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Sara J. Newman:

Aristotle and Style

Lewinston-Queenston-Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2005

298 pages (tables; bibliography; index)

ISBN: 0-7734-6194-9

Price: $119.95; £74.95

Fitting well into the recent Aristotelian bibliography, as Alan G. Gross rightly points out in his preface to the book, Sara Newman's work offers a very engaged commentary on the relation-ship between Aristotle's theory and practice of metaphor and contemporary understandings of it. As in a roundtrip, Newman comes back at the end of her analysis to her opening question "Why Aristotle and Style?" (p. 1), which she can now answer by saying that "In spite of its limitations, Aristotle's notion of style is more than ornamental and substitutive; it operates consistently in his texts to enhance, to facilitate, and to systematically guide certain conceptual inquiries" (p. 263). Indeed the book not only has the merit of stressing the role of Aristotle's metaphor within the clarifying function of style and consequently its link with the logical process of persuasion, but it is also an important contribution to the vindication of Aristotle's rightful place in the development of the modern conceptual theory of metaphor.

In the *Introduction* (pp. 1-6) Newman announces that her aim is "to make sense of what Aristotle says about style throughout his *corpus* explicitly and conceptually" (p. 3) and gives a brief survey of the contents of the ten following chapters, which she presents as the necessary steps to attain it. Newman's method is philologically correct: she starts from the analysis of Aristotle's texts and from his statements, in the *Rhetoric* and in the *Poetics*, that style must be clear, and examines the function of metaphor within this context.

The first chapter ("The Background", pp. 7-21) provides the basis for a critical approach to the traditional scholarly perspective according to which metaphor, as Aristotle defines it (*Po.* 1457b 7-9), is only "a substitutive, figurative entity that is categorically opposed to normal, clear usage" (p. 8). Newman claims that the recent reappraisals of metaphor "as more than ornamental" (p. 7), though often inadequate and careless, are a better starting point from which to discover the real value of Aristotle's theory in relationship to modern conceptualizations of metaphor.

To justify that, she begins in the second chapter ("Poetic and Heuristic Clarity", pp. 23-47) a systematic analysis of the contexts in which Aristotle deals with metaphor. Granted that he considers clarity as the goal of any linguistic expression (*Po.* 1458 a 17; *Rhet.* 1404 b 1 f.), Newman examines the role of metaphor within this function of *lexis* and takes up the four types of metaphors described by Aristotle in the *Poetics* (*genus* to *species*; *species* to *genus*; *species* to *species*; metaphor from analogy), focusing on the structural difference between the first three and the fourth. All of them, she says, "contribute to clarity" but the analogous metaphor "has greater complexity which confers greater effectiveness on the transferences it creates" (p. 36). Looking next at Aristotle's scientific works Newman mentions the unavoidable need for intellectual clarity in all definitions and says that metaphors contribute to the achievement of this clarity because of their ability to compare terms. In this regard, she rightly quotes the passage of *Top.* 1.15-18, where Aristotle is dealing with likeness, but I wish she had pointed out what I consider to be a crucial detail, namely the fact that in this passage Aristotle is focusing not only on the likeness of the relationship A : B = C : D, but also on the likeness of things that share the same attribute. It is indeed worth noting that the difference between the first three

types of metaphors and the fourth also depends on the difference between these kinds of likeness.

In the third chapter ("Prose Clarity", pp. 49-72) Newman considers the need for clarity within the constraints of the rhetorical context and offers a broad overview of all suitable stylistic devices. Among them brevity deserves particular attention and the use of metaphors fulfils this task very well. They are not only a means of spicing up ordinary language, of naming the unnamed, or of amplifying or diminishing what belongs to the same genre (not "species", as Newman p. 52 says!), but also the shortest way of conveying knowledge to the audience. In this regard, Newman calls (too) brief attention to the comparison with the simile – discussed by Aristotle himself in a very cryptic way – and devotes the last part of the chapter to other figures and elements of style, focusing at the end on the special kind of clarity offered by "bringing-before-the-eyes", which is a matter that she deals with more extensively later in the book.

In chapter four ("Style and Argument", pp. 73-107) Newman enlarges the field of her analysis and examines in depth the possible relationship between argumentation and style. She takes into account first the different understandings of the enthymeme in Isocrates, Anaximenes, and Aristotle, then the logical process of paradigms related to metaphors and other figures, and concludes by offering an interesting overview, in two specific Tables, of a certain number of the formal *topoi* which Aristotle deals with in *Rhet*. II 23. Her discussion and its results are very stimulating, even if I cannot agree with all her statements. As to paradigms, for instance, on the one hand I would require a better explanation of how the relationship from particular to particular works [*Rhet*. 1357 b 28-36], because saying that "[w]hen the orator uses examples, he moves inductively from species to species, in this case the genus involves plotting against tyrants" (p. 81), is not enough. It should be added that this is possible only when – once one has reached inductively the general attribute of the genus to which the first particular belongs – one can deductively infer that also the second particular, sharing the same attribute, belongs to the same genus. On the other hand, I would also like to stress that, if it is true that this kind of paradigm perfectly mirrors the logical process of the third kind of metaphor, paradigms called *logoi* are built, in just the same way as metaphors, by analogy.

The fifth chapter ("Aristotle's Notion of 'Bringing-Before-the-Eyes'", pp. 109-130) constitutes the core of Newman's argumentation. She summarizes two modern perspectives on 'bringing-before-the-eyes', the first (Moran, Kirby, Kennedy, Stanford) that it can be understood just as a synonym for *energeia*, the second (Lallot, Ricœur, Swiggers, Tamba-Mecz/Veyne) that it is a strong cognitive means. Critical of both, Newman rather wants to focus on the "perceptive capacity" of 'bringing-before-the-eyes' to prove that this is the way "Aristotle's theory anticipates recent approaches to language" (p. 111). The starting point for her arguments is a very engaged analysis of Aristotle's passages where 'bringing-before-the-eyes' is defined in terms of *energeia* and visualisation. In this context, metaphors that 'bring-before-the-eyes' allow the audience to visualize the actions in question because they fulfil the important task of actualizing them before the audience. Newman's interest is then not only to prove that this *energeia* relates to the visualizing capacity of the audience through sense-perception, but also that through sense-perception, metaphors which 'bring-before-the-eyes' acquire a particular kind of cognitive dimension because in this way 'bringing-before-the-eyes' contributes to linguistic clarity. Her arguments lead therefore to the final statement that "'bringing-before-the-eyes' is the lexical species of *energeia* which prompts the audience to visualize images within the persuasive process, making possible though not yet activating human understanding and reflection on the issues these images involve" (p. 127).

With the sixth chapter ("Applying Aristotle's Metaphorical Theory to his Practice", pp. 131-167) Newman moves on to verifying how Aristotle himself uses metaphors. This analysis allows her to conclude that Aristotle's practice is more or less consistent with his theory, but also that it is possible to find in his works a special kind of metaphor, which is based on

concepts rather than on terms and therefore goes beyond the standard Aristotelian doctrine. The steps to this conclusion are two particular functions of some metaphors that Newman highlights through a very careful reading of Aristotle's *corpus*. First she takes into account what she calls "illuminary" metaphor because of its enhancing function. From a logical point of view, an 'illuminary' metaphor does not work differently from other metaphors: its characteristic is that the likeness between the entities taken into account is revealed when the contrast between two linguistic extremes is resolved in a "balanced understanding" or a "mean" (p. 133). Starting with an example taken from the *History of Animals* involving the description of a physical event – the male and female voice change at puberty (*H.A.* 581 a 17-19, b 9-11) – Newman shows that an 'illuminary' metaphor contributes to clarity because, being implicitly cognitive, it makes a given situation more intelligible to the audience. Indeed, focusing on the *Rhetoric*, she examines in detail three different groups of metaphors, which accordingly she schematizes in Tables, to conclude that "these examples illustrate that metaphorical terms possess an inherent capacity to represent domains, a capacity that facilitates the clarification process by specifying what the *metaphora*'s immediate context is" (p. 142). Afterwards Newman calls attention to "heuristic" metaphors, that is, metaphors in which intellectual clarity is reached within a dialectical definitional process. She takes into account examples from the *Meteorology* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* and shows through very detailed analysis not only that these metaphors are "implicitly cognitive" but also that 'illuminary' and 'heuristic' functions often coexist in the same metaphor. Only at the end of the chapter does Newman face the question of "Another Kind of *Metaphora*" (p. 153). Taking up again the clarity reached when the contrast between two different linguistic entities is resolved in a 'mean', she says that 'illuminary' and 'heuristic' metaphors only express some aspects of this contingent 'mean', whilst they never explain Aristotle's conceptualisation of the 'mean' itself. Rather, we must look for such explanation in "another kind" of metaphor, which Newman defines as "concept-based" (p. 156).

In chapter seven ("Aristotle's Definitions of Rhetoric in the *Rhetoric*", pp. 169-182) Newman is concerned with the difficulties inherent in the metaphorical definitions of rhetoric given by Aristotle ("Rhetoric is an *antistrophos* to dialectic", *Rhet.* 1354 a 1 [here, as in the other examples quoted below, Newman uses George A. Kennedy's translation from 1991 of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*]; "rhetoric is a certain kind of offshoot [*paraphues*] of dialectic and of ethical studies (which it is just to call politics)", *Rhet.* 1356 a 24-26; "rhetoric is partly [*morion ti*] dialectic, and resembles it [...] for neither of them is identifiable with knowledge of any specific subject, but they are distinct abilities of supplying words", *Rhet.* 1356 a 30-31). Newman mentions recent interpretations of the definitions and concludes that "[t]hese efforts neglect the function of the *metaphorai* vis-à-vis Aristotle's own criteria" (p. 173). This criticism is followed by her own arguments that focus on the wider context within which Aristotle uses these definitions. Despite all her care in following Aristotle's reasoning step by step, however, she has to acknowledge that in this case metaphors defining rhetoric do not have any heuristic function because none of them "can be removed from the definition and leave the term 'rhetoric' clear. Aristotle himself does not supply the appropriate and necessary textual materials to resolve the lack of clarity in his own definitions of rhetoric according to his own criteria" (p. 181).

From these difficulties, which anyway belong to the vexed question how the first chapter of the *Rhetoric* relates to the second, Newman shifts in chapter eight ("A Theory to Supplement Aristotle's Analyses", pp. 183-212) to describing the modern understanding of the conceptual metaphor. Her account is particularly clear: following the constructivist theory (e.g. Lakoff, Lakoff and Johnson, Turner) that holds "that metaphors are the cognitive conceptualizations of particular situations" (p. 185), she first explains that a conceptual metaphor operates by means of associations that are based on shared experiences in everyday life and therefore allow people to understand one thing in terms of another. Then, to show how this theory is rooted in and integrates with Aristotle's notion of metaphor, she quotes the well-known Aristotelian ana-

logous metaphor that "old age is the evening of the life" (*Po.* 1457 b 22 ff.) and illustrates how we might reinterpret these words in terms of a conceptual metaphor. By employing this contemporary theory and analyzing in depth its easy examples as illustrations of the way the transfer of meaning between two conceptual domains can happen, Newman aims at offering her own model, which allows her to discover the use of conceptual metaphors in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. She deals with this matter in the two final chapters.

Starting from the analysis of two important metaphors often used by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, "aiming" and "mean", Newman thus in the ninth chapter ("Aristotle's Metaphorical Theory Applied to the *Nicomachean Ethics*: Aiming at a Mean", pp. 213-237) argues that Aristotle, by means of conceptual metaphors, meant to say "that ETHICS IS AIMING in terms of its method and that ETHICS IS A MEAN with respect to ethical actions" (p. 214). In doing so, Newman seeks to prove that recent theory concerned with conceptual metaphors completes Aristotle's theory, rescuing it from being limited to a transfer of terms. The way she argues is consistent with her previous accounts and gently guides the reader to acknowledge that the whole work is built on the two conceptual metaphors of "aiming" and "mean".

This particular reading of the *Nicomachean Ethics* leads Newman to conclude her study in the tenth chapter ("Justice is a Kind of Virtue", pp. 239-257) with the statement that, despite some problems related to its interpretation, book V (on justice) also "belongs conceptually to the *Nicomachean Ethics*". The last few remarks in the *Conclusion* (pp. 259-263) bring us back to the main problem, that is, "the recovery of an alternative view of style" (p. 259), and express Newman's awareness of having focused on the crucial relationship between style and argument and on its important consequences for a correct understanding of Aristotle's thought.

A well-informed *Bibliography* as well as a useful *Index* of the most noteworthy concepts close this very rewarding book. Even if reading it is not an easy task because of the complexity of the subject matter itself and because of the specialist language which Newman uses, the reader gains new tools that facilitate his understanding of style, and in particular of metaphors, in their development down the centuries, from Aristotle onwards. Sara Newman's reasoning is built on arguments that are difficult to refute. Indeed, to use the conceptual metaphor that she analyses in the eighth chapter, if "argument is a war" she will probably be a winner. The value of her book is actually not diminished by a few misprints in the layout because they belong, as she says referring to the issue of particular justice, "to the realm of variable actions".

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