kontos, eds. (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 2015), 11-34. See John Sallis in the same volume, "The Extent of Visibility," 35-48, esp. 37.

[64] *Being, Essence and Substance* 108.

[65] Ibid., 107.

[66] "Aristotle's Concept of God as Final Cause," *Philosophy* 22 (82): 112-123, 120. On the various arrangements of causes, see Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 5.2.1013a25-1014a25; *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.3.1112a20-35; and *Physics* 2.1-3, esp. 2.3.195a15-25. On the unmoved mover or the divine intellect, see *Metaphysics* 12.7.1072a25-35. See further Aryeh Kosman, "The Divine in Aristotle's *Ethics*," *Arion* 13 (2009): 101-107.

[67] *Being, Essence and Substance* 107.

the idea of mediation.[68] However, by privileging the status of the divinity in the dialogue and by attributing to the god of the *Timaeus* the sort of totalizing finality that only later, monotheistic views of the divine properly develop, Ricoeur downplays the world-generative significance of the *khōra*. As I will now work to show, this elevation of the role of god at the expense of demotion of the *khōra*, bars Ricoeur from realizing that the *khōra* performs, precisely, the metaphoric function that he himself delineates when he articulates the truth-disclosive and creative power of the metaphor.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS: *KHŌRA* AND METAPHOR AS THE GROUND OF THE FUNDAMENTAL, TRUTH-DISCLOSIVE AND WORLD-GENERATIVE PROCESSES

On my reading, the *khōra* hardly furthers the "gap between Necessity and Finality,"[69] as Ricoeur would have it. The *khōra* bridges it or, in even stronger terms, the *khōra* is that process which both interweaves and holds in a productive tension the two other causal nexuses that are essential for the continuous formation and reformation of the world. Seen as such, the *khōra* in the *Timaeus*, and Ricoeur's work on metaphor elucidate similar phenomena. The *khōra* enables the movement of the substitution play between images or likenesses and phantasms (52c). In the context of the substitution play of images, Sallis (1999) remarks in the *Chorology* about the need to pay an especially careful attention to the meaning and interpretation of the image when we consider images from the point of view of the *khōra*. Sallis claims that

> if the third kind [i.e., *the khōra*] is, as Timaeus declares, completely formless, utterly amorphous, every image will be limited, assuming that it is the very nature of an image as such to present the form of that which it images but from which it is materially distinct. If the third kind lacks all determination, then one must wonder how there can be an image that has any bearing on itself.[70]

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[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., 109

[70] *Chorology: On Beginning in Plato's Timaeus* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 114. Compare this concern with images' instability and lack of self-identity, which the choric logic generates, with Benardete's remarks about images and the *khōra*.

However, it is this indeterminacy of the *khōra* that allows it to function as the ground from which new arrangements of life, new sense-configurations, and new meanings can arise. As I have shown in Section II, the imagistic and the symbolic play of metaphor is much wider than the cognitive function. It extends, instead, to processes that are as wide as life and disclose or even create new worlds. Likewise, in the *Timaeus*, the indeterminacy of the *khōra* is akin to the metaphorical process, which itself does not carry or contain presupposed or set elements, but which accomplishes its work by interweaving the already given things. It does so in ways that allow new arrangements of phenomena, living beings, as well as of sense and meaning to arise. The *khōric* and the metaphorical processes are not determined by particular, pre-given sets of phenomena, things, or ideas. The content and the material—on which the *khōric* and the metaphorical processes work—are ever-different. This is why, by drawing on what is given, the *khōra* and the metaphor enable the creation of new arrangements of beings and of sense.

Timaeus' speech about the *khōra*, which stands in between his other two accounts of cosmic constitution, brings together his description of the world that unfolds according to the order of *nous* or mind, on the one hand, and according to the order of *ananke* or necessity, on the other. The *khōric*, "bastard reasoning" (52b-d), as Timaeus calls it, is marked by a dream-like transformation, which as I argue, is the originary ground that interweaves the two disparate causal orders and thereby gives rise to the possibility of a cognizable world.[71] Timaeus' description of this change is somewhat circuitous. Timaeus says that the work that the *khōra* accomplishes has to do with the production of likeness and, furthermore, with a kind of transformative work that is not mere copy-making, but that readily represents metaphorical process in Ricoeur.

Despite the number of images Timaeus applies to space, he never likens it to a mirror, for it is the ground of all orientation and consequently stands in the way of any isomorphism between being and image: the image (*eikōn*), since that for which it has come into being does not belong to itself, is a constantly moving phantom (*phantasma*) of some other (*heteron ti*) (52c2-3). We attach a condition to anything we believe to be: to be something is to be something somewhere. This somewhere (*pou*) is our acknowledgement that every something depends on something other than itself in order to be. *The Argument of the Action* 394.

[71] For excurses on uncommon logic, see Sallis's *Logic of Imagination: The Expanse of the Elemental* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2012), esp., 95-141. Hereafter, *Logic of Imagination*. See further Marren's analyses of Henri Bergson's articulation of logic at work in comedy and in dreams. See her "Comedic Wisdom: A Task for the Humanities in a Democratic State," *European Society for Moral Philosophy Journal* 23 (2021): 89-108."

Timaeus explains that "in the case of a likeness, since the very thing to which it has come to refer doesn't even belong to the likeness itself, and since it's always swept along as a phantasm of something other, for these reasons it is appropriate that it [likeness] come to be *in* some other thing" (52c).[72] According to Timaeus, likeness is of something. A need to liken something to something else, to represent something as other than itself by means of showing it through some other thing, leads us to make analogies. When likeness is seen as a part of an analogy, it is no longer understood as a perfect image or a copy of its model. It becomes a moment—an intermediary step—in the process of likening. As such, and in this intermediary moment, a likeness ceases to be self-determining. Abandoning the logic by which likeness refers back to its model and is tied to it linguistically, the work of the *khōra* facilitates also the process of representation or of the play of analogy[73] and substitution.

Recall, that in Section II, in my discussion of Ricoeur's take on Coleridge as well as in my analysis of McGaughey's and Kearny's view of metaphorical process and semantic innovation in Ricoeur, I argued that the substitution play, the analogic, and symbolic work of metaphor, opens our understanding onto a horizon that is much wider than the human cognition-dependent world of images and likenesses. Likewise, the *khōra*, extends to the field of the substitution play that is as wide as life, whereby the vital processes unfold as a continuous exchange of self-sameness and self-differentiation. This substitution play within a living organism is its—at one and the same time—being and not being like itself in virtue of it being alive (and therefore, necessarily, also being on the way to perishing and vanishing entirely). Thus, metaphoric and *khōric* processes run along, render palpable, or limn the very course of life. One of the hallmark features of life is the dynamic unfolding of a being, which remains what it is while at same time continuously differing from itself; undergoing ceaseless change—even unto death—upon which it stops changing and also forever ceases to be

[72] ὡς εἰκόνι μέν, ἐπείπερ οὐδ᾽ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐφ᾽ ᾧ γέγονεν ἑαυτῆς ἐστιν, ἑτέρου δέ τινος ἀεὶ φέρεται φάντασμα, διὰ ταῦτα ἐν ἑτέρῳ προσήκει τινὶ γίγνεσθαι. The passage can be rendered to read, "As the image is not itself [on account] of that [thing] for which it came to be, it, therefore, flees always [presenting itself] as the other thing's phantom, and through this comes to be present in that other thing" (52c).

[73] Here, "analogy" is a translation of "*analogia*" of that which is *ana logon*, namely, in measure or in step with a certain kind of speech.

(itself).

The "*in* some other thing" (52c) to which Timaeus refers is a creative requirement of making likenesses. It can be understood as an imaginative and creative play of metaphor and substitution.[74] During this play, something that is about to no longer be itself, refers to something that is not yet itself. By means of this referring it designates what is to be recognized as something that is about to become itself.[75] This process that the *khōra* accomplishes is not copy-making. Copy-making presupposes an original and a copy, but not some third thing. Moreover, Timaeus indicated to start that "the very thing to which it [likeness] has come to refer doesn't even belong to the likeness itself" (52c), which is not a description of a relationship between an original and a copy, because in the latter case, the copy, precisely, refers us back to its original. The work of the *khōra* cannot be any straightforward mediation either, because the mediating element unites or mediates between the two already given things or phenomena. However, on Timaeus' account, the *khōra* does not mediate in any familiar sense, because it creates that which has not been there before, i.e., likenesses that "come to be *in* some other thing" (52c). The *khōra* thereby changes that other thing and presents us with some heretofore unrecognized arrangement. As I see it, this process that Timaeus describes is what Ricoeur works to explain in his detailed analyses of the metaphorical process.

CONCLUSION

The *khōra* transposes our understanding and activates it in the self-same way as the sense-making, creative movement of the metaphor. Since the *khōra*, as I have worked to show, is not a mere mediator (or even, as Ricoeur wants to see it, a

[74] A counter point to my presentation could be made by a reference to Sallis's "Daydream," *Review Internationale de Philosophie*. 52.205 (3) (1998): 397-410. Hereafter, "Daydream." There (399-400), Sallis claims that the "χώρα is not yet even a time of imagination" (399). Imagining does not exist, "not, at least, if imagining is taken to consist in somehow bringing images to presence before, as we say, the mind's eye. For the time to which Timaeus' discourse on the χώρα is directed is a time before the generation of the heaven" (Ibid.). Indeed, if we take imagination to mean the capacity to give to the mind images, that is, as a capacity to re-produce the image for the mind, then the *khōra* is the pre-imaginative. However, if we think the *khōra* as image-generative or as productive, then, it is only proper that the *khōra's* image play gives rise to the world and, together with it, to a possibility of consciousness of the world-bound presentations.

[75] This sense of the transformative and transposing work of the metaphor is expressed by Ricoeur in "The Metaphorical Process."

further separator that stands between the orders of Finality and of Necessity), but is itself a creative agent, the *khōra* aligns closely with the world-disclosive and even world-making power of the metaphorical process. The *khōra* does not merely serve as an in-between or the copy-making element. It does not merely reiterate the divine within the human order. It does not merely install the elements of ideality within the world of sensibility. The *khōra* does not just offer the world that we inhabit and perceive as a copy of the world that is unchanging and ideal. Instead, the *khōra* thoroughgoingly interweaves these disparate elements together while also holding them in tension. It does not dissolve them into homogeneity. In this process, the *khōra* serves as the very ground of the creative possibility of new experiential and cognizable arrangements in the world. It is no mere static bridge, but just as metaphor, it creates the possibility of new events and new meanings. This, in my view, is already inscribed in Plato's text, which we can read against the traditional canon of interpretation, which makes Plato out to be an idealist and a Form theorist for whom newness and creativity are derivative off of the ever-existing Forms.[76] *Khōra* weaves the timeless universality together with the ebb and flow of the sensible particulars in time, and thereby serves as the grounding element of the unfolding of the world as such; as well as of its discernibility and meaningfulness.[77] This timeless universality,

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[76] A debunking of the Theory of the Forms/Ideas is well outside of the scope of this paper. However, the authors who have opened a new avenue for understanding Plato's philosophizing include Drew A. Hyland, *Finitude and Transcendence in the Platonic Dialogues* (New York, NY: SUNY Press, 1995). Although Paul Natorp does not deny idealism to Plato, he significantly qualifies it, reading Plato through Kantian transcendental idealism. See Natorp's, *Plato's Theory of Ideas: An Introduction to Idealism*, John Connolly and Vasilis Politis, trans., Vasilis Politis, ed. with a postscript by André Laks (1903/1921, 2004). See also an article that evaluates Natorp's approach by Vasilis Politis, "Anti-Realist Interpretations of Plato: Paul Natorp," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 9 (1) (2001): 47-62.

[77] In this context it is instructive to consider Schelling's articulations of the self-generative power of divinity, which Heidegger sees as the ever-continuously *becoming* God. See Heidegger's *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, Joan Stambaugh, trans. (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 1985), 51. See further Marren, "Analysis of Evil," 100, 104. See also Schelling's direct engagement with the *Timaeus* in *Timaeus* (1794), *Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy.* 12 (2) (2008): 205-248. Schelling's text is translated by Adam Arola, Jena Jolissaint, and Peter Warnek.

Sallis in his analyses of the *Timaeus* privileges the noetic elements and claims that what is described by Timaeus as the state of complete wakefulness is the desired condition in which "one who awakens from the dream will ... recognize that the intelligible εἴδη are set apart [in such a way], that they do not pass anywhere else into another" ("Daydream" 409*)*. However, I argue that even if the eidetic self-sameness maintains its integrity, self-sameness as a principle still passes into and is shared with the generated beings. This sharing of a principle of self-sameness is, precisely, what is accomplished by the dream logic (*Timaeus* 52a-d). In a different context, Sallis offers his view of what is at stake in the "logic of the dream-work" (*Logic*

ideality—or as Ricoeur would have it—totalizing position of God, on my reading, is *not* separated and far removed from the unfolding, sensible world in which we exist. Instead, and because of the *khōra*, the two are thoroughgoingly entwined such that 1) the ideal structures grant permanence and recognizability to the existing things without stifling change and such that 2) change is not mere copy-making of what already is. The *khōra*, just as the metaphor, creates potentiality for novelty—be it physical, phenomenal, or consciousness-enabling and cognition-dependent newness.

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of Imagination 119). This other view, which Sallis has of the dream and the logic at work in it, supports my understanding of the dream-logic passage in the *Timaeus* (52a-d).