Introduction
G. R. Boys-Stones

in Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition: Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions

Published in print: 2003 Published Online: September 2007
Item type: chapter

Ancient theories of metaphor and allegory are more sophisticated than we normally think. If we suppose they were viewed merely as decorative ‘tropes’, that is because we rely too heavily on the evidence of rhetorical handbooks without considering the restrictions implied by that context. The case of allegory provides a good way into reassessing the theory of ‘tropes’, because the philosophical approach to its use is so clearly at odds with the rhetoricians’ definition of it as ‘extended metaphor’.

How to Read the Bible
Steven L. McKenzie

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: September 2011
Item type: book

More people read the Bible than any other book. Indeed, many try to live their lives according to its words. The question is, do they understand what they're reading? As this book shows, quite often the answer is, “No.” This book argues that to comprehend the Bible we must grasp the intentions of the biblical authors themselves—what sort of texts they thought they were writing and how they would have been understood by their intended audience. In short, we must recognize the genres to which these texts belong. The book examines several genres that are typically misunderstood, offering careful readings of specific texts to show how the confusion arises, and how knowing the genre produces a correct reading. The book of Jonah, for example, offers many clues that it is meant as a humorous satire, not a straight-faced historical account of a man who was swallowed by a fish. Likewise, the book
explains that the very names “Adam” and “Eve” tell us that these are not historical characters, but figures who symbolize human origins (“Adam” means man, “Eve” is related to the word for life). Similarly, the authors of apocalyptic texts—including the Book of Revelation—were writing allegories of events that were happening in their own time. Not for a moment could they imagine that centuries afterwards, readers would be poring over their works for clues to the date of the Second Coming of Christ, or when and how the world would end.

Relocating Greekness: The Narrative of Greek Descent
Aaron P. Johnson

in Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius’ Praeparatio Evangelica

Published in print: 2006 Published Online: January 2007 Publisher: Oxford University Press
Item type: chapter

This chapter argues that Eusebius conveys a narrative of Greek descent (in Books 1-6) that begins with the Phoenicians and Egyptians in order to highlight the lateness and dependency of the Greeks upon these ‘barbarian’ nations, and to portray them as embodying negative national character traits. Thus, the Praeparatio can be seen as part of the anti-Greek tradition of historiography that arose among subject peoples (such as Egyptians and Jews) following the conquests of Alexander the Great, but which continued well into the Roman Empire, especially with Philo of Byblos. His narrative is bolstered by a euhemerist interpretation of ancient myths and a critique of allegorical interpretations.

Revelation
Richard Swinburne

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: September 2007 Publisher: Oxford University Press
Item type: book

This book is divided into three parts. Part 1 (Chapters 1 to 4) investigates how truth can be conveyed in allegory, parable, or myth by analogy and metaphor, within false presuppositions about science and history. Part 2 (Chapters 5 to 6) considers what is shown when some book or creed constitutes a revelation from God. Its content needs to be intrinsically plausible and also to be confirmed by miracle. Part 3 (Chapters 7 to 12) assesses the claim that Christian doctrinal and moral teaching and the Christian Bible constitute revealed truth. It sets out the criteria for a society descended from the society of the apostles being the Church.
founded by Jesus Christ, and shown by his miraculous Resurrection to be a source of revealed truth. It argues that the authority of its teaching and of the Bible depends on their being authenticated by that church. It analyses the extent of analogy and metaphor in the Church's teaching, claims that the moral teaching is intrinsically plausible, and that the Bible is to be interpreted in the light of the Church's teaching and of our knowledge of science and history.

Euripides and the Politics of Form

Victoria Wohl

Published in print: 2015 Published Online: October 2017
Publisher: Princeton University Press
DOI: 10.23943/princeton/9780691166506.001.0001
Item type: book

How can we make sense of the innovative structure of Euripidean drama? And what political role did tragedy play in the democracy of classical Athens? These questions are usually considered to be mutually exclusive, but this book shows that they can only be properly answered together. Providing a new approach to the aesthetics and politics of Greek tragedy, this book argues that the poetic form of Euripides' drama constitutes a mode of political thought. Through readings of select plays, the book explores the politics of Euripides' radical aesthetics, showing how formal innovation generates political passions with real-world consequences. Euripides' plays have long perplexed readers. With their disjointed plots, comic touches, and frequent happy endings, they seem to stretch the boundaries of tragedy. But the plays' formal traits—from their exorbitantly beautiful lyrics to their arousal and resolution of suspense—shape the audience's political sensibilities and ideological attachments. Engendering civic passions, the plays enact as well as express political ideas. The book draws out the political implications of Euripidean aesthetics by exploring such topics as narrative and ideological desire, the politics of pathos, realism and its utopian possibilities, the logic of political allegory, and tragedy's relation to its historical moment. Breaking through the impasse between formalist and historicist interpretations of Greek tragedy, the book demonstrates that aesthetic structure and political meaning are mutually implicated—and that to read the plays poetically is necessarily to read them politically.
The Music of the Spheres

Michael Ward

in Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C. S. Lewis

Published in print: 2008 Published Online: January 2008
Publisher: Oxford University Press DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195313871.003.0011
Item type: chapter

The problem of reception, which has already been partly solved by addressing the problems of occasion and composition, is further solved by a consideration of how the fairy-tale genre builds a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious mind and by the fact that the two things which the Narniad implicitly conveys (the argument from Miracles and the planetary archetypes) are themselves best understood through Enjoyment, not Contemplation. Objections considered, such as ‘Are the Chronicles properly understood as allegory rather than as symbol?’ and ‘Does not disclosure of this secret frustrate Lewis's imaginative purposes?’ His abiding interest in models of the universe and the myths that follow in the wake of scientific advances.

Genre

Richard Swinburne

in Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: September 2007
Publisher: Oxford University Press DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199212460.003.0005
Item type: chapter

Literary genres include works of history and philosophy, models, allegories, moral and metaphysical fables (which Plato called ‘myths’), and historical fables. These differ in respect of whether works of the genre have a truth-value, and of whether and how that value is a function of the truth-value of the component sentences. For example, in moral fables, in contrast to works of history, truth-value belongs to the whole work but not to its individual sentences. Putting a chunk of writing into a larger or different context may change its meaning entirely. Context includes literary context (the surrounding sentences, which help to determine genre), social context (the authorship and intended audience), and cultural context.
Poetic Machinations
Michael Golston

Published in print: 2015 Published Online: May 2016
Item type: book

Through a survey of American poetry and poetics from the end of World War II to the present, Michael Golston traces the proliferation of these experiments to a growing fascination with allegory in philosophy, linguistics, critical theory, and aesthetics, introducing new strategies for reading American poetry while embedding its formal innovations within the history of intellectual thought. Beginning with Walter Benjamin’s explicit understanding of Surrealism as an allegorical art, Golston defines a distinct engagement with allegory among philosophers, theorists, and critics from 1950 to today. Reading Fredric Jameson, Angus Fletcher, Roland Barthes, and Craig Owens, and working with the semiotics of Charles Sanders Pierce, Golston develops a theory of allegory he then applies to the poems of Louis Zukofsky and Lorine Niedecker, who, he argues, wrote in response to the Surrealists; the poems of John Ashbery and Clark Coolidge, who incorporated formal aspects of filmmaking and photography into their work; the groundbreaking configurations of P. Inman, Lyn Hejinian, Myung Mi Kim, and the Language poets; Susan Howe’s “Pierce-Arrow,” which he submits to semiotic analysis; and the innovations of Craig Dworkin and the conceptualists. Revitalizing what many consider to be a staid rhetorical trope, Golston positions allegory as a creative catalyst behind American poetry’s postwar avant-garde achievements.

The Sense of the Ending in La clemenza di Tito
Jessica Waldoff

in Recognition in Mozart’s Operas
Published in print: 2006 Published Online: May 2008
Item type: chapter

La clemenza di Tito, a political allegory, dramatizes clemency as a central tenet of enlightened governance. The events of the plot allow dark tendencies in human nature to threaten enlightenment values (and Rome itself), but ultimately suggest the futility of rebellion against a virtuous and benevolent ruler. The restoration of these values depends on recognition scenes in which the three central protagonists overcome their baser instincts: Vitellia her jealousy and ambition, Sesto his
abandonment of reason for passion, and Tito his angry renunciation of his merciful policies. These recognition scenes are shown to be central to the opera's dramatization of enlightenment themes. At the dénouement, Tito pardons the conspirators, reaffirms his policy of clemency, and exclaims, “Let it be known in Rome that I am myself” — a moment of self-recognition vital to the sense of the ending.

“Style Is Just the Man Himself”
Veit Erlmann

in Music, Modernity, and the Global Imagination: South Africa and the West
Published in print: 1999 Published Online: May 2008
Item type: chapter

This chapter focuses on the life stories of key members of the African Choir, such as Paul Xiniwe and Charlotte Manye. Written by the subjects themselves, these autobiographical sketches illustrate the fact that the making of modern colonial subjects was primarily a matter of self-authorization and self-stylization. By narrating their own selves, the choristers drew on modern templates of self-making provided by the bourgeois nation-state, and on more traditional models inspired by heroic poetry.

The Arcs of Modernism: Geography as Allegory
Paul Giles

in The Global Remapping of American Literature
Published in print: 2011 Published Online: October 2017
Item type: chapter

This chapter examines how the lineaments of U.S. national identity were shaped and consolidated by three wars over a span of eighty years: the American Civil War, World War I, and World War II. It explains how American writers during these years sought to accommodate the heterogeneous nature of national space within an allegorical circumference where the geography of the nation would embody its redemptive spirit. The chapter first considers the establishment of social boundaries in William Dean Howells's novel A Hazard of New Fortunes and its effort to redescribe regionalism as a nationalist phenomenon. It then explores the concerted attempt to restore the “multilingual” dimensions of American literature and the nationalistic approach adopted
by some writers that incorporates geography as a mode of allegory. It also analyzes the fiction of Wallace Stevens and Gertrude Stein, the latter of whom used the airplane as an emblem of modernism.

Jewish Animal Sacrifice in the Period 100 bc–ad 200
Maria-Zoe Petropoulou

in Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and Christianity, 100 BC to AD 200
Published in print: 2008 Published Online: May 2008
Item type: chapter

The chapter discusses animal sacrifice in the Jerusalem Temple based on sources from the late Second Temple period, that is Philo and Josephus, and of the Mishnah. Animal sacrifice shaped Philo's intellectual system to a great extent, while his work — full of sacrificial allegories — might echo Diaspora Jews (of an unknown proportion) who respected the practical aspect of Jewish animal sacrifice without feeling at odds with an allegorical interpretation of it. On the basis of the work of Josephus and the mishnaic rules, one can acquire glances at issues like the ritual rhythm at the Temple, its relation to the Romans, the blurred boundaries between secular and religious slaughter, the variety of non-Biblical rules about modes of slaughter, and the co-existence with Gentiles, but also the aspirations after AD 70.

Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition
G. R. Boys-Stones (ed.)

Published in print: 2003 Published Online: September 2007
Item type: book

According to the theoretical accounts which survive in the rhetorical handbooks of antiquity, allegory is extended metaphor, or an extended series of metaphors; and both allegory and metaphor are linguistic ‘tropes’: their purpose is essentially ornamental. The distance posited here between meaning on the one hand and the form of its expression on the other has come under decisive attack in the work of 20th century theorists, who have argued for the central role of metaphor in the construction of meaning. But how far in fact do the rhetorical handbooks represent the scope and subtlety of ancient thought on the matter? The papers presented here address this question from a variety of theoretical perspectives; they examine the origin and meaning of the
term ‘metaphor’, set ancient against modern theories of language, and theory against practice. The inclusion of papers devoted to allegory in the writing and exegesis of antiquity provides, in the first place, another way of testing the adequacy of ancient rhetorical theory; but it also extends the debate into areas of the literary life of antiquity which have been unjustly sidelined or neglected.

Classics and Colonialism: towards an erotics of the discipline
S. C. Humphreys

in The Strangeness of Gods: Historical Perspectives on the Interpretation of Athenian Religion

Published in print: 2004 Published Online: September 2007
Item type: chapter

This chapter looks at the relation between 19th-century colonialism and the repositioning of classical studies as a university discipline and as a secular alternative to theology. It considers the anthropology of reading (i.e., the conceptions of the person implied by theories and practices of reading) and the history of reading, commentary and interpretation (especially allegorical interpretation). It takes a Lacanian view of academic disciplines, arguing that fetishization and desire are essential to them; the implications for teaching are explored. It suggests that the role of humanities teaching is not merely to train future interpreters of classical texts or to maintain ‘cultural literacy’, but to foster skills of attentive, dialogic reading and to widen students’ awareness of traditions of argument, both in ‘their own’ and in ‘other’ cultures.

Bodies Fleshly and Spiritual
John Casey


Published in print: 2009 Published Online: February 2010
Item type: chapter

Two opposing accounts of heaven and the risen body are discussed—the materialist account of Irenaeus, and the elaborate theory of the spiritual risen body and its properties of Augustine. In Augustine there is a curious mixture of a vision of the risen body that is virtually allegorical—that sees the body’s existence as subsumed within the community of believers—and a continued attempt to explain it in a semi-literal way. The chapter
ends with a discussion of the Muslim paradise, and of accusations, mostly brought by Christians, that it is a paradise of the senses. The Muslim vision of paradise is discussed through an account of some hadith, and some attempts at allegorical interpretation of the sensual descriptions are noticed.

Telling a Different Story
Gordon Graham

in The Re-enchantment of the World: Art versus Religion
Published in print: 2007 Published Online: January 2008
Publisher: Oxford University Press DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199265961.003.0004

This chapter explores the concept of literary narrative. It distinguishes between historical, fictional, and allegorical narratives, and applies these distinctions to Biblical and religious literature. It distinguishes between realism and romanticism in fiction, and gives special attention to the earlier writings of James Joyce.

Metaphor, Simile, and Allegory as Ornaments of Style
Doreen Innes

in Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition: Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions
Published in print: 2003 Published Online: September 2007
Publisher: Oxford University Press DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199240050.003.0002

This chapter gives a detailed survey of surviving ancient discussions of metaphor, simile, and allegory as ‘non-literal’ tropes of ornamentation. The absence of metaphor and simile from Horace’s discussions of literary style is raised as a puzzle, and explained by Horace’s wish to avoid hackneyed theory in favour of practical exemplification.

Figures of Allegory from Homer to Latin Epic *
Andrew Laird

in Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition: Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions
Published in print: 2003 Published Online: September 2007
Publisher: Oxford University Press DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199240050.003.0008
This chapter eschews an aprioristic approach to the identification and analysis of allegory in ancient texts, instead seeking guidance from the texts themselves. Epic treatment of reflexive conventions, such as the messenger speech, suggest that epic is aware of itself as allegory — that is, as a medium whose message cannot be straightforwardly read off. Furthermore, it expects the reader to construct (not ‘find’) its meaning, so that allegorical exegesis converges in the end with interpretation. It turns out that ancient philosophical allegorists are closer to the mark than ancient rhetorical texts, which are limited in their account of allegory as a trope.

Allegory and Exegesis in the Derveni Papyrus: The Origin of Greek Scholarship
Dirk Obbink

in Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition: Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions
Published in print: 2003 Published Online: September 2007
Publisher: Oxford University Press DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199240050.003.0009
Item type: chapter

This chapter argues that the scholarly tradition of textual exegesis has pre-Classical roots in works whose purpose was religious or ritual. The Derveni papyrus exemplifies such work: its author ‘updates’ the Orphic text on which he comments and invests it with initiatory significance by reconfiguring it as cosmological allegory.

A Wheel within a Wheel: Spiritual Interpretation in de Lubac and Daniélou
Hans Boersma

in Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology: A Return to Mystery
Published in print: 2009 Published Online: May 2009
Publisher: Oxford University Press DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199229642.003.0005
Item type: chapter

This chapter turns to the spiritual interpretation of Scripture in Henri de Lubac and Jean Daniélou. Their ressourcement of pre-modern exegesis relied on a sacramental understanding of Scripture, which maintained that salvation-historical events recorded in Scripture contained deeper, spiritual levels of meaning. Thus, just as nature and the supernatural did not constitute two separate orders of being, so spiritual interpretation
was not just an unrelated addition to an already historically established meaning of the text. De Lubac and Daniélou did differ on some points. De Lubac's appreciation for allegorical exegesis meant that the purpose of spiritual interpretation was, ultimately, to move beyond history. Daniélou placed greater emphasis on the historical progression of typology, which made him wary of allegory. Their differences notwithstanding, both Jesuit scholars looked to Old Testament types as sacraments that pointed beyond themselves to their spiritual fulfilment in the New Testament and in Jesus Christ.