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Moses Ibn Ezra vs. Maimonides: Argument for a Poetic Definition of Metaphor (*Isti'āra*)

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Moses Ibn Ezra (ca. 1055-1140), a celebrated Hebrew poet, and Moses Maimonides (1135-1205), the great philosopher, drew upon Arabic learning in their definitions of metaphor (*isti'āra*) but reached different conclusions, reflecting a critical divide within the Arabic tradition. Yet, unlike Maimonides' unmistakable Aristotelian definition, drawn from al-Fārābī, Ibn Ezra's has been misconstrued in recent scholarship as a dim reflection of the same model. Ibn Ezra's source, the definition of the literary critic Ibn al-Mu'tazz, has long been known, but its significance has emerged only recently, in light of W. Heinrichs' studies (1977, 1984) of the Arabic concept of *isti'āra*. Against the historical framework Heinrichs establishes, it becomes clear that Ibn Ezra rejected the Arabicized Aristotelian model current in his time in favor of an older, indigenous Arabic poetic notion of metaphor. In an Arab author, this might be deemed cultural chauvinism,¹ but Ibn Ezra surely had other motives.² Much as Maimonides' definition served his analytic needs, Ibn Ezra devised one that suited his literary outlook by highlighting the imaginative capacity of metaphor. In this respect, he foreshadows the modern rejection of Aristotle's narrow linguistic definition in favor of a more comprehensive literary one.

1. Ibn Ezra's Definition

Ibn Ezra's definition of metaphor appears in *Kitāb al-Mubādāra wa-al-Mudhākara* (*Book of Discussion and Conversation*),³ a handbook for composing Hebrew poetry according to the rules of Arabic poetics. This work, written around 1130, is virtually unique in Jewish tradition⁴ and draws, instead, on Arabic poetic handbooks that Ibn Ezra cites by name.⁵ Following a model established by Ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 908) in his *Kitāb al-Badī'* (*Book of Ornate Style*), considered the first Arabic treatise on rhetoric (see below, n. 1), Ibn Ezra, in the second half of *Kitāb al-Mubādāra*, enumerates twenty rhetorical techniques referred to collectively as "the *badī'*" ("ornate style"; lit. "new [style]"; Bonebakker 1970: 85; Heinrichs 1984: 187–92). Arab poets glorified these techniques, often boastfully. "The *badī'* is restricted to the Arabs," writes the literary critic al-Jāhiz (d. 868), "and because of it their language surpasses every other language" (Bonebakker 1970: 95).⁶ Ibn Ezra introduces the *badī'* with a counterclaim:

In each chapter devoted to the ornaments of Arabic style, I will cite one example from Arabic verse and juxtapose it with what I find from the noble Hebrew Scriptures, lest such ornaments be considered extraordinary, and it be said that Hebrew is completely inadequate and inferior by comparison and that the Arabic language is without parallel in these embellishments of style, totally without peer, and that our language is devoid of them. (*Kitāb* 116a; trans. Brann 1991: 82)⁷

Ibn Ezra admits that this endeavor can, at best, achieve partial success, since the ornaments reflect Arabic poetic norms, which the biblical "precedents" merely approximate. He thus relies primarily on Arabic examples to illustrate the *badī'*, and adduces the biblical quasi-examples only to uphold Scripture's literary merit.

In this respect the first of the twenty chapters, on *isti'āra*, is atypical: here biblical examples eclipse the Arabic ones, a striking feature that occurs again in chapter thirteen, on *tashbīh* (simile).⁸ His respect for Arabic poetics notwithstanding, Ibn Ezra's presentation of the *badī'* actually reflects a tension between Arabic, Greek, and biblical authority. Earlier in the *Kitāb*, he undercuts the literary exclusivity of Arabic by citing Aristotle's eight techniques "through which poetry is refined and embellished," including "beauty of simile

(*tashbīh*) and excellence of metaphor (*isti'āra*)," though it was the Arabs who "explored them [i.e., the poetic techniques] meticulously and divided them into many more [categories]" (*Kitāb* 76a–b).⁹ Unlike the uniquely Arabic ornaments, Ibn Ezra believed that ancient Hebrew and Greek authors had successfully used these more universal literary techniques, which are thus adequately illustrated by biblical examples.

On the other hand, Ibn Ezra does turn to Arabic poetics for his theoretical discussion of *isti'āra*. He is perhaps to blame for the modern misconstrual of his definition, since enthusiasm for aesthetics at times outshines his analytic clarity. His definition is buried deep in the chapter on *isti'āra*, which begins instead with praise for its literary charm and the assertion that it is indispensable for superior literary expression in both prose and poetry. He admits that some authors devised especially ugly metaphors, but these result from "exaggeration (*ifrāṭ*)," not the technique itself (*Kitāb* 118b). Hardly gratuitous, these accolades are intended to counter unnamed—but evidently influential—authors who avoided metaphor in favor of precise literal language (*Kitāb* 118b–119a). Ibn Ezra provides few clues about these antagonists.¹⁰ He may have had in mind sober rationalists disturbed by poetic style in general,¹¹ though his defense on aesthetic grounds echoes a controversy over the far-fetched metaphors of poets like Abū Tammām (ninth century), who "exaggerated the use of the *badī'* and exceeded the proper limits."¹² To thwart this attack, Ibn al-Mu'tazz cites ancient Arabic poetry and Qur'ān to validate fanciful metaphors, which are disagreeable only if employed in excess (Heinrichs 1984: 188–89).¹³

Much as Ibn al-Mu'tazz turned to the Qur'ān, Ibn Ezra supports his argument by adducing the abundance of metaphors in Hebrew Scripture. Citing but "few of many" examples, he devises an impressive alphabetic list of forty biblical metaphors, his primary vehicle for illustrating the workings of this technique (*Kitāb* 119a–b). Next, he cites four Qur'ānic examples adduced by Ibn al-Mu'tazz (*Kitāb* 119b; Dana 1982: 118). Later in the chapter he cites a verse of medieval Arabic poetry (*Kitāb* 121a) and one from Hebrew poetry, a line by Ibn Gabirol (*Kitāb* 121b). Between the Qur'ānic and medieval examples, Ibn Ezra formulates his rather opaque definition:

מעני אלסתעארה אלכלמה לשי לם יערף בשי קר ערף

The meaning of *isti'āra* (lit. borrowing) is: [borrowing]¹⁴ a word for something¹⁵ not known using something already known. (*Kitāb* 120a)

Ibn Ezra fails to clarify what he means by the “thing not known” and the “thing already known,” nor does he define the relation between them. We may assume that this relation involves some type of “borrowing” (the literal sense of *isti'āra*), but the nature of this process is unclear. Below, we review prior readings according to the Aristotelian model that was, in fact, adopted by Maimonides (sec. 2); offer a new interpretation based on the early Arabic poetic conception of metaphor (sec. 3); demonstrate that Ibn Ezra deliberately resisted the Arabicized Aristotelian view (sec. 4); and explore the literary implications of his choice (sec. 5).

2. Maimonides' Aristotelian Model

A. Diez Macho (1945: 56) prefaces the first modern analysis of Ibn Ezra's definition by citing Aristotle: “metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else” (*Poetics* 1457b; *PEPP*, s.v. “metaphor”). On this basis he writes:

According to Aristotle, a thing can be named by two different names: one, its own name and two, another thing's name. Therefore, the meaning of Ibn Ezra's definition is: “A metaphor is when you describe what is unknown (its own name) by using the name of what is known (another thing's name);” this definition is equivalent to that of Aristotle.

The *metaphorical term* “lion,” for example, may be used instead of the *proper term*, “brave man.” According to Diez Macho, the “thing unknown” Ibn Ezra refers to is the proper term, the “thing already known” the metaphorical term. The latter, stated explicitly, is “known,” the former “unknown,” and revealed by decoding the metaphor. The *isti'āra* process, Diez Macho (1945: 58) explains, amounts to “borrowing” the metaphorical term (“lion”) where the proper term (“brave man”) should have been used.

D. Pagis (1970: 56) offers a similar construal of Ibn Ezra's definition:

Metaphor is a description of something not known (the “covered,” hidden subject) using something known (the “ornament” revealed to the reader).

Metaphor means speaking about the *real subject* (a brave man), i.e., the thing normally referred to by the proper term, as if it were the *image*, i.e., the thing normally referred to by the metaphorical term (a lion). Since the image hides the “unknown” referent, “the figurative language (*ha-lashon ha-ziyyurit*)... must be deciphered to understand the subject and intention of the author” (*ibid.*).

Although Diez Macho asserts that Ibn Ezra's definition is equivalent to Aristotle's, its vagueness leaves room for question. But Maimonides' definition, in *Maqāla fī Ṣinā'at al-Manṭiq* (*Treatise on Logic*), written around 1155, speaks for itself:

אלאסם אלמסתעאר הו אלאסם אלדאל עלי דאח מא פי אצל וצ'ע אללגה והו ראחב עלי תלך אלדאח, תם יסמי בה דאח אכדי פי בעץ' אלוקאח, ולם ירחב דלך אלאסם דאמא עלי תלך אלדאח אלחאניה כאסם אלדאח על נוע מן אלחיואן וקר יסמי בהדא אלאסם אלשאנע מן אלנאס ומתל הדא תסמיוחם אלכרים בהרא ומתל הדא אלסמאא ענר אלשעראא כתידיה.

A metaphorical [lit. borrowed] term is a term that refers to a certain entity in the original coinage¹⁶ of the language, and it properly denotes [lit. is fixed on] that entity. Next, another entity is at times designated by it [i.e. that word], but it does not properly denote [lit. is not fixed permanently on] that second entity. For example, the term “lion,” posited for one of the animal species, is used to designate a courageous man; and similarly people call [lit. their naming] a generous man “the sea.” And terms like these are frequently used among poets (1966: 37 [Hebrew section]; English in Efron 1938: 58 [slightly modified]).

Maimonides, like Aristotle, defines metaphor as temporarily “borrowing,” i.e., “transferring” (the literal sense of Greek *metaphora*) a word that normally “belongs” to one thing and using it to designate something else. This resemblance is hardly surprising, since Maimonides' source is al-Fārābī's *Short Treatise on Aristotle's De Interpretatione* (Türker 1956/60: 58–59n.; Hyman 1991: 177–79; Rosenberg 1978; see also below, sec. 4).

The four aforementioned accounts of metaphor, beginning with Aristotle's, share the structure illustrated in Table 1 below:

	Thing	Its Name
Known (Image)	X	"x"
Unknown (Referent)	Y	"y"

This model defines metaphor as "saying 'x' and really meaning Y"; hence, the claim "'x' is a metaphor" entails proving that it designates Y and not X (as Maimonides does in both of his examples, "lion" designating a courageous man, "sea" a generous man). Since revealing the referent is essential for establishing that a given word is metaphorical, Diez Macho, in his Spanish paraphrase-translation of Ibn Ezra's chapter on metaphor (1945: 51–54), does so for every example he cites.

Yet Diez Macho's analysis underscores the fact that Ibn Ezra simply cites his forty biblical examples without elucidation, even though many of them do not readily yield a referent. Given their centrality in the chapter on metaphor, we cite them in full:

אם הדרך, אישון לילה, בני אשפות, גפי מרומי קרת, גיד ברזל ערפך, דלתי פניו, דגן שמים, הר
 הרים, המון מערך, זר כבודה, זלעפות רעב, חלב הארץ, טל ילדותך, טבור הארץ, ילד יום, יין חמסים,
 כובע ישועה, כנפי שחר, לחם עצלות, לשון זהב, מעיל צדקה, מטה לחם, נבלי שמים, נשף חשק,
 ששון ישעך, שפת הזריעה, עפעפי שחר, עבותות אבה, פרי מחשבותם, פני המלחמה, צפורן שמיר,
 צעדי אום, קרן משיחו, קורי עכביש, רוח קבאה, רשפי קשת, שבט אפר, שמש צדקה, תורת חסד,

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mother of the road¹⁷ (Ezek 21: 26), pupil [of an eye] of night (Prov 7: 9), sons of his quiver (Lam 3: 13), wings of the heights of the town (Prov 9: 3), a sinew of iron is your neck (Isa 48: 4), doors of his face (Job 41: 6), grain of heaven (Ps 78: 24), clatter of mountains (Ezek 7: 7), roaring of your innards (Isa 63: 15); light¹⁸ of her honor (Isa 66: 11), burning of famine (Lam 5: 10), fat of the land (Gen 45: 18), dew of your youth (Ps 110: 3), navel of the land (Judg 9: 37), offspring of the day (Prov 27: 1),¹⁹ wine of violence (Prov 4: 17), helmet of salvation (Isa 59: 17), wings of dawn (Ps 139: 9), bread of laziness (Prov 31: 27), tongue of gold (Josh 7: 24), cloak of righteousness (Isa 61: 10), staff of bread (Lev 26: 26), jars of the sky (Job 38: 37), my night of desire (Isa 21: 4), joy of your salvation (Ps 51: 14), lip of the curtain (Exod 26: 4), eyelids of dawn (Job 3: 9), cords of love (Hos 11: 4), fruit of their thoughts (Jer 6: 19), face of the war (II Sam 10: 9), fingernail²⁰ of flint

(Jer 17: 1), strides of his might (Job 18: 7), horn of his anointed one (I Sam 2: 10), beams²¹ of a spider (Isa 59: 5), wind of jealousy (Num 5: 14), sparks of the bow (Ps 76: 4), rod of his anger (Isa 10: 4), sun of righteousness (Mal 3: 20), teaching of faithfulness (Prov 31: 26), pillars of smoke (Joel 3: 3).

Some of these examples readily yield a referent: the "lip" of a curtain is its *border*; "tongue" of gold—an elongated *ingot*,²² "cords" of love—strong feelings of attraction; "fruit" of thought—actions resulting from planning. But others do not. What precisely is "*wine of violence*"? A "*helmet of salvation*"? "*Night of desire*"? "*Sun of righteousness*"? Diez Macho's resourceful analysis (1945: 52) is telling:

Pr 4: 17, "They eat the bread of wickedness and drink the *wine of greed*" = they take stealing as a sedative for their greed.

Isa 59: 17, "He donned justice like a coat of mail, with a *helmet of salvation* on his head" = unbreakable will for obtaining salvation.

These readings are acceptable, though debatable;²³ but it is most striking that Ibn Ezra shows no interest in deciphering these metaphors. Nor does it seem reasonable, as J. Dana (1982: 115) argues, that Ibn Ezra remained silent because their real subject matter is obvious. Given Ibn Ezra's freedom to hand pick examples that readily illustrate the Aristotelian model,²⁴ the fact that these do not suggests that he worked with a different one.

3. The Early Arabic Model

The modern readings of Ibn Ezra's definition perhaps confirm that Aristotle "defined metaphor for the entire subsequent history of Western thought" (Ricoeur 1975: 3). But a different picture emerges from Ibn Ezra's analysis of his examples from medieval Hebrew and Arabic poetry. Citing Ibn Gabirol's verse, "The night wore armor of darkness (*shiryon afelah*)/And thunder—with a spear of lightning (*hanit baraq*)—pierced it (*deqaro*)," he comments:

פאסחעאר לטלמה אלליל שריון ולנור אלברק חנית ומן צפחה דקרן, וג'מיעהא מן אסבאב אלחרב

He lent (*fa-sta'ara*) "armor" to the darkness of night, "a spear" to the flash of lightning, its quality being "pierced it." These are all from among the implements of warfare. (*Kitab* 121b)

Instead of translating the metaphorical terms here into literal ones, Ibn Ezra observes how the line as a whole, ignoring the confines of empirical reality, imaginatively attributes (“lends”) armor to the darkness of night and a spear—along with the action of piercing—to lightning.

The *isti'āra* process that Ibn Ezra speaks of here is a borrowing of things (armor, a spear) and actions (piercing), not of language (borrowing the term “x” to signify Y). W. Heinrichs (1984: 181) calls this “imaginary ascription,” i.e., “the transference of an object from its natural owner or environment to a new owner or environment where it does not belong in our real world,” which he identifies as the original notion of *isti'āra* among Arab experts on poetry. This conception

of *isti'āra* . . . does not consist in “borrowing” a name from its original “owner” and transferring it to a new one, as later interpretations . . . have it; on the contrary, it means “borrowing” an object from an owner who possesses it in our real world and giving it on loan to one who does not. (Heinrichs 1977: 9)

The “later interpretations” conform with the Aristotelian “name transfer” model reflected, e.g., in Maimonides, who focuses on the individual “metaphorical term” (*al-ism al-mustā'ār*). Ibn Ezra never speaks of the *ism al-mustā'ār* because the “borrowing” he conceives is not linguistic. For him, metaphor is not a new name for an existing entity, but a novel combination of things or ideas; it therefore requires an *entire phrase* manifesting “impertinent predication” (Ricoeur 1975: 4), not just a single word. We return to this distinction below (section 5), after confirming that Ibn Ezra defines metaphor as imaginary ascription, based on an analysis of his language and sources.

Whereas Ibn Ezra selected his own example of *isti'āra* from Hebrew poetry, his verse of Arabic poetry, Dhū al-Rumma's depiction of “the dawn in its white gown,” has a long history. Ibn Ezra's commentary, “he lent a gown to the dawn, though it has no gown” (*fa-stā'āra lil-fajri mulā'atan wa-lā mulā'ata labu*; *Kitāb* 121a), is actually adapted from the eleventh century literary critic Ibn Rashīq (Dana 1982: 117; see below, sec. 4), and reveals the roots of Ibn Ezra's notion of metaphor. An early attested use of the technical term *isti'āra* is in a gloss on this verse of Dhū al-Rumma's by the critic Abū 'Amr Ibn al-'Alā' (d. ca. 770):

I know of no words more beautiful than his “The dawn . . . in its white gown”; obviously he attributed a white gown to the dawn, *although it does not have one*; in fact he borrowed this amazing expression, and these [words] are among the amazing borrowings (*isti'ārāt*). (Heinrichs 1977: 11)

Ibn al-'Alā' calls this *isti'āra* because it attributes a “white gown” to the dawn, expressed by the formula “B has no A,” which became a stock phrase for analyzing metaphor among early Arab theorists (*ibid.*: 9, 17). Later authors used the formula “he lent (*istā'āra*) A to B” (*ibid.*), which identifies imaginary attribution as the metaphorical (*isti'āra*) process.²⁵ In turning to Ibn Rashīq, Ibn Ezra thus combines the stock formulas of imaginary ascription: Ibn al-'Alā's comment (*wa-lā mulā'ata labu*), prefaced by the newer formula (*fa-stā'āra lil-fajri mulā'atan*; *ibid.*: 49–50).

In light of Ibn Ezra's own analysis, we return to his biblical examples. A metaphor, for Ibn Ezra, does not imply that “x” means Y,” but rather “lends A to B,” where B does not possess A in reality, i.e., “B has no A.”²⁶ This, in fact, is self-evident in every one of Ibn Ezra's forty biblical examples, which is why he cites them without explanation.²⁷ This is also why he chose the genitive construct in those examples: there is no better way of demonstrating that Scripture “lent A to B” than the form, “A of B.”²⁸ Isaiah's “helmet of salvation” attributes a “helmet” to salvation; “wine of violence” lends “wine” to violence, etc. This analysis, rather than the formula “x” means Y,” is also applicable where the referent is clear. Rather than saying, e.g., that “the ‘lip of the curtain’ is its border,” Ibn Ezra would comment: “Scripture lent a lip to the curtain, though it has no lip.”

Before returning to Ibn Ezra's definition of metaphor, we cite his source in Ibn al-Mu'tazz (1935: 2):

استعارة الكلمة لشيء لم يُعرفَ بها من شيء قد
عُرِفَ بها مثل أم الكتاب ومثل جناح الذلّ

Heinrichs (1977: 34) translates:

the borrowing of a word²⁹ for something in connection with which³⁰ it has not been known from something in connection with which it has been known, for example, “mother of the Book” (Sura 3, 7) and “wing of humility” (Sura 17, 24).³¹

This translation, which reflects “imaginary ascription” rather than name transfer, is borne out by the two Qur’ānic examples Ibn al-Mu’tazz cites, for which he identifies no referent.³² Heinrichs (1984: 190) illustrates this definition and examples in the following manner (Table 2):

Borrowed word	Not known in connection with	In connection with which it has been known
mother	book	child
wing	humility	bird

In light of this source,³³ it is reasonable to render Ibn Ezra’s definition (*ma’nā al-isti’āra [isti’ārat] al-kalima li-shay’ lam yu’raf bi-shay’ qad urifa*) accordingly:

The meaning of *isti’āra* is [borrowing] a word for something [in connection with which it is] unknown using something [in connection with which it is] already known.

Though this construal requires interpolation,³⁴ it conforms with Ibn Ezra’s examples and analysis. He defines *isti’āra* as imaginatively “borrowing” an entity from its normal context, where it is “known,” and introducing it into a new context, in which it is “unknown.” The designations “known” and “unknown” relate to the connection between the borrowed entity and its surroundings, not the proper and metaphorical terms as in the Aristotelian model.

4. The Arabic Aristotelian Shift

Having reconciled Ibn Ezra’s definition of *isti’āra* with his examples, we can fix his position on the curve of Arabic learning, which, by the twelfth century, had adopted the Aristotelian model due to developments that spanned three fields: logic, poetics and Qur’ānic hermeneutics.³⁵ The logical Aristotelian tradition is represented by al-Fārābī (d. ca. 950; see Fakhry 1994), who writes in *Kitāb bārī*

armīnyas ay al-ibāra (= *The Short Treatise on Aristotle’s De Interpretatione*) (1988: 91):

فالاسم الذي يقال على الشيء باستعارة ، هو أن يكون اسماً دالاً على ذات شيء راتباً عليه دائماً من أول ما وضع ، فيلقب به في الحين بعد الحين شيء [ح ٢٣ ر] آخر لمواصلته للأول بنحو ما من أنحاء المواصله ، أي نحو كان ،

A term said of something metaphorically (*bi-isti’āra*) is when there is a term that denotes a particular thing properly [lit. permanently attached to it] from the time of its original coinage, but once in a while another thing is labeled by it owing to some affinity, no matter of what kind, between it and the original [referent]. (Zimmermann 1981: 227 [slightly modified])

From the outset, the Arabic logical tradition (which Maimonides embraced [above, sec. 2]) followed Aristotle and his model. But the poetic tradition underwent a transformation in its conception of *isti’āra*. Dating to the eighth century, the old definition, illustrated by stock examples, dominated Arabic poetics well into the tenth, when the notion of name transfer emerged. In fact, early literary proponents of the new definition confused their presentation by retaining the traditional examples, which actually illustrate imaginary attribution (Heinrichs 1977: 1–2, 30–33; 1984: 187). The new definition crystallized in the work of the Qur’ānic scholar and linguist, al-Rummānī (d. 994), who rectified this incompatibility by adducing entirely new examples that unmistakably illustrate his definition.

الاستعارة تمليق العبارة على غير ما وضعت له في أصل اللغة على جهة النقل

Metaphor (*isti’āra*) is the application of an expression to something other than what it was set up for in the original state of the language by way of transference. (Aḥmad 1986: 69; Heinrichs 1977: 40)

By avoiding the traditional examples, including *janāḥ al-dhull* (“wing of humility,” cited by Ibn al-Mu’tazz), al-Rummānī formulates a “pure” presentation of metaphor as name transfer (Heinrichs 1977: 14, 40–41).³⁶

Adding a critical dimension to the new model, al-Rummānī is the first Arab author to define metaphor in terms of its relationship to *tashbīḥ* (simile), arguing that they differ only in that the former

involves improper use of language, unlike the latter (Heinrichs 1984: 186). In other words, using the term "lion" to refer to a courageous man named Zayd is equivalent to saying "Zayd is like a lion," which led later authors to call metaphor "a simile without the particle of comparison" (*tashbīh bi-ghayr adāt al-tashbīh*; Heinrichs 1977: 40, 47). Not insignificantly, Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1406a, 1410a; *PEPP*, s.v., "simile") had similarly connected metaphor and simile. But this association holds only for the name transfer model, in which the metaphor ("lion") is "borrowed" to denote the referent (Zayd, a courageous man) based on a perceived similarity between them.³⁷

In a later development, the literary critic 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. ca. 1071) clarifies the relationship between the old and new models. He defines *isti'āra*, using the new model, as a word "transferred from its original referent and attributed as a name to a second object" (Abu Deeb 1979: 179; Ritter 1954: 9–11, 29, 42). A strict construal of this definition, he observes, implies that the entity to which the word is transferred really exists; in the metaphorical phrase, "I saw a lion," for example, "lion" refers to a definite person (Ritter 1954: 10, 42). But when the poet Labīd describes the "reins [of the morning] . . . lying in the hand of the northwind" (*aṣḥabat bi-yad al-shimāl zimāmubā*), no real substratum can be identified either for the "reins" or the "hand"; at best we can explain that the poet imagines the northwind as a horseman with reins in his hand (Ritter 1954: 10, 42–45). To distinguish between the two models of *isti'āra*, al-Jurjānī defines the first as the product of a definite simile (*tashbīh*) with a specific referent, whereas the second is based on a broader analogy between two sets of elements,³⁸ a *tamthīl*, which is often more difficult to grasp. In other words, using "x" to designate Y is predicated on the simile "X is like Y," whereas the "A of B" formula does not imply that "A" has any substratum in reality.³⁹

Returning to Ibn Ezra, we recall the interplay between Greek and Arabic in his poetics and his reference to Aristotle's comments about metaphor and simile (above, sec. 1). Notwithstanding his exposure to al-Fārābī and al-Rummānī, and despite the growing influence of the Aristotelian model,⁴⁰ Ibn Ezra champions the older, exclusively Arabic model of *isti'āra*. He returns to Ibn al-Mu'tazz's definition and adduces examples manifesting the "A of B" form, while avoiding "x means Y" (e.g., "lion' means courageous man," the stock

example used by Maimonides). Moreover, he rejects the tendency—standard by his time in Arabic works on poetics—to associate metaphor and simile, and returns to an older convention by presenting *isti'āra* as the first ornament and *tashbīh* as the thirteenth, without ever relating them.⁴¹ The desire to separate the two techniques is also evident in Ibn Ezra's gloss on Dhū al-Rumma's "dawn in its white gown" (above, sec. 3). Whereas his source, in Ibn Rashīq, reads, *fa-sta'āra lil-fajri mulā'atan wa-akbraja lafzahu mukbraj al-tashbīh* ("he lent a gown to the dawn, using a simile"),⁴² Ibn Ezra carefully omits the reference to simile. Like al-Jurjānī, he recognizes that imaginary ascription is not reducible to simile, but draws the very different conclusion that *tashbīh* and *isti'āra* are unrelated techniques.

Ibn Ezra reveals allegiance to the old model in yet another way that ironically sets him apart from its early advocates. In addition to "x means Y" and "A of B," a third form, verb metaphor, fits either model (Heinrichs 1977: 27, 53; see also Brooke-Rose 1970: 206–37). For example, Ibn al-Mu'tazz (1935: 3) cites the Qur'ānic verse, *wa-shta'ala al-ra'su shayban* ("and my head is all aflame with whiteness"; Sura 19, 4), which attributes flames to a head of white hair. Yet the verb *ishta'ala* ("is all aflame") can also be analyzed using the Aristotelian model as a term "borrowed" to denote that the head "became white" (Diez Macho 1945: 55). Ibn al-Mu'tazz, oblivious to the Aristotelian model, could innocently cite verb metaphors;⁴³ but Ibn Ezra avoided them in selecting his forty biblical examples that feature the "A of B" form exclusively.⁴⁴ He thus provides a "pure" presentation of imaginary ascription, much as al-Rummānī had done for name transfer.

5. A Poetic Agenda

What remains to explain is why Ibn Ezra championed the early definition of *isti'āra*, which had been bypassed even within Arabic poetics. Heinrichs (1977: 14, 31, 40–41, 53) attributes that development to the influence of Qur'ānic hermeneutics, in which the notion of name transfer was particularly useful. Among Qur'ānic exegetes, *isti'āra* was analyzed as a type of *majāz*, i.e., improper, figurative language, as opposed to *ḥaqīqa* (lit. truth), i.e., literal

language.⁴⁵ The *majāz-ḥaqīqa* dichotomy underlies al-Rummānī's definition of metaphor (above) as an "expression [referring to] something other than what it was set up for in the original state of the language." If a given word, "x," is *ḥaqīqa*, it designates X, i.e., "what it was set up for in the original state of the language," and can be interpreted using its dictionary definition. But in *isti'āra*, "x" refers to Y and requires a special interpretive mode, which the Aristotelian model outlines: substituting "y" for "x" to yield a literal statement that expresses the meaning of the metaphor.

Maimonides could take advantage of a beneficial convergence of logic and hermeneutics. In his *Guide of the Perplexed* (ca. 1190) he follows a Jewish exegetical tradition dating to Sa'adia that aimed to decode biblical *majāz*, an endeavor facilitated by his Fārābīan definition of *isti'āra* in the *Treatise on Logic*. This produced the "lexicographic" section of the *Guide*, in which he translates biblical metaphorical terms into literal equivalents.⁴⁶ In a typical passage (I: 43) of this section, for example, he analyzes the Hebrew word *kanaf*:

Its first coinage (*wad'uhū al-awwal*) is to denote a wing of the living things that fly. Thus: "Any winged fowl that flieth in the heaven" (Deut 4: 17). Subsequently it was applied figuratively [*ustū'ira*; lit. was lent] to the extremities and corners of garments. Thus: "Upon the four corners [lit. wings] of thy covering" (Deut 22: 12). Afterwards it was applied figuratively [*ustū'ira*; lit. lent] to the farthest ends and extremities of the habitable parts of the earth, which are remote from the places where we live. Thus: "That it may take hold of the ends [lit. wings] of earth" (Job 38: 13). (Pines 1963: 93 [slightly modified])

Following the Aristotelian model, Maimonides here speaks of "borrowing" a term to designate something other than its original referent. His analysis presupposes Scripture's intent to use the borrowed term to designate a real subject matter, e.g., the *ends* of the earth, normally called *qezot ha-arez* in biblical Hebrew (e.g., Isa 40: 28; Job 28: 24).⁴⁷ Naturally, this model would appeal to exegetes, who aim to decipher Scriptural metaphors, since it guarantees—by definition—the existence of an underlying real referent.

The old model of *isti'āra*, lacking an underlying simile that compares two specific entities, yields no such guarantee. Indeed, imaginary ascription often makes "exegesis" irrelevant, as illustrated by an

anecdote about Abū Tammām. In response to the fanciful metaphor, "water of reproach" (*mā' al-malāmati*) that he devised,

one of his mockers sent to him a bottle and said: "Put herein some water of reproach." Abū Tammām answered him: "If you send me a feather of the 'wing of humility,' then I will send you some water of reproach." (Schippers 1981: 258)

Defying rational analysis, this metaphor irritated Abū Tammām's critic.⁴⁸ But instead of divulging a subject matter, the poet dismisses such analysis by citing the Qur'ānic "wing of humility," which likewise lacks a definite referent. Abū Tammām saw *isti'āra* as a canvass for painting one realm of reality using colors from another to synthesize combinations that need not correspond with real objects.

In hinting at reservations about the propriety of using metaphor (above, sec. 1), Ibn Ezra may have had this or a similar exchange in mind. In any case, his response resembles Abū Tammām's; rather than claim that metaphor can be "rationalized" through translation, he invokes the authority of Scripture by observing its frequent use there. In fact, deciphering his list of biblical examples (above, sec. 2) would undermine Ibn Ezra's purpose, since, like Abū Tammām, he probably intends to show that Scripture includes "irrational" metaphors without an underlying referent. Maimonides, on the other hand, might have shared the perspective of Abū Tammām's mocker. As a logician and exegete, his preference would most naturally be for metaphors with a distinct real referent, translatable into literal language.⁴⁹

Whereas Aristotle's name transfer model reduces metaphor to *linguistic* "borrowing," i.e., a novel choice of language to designate an otherwise existing entity, imaginary ascription entails *conceptual* "borrowing," crossing boundaries set by empirical reality to create new entities in a "virtual reality." Name transfer breaks only the rules of language, but not of empirical reality; imaginary ascription goes beyond linguistic creativity and empowers the poet to "create" new entities in his mind, as described in a famous passage by the English poet, Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1589):

Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection [to nature], lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in nature... so as he goeth hand in hand with nature, not enclosed

within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit. (1989: 216; see also Adams 1971: 154, 157)⁵⁰

Rationalists since Plato have criticized poets as liars for this very reason, and the Aristotelian model—which limits the creativity of metaphor to improper use of language—may have been seen as a corrective to this problem (see *PEPP*, s.v., “Platonism and Poetry”). But Abū Tammām, adducing Qur’anic authority, fervently asserts the fullest poetic license.

Aligning himself with the poetic tradition Abū Tammām epitomizes, Ibn Ezra counters the Platonic critique by citing the maxim, *atyyab al-shi’r akdhabubu* (“the best of poetry is its most false”) (*Kitāb* 62b).⁵¹ Poetry involves falsehood by definition, he admits, but therein lies its creative beauty.⁵² In listing *isti’āra* first among his twenty ornaments, Ibn Ezra grants it the prominence it traditionally held in Arabic poetics as the most basic element of poetry.⁵³ Given his poetic outlook, the fact that imaginary ascription often lacks a definite referent is an asset rather than a liability. It is this conception, not the Aristotelian model, that empowers poets to create “forms such as never were in nature,” making *isti’āra* the wellspring of poetic creativity.

Writing a work on poetics in his old age, after a distinguished career as a Hebrew poet, it is understandable that Ibn Ezra would formulate a definition of *isti’āra* that best suits his poetic aims.⁵⁴ Indeed, fanciful genitive metaphors abound in his poetry, for example, “sanctuary of truth” (*mishkan ha-emet*), “breasts of knowledge” (*dadei mada*), “neck of kindness” (*zawar besed*), “cloak of falsehood” (*kesut sheqer*). At times Ibn Ezra is particularly successful in blending an image with the situation he depicts; for example, speaking as a spurned lover, he sees himself as a ship tossing at sea with no safe haven in sight:

[I am] tossing without ship in *the sea of his love (yam ahabbaw)* / And his eyes prevent [me] from reaching *his shore (bofo)*. (1935, poem 179, 1.3)

One might attempt to identify the real referent of these metaphors, perhaps even translate them into simpler literal language; but doing so seems beside the point.⁵⁵ Ibn Ezra’s appreciation for metaphor relates to its imaginative aspect, which allows him to celebrate “the zodiac of his own wit.” Maimonides defines metaphoric words; Ibn Ezra builds a metaphoric world.⁵⁶

6. Conclusion

On one level, the divergence between Ibn Ezra and Maimonides is not surprising since their respective works flow from different streams of Arabic learning. Given his overall debt to al-Fārābī, it was only natural for Maimonides to copy his Aristotelian definition, just as Ibn al-Mu’tazz was a natural source for Ibn Ezra. These Jewish scholars also had different reasons for defining metaphor: Ibn Ezra had a poetic agenda, whereas Maimonides’ interests were philosophical and exegetical. In fact, Ibn Ezra, in a separate work on biblical exegesis, *Maqālat al-Ḥadiqa fī Ma’nā al-Majāz wa-al-Ḥaqīqa* (“The Treatise of the Garden on Figurative and Literal Language”), tacitly recognizes the inadequacy of imaginary ascription for exegetical purposes and seems to work with the Aristotelian model (above, n. 54). But this underscores its absence in *Kitāb al-Muḥādara*. Maimonides did not actively select his definition and thus cannot receive credit for its perfect fit with his rationalist outlook. But Ibn Ezra had a choice. He could have used the Aristotelian model that had taken root in Arabic poetics and which he himself uses elsewhere. His adherence to the old model reflects a conviction that it alone fulfills the needs of literary expression by harnessing the creative poetic imagination.⁵⁷

Notes

1. Such motives have been attributed to Arab authors. Bonebakker (1967: 193–97, 208–09; 1970: 92–94) suggests that Ibn al-Mu’tazz wrote *Kitāb al-Badī’* in part as a reaction to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. Al-Jāhiz’s arrogant comment (cited below) can similarly be taken as an assertion of the superiority of Arabic over Greek poetics; see Bonebakker 1970: 95; Heinrichs, 1984: 200–01.
2. Although he admired Arabic learning, Ibn Ezra’s attitude obviously cannot be construed as a nationalistic bias; see Allony 1973; Brann 1991: 69–71. Anti-Greek sentiment must also be ruled out as a motive, since Ibn Ezra cites Aristotle and other Greek authors throughout his writings; see Allony 1973: 33.
3. On Ibn Ezra’s poetics see Pagis 1970; on his attitude towards poetry see Scheindlin 1976; Brann 1991: 59–83. Around the same time that he wrote the *Kitāb*, Ibn Ezra also wrote a work on biblical exegesis, *Maqālat al-Ḥadiqa fī*

- Ma'nā al-Majāz wa-al-Ḥaḡīqa* ("The Treatise of the Garden on Figurative and Literal Language"); see Fenton 1997 and below.
4. Two exceptions can be mentioned. (A) A fragment of a work from the circle of Sa'adia Gaon (Baghdad, tenth century), which uses Arabic categories to classify biblical literature (Allony 1969: 79–82, 386–89; see also Fleischer 1990: 12–17). Parallels to *Kitāb al-Muḥādara* raise the possibility that Ibn Ezra used this work (Allony 1969: 112–13), though he acknowledges only Arabic sources. (B) The only other known medieval work on Hebrew poetics is by El'azar ben Ya'akov ha-Bavli, a thirteenth century poet in Baghdad. In the extant fragment of this work (being edited by Y. Yahalom in Jerusalem) he defines and illustrates twenty-five poetic techniques. El'azar ha-Bavli knew of Ibn Ezra and cites his poetry, but works with a separate tradition of poetics (Abramson 1967/8: 9–28).
 5. For example, Ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 908), al-Ḥātīmī (d. 998) and Ibn Rashīq (d. 1070). See Dana 1982, Mashiah 1972.
 6. Heinrichs (1984: 192–95, 200–01) shows that al-Jaḥiẓ uses the term *badī'*—in general and in this passage—to denote a type of *isti'āra* ("imaginary ascription"; see below). Still, Ibn Ezra would have taken this comment as a challenge to find the *badī'*—in the broader sense used in his time—in Scripture.
 7. Here we can detect Ibn Ezra's nationalist sentiment, though he claims only that Hebrew literature is comparable to Arabic, not better. In general, he is not a strong opponent of 'arabiyya; see Brann 1991: 14–16, 69–70. In fact, by embracing Arabic poetics as a yardstick to measure Scripture's literary elegance, Ibn Ezra implicitly recognizes the artistic supremacy of Arabic poetry. More dogmatic Jewish authors argued for the Bible's supremacy even from a poetic perspective; see Cohen 1995/6: 23–25. On Sa'adia's use of the term *badī'* see Tobi 1983: 323; see also Allony 1969: 30, who argues that Sa'adia's intent was to uphold the linguistic elegance of Hebrew in the face of the Arabs' pride in Arabic, a manifestation of 'arabiyya.
 8. See Dana 1982: 112–13, 117–18, 152 (and 125, for a similar observation regarding *mujānasa* [paronomasia]). See also Cohen, "Aesthetic Exegesis" (forthcoming), sec. 3.3.
 9. Ibn Ezra implies that these techniques—at least their technical definitions—were transmitted from Greek to Arabic learning, a claim made by von Grunebaum (1953: 325–27), but debated by Heinrichs (1973: 32–33).
 10. Another comment later in the chapter on metaphor relates to a different controversy, though it has been misunderstood as a reference to this one. After citing four Qur'ānic examples (see below), Ibn Ezra writes: "In citing the Qur'ān of the Arabs I have not heeded the widespread repugnance [for it] embraced by our faith's expert jurists nowadays, for I have observed that the leading jurists and greatest theologians, Rav Sa'adia and Rav Hai and other theologians cite it in deciphering enigmatic prophecies, [and] even [use] Christian commentaries, despite their manifest weakness" (*Kitāb* 119b). This discussion has nothing to do with metaphor; Ibn Ezra simply defends his use of Arab Holy Scripture—obviously a sensitive matter—based on the precedent established by Sa'adia and Hai. See Pagis 1970: 40; cf. Brann 1991: 79; Dana 1982: 116.
 11. See Dana 1982: 116. Shem-Tov Ibn Falaquera (Spain, thirteenth century) echoes this tradition when speaking of poetry as "far from truth . . . its practitioners use nothing but metaphors (*sbemot mush'alim*, loan trans. of *isti'āra*"); see Schirmann 1956: 329. This anti-poetic bias has a long history in Greek and Arabic philosophical tradition; see Kugel 1981: 188 and above, sec. 5. Maimonides is often an adherent of this viewpoint (Twersky 1980: 250–51), though this assessment has recently been questioned (Yahalom 1997: 551–52, 558–60, and Yahalom [forthcoming]). An early reflection of the tension between precision and literary elegance emerges in a comment of the tenth century linguist Judah Ḥayyuj, who expresses concern lest "refined eloquent language (*al-lafẓ al-jayyid al-faṣīḥ*)" would detract from a clear, precise presentation of his subject (1897: 3; I thank my colleague, Prof. Aharon Maman, for this reference). Even Ibn Ezra seems to show concern over metaphorical imprecision; see Cohen 1999: n.13.
 12. Citation from Ibn al-Mu'tazz, in Bonebakker 1981: 571; see also Heinrichs 1984: 204. For an example of a far-fetched metaphor of Abū Tammām's that sparked criticism, see above, sec. 5. A similar accusation was leveled against Abū Nuwās, who "exceed[ed] all bounds in his search for *badī'*" (Heinrichs 1984: 196–97; cf. Bonebakker 1981: 72). In these citations, the term *badī'* is used in reference to *isti'āra* (Heinrichs 1984: 187–205). Halkin (1975: 225n) cites a similar concern voiced by Ibn Rashīq over improper use of metaphor on poetic grounds.
 13. It seems, in fact, that Ibn al-Mu'tazz's primary motive for writing *Kitāb al-Badī'* was to refute the above-mentioned criticisms (Bonebakker 1981: 575–76).
 14. It is conceivable that Ibn Ezra's original definition read "*ma'nā al-isti'āra isti'ārat al-kalima . . .*," the second occurrence of *isti'āra* being omitted due to haplology.
 15. Ar. *li-shay'*. This reading, attested in one MS (Halkin 1975: 228n), parallels Ibn al-Mu'tazz and is preferable to *bi-shay'* (reading in Halkin and Abumalhan Mas eds.).
 16. The Arabic root *wd'* in relation to language is used to indicate the creation or "coining" of words, either "naturally" or by "agreement"; see Dotan 1996: 237–49; see also Zwiep 1997: 107–61.
 17. We assume (with Diez Macho) that Ibn Ezra would translate these verses literally to highlight their metaphorical nature (cf. trans. in Berlin 1991: 74). For unclear Hebrew, we refer to biblical exegetes of Ibn Ezra's Andalusian tradition.
 18. Although Isa 66: 11 reads *zīz* (an obscure word), the MS of the *Kitāb* reads *zīw* (light; Abumalhan Mas 1985: I: 244), suggesting that Ibn Ezra agrees with

- Radak, *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, s.v. *zyz*, who interprets *z̄z* here in the sense of *z̄w* (cf. Ibn Janah, *Kitāb al-Uṣūl*, s.v. *zyz*, who takes *z̄z* to mean "animals," citing Ps 50: 11).
19. Scripture actually reads *yēled* indicating a verb (yielding, "you do not know what the day will bear"). But by placing it among phrases that are all in the genitive construct (see *infra*), Ibn Ezra (perhaps inadvertently misquoting this verse) seems to read *yēled yom* in the genitive ("offspring of the day") as well.
 20. Compare Ibn Janah, *Kitāb al-Uṣūl*, s.v. *zpr*, who cites Deut 21: 12, "she shall pare her nails (*ziporneha*)."
 21. Following Ibn Janah, *Kitāb al-Uṣūl*, s.v. *qwr*, who cites "beams (*qorot*) of our houses" (Song 1: 17). Translating *qurē 'akabbish* as "spider's webs" (as modern biblical translations do) renders this phrase non-metaphorical.
 22. The transparency of these first two examples, in fact, diminishes their metaphorical quality, making them "dead metaphors," which have, through common usage, become literal expressions.
 23. According to Radak, "wine of violence" indicates that the wicked are accustomed to violence as if it were their fare (comm. on Prov 4: 17), and the "helmet of salvation" represents God's protection of Israel at the time of salvation (on Isa 59: 17).
 24. His only apparent constraint—a desire to compose an alphabetic list (Dana 1982: 117)—still granted him great freedom of choice. Dana (1982: 279; 1979: 91) raises, but rejects, the possibility that Ibn Ezra's list was culled from stock examples cited by Jewish predecessors (which would have limited his choice).
 25. This is the formula Ibn Ezra uses in analyzing Ibn Gabirol's verse (above). Interestingly, the formula "B has no A" appears in the (longer) commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra on Ex 19: 20.
 26. If not for Ibn Ezra's own explicit analysis, one might have assumed that he took the genitive link as way of equating two terms; i.e., "A of B" implies that "A is B" (see below, n. 55). Brooke-Rose (1970: 146-65) illustrates this in English: "if we attribute a prison . . . to love (the *prison* of Love, etc.) the prison is in fact love." Instead, Ibn Ezra takes the genitive link as a way of attributing A to B. See the distinction between "attributive" and "identifying" genitive metaphors in Schippers 1981: 254-55; Heinrichs 1986: 4-5.
 27. Ibn Ezra, in fact, classifies these metaphors as obvious (*jalīy*); in contrast, he observes that Scripture also contains "concealed (*kḥafīy*) [metaphors], e.g., 'the heavens declare God's glory' (Ps 19: 2). And what follows it clarifies that it is a figurative statement (*majāz*), not precise language (*mubkam*), as it says, 'there is no utterance and there are no words' (Ps 19: 4) and what is connected with it" (*Kitāb* 120a). Ps 19: 2, he argues, might have been taken literally, if not for 19: 4, which reveals that speech is attributed to the heavens only poetically. In calling his original list "obvious" metaphors, Ibn Ezra is not thinking of their referents (as Dana [1982: 115; above] assumes), but rather their metaphorical nature (i.e., that "B has no A"), even if their real subject matter—which doesn't seem to interest him—is obscure (see Pagis 1970: 59).
 28. Not that he limits metaphor to the "A of B" form, since he does recognize verb metaphors (see Brooke-Rose 1970: 206-37), which amount to imaginary ascription of actions. E.g., he observes the verb metaphors, "thunder *pierced* it with a spear of lightning" (in the verse by Ibn Gabirol above) and "the heavens *declare* God's glory" (Ps 19: 2; above, n. 27). On Ibn Ezra's avoidance of verb metaphors in his primary list of examples, see *infra* sec. 4.
 29. Heinrichs suggests translating *kalima* as concept, but the more literal translation, "word," also achieves his aim of illustrating the notion of metaphor as imaginary ascription.
 30. Heinrichs translates *bi-bā* and *bi-bi* as "in connection with which."
 31. Admittedly, Ibn al-Mu'tazz is unclear and has been misunderstood (Heinrichs 1977: 33, citing earlier translations), much like Ibn Ezra. Heinrichs (1977: 2-3, 14, 23) observes that definitional clarity was not a strong point of early Arab theorists, whose conception of metaphor must therefore be deduced from their examples and analysis.
 32. Heinrichs' case is strongest with respect to the "*wing* of humility," he concedes that "*mother* of the book" is commonly used to mean "unambiguous verses of the Qur'an" and can illustrate the Aristotelian model. But, as Heinrichs argues, if only one example defies that model, another must be sought, since an author would avoid citing problematic examples to illustrate his definition. Diez Macho (1945: 54) attempts to identify the referent of the "*wing* of humility," but his analysis is less than convincing and certainly should have been stated if it were Ibn al-Mu'tazz's intent.
 33. Halkin (1975: 229n) identifies Ibn al-Mu'tazz as Ibn Ezra's source. Dana (1982: 118) supports this conclusion by observing that Ibn Ezra's Qur'anic examples are all taken from Ibn al-Mu'tazz's discussion of *isti'āra* (1935: 3).
 34. Adding the prepositional phrase *bi-bā* twice omitted from Ibn al-Mu'tazz. Ibn Ezra elsewhere cites Arab predecessors with minor omissions that cause confusion (Dana 1982: 139).
 35. We use the label "Aristotelian" typologically rather than historically, since Heinrichs (1977: 14, 40-41, 53; see also 1973: 30-33) argues that the "name transfer" model entered Arabic poetics from Qur'anic hermeneutics, independent of Aristotle's influence. But for our purposes this distinction is moot (and might be contested; see below, n. 36) since Ibn Ezra—exposed to both Qur'anic hermeneutics and logic—would have connected the name transfer model with al-Fārābī's Aristotelian model.
 36. On the possibility that al-Rummānī, who was noted for his leanings towards the logical tradition, was influenced by al-Fārābī, see Versteegh 1978: 124-25.

37. See Heinrichs 1977: 15, 47–48. Von Grunebaum 1953: 327 argues that the stock example of *isti'āra*, “Zayd, a lion,” can be traced to Aristotle's paradigm, “Achilles is a lion.”
38. E.g., the wind is described in terms of a horseman, his hand and reins. Compare Ibn Ezra's observation that Ibn Gabirol's verse depicts a nocturnal flash of lightning using elements “from among the implements of warfare” (above, sec. 3).
39. Heinrichs, 1977: 6–7, 12; 1984: 181–82, 187. See also Ritter 1954: 11–14; Abu Deeb 1971: 62. On the other hand, Heinrichs (1986: 4) admits that the old model does not exclude the possibility of a real substratum.
40. Being well versed in Arabic learning, Ibn Ezra was certainly aware of the Aristotelian model (which he uses elsewhere; see below, n. 54). He often cites al-Fārābī (Halkin 1975, *passim*); and al-Rummānī's influence is detectable in his writings (Fenton 1997: 301); on the other hand, he may not have known al-Jurjānī's works (Fenton 1997: 262).
41. Following Arabic poetics, he defines simile as an explicit comparison (*Kitāb* 134b), either with or without the comparative particle, *kaf*. His examples from Scripture include “Judah is a lion cub” (Gen 49: 9) and “He is a lurking bear to me” (Lam 3: 10); see Dana 1982: 148–52. Taking the Aristotelian definition for granted, Dana (1982: 118) expresses surprise at Ibn Ezra's “failure” to observe “the close affinity between . . . metaphor and . . . simile.” But, as Heinrichs (1984: 182) observes, “the oldest treatises on literary theory—which still subscribe to the idea of *isti'āra* being an act of object borrowing—contain no cross-referenceness whatsoever between *isti'āra* and *tashbīh*.” Only as a result of the ascendancy of the new model “it became commonplace in the later handbooks of rhetoric to define *isti'āra* in terms of its relationship to *tashbīh*.”
42. Lit. “and let his expression come out in the place of simile” (Dana 1982: 117). Heinrichs (1977: 11n, 49–50) observes that Ibn Rashīq's “hybrid” analysis is inconsistent, manifesting the confusion created when the old and new concepts of *isti'āra* co-existed. On the other hand, it is possible to analyze this verse purely according to the new model by assuming Dhū al-Rumma intends to *compare* the dawn to a white gown, rather than “lend” it one.
43. Even if Ibn al-Mu'tazz was aware of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, which may have been translated by his time (Bonebakker 1967: 196), the Aristotelian model of metaphor was not a serious force to contend with, as it would be for Ibn Ezra.
44. As observed above (n. 28), he does not deny the *isti'āra* status of verb metaphors; in fact, he faithfully cites *wa-shā'ala al-ra'su shayban* along with Ibn al-Mu'tazz's other Qur'anic examples (see Dana 1982: 118). But by excluding verb metaphors from his primary list of examples, Ibn Ezra implies that they are less than paradigmatic.
45. See Fenton 1997: 257–98; Ben-Shammai 1991: 380–82. Even Ibn Ezra follows this trend in his exegetical treatise, *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* (below, n. 54).
46. See Strauss 1963: xxiv–xxxii; Harvey 1988; Hyman 1991; and chaps. 2 and 4 of my forthcoming monograph, *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor* (= Cohen, *Three Approaches*).
47. Given his rigorous application of this model of *isti'āra* in the *Guide*, Maimonides would perhaps accept Diez-Macho's exegesis of Ibn Ezra's examples (above, sec. 2). Surprisingly, echoes of the old model of *isti'āra* occur in Maimonides' *Guide*; see, e.g., I: 46–47; II: 47, and Cohen, *Three Approaches* (forthcoming), chap. 4.
48. Although the actual criticism here related specifically to aesthetic issues (see Heinrichs 1986: 5–7), it does reflect a rationalist bias, i.e., the desire to limit how “far-fetched” a metaphor ought to be.
49. Medieval Arabic and Hebrew logic, modeled after Aristotle, defined language as consisting primarily of “signs of things,” i.e., actual entities (Zwiep 1997: 94–101). Given this orientation, Maimonides would favor a model of metaphor that offered a strict word: referent relation, even though theorists did make room for non-referential language denoting “imaginary matters” and even falsehoods (Zwiep 1997: 98–99). Maimonides was also suspicious of the imagination (see Leibowitz 1997), which produced irrational metaphors. On the other hand, he recognized the role of the imagination in the related literary technique, *mathal* (Heb. *mashal*; allegory, parable), also discussed at length in his *Guide* (see Rosenberg 1981: 96–134). But this underscores the fact that his linguistic account of metaphor bypasses the imagination. In fact, this distinction between *isti'āra* and *mathal* may have motivated Maimonides to expand the considerable effort that he does in the *Guide* to separate these literary techniques (Cohen, *Three Approaches* [forthcoming] chaps. 2 and 4).
50. For Arabic precursors of this conception, see Cantarino 1975: 38, 74–79, 83, 86ff.
51. This maxim, which reflects the interaction of Greek and Arabic thought, was often used to criticize poetry; see Bonebakker 1970: 91; Scheindlin 1976: 106–08; Kugel 1981: 186; Dana 1982: 101; Brann 1991: 72–76.
52. “If a poem were stripped of deceit, it would no longer be a poem” (*Kitāb* 62b); see Brann 1991: 75; Pagis 1970: 41–44.
53. Ibn Rashīq writes that “*isti'āra* is the most excellent kind of *majāz* and the first of the subcategories of *badī'*” (Heinrichs 1977: 48). Dana (1982: 118) identifies this passage as Ibn Ezra's source in his opening praise for metaphor (above, sec. 1).
54. On the other hand, his definition is not well suited for exegesis in the traditional sense. Given his formulas of analysis (above, sec. 3), Ibn Ezra might comment, e.g., on *qezot ha-arez* (cited by Maimonides): “Scripture lent wings to the earth, though it has no wings,” which yields no real subject. Ibn Ezra seems aware of this in his exegetical work, *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*, where he tacitly uses the Aristotelian model (see Fenton 1997: 301–04, 332–34). Although he

never defines *isti'āra* in that work, Ibn Ezra (1) classifies it as a type of *majāz*, (2) associates it with simile and, most importantly, (3) analyzes it as linguistic "borrowing," i.e., a term borrowed to signify something other than its original sense. Elsewhere I hope to address this inconsistency, which arises in part because the *Maqāla* follows a Jewish exegetical tradition represented by *Sa'adia* and Ibn Janah (Spain, early eleventh century), whose methods have greater affinity to Qur'ānic hermeneutics than Arabic poetics (Cohen, "Aesthetic Exegesis" [forthcoming]). At this point we note that Ibn Ezra's reliance on the Aristotelian model in the *Maqāla* makes his avoidance of that model in the *Kitāb* all the more striking.

55. Given his analysis of Ibn Gabirol's verse, he might observe how this verse imports the scene of a ship lost at sea to depict the spurned lover. On genitive metaphors in Ibn Ezra and other Andalusian Hebrew poets, see Pagis (1970: 64–70); Fleischer (1990: 109–13). Consistent with his reading of Ibn Ezra's definition (above, sec. 2), Pagis (followed by Fleischer) analyzes such metaphors according to the Aristotelian model by assuming that the genitive link identifies A and B, rather than attributing A to B (see above, n. 26).
56. Ibn Ezra's avoidance of the Aristotelian model foreshadows a modern development outlined by Ricoeur 1975: 4, 76–90. Aristotle's definition has been deemed too narrow since it reduces metaphor to "deviant nomination," i.e., an unfamiliar name for an entity usually expressible by a proper term. Modern theories thus define metaphor as "impertinent predication," i.e., the mixture of categories that occurs when the subject is actually perceived as the image. On this account, a metaphor cannot be translated into a literal equivalent that expresses the referent directly, since the imaginative operation of attributing features of the image to the subject is integral to the metaphorical process.
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En/gendering Hebrew Literature in the 90s

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Modern Hebrew literature has long been seen as a literature of fathers and sons, men writing and rewriting the story of the *akedab* (the binding of Isaac). Recently, however, Israeli literature has seen a near-explosion of writing by women. Amalia Kahana-Carmon is joined not only by Yehudit Hendel, Ruth Almog, Shulamit Lapid, but also by Irit Linor, Yehudit Katzir, Orly Castel-Blum, Ilana Bernstein, and Dorit Rabinyan. Women writers are responsible in large part for introducing new genres and new approaches to less developed genres into Israeli literature, from fictional autobiography to the detective novel. (On the former see Feldman 1988, 1990; on the latter see Furstenberg 1992; Berg 1994.) Women's voices contribute to the development of the domestic in Hebrew literature and to a greater awareness of gender and gender politics.

Until the turn of the century, and even until today, women's novels in general often told of the quest for a husband, the tale of wedlock and/or maternity. The first, the marriage plot, though perhaps never far from the scene, has made a comeback in recent years, albeit in a somewhat refurbished mode. The protagonists in the contemporary Israeli versions are generally thirty-something, independent and single. These stories rewrite the plots of marriage and motherhood, updating, subverting, and pushing them to the extreme. While their male colleagues are exploring midlife crises of the now older disillusioned anti-hero, some of these women writers have created a new Israeli