

ARISTOTLE, *RHETORIC* III.4. 1407a 15 and 11. 1413a 5¹

Three chapters (4, 10, and 11) in Book III of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* contain discussion of *εἰκῶν*, "comparison" or "image." The main points of his evaluation of *εἰκῶν* are clear enough. He says that it is a kind of metaphor, *μεταφορά*; that it is poetical and should be used in prose only rarely; that it is less instructive than metaphor and therefore gives less pleasure; that it is more extended than metaphor. The first two of these characteristics are stated at the beginning of chapter 4. The chapter goes on to give a series of examples of *εἰκόνες*, then sums up the discussion of *εἰκῶν* in a short concluding passage which comments on the examples and restates Aristotle's basic view of *εἰκῶν* as a kind of metaphor: *πάσας δὲ ταύτας καὶ ὡς εἰκόνας καὶ ὡς μεταφορὰς ἔξεστι λέγειν, ὥστε ὅσαι ἂν εὐδοκιμῶσιν ὡς μεταφοραὶ λεχθεῖσαι, δῆλον ὅτι αὐταὶ καὶ εἰκόνες ἔσονται, καὶ αἱ εἰκόνες μεταφοραὶ λόγον δεόμεναι.* (*Rhet.* III. 4. 1407a 11-15) The meaning of all but the last phrase is clear enough. Aristotle is saying that any of the examples of *εἰκῶν* which he has given could also be expressed as metaphor, *mutatis mutandis*, and that any fine metaphor can be changed into an *εἰκῶν*. The final phrase of the passage, however: *καὶ αἱ εἰκόνες μεταφοραὶ λόγον δεόμεναι* is puzzling, the difficulty lying specifically in the last two words.

The words have been interpreted in two quite different ways, as "explanation" or "development" and as "(single) word." The first interpretation, adopted by most recent commentators, springs from Aristotle's statement that *εἰκῶν* is more extended than metaphor²). Barbarus' translation of the *Rhetoric* is an early illustration: *nam collatio non alia re distat a translatione, quam quod pluribus verbis absolvitur*³). Riccobonus, followed by

1) I have benefitted greatly from the advice of Professor Zeph Stewart in the preparation of this article. I am also most grateful for the suggestions and criticisms of Professor R. Kassel.

2) *Rhet.* III. 10. 1410b 18-19, διὸ ἤττον ἡδύ, ὅτι μακροτέρως.

3) *Rhetoricorum Aristotelis Libri Tres*, ed. and trans. H. Barbarus/D. Barbarus (Venice, 1544).

the Berlin edition of Aristotle, has a more literal Latin translation: *et imagines translationes rationis indigentes*⁴). Among English commentators Jebb's translation may illustrate: "and similes, with the explanation omitted, will appear as metaphors"⁵). A recent German translation by Gohlke follows this interpretation: "... und diese wieder zu bildhaften Ausdrücken sich eignen, wenn man die Begründung wegläßt"⁶).

The difficulty with this interpretation of the phrase lies in the complex meaning assigned to *λόγον*. *λόγος* carries the meaning "explanation" often enough, but in the sense of "pretext", "reason", "plea". It also carries the meaning "argument", but in the sense of "statement of thought". There would not seem to be instances in which the term means "explanation", "argument" in the sense of "details", the meaning required by this first interpretation.

The second interpretation of *λόγον*, as "(single, introductory) word", stems from the view that there was precisely the same distinction in Aristotle between *εἰκὼν* and *μεταφορά* as the modern distinction between simile and metaphor. Victorius provides an early illustration of this interpretation: *imagines enim nihil aliud sunt nisi translationes, quae egeant conformatione quadam orationis particulae, quae si adiuncta fuerit, ilico fiunt imagines*⁷); Saint-Hilaire a later one: "et les comparaisons sont également des métaphores, auxquelles il ne manque qu'un mot"⁸).

4) *Aristotelis Artis Rhetoricae Libri Tres*, ed. and trans. A. Riccobonus (Frankfurt, 1588); *Aristotelis Opera*, vol. III, ed. Academia Regia Borussica (Berlin, 1831).

5) *The Rhetoric of Aristotle*, ed. R. C. Jebb, rev. J. E. Sandys (Cambridge, 1909) p. 155.

6) *Aristoteles, Die Lehrschriften*, vol. III, part 1, *Rhetorik*, ed. and trans. P. Gohlke (Paderborn, 1959). Other translations and commentaries which adopt this interpretation include: Trapezuntius (1550-52), Goulston (1619), Battie (1728), Cassandre (1733), Taylor (1812), Gros (1822), Spengel (1867), Cope (both in his *Introduction* of 1867 and in his edition, rev. Sandys, of 1877), Roberts (1924), Freese (1947), Grube (1958), Plebe (1961).

7) *Petri Victorii Commentarii in tres libros Aristotelis de Arte Dicendi* (Florence, 1548).

8) *Rbétorique d'Aristote*, vol. II, ed. and trans. J. B. Saint-Hilaire (Paris, 1870). He adds: „Le texte n'est pas très-clair; je pense que ceci veut dire que la métaphore n'a pas le mot Comme, qui indique nettement la comparaison." Other translations and commentaries which follow this second interpretation include: de Balmes' translation of Averroes' commentary (1550-52), Maioragius (1591), Randolph (1759), Buhle (1793), Gillies (1823), Mynas (1837), Dübner (1848), Bonafous (1856), Buckley (1857), Tovar (1953).

The interpretation of *λόγου* as “(single) word” seems as difficult as the meaning “explanation”, “development”, for two reasons. First, *λόγος* means “word” extremely rarely, if ever, in classical Greek. *ἔπος*, *λέξις*, *ὄνομα*, and *ῥῆμα* are the regular terms, *ὄνομα* indeed occurring in this sense in a passage early in Book III of the *Rhetoric*⁹). LSJ cites *Rhet.* III. 3. 1406a 36, a passage in close proximity to the present one, as a rare instance of *λόγος* meaning “(single) word”. An examination of the passage, however, suggests that even here *λόγος* does not necessarily have this meaning. The passage reads: *οἱ δ' ἀνθρώποι τοῖς διπλοῖς χρῶνται ἔταν ἀνώνυμον ἢ καὶ ὁ λόγος εὐσύνθετος, οἷον τὸ χρονοτριβεῖν*. It seems at least as natural to take *λόγος* in the sense of an “idea” which is easily expressed as a compound form. The case, then, for *λόγος* meaning simply “word” at 1406a 36 is not clear, and it would be hazardous to use it to support the meaning “word” for *λόγου* at 1407a 15.

A further argument against this interpretation of *λόγου* is the overly narrow meaning which must, as a result, be assigned to *εἰκῶν*. If the phrase is to mean “And *εἰκόνες* lacking a single word will be metaphors”, then *εἰκόνες* must be translated by the limited term “similes”, comparisons containing specific introductory words which, if removed, transform the similes into metaphors; e.g. Wordsworth’s “I wandered lonely as a cloud” becomes “I wandered lonely, a cloud”. *εἰκῶν* appears not, however, to be used in quite this way in the rest of chapter 4, and indeed in the rest of the *Rhetoric*. The definition of *εἰκῶν* at the beginning of the chapter includes an illustration which is, in fact, a simile¹⁰), but the examples of *εἰκῶν* which follow, ten in all, taken from fifth and fourth century orators and prose writers, show that simile is only one type of comparison which Aristotle covers by his term *εἰκῶν*. The method of citation makes it impossible to reconstruct the exact wording of those original passages which are no longer extant. Three of the examples, however, are from Plato’s *Republic*. Of these, one is a simile¹¹), two are simply long illustrative comparisons¹²). Thus, *εἰκῶν*

9) III. 2. 1404b 5, in the sense of “single words” as opposed to “phrases” (*ῥήματα*); but see Aeschines 2. 122 for an instance of *ῥῆμα* meaning “word”).

10) ὥς δὲ λέων ἐπόρουσεν, based probably on II. 20. 164, ὄρω λέων ὥς.

11) *Rep.* X. 601b 6–7.

12) *Rep.* V. 469d 9–e 2; VI. 488a 7–b 3. The latter is the famous illustration of the perils of democracy by means of the image of unruly sailors casting aside their pilot.

here signifies to Aristotle various types of stylistic comparison. Simile is one of these types but is not the only one¹³). Since, therefore, Aristotle seems to mean by *εἰκῶν* something broader than the English term "simile", it is again hard to assign to *λόγον* the meaning of "(single) word" which would unduly restrict the range of *εἰκῶν*.

In sum, neither of the two interpretations traditionally put forward for the phrase *λόγον δεόμεναι* is satisfactory. It is interesting to note that one early commentary in a sense recognizes this and straddles the fence by presenting both interpretations, an impossible position. The anonymous Greek commentator on the *Rhetoric*¹⁴) stresses in most of his remarks on chapter 4 that the addition or subtraction of *ὡς* will create, respectively, an *εἰκῶν* or a *μεταφορά*. He has chosen, in other words, the interpretation of *λόγον* as "(single) word". His actual comment on the whole phrase, however, reveals that he is trying to incorporate also the meaning "development", "explanation": *καὶ αἱ εἰκόνες αὐταὶ πάλιν τῇ ἀφαιρέσει τοῦ ὡς ἔσονται μεταφοραὶ λόγου δεόμεναι ἢτοι οἰκονομίας¹⁵) δεῖ γὰρ ἀφελεῖν τὸ ὡς ἐξ αὐτῶν. ἢ τὸ λόγου δεόμεναι ἢτοι ἐρμηνείας¹⁶) αἱ γὰρ εἰκόνες ἀσαφέστεραί εἰσι τῶν μεταφορῶν καὶ διὰ τοῦτο προσθήκη τινὸς σαφεστέρας ταύτας ποιήσομεν¹⁷).*

This attempt to combine the two separate interpretations of *λόγον δεόμεναι* serves only to confirm that the whole phrase *καὶ αἱ εἰκόνες μεταφοραὶ λόγον δεόμεναι* cannot be explained satisfactorily as it stands. No significant variant is given by the manuscripts (*μεταφοραῖς* for *μεταφοραὶ* in Parisinus 1741 is clearly a scribal mistake), and any effort at emendation, therefore, must be based on sense alone¹⁸). The simplest course would be to strike out *λόγον δεόμεναι*. The sentence can certainly stand

13) Aristotle uses a simile in his opening definition of *εἰκῶν* perhaps because it is a more convenient and concise way of exemplifying a comparison vs. a metaphor than would be a long illustrative comparison.

14) *Anonymi et Stephani in Artem Rhetoricam Commentaria*, ed. H. Rabe (Berlin, 1896). Stephanus does not comment on the passage.

15) My emphasis.

16) My emphasis.

17) Rabe, p. 179, 26-30.

18) It is interesting to see, however, that another passage in the *Rhetoric* containing the words *λόγος* and *δεόμενος* (I. 2. 1356b 37, *ἐκ τῶν λόγων δεομένων*) has been questioned for quite different reasons by H. Maier, *Die Syllogistik des Aristoteles* (Tübingen, 1896), vol. II, part 1, p. 476, note 2.

without the phrase, but its origin then remains unaccounted for. More difficult, but potentially more satisfactory, is conjecture. Although the meanings "development" and "(single) word" seem unlikely for *λόγον*, there is another meaning of *λόγος* which Aristotle has used already in connection with *εἰκῶν* and which would seem wholly fitting in these closing remarks of his first discussion of *εἰκῶν*. That meaning is "prose", as opposed to "poetry". In the opening paragraph of the chapter, Aristotle states that an *εἰκῶν* is poetical and should be used only rarely in prose: *χρήσιμον δὲ ἢ εἰκῶν καὶ ἐν λόγῳ, δλιγάκις δὲ ποιητικὸν γάρ.* (*Rhet.* III. 4. 1406b 24–25) This is not the only instance in Book III of *λόγος* in the meaning of "prose". In chapter 1, Aristotle remarks that people consider Gorgias' poetic prose very beautiful but that this is not as it should be: *ἀλλ' ἑτέρα λόγου καὶ ποιήσεως λέξις ἐστίν.* (*Rhet.* III. 1. 1404a 28–29) A similar thought occurs near the beginning of chapter 2: *ἢ γὰρ ποιητικῆ* [sc. *λέξις*] *ἴσως οὐ ταπεινῆ, ἀλλ' οὐ πρόπευσα λόγῳ.* (*Rhet.* III. 2. 1404b 4–5) *λόγος* in this sense, then, is common in the early chapters of Book III and is connected specifically with *εἰκῶν* at the beginning of chapter 4. Since our phrase is part of the summing up of Aristotle's comments on *εἰκῶν* thus far, it would be natural for the meaning of *λόγος* to stress again the idea that *εἰκῶν* is to be used only infrequently in prose.

In this case, the corruption lies less in *λόγον* than in *δεόμεναι*, and I suggest that the original phrase read something like: *καὶ αἱ εἰκόνες μεταφοραί, λόγῳ δὲ οὐ πρόπευσαι* („And comparisons will be metaphors, but in prose not fitting“). *οὐ πρόπευσαι* is suggested only *exempli gratia*; there is no immediately obvious emendation. Another possibility, perhaps better palaeographically but not as attractive as a participial form and somewhat harsh with a dative, is *λόγῳ δὲ σπάνιαι*, or *σπάνιοι*¹⁹ (Aristotle uses the word as both two- and three-termination). A third possibility, which preserves the genitive, is *λόγον δὲ οὐκ οἰκεῖται*²⁰. Any of these readings would give an easy sense to the passage; none is palaeographically desperate.

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19) The term does not appear elsewhere in the *Rhetoric*, but H. Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus* (Berlin, 1870) lists more than a dozen instances from other works.

20) Professor H. Lloyd-Jones has suggested this possibility.

In chapter 11 of Book III, Aristotle again discusses *εἰκῶν* in connection with metaphor. His particular concern is the *μεταφορὰ κατ' ἀναλογίαν*, the proportional metaphor, which he considers the finest kind. An example²¹), which Aristotle probably takes from Timotheus, is "The shield is the bowl of Ares"²²). This is a proportional metaphor because it is composed of two parts which contain reciprocal terms. In other words, the example can be reversed and expressed as "The bowl is the shield of Dionysus"²³). Aristotle describes the proportional metaphor as *οὐχ ἀπλοῦν*, the nonproportional as *ἀπλοῦν*²⁴), and fine comparisons, *εὐδοκιμοῦσαι εἰκόνες*, are said to be closely related to proportional metaphors, although *εἰκόνες* in general can also be constructed from simple (*ἀπλοῦν*), nonproportional metaphors. Two examples are given of *εἰκόνες* which, if they were to be expressed as metaphors, would be simple ones: *καὶ εἰκάξουσιν δὲ οὕτως, οἶον πιθήκῳ ἀλλητήν, λύχνῳ ψακαζομένῳ μύωπα*. (*Rhet.* III. 11. 1413a 3-4) Aristotle then seems to repeat for emphasis that fine comparisons are those constructed in an equivalent fashion to proportional metaphors, and he appends three examples of these. His language, however, is so abrupt and incomplete that once again a corruption may be suspected: *τὸ δὲ εὖ ἔστιν ὅταν μεταφορὰ ᾗ· ἔστιν γὰρ εἰκάσαι...* [and the examples follow]. (*Rhet.* III. 11. 1413a 5-6) *εἰκάσαι* is easily understood with *τὸ δὲ εὖ*, and there is thus an implied contrast between "to make *εἰκόνες* in a fine way" and the previous, simpler "to make *εἰκόνες*". The words which follow, however, *ὅταν μεταφορὰ ᾗ*, have been explained in two different ways by editors and translators.

The usual interpretation has been a literal one. Barbarus' translation²⁵) is an early representative: *Speciosissima vero similitudo est, in qua translationis quoque permixta est gratia*. Cope translates: "Excellence is attained in them when they contain (involve) metaphor"²⁶). There are two difficulties in this inter-

21) *Rhet.* III. 11. 1412b 36-1413a 1.

22) *ἡ ἀσπίς ἐστι φιάλη Ἄρεως*, cf. Timotheus, frag. 21 (Page).

23) Aristotle explains this basic feature of the proportional metaphor at the very end of chapter 4, at 1407a 15-18.

24) What he means by nonproportional is some such metaphor as "They showed boiling anger."

25) Barbarus, *op. cit.* (see note 3).

26) Cope, *Rhetoric*, vol. III, p. 139. Others who have followed this interpretation include: the anonymous commentator, Trapezuntius, Vic-

pretation. The first is that Aristotle's statement would be absurd if he means no more than that *fine* (εῖς) comparisons are those which contain metaphor, since the immediately preceding sentence has stated that comparisons *in general* can be formed which contain metaphor. Second, the first of the three examples of τὸ δὲ εἶς [εἰκάζειν] is formed from the proportional metaphor which has been used already, "The shield is the bowl of Ares".

It would seem that "proportional" *must* be understood with μεταφορά in the phrase ὅταν μεταφορὰ ᾖ. Maioragius' early translation realized this: *Laudantur (inquit) imagines, quoties in eis apparet translatio, praesertim eius generis, quod a proportione ducitur*²⁷), as also did Jebb's translation: "But the happy simile²⁸) is when there is a 'proportional' metaphor"²⁹). The text, however, should be corrected to say what Aristotle means, and I suggest that the phrase ἢ κατ' ἀναλογίαν has been dropped. There is no manuscript difficulty which might point toward this particular omission, but a plausible sequence can be proposed. If the original phrase was ὅταν μεταφορὰ ἢ κατ' ἀναλογίαν ᾖ, a copyist may have moved his eye from μεταφορὰ not to the first but to the second *eta*. Alternately, if the original phrase was ὅταν ἢ κατ' ἀναλογίαν ᾖ, a copyist may have skipped from ὅταν to ᾖ because of the similar *-an* ending of ἀναλογίαν, with μεταφορὰ introduced later as a gloss. Either sequence reflects a common mistake among ancient and medieval copyists and enables the text to say what it means.

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torius, Cassandre, Buhle, Taylor, Gros, Gillies, the Berlin edition, Mynas, Dübner, Bonafous, Buckley, Spengel, Saint-Hilaire, Roberts, Tovar, Grube, Gohlke, and Plebe.

27) Maioragius, *op. cit.* (see note 8).

28) "Simile," I repeat, is misleading as a translation of εἰκόν.

29) Jebb, *op. cit.*, p. 175 (see note 5). Riccobonus, Goulston, Battie, and Freese have also followed this interpretation.