

*The 'Quantum Politics' Metaphor in International Relations:
Towards a Hermeneutics of Political Metaphoricity*

Dimitris Akrivoulis

Lecturer in IR, Department of Balkan Studies, UOWM, Florina, Greece

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Contact details: Dr Dimitrios E. Akrivoulis
Lecturer in International Relations
Department of Balkan Studies in Florina
University of Western Macedonia
3rd km Florinas-Nikis Str.
53100 Florina
GREECE
e-mail: dakrivoulis@uowm.gr
Tel.: +30 6972500862

Abstract

The paper suggests that questioning an appreciation of scientific metaphors as the linguistic carriers of the patterns and legalities 'discovered' in nature through science – and thus as the linguistic modes for sociopolitical modelling – is inseparable from a similar questioning: a) of a pre-scientific conceptualization of nature and b) of scientific endeavour as able to decipher and mimetically represent these natural legalities. Drawing on Paul Ricoeur's theory of metaphor and hermeneutics of imagination, the analysis is based on three core Ricoeurian themes: a) a treatment of imagination as a dimension of language, b) the capacity of metaphors to regenerate meaning and open up new worlds of signification and a horizon of future possibilities, and c) the paradoxical relationship sustained between the 'ideological' and 'utopian' functions of opposing sociopolitical imaginaries. In this context, the paper will discuss two seemingly opposed sets of scientific metaphors in international politics (Newtonian and quantum) as corresponding to imaginaries which are bound in a tensional yet complementary relationship, reflecting the Janus face of sociopolitical imagination and having both positive and pathological traits in their constitutive relation to political reality.

The literature of International Relations has in many instances and for diverse purposes discussed the relevance of Newtonian science to international politics. The respective accounts could be roughly divided into two large categories. In the first, we could include those accounts that refer to Newton and his science in terms of the positivist import of scientism into the study of international politics (Hollis and Smith 1991; George 1994; Ruggie 1993). In the second, we could include those that discuss Newtonianism in terms of the heavy reliance of our worldviews upon Newtonian metaphors. (Luke 1995; 1996; 2004; Deibert 1997; Magnusson 1994; 2000). More often than not, authors base their critique upon the inherent simplicity, outmoded character and representational insufficiency of the imaginaries evoked by the employment of such metaphors to describe the complexities of post-Cold War international politics, calling for a reimagining of international politics through new, post-Newtonian metaphors. Focusing on the balance of power as the Newtonian metaphor *par excellence*, they tend to identify Newton's science with mechanistic philosophy and systemic determinism governed by eternal, universal laws. As a result, what is taken to correspond to the so-called Newtonian imaginary of international politics is rather unproblematically understood as directly reflecting Newton's own philosophy.

It is in Rob Walker's writings (1991) that Newtonian mechanics are clearly dealt with in terms of imagination and metaphoricity. The impact of Newtonian science is hence approached in the general context of questioning the heavy reliance of our political considerations relating to causality, space and time – and consequently to political determinism, structure, interaction, order, sovereignty, history, subjectivity, being and becoming – on ontological traditions of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Discussing the decisive role of the spatial constructs associated with Newton "in determining the cultural forms of European civilization", Walker's (1993, 129) engagement with Newton and Newtonianism is indeed both cautious and subtle for at least two reasons. First, because he avoids the risk of oversimplifying Newton's theories, reducing them to mere expressions of a deterministic and mechanistic philosophy that falls short of the complexity of Newton's own thought. Second, because the impact of Newtonian science is examined in terms not of its direct application to our systemic modelling of international politics, but in terms of the metaphors it generates and the sociopolitical imaginaries these metaphors project.

Walker interestingly differentiates between two separate sub-themes of a far more general ‘set of puzzles’ pertaining to the role of scientific metaphors, analogies and models in our conceptualizing international politics. The first sub-theme concerns the drawing of analogies from Newtonian mechanics in system modelling in order to explain the relatively more complex political structures. The second concerns the circulation of metaphors “used to analyse world politics within a broader cultural and political economy”. According to Walker (1993, 98), once we move from the first sub-theme to the second, that is, once we move from structural analysis to *historically specific metaphors and analogies* drawn from Newtonian mechanics, “we quickly begin to understand how entangled we are in a complex politics of language or discourse.”

Entangled in a notable epistemological aporia, we indeed tend to treat the reality represented either as providing the safest validity check for the accuracy of our metaphors or as ultimately arbitrary, depending solely on the metaphors we employ to describe it. The usefulness of the metaphors employed would then have to be judged by their being either representationally sufficient enough to contain the complexities of contemporary international politics they are supposed to *discover*, or appropriate enough so that the political reality they are supposed to *create* would serve the interests or expediencies of those who employ them. In both cases, the issue is how to choose the best new metaphors that would replace the old ones, while the relationship between the two opposed sets of metaphors and the sociopolitical imaginaries they depict remains rather inscrutable, reduced to the inevitability of final substitution.

My major problem with this kind of reasoning concerns the fact that either option attributes little if any importance to how two such sets of metaphors and their imaginaries become socio-politically meaningful and relate to one another as well as to the political reality they aim to re-present. This paper will attempt to suggest that there is always more involved in this reimagining of international politics than the mere substitution of our outdated modes of metaphorical imagination by new, better, more adequate or useful ones. Drawing on Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of imagination and metaphoricality and his discussion of the ideological and utopian functions of sociopolitical imaginaries, the paper will focus on the social functions of Newtonian and quantum metaphors in international politics.

Imagination as a dimension of language

The three core questions that will guide our analysis in this section are: How do imagination and metaphorical language relate to the reality represented? What are the traits and potential of the metaphorical function of language? What are the functions of opposing sociopolitical imaginaries depicted through the use of scientific metaphors and how do these functions relate to one another?

Imagination was first seen in linguistic terms with the hermeneutic turn in phenomenology, the turn of focus from *Wesenschau* to *Verstehen*. The major contribution in the field should be traced back in what Cornelius Castoriadis (1994, 136) has called “the rediscovery of the Kantian discovery and retreat”, referring to Heidegger’s (1962) critique of ‘transcendental imagination’ as developed in the first edition of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. (see also Bernasconi 1985) Although Heidegger’s reading of the Kantbook affected many later accounts of imagination like

those of Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Bachelard, it was not until Ricoeur's *Le Symbolique du mal* (1960) that imagination has been hermeneutically discussed as a dimension of language. With this shift of focus from the visual to the verbal aspect of imagination, Ricoeur affirmed what he addressed as the *poetic* function of imagination, that is, its ability to *say* something in terms of something else thus creating something altogether new in the process of what has been referred to as 'semantic innovation'.

Ricoeur builds his approach upon the Aristotelian definition of metaphor, that is, both as a process of transference, and as a product of this process of *metapherein*. According to Ricoeur's (1978b, 145-147) reading of Aristotle, this process is based on thinking and seeing the likeness (*theorein to omoion*) not between already similar ideas, but instead between semantic fields heretofore considered dissimilar. It is through the 'semantic shock' caused by the metaphorical connectivity in dissimilarity that produces a new meaning. Imagination is seen poetically, as the possibility or the power for this creative reconciliation, as "the capacity of language to open up new worlds", which "transcend the limits of our actual world". (Ricoeur 1995a, 243)

Having established an impregnable link between imagination and language in his early work, Ricoeur opened the way for his hermeneutic exploration of imagination, metaphor and the poetic initiated in his *La Métaphore vive*. In his hermeneutic reading, imagination is not merely subject to various interpretations; it provides new projects of action. Imagination obtains this dynamism from its visual aspect, that is, the metaphorically evoked images, for without the latter it would cease to be *imagination*. This is Ricoeur's sensible moment of metaphoric imagination, when his semantics of *saying* are complemented by a phenomenological psychology of *seeing-as* through metaphors. (Ricoeur 1997, 208) Metaphors bring forth the question of the relationship between language and reality by introducing a certain 'thinking more' born from the inherent tension between the literal ('lexicalized') and the figurative within metaphoricity that gives life to metaphor, rendering it a 'living metaphor'. (Ricoeur 1983, 183)

To render the notion of tension more intelligible, let us use here an example taken from international politics: Neorealist theorists and strategists alike may *see* the international system functioning as a planetary system where states interact like planets energized by gravitational forces. They *know*, of course, that neither the international system *is* a planetary one nor that states *are* planets. Nevertheless, by *saying* that all these are so, by evoking, that is, these imaginative depictions and metaphorical resemblances, they affirm that they *are* so indeed, but at the figurative level. What we have here is thus a certain thinking more, which at the end of the day is both a seeing and a saying more; a *penser plus* that brings life, so to speak, to the metaphor through this semantic innovation.

As new meanings are generated and regenerated in the 'living powers' of metaphoricity the relation between language and reality comes forth, finally leading Ricoeur to the ontological paradox of *creation-as-discovery*. What then is left to be discovered in reality and what to be created metaphorically? Ricoeur's answer (1991b, 462) is adamant: "Through this recovery of the capacity of language to create and recreate, we *discover* reality itself in the process of being created. ... [Language] is attuned to this dimension of reality which itself is unfinished and in the making.

Language in the making celebrates reality in the making.” Ricoeur (1978a, 132-133) acknowledges a specific strategy to discourse implied in metaphorical language, a strategy that originates from the very function of metaphoricity: “If this analysis is sound, we should have to say that metaphor not only shatters the previous structures of our language, but also the previous structures of what we call reality. When we ask whether metaphorical language teaches reality, we presuppose that we already know what reality is. But if we assume that metaphor redescribes reality, we must then assume that this reality as redescribed is itself novel reality. My conclusion is that the strategy of discourse implied in metaphorical languages is ... to shatter and to increase our sense of reality by shattering and increasing our language. ... With metaphor we experience the metamorphosis of both language and reality.”

Having later expanded his understanding of the poetic to its narrative form in his three-volume *Temps et Récit*, Ricoeur attempted to explore how the metaphorical refiguring of the world of action takes place; how, that is, human action is influenced by the configuration of meaning. This necessitated a double analytic move. First, an extension of his analytic scope beyond the literary text, thus embracing *all* collective narrative forms that play a formative role in human action. Second, and as a corollary, a progress of analysis to the social level, in order to explore how this textuality informs social behaviour and action through what he calls the ‘social imaginary’ and how this social imagination relates to sociopolitical reality. This is the core thematic of his *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, where the social imaginary is examined in the light of these two limit-ideas – ideology and utopia.

Approached as cultural expressions of sociopolitical imagination, ideology and utopia are there discussed together within a single conceptual framework. The lectures promise to offer a “regressive analysis” of meaning, going beyond the surface of the apparent to the more fundamental meanings not only of ideology but also of utopia. (Ricoeur 1986b, 311)

For Ricoeur, Marx’s concept of ideology as distortion is exactly a definition of ideology at the surface level, which needs to be genetically explored at more profound levels, so that its range of possibilities would be disclosed. Although ideology can make authoritative claims as the only valid representation of reality and thus function as distortion, it never ceases to function as such, in representational terms. It seems, as he notes (1986b, 136), that “to give an account of ideology we must speak the language of ideology; we must speak of individuals constructing dreams instead of living their real life.” Thus seen, distortion is simply a phase, a paradigmatic explication, a function or a mere level of ideology and not the model of ideology *per se*. Drawing on Weber’s motivational model, Ricoeur proceeds from the distorting to the *legitimizing* function of ideology. Weber had already pointed out that any legitimating process involves an interrelation between a *claim* to and a *belief* in legitimacy. Ricoeur’s syllogism is threefold: First, he affirms the existence of a gap between claim and belief. Second, ideology’s legitimating function is to fill this very gap. Third, the demand for this legitimating role necessitates a new theory of surplus value that relates not to work, as in Marx’s case, but to power. Belief is always in need of a supplement and it’s the role of ideology to provide it. The third level of Ricoeur’s exploration of the concept of ideology is that of *integration*. Following here Geertz’s claim on the symbolic mediation of social action, Ricoeur asserts that it is ideology that plays this mediating role in the social realm. By symbolically mediating

social action, ideology integrates society. It is only because of its integrating function, at this deepest level, that the distorting and legitimating of ideology can be disclosed. (Ricoeur 1986b, 10) This distortion occurs “when the integrative function becomes frozen, ... when schematization and rationalization prevail.” (Ricoeur 1986b, 266) This leads Ricoeur to the irreverent function of ideology. As symbolic mediation, ideology is *constitutive* of social existence. (Ricoeur 1986b, 258)

Having defined ideology in its relation to sociopolitical reality as distortion, legitimation, integration and finally constitution, Ricoeur then shifts his focus on utopia. Whereas ideology’s positive trait is integration, utopia’s positive function lies in its allowing the exploration of the possible. Hence, utopia is not merely something unreal, but the unreal that makes a claim to reality, the unreal that wants to be realized. This is what Ricoeur calls utopia’s ‘function of the nowhere’ that is dialectically related to *Dasein*. (Ricoeur 1986b, 310) Applying his genetic phenomenology in his definition of the concept of utopia as well, Ricoeur moves from the surface level (utopia as *possibility*) to a deeper level of definition, that of utopia as *challenge* to the present authority, the given order: “If ... ideology is the surplus-value added to the lack of belief in authority, utopia is what finally unmask this surplus-value.” (Ricoeur 1986b, 298) In other words, the above mentioned gap that ideology tends to supplement, utopia tends to expose. Besides providing a possibility and a challenge to authority, utopia may function at a third, deeper level. It may lead to a form of escapism, concerning both the means of its achievement and the ends to be achieved. It then becomes completely indifferent to its realization and the possible transition from the present and existing to the future and possible. For Ricoeur, this pathology is rooted in what he calls the ‘eccentric’ function of utopia, offering a parody of an ambiguous phenomenon that fluctuates between fantasy and creativity.

Ricoeur approaches ideology and utopia as two opposed, yet complementary functions of the social imaginary, expressions of a constitutive imaginary for any durable society. They are both necessary. (Ricoeur 1986b, 265-266) On the one hand, the ideological imaginary is not fundamentally destructive, but plays a constructive and necessary role in establishing, and maintaining a sociopolitical order. Although it may contribute to the integration of society, it may also lead to an endless repetition of sociopolitical stereotypes that ideology itself legitimates. Thus, while its main function is to preserve this order, it inevitably tends to canonize the existing system leading to “a stagnation of politics”. (Ricoeur 1981, 229) Ricoeur’s (1995b, 230) warning is adamant: “The danger is that this reaffirmation can be perverted, usually by monopolistic elites, into a mystificatory discourse which serves to uncritically vindicate or glorify the established political powers. In such instances, the symbols of a community become fixed and fetishized; they serve as lies.” On the other hand, the utopian imaginary functions in a destabilizing, yet countervailing manner, enabling a critical re-examination of the given sociopolitical order. Functioning as a Husserlian *epoché*, a utopian imaginary calls for a suspension of our assumptions about reality. Nevertheless, no matter how attractive a utopian social imaginary might be, Ricoeur is right to warn us about its inherent dangers of constituting a new ideological orthodoxy itself, sharing the dogmatism of the ideological one it seeks to disturb. If utopian imaginaries do not provide the conditions for their realization, all they do is “project a static future” or a “mere alibi for the repressive powers” concealed in its “dangerously schizophrenic utopian discourse”. (Ricoeur 1995b, 230) Then, utopia employs its own ‘mystificatory discourse’ functioning itself as an ideology.

Ricoeur's theory of metaphor and hermeneutics of imagination briefly presented above will guide the following analysis of the employment of Newtonian and quantum metaphors in international politics. In the next section, I will attempt to propose a hermeneutical approach to political metaphors that specifically originate from the realm of natural science, in order to highlight the inherent dynamism and the dangers implicit in such a venture.

A hermeneutics of scientific metaphors

The employment of scientific metaphors in political discourse is certainly not a recent phenomenon. At least for the last four centuries, natural science has been one of the most notable sources of political metaphoricity, as scientific 'discoveries' provided the most authorized models of structure and process in the conceptualization of society and (international) politics. In this metaphorical relation, science is often approached as left intact, uninfluenced by the sociopolitical contexts of its practices or the respective specificities and necessities of its epoch. This privileging of science over politics in their metaphorical relation brings forth two cardinal problematic biases. The first relates to a concrete, pre-scientific conceptualization of nature as left to be 'discovered' piece by piece through scientific endeavour, and then as providing the 'natural' and hence legitimate patterns for sociopolitical organization and interaction. The second bias relates to the treatment of metaphors as the means for such a modelling of society and politics in terms of what science has already represented as 'natural'. In that sense, questioning a certain appreciation of scientific metaphors as the linguistic carriers of the patterns and legalities 'discovered' in nature through science, and thus as the linguistic modes for sociopolitical modelling, is inseparable from a similar questioning both of a pre-scientific conceptualization of nature and of scientific endeavour as able to decipher and mimetically represent these natural legalities. How has this pre-scientific reading of nature influenced our political conceptualizations? Most importantly, how could science be treated in its metaphorical relation to politics? These are the questions that this section will attempt to tackle.

Since the seventeenth century, science has concentrated its efforts on revealing the universal rationality underscored by the unifying regularities of nature, leading to the modernist obsession with the quest for a unified scientific method able to tame the vagaries of the unknown. By deciphering the laws of nature, scientific inquiry was thought as a decontextualized venture, able to disassociate itself from the array of social relations. In this vein, scientific revolutions of the time, like Newtonian physics, were metaphorically used to offer both a true mimesis of the world, and the legitimate premises for a rationally organized society. Hence, as the modernist belief was strengthened that nature could be accurately represented and controlled through science, the hope was raised that similarly society could be organized and regulated according to the uncontested uniformity of nature. It should be noted from the outset, though, that this is by no means to suggest an hierarchical relationship between the two domains favouring science. It rather aims to connote that the social imaginaries such scientific metaphors evoked in modernity were based on an ultimate trust in the existence of knowable laws able to organize societies through human reason in the same manner as they govern nature.

In this process, science was not understood as a social, discursive act participating in the practices of its epoch, but instead as an absolute reflection, a neutral representation of nature. Intellectually supported by the long, totalizing, essentialist traditions of what Caputo (2000, 152) would call 'Capitalization', modernity conceived nature as a Book waiting to be opened, read and followed to the heart as almost a Holy Script. The image of nature as a Book combined two "technical image systems": the mental technology of the printed book and the material technology of the machine. Moreover, it embodied the symbolic capacities of the alphabet as a system of mimetic classification, codification, and transmission. (Sandywell 1996, 103-108) It came to aestheticize nature as a self-regulating totality resulting from the incontestable artifice of a divine Demiurge. In this codification, the language of transcription, the very language of nature, becomes also the ideal of political language, the nature of language *and* politics, imposing its dominance to a heterogeneous linguistic matrix, excluding what it could not codify.

This is the moment of ideology, when metaphors are employed to construct a social imaginary that claims to *have discovered* the reality of nature and the nature of politics, reaffirming society in its identity by representing its foundational metaphors and mirroring natural order. Indeed, this seems like a peremptory process of codification, and perhaps it actually was so. Yet, even in this codification, language could not transcend the processes that rupture what Dear (1991) has called the 'rhetorics of sociality' and their participants. In that sense, it is important to note that the scientific metaphors of modernity contested the traditional forms of representation organized by either the Bible or the taxonomies of Aristotelian science. They further questioned the authorities of the Church and the State, all of which have been functioning as the dominant sites of authoritative language and legitimate systems of meaning. They finally came, though, to offer new models of imaginative transformation "that promised either to transcend contested and politicized languages, or to subsume them within an authoritative semiotics, thereby reasserting the validity of the political, socioeconomic, and theological order." (Markley 1993, 25) In a sentence, having already functioned in a destabilizing/utopian manner they finally came to impose their own ideology.

This was a dual process taking place at the levels of both scientific enquiry and political conceptualization. On the one hand, with its having been symbolically objectified, nature came to be conceived as totally independent from scientific discovery. In such a pre-scientific conceptualization of nature, the 'Book of Nature' appeared as already embodying all the answers that the scientists had to discern by discovering the way nature operates. On the other hand, with science decontextualized and able to transcend the environment of its own production, once scientific metaphors were employed in matters political they functioned as accurate measures of what is true, real, natural and thus politically legitimate, by virtue of their mimetic correspondence to what has been already discovered in nature. In other words, what these scientific metaphors were thought to have attained was to have similarly 'discovered' the truth, reality and nature of politics, including, of course, international politics. Yet, once we look to the scientific work of a Galileo or a Newton, what we find "is not the report of a discovery and efforts to verify it, but rather the expression of a truly inventive conception and the struggle to establish a new meaning horizon in place of that prevailing in the medieval tradition." (Jones 1989, 13) In this meaning horizon, nature was conceived as an orderly whole always subject to the same

unalterable laws. (Husserl 1970, 41-43, 68-70; Heidegger 1977, 254; Kockelmans 1985, 140-189)

Scientific knowledge, as any form of knowing, always involves a disclosure, a saying of something to somebody. Embodied in language, textualized in scientific literature and laboratory praxes, its meanings are always context dependent; they are dependent upon specific historical and cultural specificities and necessities. In this hermeneutical appreciation of science, scientific meanings are not treated as ahistorical forms of a transcendental origin. Understood as always historically and culturally specific, scientific meaning is treated as always already related to particular 'negotiations' taking place not only in experimental discourse but also between scientific, sociopolitical, theological and other discourses. (see for example Shapin and Schaffer 1985) Nevertheless, this is not to suggest that the object and results of scientific endeavour are but the sole arbitrary results of concrete expeditions and personal interests. By saying that science is always situated in a specific 'here and now', I mean that science proceeds from, responds to, and is judged by a historically and culturally determined and pre-existing involvement, engagement with and understanding of a specific situation. In science, as in other forms of human endeavour, meaning is constantly regenerated in a process where phenomena are constantly projected upon a pre-existing framework of meaning, the assumptions of which are only partially questioned; they are expanded and refined through this regeneration of meaning resulting *from* interpretative practices. The disclosure of scientific meaning is not a novice transcending or transcendental form, but a deepening and extending of language and hence of being's relations with the world. Correspondingly, science is seen here neither as involving an essentialist reference to a deeper truth found in nature, nor as a mere projection of personal interests. Instead, it is treated as *an interpretative process of meaning (re-)generation that involves a culturally and historically determined engagement and involvement with the world.*

For many theorists and strategists alike, changing the scientific metaphors we employ in our thinking about international politics and issues of strategy is an invaluable task. Indeed, such metaphors have been employed not only in IR theorizing but also and most crucially in the practice of international politics. (see Alberts and Czerwinski 1997) Whereas the reason for this diversity should be traced in the different treatment not only of metaphorical language but also of the relation between science and politics, their employment at least in strategic modelling and military science is usually said to be facilitated by the increased role of new technological applications in these areas. Discussing the impact of scientific metaphors on political imagination in such a context, brings forth the issue of the respective relation between opposing metaphors and imaginaries.

Conclusion: The social functions of a quantum imaginary

As in the case of Newtonian science, if we employ quantum metaphors to depict a new imaginary of international politics, their content would depend less on what the quantum physicists have said, than on how their theories have been understood in their dissemination. In other words, our analytical focus would have to be less on the theories of Heisenberg, Bohr, Bohm, or Wheeler, than on their productive misreadings through their dissemination and popularization as well as on their radical recontextualization through metaphorical language. No matter how distant quantum

theories are from Newtonian science, it is difficult to miss the different ways these scientific areas are publicly understood and socially absorbed. Once metaphorically employed in sociopolitical discourse and detached from Newton's own interests, Newtonian science was, on the one hand, widely appreciated as offering the natural and legitimate patterns for sociopolitical organization and interaction. As we have seen, it functioned as both a mirror and a projector, mirroring the 'intrinsic legality of Nature' and projecting this legality onto (international) politics. Quantum theories, on the other hand, are publicly understood as having affected a serious shattering of this mirror and as having revolutionized our Newtonian appreciations of space, time and interaction.

By discussing the metaphorical relevance of quantum physics to matters political, I imply neither that metaphoricity could be reduced to a mere venture of conceptual familiarization, nor that the two metaphorically bridged areas share the same 'scientific' status, properties, or methods. (see Wendt 2006) A quantum-politics metaphor would not necessarily imply a neo-positivist import of scientific truths into our political conceptualizations in order to render them legitimate, or the evocation of an operational model of international politics, upon which the empirical verification of these truths would be possible. If we follow the hermeneutical approach herewith proposed, our imaginative venture could entail instead an exploration of the tension between the meaning of quantum and political relationality that could disclose future possibilities of relationality in international politics through a regeneration of the meaning of relationality itself. To be more explicit, these possibilities could concern an imaginative reconceptualization of political relationality as ontologically prioritizing political relating to political being; as defining the ontological substance of being politically in terms and in virtue of its being always already relational. (Dillon 2000)

I prefer to treat such a quantum imaginary as a 'utopian' one, by virtue of its utopian functions. The realization of the possibilities and limitations as well as the political significance of a quantum metaphoricity would depend on an explication less of the particular content we would ascribe to it, than of the functions of its implicit utopian imaginary and the ways it relates to the Newtonian ideological one. As noted above, if we are to treat the Newtonian imaginary of international politics only in terms of its representational fallacies and inconsistencies, as most of its opponents have so far suggested, then our aim would be limited to the unmasking of its intellectual malfeasance. Although such a therapeutic venture is important in its own right, it is fairly incomplete for what would be missed is the very ideological relating of "the mask to the face." (Ricoeur 1982, 116) Then, both this relating would be impossible and the 'unmasking' would be meaningless, if we fail to acknowledge the ways Newtonian metaphoricity is related to the symbolic systems that constitute and integrate a specific community and legitimate the articulation of its policies.

In order to bring the Newtonian and the quantum imaginaries closer together so that their subtle, complementary relationship can be highlighted, the analytical focus must be shifted from the noematic content of the quantum imaginaries proposed, towards what Ricoeur, following Raymond Ruyer's (1950) distinction, has called the "mode" and the "spirit" of utopia. This double move implies that we must first abandon any effort to impose a thematic unity on the various attempts to propose a quantum imaginary. On the one hand, the utopian *mode* refers to its constitutive and inventive

function (1982, 118-119). To relate this definition to the imaginative conceptualization of international politics, I would say that the utopian mode of a quantum imaginary is the imaginary project of another kind of international politics, a way of radically rethinking what international politics is, who the agents of this politics are, as well as where and how this politics takes place; another way of political relating altogether. In that sense, all three components of international politics become subject to interrogation. In other words, a quantum imaginary of international politics would involve a radical rethinking of a series of questions relating to the 'inter-', the '-national', and the 'politics' that comprise international politics in the first place. But whereas the Newtonian ideological schematization imagined all these terms in a rather integrative manner, a quantum utopian imaginary would reimagine them in order to invent another political reality altogether by virtue of the 'living powers' of its implicit metaphoricity.

On the other hand, the *spirit* of utopia encompasses all those fundamental ambiguities and functional variations which may be paralleled with and intersect those of ideology. Whereas with the utopian mode we could come closer to the realization of the more general inventive function of a quantum imaginary, once we take this second step towards the spirit of utopia we could first ascribe a more meaningful content to this inventiveness. For by treating a quantum imaginary of international politics as a utopian imaginary, we situate our gazing spot in the no-place of utopia, from where a radical rethinking of international politics would be possible. Taking this further step means both a moving beyond the field of the actual and an opening-up of the field of the possible. Appreciated as a form of inventiveness, this constitutive function of the quantum imaginary involves not only the invention of a new order, but also the subversion of the given one that the Newtonian imaginary tries to conserve. Hence what becomes more evident is the second dimension of our step towards the spirit of utopia, concerning the possible parallelism of the whole set of functions of our utopian imaginary with the ideological functions of the Newtonian one.

It is here that the fundamental ambiguities of a quantum imaginary could be placed beside, juxtaposed with and contrasted to the ones of the Newtonian imaginary. And here the regressive analysis of meaning that we follow, when examining the positive and negative traits of the Newtonian ideology (integration, legitimation, distortion), could also prove helpful in the exploration of the respective traits of a quantum utopia (challenge, possibility, and escapism). Given the above, it is perhaps not difficult to assess that, first, whereas the Newtonian imaginary functioned in an integrating manner establishing a kind of social bond and reaffirming a sociopolitical order that was taken as natural and given, a quantum imaginary would aim at denaturalizing this order by subverting or challenging the given forms of social bond and political relating.

Moving to the second, intermediate level, a quantum imaginary could also appear as a counterpart of the legitimating function of the Newtonian one. By challenging the givenness of the Newtonian order, what is questioned is exactly the legitimating process that sustains it. And here what is provided by a quantum imaginary is a series of possible political futures. For example, America's ideological schematization of international politics through the employment of a metaphoricity that depicted the Cold War balance-of-power system in terms of Newtonian constellations full of orbits, satellite-states and gravitational centres, provided a kind of surplus value to the

belief that the international system of power operates as an interplanetary system energized by gravitation, where policies are fixed as fate by virtue of the naturalness of the forces exercised and the inherent capacity of the system to sustain its steady function. This led to the legitimation of a series of U.S. policies that were conceptualized as the appropriate reactions to the necessities imposed by the international system. (Akrivoulis 2002; forthcoming 2007) By divulging the “undeclared surplus value” (Ricoeur 1991a, 184) of this systemic schematization, a quantum imaginary of international politics could thus propose an alternative way of relating politically that exceeds the fixed and steady forms of power relations provided by the Newtonian imaginary. The propensity and efficacy of such a quantum imaginary could be evaluated by its ability less to provide a concrete political content to the meaning of political power, than to disclose its paradoxical gist, manifestations and practices. This would require, that is, not merely a symbolization of power as other-than-gravitational, but a re-questioning of where this power is located.

This relating between the Newtonian and the quantum imaginaries could also bring forth a parallelism of their own pathologies, for in both cases their negative traits intrinsically relate to and originate from their positive functions. In the case of the Newtonian imaginary, as suggested above, the distortion of sociopolitical reality is possible because it functions in an integrating and conservative manner. In a similar way, the negative function of a quantum imaginary could emerge out of its most positive trait, that is, its implicit ‘leaping outside’ from where the reimagination of society and politics is possible. This pathology could reveal its negative traits, once our imaginative variations of a political spatiotemporality or a political relating in a new form of order remain mere idealized models of the future, while no consideration is taken as to how their realization would be possible. In that case, we are perhaps in a position no different to the one in which the distorting function of the Newtonian imaginary has already placed us.

Integration contra challenge, legitimation contra possibility, distortion contra escapism: the social traits of the imaginaries discussed appear to be opposed to each other. Yet, a closer look might convince us that their relating is also one of complementarity, involving a dialectical relating or, better, an implicating of each other. The relationship between the Newtonian and a quantum imaginary could be expressed in terms of the dialectical interplay between ideology and utopia as expressions of the “two fundamental directions of the social imagination” (Ricoeur 1982, 122), the first leading towards integration, the second towards an eccentric subversion. Hence, whereas the Newtonian imaginary tends to integrate, repeat and mirror the given order of international politics, a quantum imaginary would tend towards its subversion, rupture and unmasking. But this eccentricity is the potential result of the gap introduced by the ideological symbolic mediation of political reality through a Newtonian metaphoricity. Conversely, it is this eccentricity that the Newtonian imaginary aims to tame by filling the ideological gap through its imaginative schematizations. We hence see that both the existence and the functions of these imaginaries are caught in this interplay. They are complementary expressions of sociopolitical imagination reflecting the paradoxical effects of the political phenomenon itself: “This is why the tension between ideology and utopia is unsurpassable. It is even often impossible to tell whether this or that mode of thought is ideological or utopia. The line seemingly can only be drawn after the fact on the

basis of a criterion of success which in turn may be called into question insofar as it is built upon the pretension that whatever succeeds is warranted.” (Ricoeur 1986a, 323)

The Janus face of imagination is also reflected at the level of pathology, which in our case corresponds not only to the subtle relationship between the dysfunctions of the Newtonian and quantum imaginaries, but also between these specific dysfunctions and the fundamental directions of the social imagination. The pathology of the Newtonian imaginary, on the one hand, corresponds as we have seen to the distortion and dissimulation of political reality. This dysfunction becomes meaningful only due to the integrating function of the ideological schematization. To be more precise, its meaning is attained within the symbolic constitution of the political order reflecting one of the fundamental directions of the social imagination, that is, the integrating one. On the other hand, the dysfunctioning of a quantum imaginary should be appreciated as a reflection of the other fundamental direction of the social imagination. The possible pathology of such a quantum imaginary, that is a form of escapism, is rooted in the eccentric function of utopia.

Yet, if our utopian imagination does not manage to fully escape its own pathology, to what extent are we to count on and value such an imaginary? The answer would be twofold, concerning a double pondering first on the metacritical potential of such an imaginary, and second on the dialectical and complementary relationship between such an imaginary and the Newtonian one. Then we would be not that far from realizing that an alternative imaginary is the aptest medium for rejecting the given one and destabilizing the imaginative schematization of the given forms of sociopolitical organization and interaction. Most crucially, by being aware of its complementary relationship with the Newtonian imaginary, our venture would have to both ‘flight from’ and also ‘return to’ the specificities and necessities of our current imaginative schematizations. Finally, it is in the very pathological traits of such an erratic imaginary that perhaps one should trace its most positive function as well, for as Ricoeur (1982, 124) has asked: “[W]ho knows whether such and such an erratic mode of existence may not prophesy the man to come? Who even knows if a certain degree of individual pathology is not the condition of social change, at least to the extent that such pathology brings to light the sclerosis of dead institutions? To put it more paradoxically, who knows whether the illness is not at the same time a part of the required therapy?”

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