Metaphor and the Logicians from Aristotle to Cajetan

E. Jennifer Ashworth
University of Waterloo, Canada

Abstract
I examine the treatment of metaphor by medieval logicians and how it stemmed from their reception of classical texts in logic, grammar, and rhetoric. I consider the relation of the word ‘metaphor’ to the notions of translatio and transumptio, and show that it is not always synonymous with these. I also show that in the context of commentaries on the Sophistical Refutations metaphor was subsumed under equivocation. In turn, it was linked with the notion of analogy not so much in the Greek sense of a similarity between two proportions or relations as in the new medieval sense of being said secundum prius et posterius. Whether or not analogy could be reduced to metaphor, or the reverse, depended on the controversial issue of the number of acts of imposition needed to produce an equivocal term. A spectrum of views is canvassed, including those found in the logic commentaries of John Duns Scotus.

Keywords
analogy, equivocation, imposition, metaphor, Sophistical Refutations commentaries

In this paper I shall sketch an answer to a series of questions about the treatment of metaphor by medieval logicians. One question is linguistic: are the words “translatio” and “transumptio” synonyms of the word “metaphora”? Three other questions concern analogy and equivocation. First, is metaphor a type of equivocation? Second, is metaphor a type of analogy and if so, what type? Is it linked with analogy in the Greek sense of a similarity between two proportions or relations, or with analogy in the new medieval sense of being said secundum prius et posterius because of some attribution? Third, how many acts of imposition are required for the production of analogical terms and metaphors? This last issue is particularly important, given that words are said...
to be used *proprie* only when used in accordance with an act of imposition, and that metaphors are normally said to be taken *improprie*. I will take up these questions in the context of three sets of texts. I will start with some remarks about the texts of Aristotle and their reception in the Middle Ages. Secondly, I will look at *translatio* and *transumptio* in ancient grammar and rhetoric. Finally, I will look at medieval logic texts, especially commentaries on the *Sophistical Refutations*.

My study will show how ancient traditions in logic, grammar and rhetoric were interwoven and used to tackle specifically medieval problems. Aristotle played a prominent role in the story, but not primarily because of his explicit discussions of metaphor in his *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*. Stoic thinkers contributed the theory of tropes or figures of speech; and Neoplatonic commentators such as Porphyry influenced Boethius’s discussion of equivocation and metaphor. The thirteenth century theory of analogy itself grew out of the interweaving of problems in Christian theology, Aristotelian metaphysics and Aristotelian logic, but was enriched by the long Greek and Arabic tradition of analysing ambiguous terms as being said *secundum prius et posterius*. The resulting syntheses, especially in late thirteenth and early fourteenth century British logicians, show a skilful use of whatever parts of ancient traditions seemed relevant to the particular interests and doctrines of the author in question.

**Aristotle**

Aristotle discussed metaphor in his *Rhetoric* and his *Poetics*. These two works came to be regarded by the late Greek commentators of the School of Alexandria as part of the *Organon*, that is, as part of logic in a wide sense, and the Arabs followed this established tradition. Albert the Great, Aquinas, and Simon of Faversham, among others, followed the Arabs, at least in principle. However, the practice was rather different, given the relative inaccessibility of the two works. It is tempting to think that they contain the origins of medieval discussions of metaphor, but at least so far as direct influences go, this hypothesis cannot be sustained.

Aristotle gave his standard definition of metaphor in *Poetics* 1457b7-18, writing:

> Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy. . . . That from analogy is possible whenever there are four terms so
related that the second is to the first, as the fourth is to the third; for one may then put the
fourth in place of the second, and the second in place of the fourth.\textsuperscript{1}

We should note that two of these types of metaphor, from genus to species and
from species to genus were later classified by Quintilian as types of synecdoche.\textsuperscript{2} In accordance with his extensional definition, synecdoche differs from
metaphor because in synecdoche one moves between more and less in things
of the same nature, whereas in metaphor reference is made to a different type
of thing.\textsuperscript{3}

William of Moerbeke translated the \textit{Poetics} in 1278. However, only two
manuscripts survive, and for all practical purposes the translation remained
unknown. On the other hand, in 1256 Hermannus Alemannus translated the
middle commentary of Averroes on the \textit{Poetics}.\textsuperscript{4} This translation was reason-
ably well known, and it gave rise to at least one commentary by Bartholomew
of Bruges, a short \textit{quaestio}, and some glosses.\textsuperscript{5} In some places (e.g. 59-60)
Hermannus does use the words “metaphora”, “metaphorica” and “metaphorice”, but when he refers to the standard Latin examples of metaphor and
amphiboly, “pratum ridet” and “litus aratur”, he speaks rather of “translatio”
and “transumptio” (42). The latter is associated with proportionality. The
work gives no very clear idea of the definition of metaphor, and the four types
of metaphor are included, without emphasis, in a discussion of various ways
in which words may be used, including transumption or transmutation to an
extraneous use (67). The example of analogy (without any use of that word) is
presented as a change of proportions, as when old age is called the evening of
life and evening is called the old age of the day on the grounds that the relation
(proportio) of old age to life is much like (\textit{quasi}) the relation of evening to
the day.

Aristotle’s \textit{Rhetoric} was better known. There were at least two translations
dating from the middle of the thirteenth century, followed by that of William
of Moerbeke, finished around 1269 and transmitted by a large number of
manuscripts. In this work, Aristotle associates metaphor and simile, writing

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Quotations are taken from Aristotle (1984). However, I have modified them where necessary
to conform with the medieval Latin translations.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Quintilian (1970), 8.6.19, 465-466. For discussion, see Meyer (1993), 9.
\item \textsuperscript{3} See Grondeux (2002), 121.
\item \textsuperscript{4} See AL XXXIII.
\item \textsuperscript{5} See Dahan (1980).
\end{itemize}
The simile also is a metaphor; the difference is but slight. When the poet says:

He leapt on the foe as a lion,

this is a simile; when he says of him ‘the lion leapt’, it is a metaphor—here, since both are courageous, he has transferred to Achilles the name of ‘lion’.

Aristotle also writes (1411a1-3): “Of the four kinds of metaphor the most taking is the proportional kind. Thus Pericles, for instance, said that the vanishing from their country of the young men who had fallen in the war was ‘as if the spring were taken out of the year’. However, in this passage he does not explain what the other three kinds of metaphor are.

At least four commentaries on Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* still exist, though both surviving manuscripts of John Buridan’s *Quaestiones* lack the material on metaphor. I shall focus on the popular commentary by Giles of Rome, written between 1271 and 1274. Giles follows Aristotle’s text very closely, though not always with understanding, apparently owing to errors in his copy of Moerbeke’s translation. For instance, when Aristotle (1411a13-14) speaks of Sestos as “the treasure trove of the Peiraeus”, Giles translates “the man called Sextus was a robber of the pyre, that is, of fire” which means, Giles tells us, that he was very audacious. According to Giles (f. 103 rb), the four kinds of metaphor to which Aristotle refers are the following: *asteyum*, also called *asteycum* (e.g. f. 105 rb), *proverbium*, *transumptio*, and *assumptio* or *assimilatio*. *Transumptio* is the simplest kind of metaphor, as when we say of Achilles that he is a lion or of the young men that they are spring-like. The other types all add something to the basic metaphor (f. 105 rb-va). *Asteyum* is the result of a problem with Moerbeke’s text. Moerbeke had left the word “asteios”, which roughly means lively or witty, in Greek. Giles took *asteyum* to be a kind of metaphor to which is added a teaching function, and he called it *disciplinativa*. It also has a link with analogy, because the strongest kind adds the teaching function to a metaphor involving analogy (f. 104 va). *Proverbium* has to do with proverbs, and Giles explains that this is the kind of metaphor to which is added the element of a common usage. *Assimilatio*, the word that William of Moerbeke had used to translate simile, is the kind of metaphor to which is added a certain analogy.

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6) Fredborg (1976a), 47.
7) Al. XXXI,1-2, 299: 27-8, ‘Sestum autem predam Pireei.’
8) Giles of Rome (1968), f. 103 va, ‘Sextus, id est quod ille homo, erat praedo pyretri, id est, ignis.’
(analogiam quandam), for example when one says that the young men are to the city as the spring-time is to the year. We should note, however, that in this case it is the explicit analogy in the Greek sense that is a type of metaphor, whereas for other logicians an underlying analogy was what explained the metaphor actually used. Thus Thomas de Wyk and Walter Burley both claim that we say “foot” of a bridge because the bottom of the bridge supports the bridge in the way that a man is supported by his foot.9

Apart from the Rhetoric and Poetics, Aristotle speaks of metaphor in the Posterior Analytics, in a passage (97b29-39) where he warns against the use of metaphors and metaphorical expressions in definitions. In the same place he makes a passing reference to the word “sharp” (acutum), which he had described as a metaphor in De anima 420a29, and, in Topics 1.15 (107a14-18), as equivocal when said of a vocal sound (vox), an angle and a knife. In commentaries on the Posterior Analytics, notably those by Giles of Rome and Paul of Venice, these remarks led to some discussion of the way in which “acutum” could be both equivocal and a metaphor. Giles of Rome explains that many cases of equivocity are caused by those metaphors which involve transumptio.10 Because a sharp object penetrates magnitudes rapidly, the term is transferred to those tastes that penetrate the taste buds, and then to those vocal sounds that penetrate the hearing. He added that when Aristotle said that equivocation was worse than metaphor, he was referring to pure equivocation, not the kind that is equivalent to metaphor and transumptio, and which is based on some similitude. Paul of Venice echoes Giles’s remarks in his own commentary on the Posterior Analytics, though he does not refer to transumptio.11

Aristotle gave similar warnings against the use of metaphor in definitions in Topics 6.2 (139b33-140a2). He also remarks there (140a9-11) that all metaphors are based on some kind of similitude, and earlier, in Topics 1.17 (108a6-16) and 18 (108b24-27), he had explicitly linked similitude with what became standard examples of analogy in the Greek sense. One is principium said of a point on a line and the unit in number, and the other is sight, which is to the eye as intellect is to the soul. The latter example was also influential through its use in Nicomachean Ethics 1.6 (1096b29-30). The passages in the Topics introduce us to the next notion to be examined, translatti

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11) Paul of Venice (1976), sig. x 5 vb-6 ra.
for in Boethius's translation of the *Topics*, the Greek *metaphora* is always rendered as *translatio*.

**Translatio**

*Translatio* is part of the theory of tropes or figures of speech, which is Stoic in origin.12 According to Quintilian, "A trope is the change (*mutatio*) of a word or phrase from its proper signification to another signification, with some <added> force (*cum uirtute*)."13 Donatus, the fourth century grammarian whose discussion of tropes in Book 3 of his *Ars Maior* became standard for medieval undergraduate instruction, wrote: “A trope is an expression translated (*translata*) from its proper signification to an improper similitude (*ad non propriam similitudinem*), either for ornament or out of necessity.”14 Donatus’s wording suggests a general sense of *translatio*, but for Quintilian *translatio* (or *tralatio* in the variant found in the critical edition) is the trope that corresponds to the Greek *metaphora*. It is "the transfer of a noun or verb from the place in which it is proper to another place where the proper word is lacking or where the word which has been transferred is better."15 The earlier *Rhetorica ad Herennium* had added a reference to similitude as justifying the transfer, and had noted that the reasons for *translatio* included brevity, ornament, and the avoidance of obscenity.16 Quintilian listed four types of metaphor: the transference from an animate being to another animate being, from an inanimate being to another inanimate being, from an animate being to an inanimate being, and from an inanimate being to an animate being.17 This fourfold division, which is found in Donatus, and in other authors, such as Bede in his *Liber de Schematibus et Tropis*,18 seems to be an elaboration of Aristotle’s type of metaphor from species to species, and no mention is made of analogy in the Greek sense.

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12 For discussion and further references, see Meyer (1993), 10 and Holtz (1981), 200.
15 Quintilian (1970), 8.6.5, 463: 3-5. Later Quintilian (1970), 8.6.34-5, 469 says that catachresis or *abusio* gives a name to things that have no name, and that it differs from metaphor because in metaphor there was a different word (*abusio est ubi nomen defuit, tralatio ubi aliud fuit*).
16 Anonymous (1964) IV (V) 45, 157: 27-158: 1; V (V) 34, 158: 5-16.
Translatio was linked with equivocation in the Categories commentary of Boethius. He follows Greek commentators, notably Porphyry, in making a prior distinction between chance equivocals which, according to later logicians, must involve two separate impositions of the one word, and deliberate equivocals, where the different senses are linked in some way. There are four kinds of deliberate equivocation. Similitude, in the sense of a similarity of external form, exemplified by a true man and a painted man; analogy in the Greek sense, exemplified by principium said of unity with respect to number and point with respect to a line; “of one origin”, exemplified by medicinale; and “in relation to one end”, exemplified by salutaris or, for later authors, sanum, said of animals, their diet, and urine. From the 1240s onward, the last two subdivisions were classified as analogy in the new sense of being said of two things in a prior and a posterior way (secundum prius et posterius), and often an extra subdivision, relation to one subject, was added to accommodate the example of ens. Boethius then goes on to say that there seems to be another mode of equivocation that Aristotle is silent about, namely translatio. He cites the example of “pes”, said of a ship and of a mountain. He states that translatio has no property of its own (translatio nullius proprietatis est), by which he means that it is not a particular class of word. It may or may not fall under equivocation. If, for reasons of ornament, one calls a steersman a charioteer, the word “charioteer” is not equivocal, for the man is already properly named steersman. However, if the object has no name of its own, as in the case of the picture of a man, one can transfer the word “homo” from the living man to his picture, and so the word “homo” is equivocal. Note that we are encountering homo pictus for the second time, for he was also the standard example of similitudo, the first subdivision of deliberate equivocation.

The distinction between two types of translatio, found in Boethius and in the rhetoricians, as well as in Petrus Helias, seems to cause a problem, given that metaphor seems to involve an ephemeral, ad hoc use of words, related to a particular language and to particular circumstances. Some commentators on the Sophistical Refutations explained that it was because of this specificity that

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22) Cf. Quintilian (1970), 8.6.6-8, 463 on necessity and ornament.
Aristotle, when he listed the three modes common to equivocation and amphiboly, gave no example of the second mode which they identified with metaphor. This characterization of metaphor fits well with the idea of using another word for something that already has its own name, such as “laughing” instead of “flowering”, for the sake of ornamentation. It does not fit so well with the idea of using a word with an established sense to name something that has no name of its own, for that seems to imply a certain permanence. Of the logicians I have read, only Peter of Spain notes that metaphors can become fixed in the language, and thereby turn into straightforward equivocal terms. We should note that in medieval practice fixed metaphors include those primarily introduced for the sake of ornamentation, such as the laughing meadows which provided a stock example from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, and that these meadows became not just a stock example of metaphor but of equivocation.

Another classical source that brought metaphor, under that name, together with equivocation is Simplicius’s commentary on the *Categories*, translated by William of Moerbeke in 1266. Simplicius remarked (43) that there was a possible link between one of the subdivisions of deliberate equivocation, analogy in the Greek sense, and metaphor, when he wrote “Others, among whom is Atticus, bring together the mode according to metaphor (*secundam metaphoran*) and the mode according to analogy (*secundum analogiam*) and affirm that their reunion constitutes one single mode of equivocation.” He went on to quote and elaborate on Porphyry’s point that when a word is transferred to something that has a name, there is metaphor and no equivocation, but when it is transferred to something that has no name, it is not a case of metaphor at all, but is straightforward equivocation. The example cited is that of “foot”, said on the one hand of the lower part of a mountain in place of the Greek word “hyporia” and on the other hand of a table or bed, because of the similitude to the foot of an animal. Here there are two *rationes* and one common name. Simplicius added (43-4) that the first case will count as equivocation if similitude is involved.

26) For Abelard in *Glosae super Praedicamenta*, ‘prata rident’ was not a case of equivocation: see Rosier-Catach (1997), 156-157.
To return to the word *translatio*, we cannot assume that even in the late classical period it was always equivalent to metaphor as one particular figure of speech [cf. Donatus, above]. In *De Doctrina Christiana* (II, 10, 15) Augustine divides signs into two groups, *propria* and *translata*. Proper signs are those used to signify those things they were instituted to signify (*propter quas sunt instituta*) and transferred signs seem to be those used in accordance with any figure of speech. He gives the example of “ox” used in “You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain” to stand either for an actual animal or for an evangelist. In general, he argues for the importance of knowing the tropes in order to dissolve ambiguities (III, 30, 41), and he makes specific reference to metaphor and catachresis (III, 29, 40). This generality is even clearer in Augustine’s *De Dialectica* (112-16) where *translatio* is introduced as a type of equivocation depending on the use of words (*ex loquendi usu*). The first case cited is that of similitude, as when a man and his statue are both called “Tullius”. The second and third cases involve parts and wholes, the fourth and fifth involve species and genus, the sixth and seventh involve cause and effect, and the eighth and ninth involve the contained and the contained. In other words, they cover synecdoche and metonymy. Another influential text was *De trinitate* I, 1, 2, where Augustine remarks that those things that are said *proprie* of God and are not found in creatures, are rarely affirmed in Scripture, and cites *Exodus* 3.14 as an exception. This remark was one of the inspirations for a prominent movement in twelfth century theology which held that all words, with the possible exception of “Qui est”, are said *translative* of God. In my view, it is clear that Gilbert of Poitiers and Alan of Lille, to mention just two names, were using *translatio* in a much wider sense than mere metaphor.27 Similar extensions are found in the logicians, and Irène Rosier-Catach (1999a) has recently studied the wide use of *translatio* in Peter Abelard’s logical writings.

**Transumptio**

A word with a similarly wide use, and that often replaced *translatio*, was *transumptio* (or *transsumptio*). For Quintilian, *transumptio* was metalepsis, which occurs when there is a double transference, that is to say, when the word in question replaces another word, which in turn replaces another word and so

on. For instance, we might replace the word cano (I sing), by canto (I chant), and then replace canto by dico (I say) in order to say that I say instead of saying that I sing. There are elaborate discussions of transumptio in later medieval writings on the poetic arts, but for most logicians the word transumptio was merely a synonym of the word translatio, and enjoyed the same ambiguities. For instance, in the thirteenth century we find Roger Bacon, who was strongly influenced by Augustine’s De dialectica, using the words transumptio and transsumere in his De signis to cover a variety of cases of equivocation and analogy. In his Compendium Studii Theologiae (116) he notes that figurative language, as in Pratum ridet, constitutes an improper mode of equivocation, so it is unlikely that he meant transumptio to be equivalent to metaphor.

We find the wider sense in various logical sources, at least three of which bring together Boethius’s four types of deliberate equivocation with the notion of transumptio. Anonymus Aurelianensis, writing perhaps between 1160 and 1180, said that the second type of equivocation was when a name signified one thing principally, but was transferred to signify another thing either from proportion or from similitude or from some other cause, and he gave the examples of homo pictus and the laughing meadows. There is a clear hint of Boethius’s four types of deliberate equivocation here, as there is in the thirteenth century Categories commentary of Robert Kilwardby. It should also be noted that Anonymus Aurelianensis remarks that the first case of equivocation, Boethius’s chance equivocation, involves diverse institutions, which suggests that the other types he lists do not. In the late thirteenth century, Burley explicitly identifies types of transumptio with Boethius’s types of deliberate equivocation, and he insists that there is just one act of imposition involved.

In discussions of supposition theory, the word transumptio also has a wider sense. For instance, Walter Burley explains that supposition is improper when a term supposits because of transumptio or the use of words (ex transsumptione vel ex usu loquendi), and Vincent Ferrer mentions this view. They both go on to cite antonomasis, synecdoche, and metonomy as producing improper

30) Fredborg, Nielsen and Pinborg (1978), e.g. 109-115, 128-130.
31) Ebbesen (1979), xxviii.
32) Anonymus Aurelianensis, Commentarium in Sophisticos Elenchos, in Ebbesen (1979), 86.
34) Burley, Quaestiones super Sophisticos Elenchos, in Ebbesen (2005c), 281.
We find similar material in the Logica "Cum sit nostra", Roger Bacon, William Ockham and John Buridan, but there was little sustained discussion of improper supposition.

In logic texts, transumptio also appears in the sections devoted to the Topics. In his De topicis differentiis, Boethius, following a lost work of Themistius, describes the topic ex transumptione as the use of a thing which is better known (such as justice in the republic) in place of something less well known (such as justice in general), or of a more common word (such as "wise") in place of a word that is obscure or difficult (such as "philosopher"). Boethius was followed by William of Sherwood, but some writers of logic texts, including Peter of Spain, Lambert of Lagy (often called of Auxerre) and John Buridan, replace the first case by the case of a word or phrase which is transferred on account of a similitude, and here we find the standard examples of "pratum ridet" and "litus aratur". John Buridan also added the cases of words such as "lion" and "pig" predicated of human beings. In this context it is clear that these logicians thought of transumptio in terms of metaphor.

Commentaries on the Sophistical Refutations

The fullest discussions of metaphor, most usually under the name transumptio, occur in textbook treatments of fallacies and in commentaries on the Sophistical Refutations. In that work Aristotle first lists six types of fallacy which depend on language, beginning with equivocation and amphiboly (165b24-166a6). He then gives four examples of equivocation which were regarded as falling into three groups. Following Boethius's translation in AL VI 1-3 the first is exemplified by the word "discere", the second by the word "expediens", and the third by the words "sedens" and "laborans". After some remarks about amphiboly (166a7-15), Aristotle then writes (166a15-20): "There are three modes of equivocation and amphiboly: one when either the phrase or the name primarily signifies more than one thing, e.g. 'piscis' and 'canis'; another when we are accustomed to speak in that way; a third when words put

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together signify more than one thing, but taken alone signify simply, e.g. 'scit saeculum'.

The first issue here is how to coordinate the two lists, given that each had three members. In the literal commentaries of Albert the Great and Giles of Rome the two are separated. In similar language, they report that the second mode of equivocation is when a word signifies one thing prius (or principaliter) and another thing ex consequenti, whereas the second mode common to equivocation and amphiboly signifies one thing proprie and another thing per similitudinem translationis or improprie for Albert and one thing principaliter by virtue of imposition and another thing transumptive for Giles.40 Giles added that the second mode of equivocation was found among analogical terms (in analognis). Later Ockham discusses the two lists separately, but treats the second mode in much the same way.41 Question commentaries and logic textbooks tend not to make any distinction, and focus on Aristotle's list of common modes when they are discussing equivocation. Peter of Spain (99: 22-26) remarked that one could take equivocation by itself or in relation to amphiboly, but that there were just three modes in either case. Some early sources questioned in what way the so-called common modes were in fact common, and suggested that, whereas the first mode was genuinely common, the second mode related to equivocation alone and the third to amphiboly alone, but this was never a popular view.42 On the other hand, it did raise the issue of how the three modes were to be related to Aristotle's discussion in Categories 1a1-5, where, according to Boethius and other sources, there are just two main types of equivocal terms, chance equivocals and deliberate equivocals. The standard answer was that the first two modes dealt with signification, the subject of the Categories, and were equivalent to chance equivocation and deliberate equivocation, whereas the third mode dealt with modi significandi, consignification, or perhaps supposition (depending on the source).43 Thus, as Albert the Great explained,


41) Ockham (1979), 16-17 (proprie vs. improprie), 20 (principaliter vs. ex translatione).

42) See Glossa in Aristotelis Sophisticos Elenchos in De Rijk (1962-1967), I, 207 and Anonymus Aurelianensis in Ebbesen (1979), 106-107. Anonymus Parisiensis in Ebbesen and Iwakuma (1990, 79), says that the first two modes are common and the third is proper to amphiboly.

43) Albert the Great (1890), 538a (modi significandi); Giles of Rome (1967b), f. 10 rb (modi significandi); Incerti Auctores (1977) Anonymus SF, 116-7 and Anonymus C, 309 (modi significandi); Peter of Spain (1972), 103 (consignification); Nicholas of Paris in Ebbesen (1997), 173, ad 5 (consignification); Ockham (1979), 24 (supposition) and Ockham (1974), 759-760 (supposition).
equivocation is treated more widely in the *Sophistical Refutations*, which has to treat of all the ways in which fallacy can arise, than in the *Categories*.\(^{44}\)

The tendency to identify the two lists of modes raises the important question of how the second mode of equivocation relates to *transumptio*, the second mode common to equivocation and amphiboly. The issue was complicated by the introduction of analogy in the new sense whereby, because of attribution, a term signifies one thing *per prius* and another *per posterius* or *ex consequenti*. A number of sources pay little or no attention to this issue. Some, particularly the authors of Question commentaries, refer only to analogy;\(^{45}\) others refer, at least in effect, only to *transumptio*.\(^{46}\) At least two English sources belonging to the latter tradition refer in passing to analogical terms,\(^{47}\) and in his *Summulae* Roger Bacon included *ens*, which was a standard analogical term, among his examples of *transumptio*.\(^{48}\) At least two other English sources solve the problem by placing analogy in the third mode. Thus William of Sherwood (172) takes both “ridet” and “expedit” as examples of the second mode in which words signify one thing *principaliter* and are transferred (*transumuntur*) to another because of some similitude. The third mode (174), illustrated by “laborans”, involves those *dictiones* whose “signification or consignification is one *intentio* participated by many *seceuntio et posterius*. A similar solution is found in Simon of Faversham.\(^{49}\) Other sources refer to both analogy and *transumptio* without making any choice between them.\(^{50}\)

\(^{44}\) Albert the Great (1890), 538b-539a. See also Robert <Kilwardby> in Ebbesen (1997), 161.


\(^{48}\) Roger Bacon in De Libera (1987), 242, §§448-449.

\(^{49}\) Simon of Faversham (1984), 85-86, 127-128. Curiously, on p. 80 he relates the *per prius/per posterius* case to the second mode of equivocation, and refers to analogical terms.

\(^{50}\) See e.g. *Dubia de aequivocatione* in Ebbesen (1998), 127-128. For a more elaborate classification, see *Summe Metenes* in De Rijk (1962-1967), II.1, 475-476 and *Dialectica Monas- cens* in De Rijk (1962-1967), II.2, 559-20-28. The latter source is important because it emphasizes that *transumptio* covers all kinds of trope: 561: 25-36. Cf. Ockham (1974), 758-759 for a long list of types of *translatio* of which one type is metaphor (*eo transumptio*: cf. 757: 39 ‘metaphorice et transumptive’).
The Reduction of Analogy to transumptio, or the Reverse

More important for our purposes are those sources that refer to both analogy and transumptio and explicitly reduce one to the other. One school, exemplified by Peter of Spain and Lambert of Lagny, focussed on analogy, or at least on terms that are said *per prius et posterius*, and reduced *transumptio* to analogy. Peter remarked that one can view *ridere* as being said in a prior way of men and a posterior way of fields. In his *Syncategoreumata* he listed the ways in which a word can signify different things, but kept *secundum prius et posterius* and *transumptio* separate. Unlike Peter of Spain, Lambert explicitly mentioned analogical terms, which he assigned to the second mode of equivocation. The other school focussed on *transumptio* and saw analogy as secondary. The *De fallaciis* wrongly attributed to Aquinas follows this school, and claims that the multiplicity of analogical names which are said in a prior and a posterior way is reduced to the case in which a term signifies one thing principally and another thing *metaphorice siue transsumpstiue*.

Few sources examine the relation between *transumptio* and analogy in more depth. However, a certain Robertus and another Robertus, Robertus de Aucumpno, both explain that even though analogy reduces to *transumptio*, there is a difference because in one case there is a true unity of nature and in the other case there is only a resemblance, that is, a surface similarity. A better explanation is found in the theologian James of Viterbo (d. 1308). He argued that there is a crucial difference between analogy and metaphor. Where there is attribution of one thing to another, there is a causal relationship of

51 Peter of Spain (1972), 100: 18-20 ‘Secunda species sive secundus modus equivocationis est quando eadem dictio secundum prius et posterius significat diversa. . . .’; 101: 11-12 ‘Ad hanc secundam speciem reductur equivocatio ex transsumptione; 101: 20-23 ‘hec verba “currit” et “ridet” per prius significant *ridere* vel *currere* et per posterius *florere* vel *labi*, quia hec significant ex propria impositione, illa vero ex assuetudine.’
52 Peter of Spain (1992), 46.
53 Lambert (1971), 149 for analogy; 150 for the claim that fallacies arising from transumption are reduced to the second mode.
some sort, to one agent, or one end or one subject, but in translatio there is only a relation of similitude.56 This ontological issue, while not discussed at any length by logicians, clearly lies behind some of the discussion about the number of acts of imposition involved in deliberate equivocation. A causal relation can be taken to justify a single act of imposition that covers two related senses, though as we shall see it can equally be taken to justify the rejection of such a single act.

Acts of Imposition

Ockham argued that just as chance equivocation involved two or more distinct and unrelated acts of imposition, so deliberate equivocation of any sort required two acts of imposition, so related that the second would not have taken place had not the first already occurred.57 More usually, logicians insisted that deliberate equivocation required just one act of imposition, and this allowed a principled distinction to be drawn between analogy and transumptio. For instance, Radulphus Brito writes in his Questions on the Sophistici Elenchi that there are two sorts of analogy, the first when a term is imposed to signify several things, one per prius and the other per posterius or ex consequenti, and the second when a term is imposed to signify just one thing and is then taken improperly (sumitur improprie) for another thing on the basis of some similitude or other.58 He uses homo pictus as an example, and says that this is an improper kind of analogy.

The claim that transumptio is a subdivision of analogical terms, and perhaps the only one that causes the fallacy of equivocation, is found in later authors, notably in the fifteenth century logician and theologian Dominic of Flanders (d. 1479), who enriches his discussion by an insistence on the role of concepts. The term ridere comes to signify the concept flowering only by transference, but a properly analogical term signifies either a concept containing some ordering or an ordered group of concepts by virtue of its initial imposition.59 Transumptio as a subdivision of analogy reappears in Gerard de Harderwyck (d. 1503). In his commentary on the Categories he identifies deliberate equivocation with analogy, and credits Albert the Great with the division of analogy

59 Dominic of Flanders (1967), sig. i 3 vb.
into three: *secundum proportionem ad unum* (e.g. *sanum*), *secundum similitudinem* (e.g. *homo pictus*), and *secundum transsumptionem* (e.g. *cursus* said of a man and of water). Yet another approach is found in Cardinal Cajetan’s treatise *De analogia nominum* which was a supplement to his commentary on the *Categories*. Cajetan echoes the early fifteenth century English Dominican Thomas Claxton in distinguishing the analogy of attribution from the analogy of proportionality, but where Claxton gave two undifferentiated examples of the latter, *visus* and *ridere*, Cajetan writes that the analogy of proportionality, which is analogy in the Greek sense, has two modes, *metaphorice et proprie*, and *ridere* when said of a field or of fortune is his example of metaphor. Cajetan thus restores the strong relationship between analogy in the Greek sense, and metaphor.

All these authors accepted the existence of analogical terms, and those who discussed imposition held that the single imposition of a term to signify *per prius et posterius* was possible. For authors who rejected the possibility of such a complicated initial imposition, but retained the view that only one act of imposition was involved, appeal was made to transference from the proper imposed signification, and analogical terms were either identified with metaphors, or were excluded from the second mode altogether. The British school is prominent here. In his Questions on the *Sophistici Elenchi*, Duns Scotus argued that whatever relations of attribution hold in reality, it was impossible to impose a single term to signify one thing *per prius* and another thing *per posterius*, or to establish such a relationship between two distinct impositions of a single term (336-7). Hence he argued that *sanum* was reducible to univocation, and that *ens* was reducible to the first mode of equivocation (344). The second mode of equivocation did not include analogical terms but was confined to *translatio et transumptio a propria significatione ad improprium*, *per aliquam similitudinem*, with *ridere* as the example (338-9). Four of his English contemporaries, Thomas de Wyk, Walter Burley, Peter Bradlay, and the anonymous author of *Quaestiones*, retained the notion of analogy as applying to the second mode of equivocation but made a clear distinction between the analogy of being and the analogy of terms. There is an analogical relationship

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60) Gerard de Harderwyck (1486), sig. a iii vb-sig. a iii ra.
61) Thomas Claxton (1943), 138-139.
between the kind of being that is a substance and the kind of being that is an
accident, but, said Thomas de Wyk, this does not concern the act of signifying. The only analogical terms are those such as *ridere* which signify one thing
by imposition and another by transference. Burley added that this is the only
way in which a term can signify one thing *per prius* and another thing *per
posterius* (p. 201). Both Thomas de Wyk and Burley went on to explain that
the presence of just one act of imposition was crucial.\(^{64}\) Imposition must be
totally *ad placitum*, but when there is transference, there is always a reason,
namely a likeness of relations, and so calling the lower part of a bridge its foot
cannot involve a second act of imposition.

**Conclusion**

Medieval logicians do not offer any sustained account of metaphor and how it
functions. Nonetheless, there is enough material to answer my initial ques-
tions. First, while “transumptio” and “translatio” are quite often synonymous
with “metaphora”, one cannot take this as a general rule. Second, metaphor,
whether for the sake of ornamentation or out of necessity, was generally sub-
sumed under deliberate equivocation. As a result, it was often identified with
analogy in the new non-Greek sense by logicians. This was obviously seen to
be compatible with the view that analogy in the Greek sense of a comparison
of relations was the basis for most metaphors. However, when “homo pictus”
was taken as an example of analogy and *transumptio*, the similarity involved
was one of external form rather than of relations. The most important contro-
versies about the status of metaphor in relation to analogy were linked to the
issue of acts of imposition, and the question whether a single term could by a
single act of imposition come to signify *secundum prius et posterius*. Finally,
there are three features that serve to distinguish terms used metaphorically
from genuine analogical terms. Metaphors are not based on causal relations
among the objects signified; the metaphorical sense is not acquired by an act
of imposition; and when a word is used metaphorically it signifies something
other than what is properly signified by that word. When speaking of mead-
ows, we say “laughing” and signify flowering.