MEDIEVAL ARABIC POETICS:
POETIC SYLLOGISM AND COMMUNITY IN AVICENNA'S COMMENTARY ON ARISTOTLE'S POETICS

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ABSTRACT: 'Medieval Arabic Poetics'

The paper concerns the Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics written by Avicenna (Ibn Sina: 930-1037AD). The paper is divided into two parts, the first of which examines Avicenna's account of poetic imagination and the use he makes of this concept in justifying a 'poetic syllogism' that accounts for aesthetic validity. The second part develops this account of the poetic syllogism to show that the completeness of the syllogistic requires us to consider the kind of community and moral validity sustained by poetic validity. To explain the first claim— for poetic syllogisms— the paper examines Avicenna's writings on logic and parts of his commentaries on the Prior and Posterior Analytics, linking these to issues in his commentary on the Poetics. To explain the relation of poetry to community, the paper develops issues from the commentary on the Poetics, especially Avicenna's use of the concept of 'themes'. 
Western scholarship on Aristotle’s Poetics no longer relies on Medieval Arabic Commentaries on that work. Yet those commentaries can still be of interest, for they exhibit features of that work which we now ignore for the wrong reasons. For example, the commentaries emphasise the relation of aesthetic validity to community in a way that has become important again only recently, following a long night in which aesthetic value was supposedly entirely disinterested and had no basis in or relation to social forces. But the commentaries are of interest also because they display the richness and sophistication of a philosophical tradition to which the West owes a considerable debt. Knowledge of Greek works was transmitted to Europe through Arabic translations and commentaries; and although later scholars gained access to the Greek originals, thus making translations from Arabic redundant, nevertheless the Arabic commentaries remained a vital part of the developing European tradition of philosophy.

Of course, given their own philosophical tradition, Arabic philosophers were concerned with what Aristotle had to teach them of the issues central to their own concerns, and were wont to use Aristotle yet that use yields a rich harvest: one that is worth pursuing in some detail. And in this paper I shall consider Avicenna’s Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle to show how he developed a theory of the relation between logical and moral validity by developing a notion of poetic syllogisms. Avicenna (980–1037 A.D.) was known to his Arabic readers as Ibn Sina.

ISSUES OF EXEGESIS

One problem with understanding Ibn Sina’s conception of the poetic syllogism is that he is not averse to developing Aristotelian ideas beyond their original scope. In the case of the Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle, this development takes the form of introducing elements from his own theory of poetics or from al-Farabi’s Canons of Poetry. Since the latter lacks a clearly recognisable Aristotelian source, while the former has features which are
distinctive to Ibn Sina, the reader can only understand the Commentary by carefully disentangling its heterogenous elements. This problem is compounded by the fact that Ibn Sina presents parts of his theory in different texts - a habit common to many philosophers, who had need to express their opinions very cautiously. As a result, the reader has to be sensitive to nuances and ready to recognise how diverse concepts from different texts determine issues from their particular text. Moreover, as they must defend claims made for their texts by assessing and clarifying the part played by these concepts in Ibn Sina's theory, readers are forced to engage with the text not merely by exegesis but also by argument with it.

Another problem is that Ibn Sina uses concepts of 'imagination', 'wonder', 'imitation', etc., which borrow meanings from Arabic culture as well as from Aristotelian psychology. That is, although philosophers such as al-Farabi and Ibn Sina introduced a number of Greek terms into Arabic usage, nevertheless a number of other terms already had a history in Arabic; and to grasp Ibn Sina's usage, the reader must attend to all these senses. In addition, in relation to this Commentary, Ibn Sina explains the logic and ratiocinative force of the poetic syllogism not in this work on poetics but in the texts on logic. As the latter texts show that the poetic syllogism is crucial to validity, we must understand how it underlies and sustains Ibn Sina's theory of poetics. But to understand their connection we must relate issues from two texts which are not clearly or explicitly related by Ibn Sina; therefore, the reader must construe both texts from a perspective that is not native to either. In turn, this perspective raises issues that are only implicit in the text. Of course, in pursuing issues in this way we cannot arbitrarily introduce premises alien to Ibn Sina, nor can we willfully contradict his explicit claims, but in a number of cases it will be possible and necessary to draw out conclusions because they make his theory whole - even though Ibn Sina does not make them explicit.

That claim may be made clearer by considering an example. For instance, we must develop Ibn Sina's account of pleasure in poetry. Ibn Sina claims that poetry is imaginative and figurative, where figurative speech involves a meaningful composition of images. For the imagination to function in this way, if it is to escape the pitfalls of idiosyncratic subjectivity, it must operate according to rules. Ibn Sina proposes that one way to measure whether the imagination is successfully following rules is by seeing whether its use in a poem evokes a feeling of pleasure. Yet pleasure seems entirely subjective, and so must fail to provide any standard for the rules of imagination. That is, some use of imagination may generate pleasure in one person, perhaps because of associations she has with whatever is imagined, while another person may feel no such pleasure. Conversely, different images may be evoked in diverse subjects by the same poem, and so cause pleasure in each case, yet without any guarantee that the same rules of imagination are present or being observed. Where such arbitrariness obtains, each 'successful' use of imagination is only coincidentally related to pleasure, and the occurrence of pleasure fails to provide a ground for saying that the imagination is rule-governed. Consequently, the occurrence of pleasure would seem to be very unsatisfactory as a criterion by which to judge the operation of imagination in poetry.

At this point we might expect Ibn Sina to defend his claim by showing how pleasure and imagination are rule-governed, but he does not do so. Nevertheless, if we understand that pleasure is part of the formal character of the poetic syllogistic, then Ibn Sina's justification for his claims becomes clearer. Yet this is argument and justification which we have to make explicit by comparing different texts and extrapolating issues and conclusions from one to another. That is, taking premises implicit in Ibn Sina's Commentaries on De Anima and in the logical works, which are also developed in his Remarks and
Admonitions: Logic, we have to produce arguments to gain the conclusions which Ibn Sina espouses, seemingly without defence, in the Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle. Such a task is not easy, but by carrying it out successfully we will not offend against Ibn Sina's theories — and its results can prove very worthwhile. Accordingly, to understand Ibn Sina's theory of poetics, we must explain how his account of poetic syllogisms, suggested in the writings on logic, supports his contention in the Commentary on Poetics of Aristotle that 'Poetry is imaginative speech'.

It is not obvious that the latter must be explained by the former, but we shall see that as Ibn Sina develops his conception of imaginative speech, their relation becomes more plausible.

To see this development, we must be clear that Ibn Sina is interested in making sense of the nature of poetry by justifying one conception of its power and validity. For example, the poet al-Muzani writes that 'the horses of youth and its trappings have been removed'. His metaphor evokes thoughts of the vivacity and insouciance of youth now lost in temperate old age. Though different readers may gain diverse images from these phrases, we should be surprised if the images did not all have some similar resonances at their base. Our expectation is justified because we take the metaphor to be meaningful and therefore valid for all subjects. And while it may be difficult to articulate precisely what that meaning is, it seems clear that unless all the readers shared some central core of ideas, they will have misunderstood the poem. Similarly, other meanings are inappropriate, so that someone who construes 'its trappings have been removed' merely as an escape from captivity would have misunderstood the poem or have read it only in translation.

These claims about poems may seem acceptable, yet it is far from clear what justifies such certainty about meanings. The phrases are not literally true: youth is not a horse nor must it possess a horse. If considered as a veridical claim, it is clearly false. It may even so confuse the mix of its elements as to be meaningless, for youth and horses belong to such completely different categories that arguably we do not know how to relate them in a sentence having truth content. Nor does grammar guarantee the meanings of those phrases. At best its rules govern the functions of parts of sentences, and a grammatically sound utterance can be unsound in sense. Further, neither rhythm nor rhyme generates meaning for poetic phrases. Yet, for all that, poetic phrases do seem just right. The words composing them say something which we expect others will also understand and enjoy. At times Ibn Sina even implies that we judge people by both whether and how they grasp poetry. An insensitivity to the meanings of tragedy can be a moral failure, and the vulgar are more likely to be moved by epic than tragedy. Nevertheless, it remains unclear that poetry can claim such meaningfulness or that the latter gives poetry its power over us.

In fact, by describing poetry as imaginative speech, Ibn Sina is preparing the ground for an explanation of the meaningfulness of poems and thereby indicating the basis for poetic validity. First, recognising that meaning rather than rhythm, rhyme, or metre, is the primary element of poetry, he is associating poetic validity with a ratiocinative part of ourselves which has to do with thinking and manipulating mental images. This is not to reject emotions and the non-rational, though, for feelings of pleasure and displeasure are associated with poetry through the mediation of imagination. Second, the association with imagination introduces issues of the audience's state of mind, and allows Ibn Sina to compare the states induced by poetry with the conviction produced by demonstrative arguments. This comparison can then be filled out by showing, third, that poetic meanings and the conclusions of demonstrative syllogisms share both a logical structure and resulting states of mind, and therefore, fourth, that poetry has validity. Further, this conclusion has other implications concerning the nature and role of subjectivity and the moral character of poetic form.
To pursue these issues, in the following section we will briefly present Ibn Sina's conception of imagination, clarify how it constitutes poetic speech, set out the state of mind involved, and then argue that poetry gains validity through its logical form of the poetic syllogism. In the following section the subjectivity and moral quality of poetry will be considered.

I.

IBN SINA AND THE IMAGINATION

Ibn Sina's definition of poetry as imaginative speech obviously depends on his conception of the imagination. He examines this latter concept also in texts other than the *Poetics*, and there uses it to cover a range of phenomena in explanations of human thought and action. But much of this range centres on one sense, also developed in his Commentary on *De Anima*, but outlined succinctly in the Sixth Chapter of Book II of *Kitab al Najat*. This central sense identifies imagination with the ability to reproduce sensory experiences as mental images, even in the absence of the objects which would have caused these experiences, and in combinations and forms significantly different from our original experience of them. This central sense is crucial to human thought as it is active in diverse phenomena including thinking, imagining, calculating, dreaming, remembering, wishing, and so on; and Ibn Sina's explanations of the central sense can be developed to give conceptual support to the etymological relation between 'imagination' and 'imaginative representations'. The latter, of course, are crucial to poetic discourse.

The Faculty of Imagination. Ibn Sina's interest in the imagination occurs in the context of his concern with understanding the nature of human reason. The latter, in turn, is part of his interest in discovering the forms of moral goodness and of the exercise of theoretical intellect in a contemplative life. As a part of this conception, Ibn Sina holds that we possess a special spiritual capacity that distinguishes us from animals and is the object cultivated in the arts, sciences, and noble actions. The nature of this capacity may be understood through our cognitive activity, which Ibn Sina examines in a number of texts, and his theory of the imagination can be extracted from that more general consideration. In the *Kitab al-Najat*, for example, Ibn Sina distinguishes animal nature from human intelligence by identifying a 'rational imagination' that differs from an animal's 'sensitive imagination' by virtue of our ability to apperceive. In this text as in others, the 'rational imagination' of the human soul is a faculty whose function it is to combine certain things in the faculty of representation, and so to separate some things from others as it chooses. Representation, it is explained in turn, 'preserves what the sensus communis has received from the individual five senses, even in the absence of sensible objects'. That is, the faculty of representation can bring images before the mind, even in the absence of the objects of which they are representations, and the imagination is the faculty for manipulating those images, adding to or subtracting from them to produce newer representations which need not have any object in the world of which they are or can be sense impressions. So, it is possible to imagine a Roc, constructing it out of preserved experiences of white birds and large objects, without supposing that such a creature must exist or be perceived. To this image it is possible to add elements drawn also from aural, tactile, and olfactory representations, or the imagination may construct images in which, say, smell or feel is more important than visual appearance.

Ibn Sina also maintain that the imagination always deals with particulars. And in addition to being an active but characteristic manipulation of representation because it deals only with particulars, imagination can also be a
matter of interpretation. There is an important sense in which, for example, sense perception is true while imagination is not: Aristotle proposed that it is unusual to talk of what we see distinctly as merely 'appearing' to us. Rather, we speak of things 'appearing thus-and-so' only when sensory perception seems unclear and we need to interpret what we see. We may need to ask what a perception is of, for example by saying 'it looks like a man'. In these circumstances it is appropriate for the percipient to exercise imagination in acknowledging that the figure can be seen as a man. Yet such an exercise is not the function of the faculty of sense perception. In dealing with this issue, Aristotle ascribes the task to imagination and its dealing with phantasiai. Indeed, his conception of imagination is rather wider than Ibn Sina's, for Aristotle includes under this rubric a number of different functions which Ibn Sina, following Alexander of Aphrodisias, ascribes to distinct faculties. Thus, where Ibn Sina distinguishes the faculties of representation, imagination, and estimation, Aristotle includes all these within the same rubric as different aspects of imagination's dealings with phantasiai. Nevertheless, in spite of these differences, both Aristotle and Ibn Sina separate the task of sense perception from what Ibn Sina calls 'imagination'. Ibn Sina maintains that imagination not only abstracts from both sense and representation and is able to produce images, but can also add and subtract parts of images. The last ability is constrained by the fact that it can only produce images of what originally was received from the senses, and so its object must still be a particular, but the possibility that diverse combinations can be produced by the subject introduces a particular kind of lacunae between image and reality. For imagination does not merely reproduce what it sees only so far as that appeared distinctly. Rather, the subject can reproduce a composite image made up from its experiences. Accordingly, this product of the imagination invites both a reference to the subject who reproduces the image and also a concern with the elements composed into that image. And we may seek to understand the image by grasping the relation of its parts and by investigating their source in the subject's abstraction and combination of these parts.

These references to the subject who constructs the image and to the composition of the image are crucial to Ibn Sina's theory of poetics. But that is not their only function in his works. In his Commentary on De Anima he points out that by considering images the mind prepares itself for dealing with intelligibles. He also writes that 'when images alone are present and not the external sensible, they affect the rational soul like present perceptions. Similarly, when the rational soul, with the help of wahm [imagination] creates images, it is affected by them, thus giving rise to a [belief]-process (zann). Later he argues that through its compositions the imagination is enabled to represent high truths in figurative forms. However, before turning to the use we can make of imagination, we must first consider the related faculty of estimation.

The Faculty of Estimation. Estimation is another function of the imagination in Aristotle's works that Ibn Sina, in his own work, identifies as a separate faculty. It assesses non-material attributes of objects and their images, which it abstracts from matter. Thus, it shares some of the structure of the imagination, in dealing with particulars, but it also abstracts further in that it ascribes non-material qualities such as agreeableness and aversion to images. These qualities are not perceived in the material nature of the object and so cannot be perceived by the imagination. Accordingly, the crucial task of estimation is to produce desire and movement by assessing the agreeableness or painfulness of objects. This is a separate task from the one of manipulating images, though it shares much of its structure in having to deal with particulars. Nevertheless, the imagination is simply neutral in that it is merely a presentation or representation of images, and it becomes the task of estimation to judge the
agreeableness or otherwise of its content and to generate desire or aversion. Though the content of imagination is constructed by composing elements from sensory experience, i.e., activity need not thereby impose any 'non-material' qualities.

As a faculty of judgement, estimation operates 'by way of an imaginative impulse without its judgement being (rationally) proven' 19. Ibn Sina explains it further by comparing human and animal capacities. Thus, whereas animal estimation may associate pleasure with an image because of past experience or by 'an instinctive interpretation of the image by the soul'20, the rational soul in addition not only suffers appetitive states such as shame, laughter, etc., which are peculiar to human beings, but also incorporates the products of the imagination and estimation into a relation under the governance of a practical faculty. His latter is 'the principle of movement of the human body, which urges it to individual actions characterised by deduction and in accordance with purposive considerations'21. And Ibn Sina adds that 'its relationship to the animal faculty of imagination and estimation is that it uses the faculty to deduce plans concerning transitory things and to deduce human arts'.

This last set of claims raises a number of issues, one of which concerns the distinction between animal and rational imagination. The first - sensitive (animal) imagination - is generally referred to by mutakhyil while the second - rational or deliberative imagination - is usually identified as mufikr. The second bears connotations of thought (fikri) and rationality while the first is closer to the sense of a mere image. Such differences do not imply that there is an unbridgeable gulf between these senses. First, humans and animals have a number of faculties in common: animals too can perceive, remember, and find images pleasurable or painful, and so far as these uses of imagination are identified as mutakhyil, we may expect that humans also possess that capacity. The difference is that humans also have intellectual capacities which animals lack, and to understand completely any human use of imagination to manipulate mutakhyil, this faculty must be placed in the larger explanatory context of the rational soul. Accordingly, human mutakhyil may bear connotations derived from this context which are not available to the sensitive imagination of animals; and we can identify the human rational imagination as mufikr in order both to distinguish its role in animal behaviour and to indicate its connection with intellect. But we need not thereby suggest that humans lack the sensitive imagination which animals also possess. Instead, by grasping the role of imagination in practical and theoretical intellectual activities, it can be made clear just what connection mutakhyil bears to mufikr.

This leads to a second matter: that there must be some such connection between mutakhyil and mufikr is made clear by a number of things. For example, Ibn Sina follows Aristotle in accepting that all thought involves imaging. This is to say that the use of takhyil is inescapable, even in the most abstract thought (fikr), though it does not imply that thought must always be about particulars. The suggestion Ibn Sina makes is that we use images in order to think about and with universals, so that our interest is not so much in images for the particulars they are as it is in images because they facilitate thought. Similarly, in figurative language we construct images for poems and aphorisms. These also involve the use of mutakhyil, but as Ibn Sina will be seen to say, this use of mutakhyil is part of the exercise of our reason. For poetic images possess a logical validity and are part of that ratiocinative activity which includes demonstrative thought, dialectic, and all the parts of logic. Thus, in all these kinds of thought, mutakhyil is not excluded; and in making a distinction between animal and human souls by reference to that between mutakhyil and mufikr, Ibn Sina is not implying that the two distinctions either coincide or are exhaustive and exclusive 22.
Even if *mutākhīl* and *mufikr* are not subject to an unbridgeable gulf, we still need to see how imagination enters into reasoning. Ibn Sina has proposed its use in deducing 'plans concerning transitory things' and 'human arts'. His concern is with reasoning about particular objects and events pragmatically, as means to realise some end, and with exercising the various arts of, say, painting, building, and so on, in which given materials are used in accordance with the rules of those arts. In these situations, the imagination provides a set of particulars to facilitate constructing a plan that is to be implemented. Similarly, Ibn Sina explains that the imagination assists the rational soul in numerous ways: first, the imagination deals with particulars, bringing forward particular instantiations from which the intellect sifts out inessentials in order to identify universals; second, the intellect is also able to discover relations between the simple universals presented in particulars and can construe them as propositions claiming truth values. It is important to note here that the logical structure of a proposition need not show itself in the image but has to be abstracted from the represented particular. Indeed, where a proposition is not obvious there the intellect generates a proposition by producing a middle term and so constructing a syllogism. In any case, other assistance given by the imagination includes providing a series of particular cases that the intellect examines and from which, third, it extracts not only inductive generalisations but also, fourth, claims about historical traditions.

However, more than merely cases of imagination aiding reason, these examples succeed because they are instances in which reason determines the imagination. For the latter to enter into reasoning, we must explain how the intellect gives significance to special features of images. It may be argued that, in the absence of this ability to single out some aspects of images, we could not clearly recognise an imaginative product as part of a plan, as an instance which serves as a universal, as party to relations between universals, as a member of an inductive generalisation, or as possessing a given logical structure, and so on. An ability to focus on some features and disregard others is essential if we are to understand how an image serves, say, a historical tradition. Thus, not every detail of a printed page, such as the quality of its paper, script, size, colour, etc., need be important to identifying how a poem participated in the *jahilliya* tradition. Of course, the imagination is the mechanism we use to focus attention by subtracting parts of representations, highlighting others, etc., but this mechanism has to have guidelines. For Ibn Sina, such rules are provided by the intellect in its use of concepts and syllogisms in thinking correctly. And in the next section, we shall begin to see how imagination functions in poetry under the guidelines provided by the poetic syllogism.

In any case, this section has been concerned with Ibn Sina's conception of imagination. A number of criticisms can be levelled against him - his use of 'abstraction' to distinguish different faculties is highly questionable; we may disagree with his insights into the nature of mental operations - though at present it is unnecessary to do so. One set of criticisms will identify inadequacies in his theory, arguing that it conflates some issues or ignores other senses which we have since seen are separable or intrinsic to imagination. Given that Ibn Sina is struggling with an idiom which had only recently been developed by Aristotle, though by its counter-parts in Arabic thought, and that this idiom was to influence a broad range of theories which were developed and criticised not only in Arabic but also in both the Europe of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, it is not surprising that Ibn Sina's conception contains problems. How significant these problems are, we will discover only by seeing what he wishes to make of his concept, and that depends on the context defined for it by our concerns. To clarify that context, we must consider the role of imaginative representations in figurative and poetic language.
IMAGINATION IN POETRY

At first it seems that Ibn Sina's *Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle* contains his own theory as well as his explanation of the Aristotelian text: his own conclusions are set out in Chapter 1 and his explanations in the following parts. This distinction does not and is not intended to disguise what Ibn Sina owes to or brings to his reading of Aristotle, for both parts owe a great deal to the *Poetics* and other Aristotelian works. In spite of this qualification, the above distinction is misguided, for the first chapter is not so much a distinctive theory as it is a study of the *Poetics* from the viewpoint of the Aristotelian *corpus*. It supplements that text with reflections on the logical status of poetic discourse and on the variety of forms and themes available to it. The *Poetics* itself contains little reflection on these subjects, but in the context of the *Organon*, which is where Ibn Sina would have placed it, such issues became paramount, for the *Poetics* was understood as a part of Logic. It was an element of a comprehensive theory about the nature of our capacity for reason, which included all the forms of viable human discourse. In this context, a commentary on any one of the logical texts would have to explain its part in the larger, comprehensive theory. Where its participation could not be clarified by using material from within that text itself, the text could be clarified by drawing on the larger theory. This clarification Ibn Sina provides in the first chapter of his *Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle*, by bringing to the text a concern with logical status and validity. Thus, in one sense, that first chapter is Ibn Sina's theory in so far as it contains his extrapolation from a larger theory of logic to issues in the *Poetics*. But, in another sense, it is still very much a part of Aristotelian thinking because Ibn Sina is using its tools and vocabulary to satisfy a demand which is made by that very theory.

As we shall see in some detail later, Ibn Sina wants to establish that poetic utterances have an independent validity. Initially, he seems intent on proving this by distinguishing poetic speech from its cognitive counterpart, but it soon becomes clear that, in spite of important differences between them, poetic and demonstrative utterances share a logical structure. The major difference turns on the roles of wonder and pleasure in poetic utterances, which have no counterpart in objective statements. The latter abjure all such subjective references, the former do not; but it is important to see that where pleasure is involved in poetic utterances and the latter claim validity, there wonder and pleasure have a particular role to play. For example, we gain pleasure from two sources: from 'imitations' for their correspondence to reality and from satisfying our love of harmony and melodies. For Ibn Sina, these pleasures cause us to create poetry. But the pleasures we get from creating poetry are distinct from another role Ibn Sina gives to wonder and pleasure in establishing the validity of poetic utterances. This latter pleasure is the basis for gaining an 'imaginative assent' or 'compliance', involving a sense of 'imaginative imitation' that does not simply seek to copy reality. Such compliance parallels the objectivity of demonstrative, objective statements, and Ibn Sina explains their similarity by developing a notion of poetic form that is associated with his conception of 'poetic syllogisms' and 'poetic premises'. As we shall see, these associations raise further issues.

As a first step in his explanation of poetic discourse, Ibn Sina distinguishes it from science and knowledge. 'Poetry is imaginative speech to which the soul yields, accepting and rejecting matters without pondering, reason, or choice. In brief, it responds psychologically rather than ratiocinatively (fikri), whether the utterance is demonstrative or not.' The nature or structure of the imagination does not change here, though, in this context, Ibn Sina uses 'imaginative representation' (takhyil) and 'imitation' (muhakah) if not always
interchangeably, then in a combination which suggests he wants to emphasise particular features of their nature. In al-Najat and al-Nafs, the central sense of imagination was the ability to bring to mind and manipulate images of absent particulars. By describing poetic imagination as 'imitation', Ibn Sina is emphasising the aspect of imagination that allows us to consider and manipulate images for themselves, without regard to their references to sense experiences of reality. This may seem counter-intuitive for two reasons: first, Ibn Sina has already shown that imagination is distinguished from sense, and so adds little by calling it imitation. This is true to some extent, but the notion of 'imitation' serves to emphasise that the alignment which imagination bears to its sensitive origin can be distinguished from the other uses which can be made of that faculty.

Second, it seems that 'imitation' must have an original, and surely this invites precisely that concern with the relation of image to object which we have just denied. But, in fact, Ibn Sina goes on to explain that imitation is a matter of 'giving the likeness of a thing, not the thing itself'. This underlies a distinction from objects of experience – the ultimate source of the representations manipulated by imagination. Accordingly, the suggestion is, by relating imagination to imitation in poetry, Ibn Sina is de-emphasising the relation to objects and emphasising our contemplation of the qualities of images. Similarly, Ibn Sina holds that in poetry imitation succeeds by using melody, sense, and measure to provide images. This possibility shows that imitation is neither simply copying precisely nor restricted in its means or manner by the need for such copying. Further, he claims that imitation is pleasurable for itself, and allows that even if we have not perceived the original, and so cannot enjoy the relation of portrayed forms to their originals, nevertheless we would still 'delight in the form itself – its manner, composition, and so forth'. Again, clearly his interest is not simply in copying. This is suggested also when he proposes that images and imitation possess an element of wonder that truth lacks; and while it is necessary to explain this further, as it stands it suffices to show both that imitative imagination can be contrasted with truth and that its corrigeable relation to reality is not at issue. The examples suggest that even in imitation – or perhaps especially there – our concern is with the representations themselves.

Further, Ibn Sina also stresses 'the utterance itself' over what is spoken of, proposing again a distinction from the cognitive use of imagination. He explains this distinctive aesthetic use by arguing that four elements go to make an utterance imaginative. These elements are (i) those related to the temporal duration and quantity of the utterance, i.e., its measure, (ii) those related to the sound of the utterance, (iii) those related to the sense [or meaning] of the utterance, (iv) those hesitating between sound and sense. Although Ibn Sina's explanation of the third element is the main topic of this chapter, it is possible to conjecture what he has to say of the other three. Both time and sound may refer to the musical properties of poems such as metre, intonation, and cadence: Arabic poetry depends on establishing and maintaining a beat by ordering words so that recitation involves not just rhymes at the ends of lines but also a consistent metre. Of course, meaning cannot be ignored in this order, but the elements of sound and beat go to affect meanings. Elsewhere Ibn Sina declares that particular metres are appropriate to ecstasy, while others are usual to impressiveness, and yet other to charm. The second set of elements is more closely related to linguistic expressions, and concerns the fluency or purity of speech and the best use of appropriate figures of speech. These concerns also enter under the last heading, and elsewhere Ibn Sina explains that to judge the quality of an utterance, we assess how rich in thought it contrives to be without any loss in expression. More importantly, this use of tone and sound does not follow a cognitive interest. Scientific truths may also be expressed in
such metred utterances, but our concern there would be with the matter being referred to rather than with the utterance for itself. In poetry we attend to the utterance for sense, which we seek out from 'the relation among the parts' of the phrase, rather than to a veridical relation of utterance to object.

Sense is poetic when it is striking and original. We shall return to this third element by exhibiting other features of Ibn Sina's account of imaginative imitations. He explains their non-veridical character further by saying that 'images and imitations are neither limited nor fixed...what is proper to poetry is that which is invented and created'. Whereas imagination ordinarily is determined ultimately by given forms of experience, with imitation in poetry we consider images for their being created, and so understand them by reference also to the poet rather than to the object alone. Such creativity will differ from ordinary imagination in that it need not be determined by the process of knowledge beginning with sense and passing through representation to the imagination. The suggestion is that poetic imagination is freed of the relation to original sense experience not simply because it can manipulate representations but also because subjects can invent or create images. Accordingly, where earlier we identified a reference to the subject in the imagination's manipulation of images, now in the poetic imagination and the creation of images we broaden that reference to the subject at the same time as we weaken references to real objects and events of experience. But we do not thereby reject the claims imagination makes to validity. Thus, imagination is poetic because its images are created and because it involves a concern with the utterance itself, with its balances, and its sense or meaning. The latter are not gained simply by a reference to reality, and so are not understood solely through a veridical relation to objects. Instead, they are to be grasped by reference to the relations of parts of the utterance to each other and by reference to the subjects - poet and audience - who create and understand those compositions.

Although we have been at pains to distinguish poetic imagination from its cognitive counterpart, it must not be supposed that imaginative imitations bear no reference at all to our cognition of reality. And by explaining that relation we will clarify further Ibn Sina's conception of poetic discourse. Certainly, Ibn Sina seems to identify poetic speech by contrasting it with demonstration and analysis. The 'clearest and most desirable speech is achieved by 'direct statement made up of authentic and standard language'. Its use of concepts and symbols can be codified and given determinate correspondence with the world in a system of scientific reasoning. In its use we consider not 'the utterance itself' but the 'matter being conveyed', and accept or reject claims due to the realisation that the thing is what it is said to be. Yet cognitive and poetic utterances are not exhaustively distinct: it seems at first that the 'demonstrative is different from the imaginative, for an utterance may serve to prove the truth (of something) without exciting emotion'. However, as Ibn Sina goes on to argue, 'if said again in a different way, [that same utterance] may often effect emotions without conviction occurring as well'. That is, although demonstration and poetry differ in the criteria they satisfy, the same utterance could be used to satisfy either set of criteria - although each use provokes distinct kinds of response. Moreover, most importantly, poetry and analysis share a structure of utterance and response. Ibn Sina proposed that 'the soul yields [to imaginative speech], accepting or rejecting matters without pondering, reasoning, or choice'. Although the contrast with cognition is gained by denying the presence of a process of reasoning, Ibn Sina is not claiming that poetry is non-intellectual or purely emotive. He has made a commitment by which possession of a 'spiritual' or 'intellectual' capacity, sometimes identified with reason, is distinctive of human beings. So he cannot relegate poetry to a non-intellectual status without also excluding it from the humanities (nafsani). And in
saying that the soul yields, Ibn Sina is trying to give poetry a rational though non-cognitive force. Poetry concerns that part which makes us rational beings, and though we do not accept or reject matters by reasoning demonstratively, we are not passive in the way that animals are subject to stimuli. Even if it is not compliance to a demonstrative argument, yielding denotes an active intellectual ability and, in our response to poetry, may correctly be seen as an 'imaginative assent' in which we yield to a valid utterance. In this rule governed and valid assent, poetry resembles demonstration and analysis. This claim needs to be explained further.

**Imaginative Assent and Pleasure.** Ibn Sina writes that imaginative assent 'is a kind of compliance due to the wonder (ta'ajab) and pleasure (lidhdhah) that are caused by the utterance itself... [it] results from the utterance itself...47. If the source of this response lies in the utterance itself, it must arise from the presentation of imaginative representations of which it is composed. Ibn Sina holds that these 'possess an element of wonder that truth lacks' 48. They also generate feelings of pleasure. Now, an association between pleasure, wonder, and imagination in its aesthetic use, has a long history, stretching from Classical to present times. It is easily accepted that we read or listen to poetry, drama, novels, and music because it gives us pleasure. There may be other purposes also served by these works, but these do not replace or substitute for pleasure. However, it is difficult to explain why we maintain that link to pleasure or what its scope should be. Pleasure is subjective, variable, and fleeting, and its part in our relation to works does not seem to sustain the seriousness with which we listen to poetry or music. It could be that pleasure is not our principal interest in poems, even if it could be what initially draws us to it. Yet those other interests do not concern the utterance itself: we may want the result of utterances - the insight they yield, the benefits they bring - and so may see the utterance as a means to some end beyond the balance of sense, words, and phrases; but that outside interest is easily chided for impropriety towards the utterance itself. For if the utterance is only a means, then it is pleasurable only contingently. Other means may satisfy its end, and so be more valuable, or where the utterance fails to satisfy an end, it will not be pleasurable. In either case, the utterance itself is not of interest, and in this the position differs from that of Ibn Sina, for whom the utterance itself is essential and of interest. In a serious sense, it is no more possible to explain why we feel pleasure in works of art than it is to account for the concepts we have. We cannot expect to think beyond aesthetic pleasure, to explain it in more basic terms, because such pleasure is basic to identifying the object as one in which we have an aesthetic interest. Instead, at best, we can explore what it means to make this association between pleasure and works, and by producing a theory or a rounded set of generalisations which cover and organise our numerous particular insights into works of art and aesthetic activity, we can exhibit the usefulness of accepting that crucial connection.

In relating poetry to pleasurable awe, Ibn Sina is taking up something close to this last option. The association may seem to require explanation through some more basic concepts, and Ibn Sina may seem to provide this, but he mostly only relates pleasure and wonder to other parts of his theory. To understand the links between poetry, pleasure and awe, we must first return to the issue of imitation, to distinguish other roles played by pleasure. For pleasure enters into Ibn Sina's theory in a number of ways, and it is an easy mistake to think that all those roles have to do with 'imaginative assent' even when they do not.

We said earlier that imitation is used naturally in a pairing to counterpoise with 'original', but that Ibn Sina's use stresses our interest in the representation for itself. This second use does not make the first sense
irrelevant to the theory. That first sense re-emerges in the chapter 'On the Origin and Development of Poetry and Its Kinds'. There, when discussing the relation of pleasure to poetry, Ibn Sina notes that imitation causes pleasure, and clearly he is using 'imitation' to counterpoise and refer to an 'original'. Moreover, he identifies such pleasure in imitation as one of the causes of poetry, and we may infer that this pleasure can be identified with the pleasurable awe which constitutes imaginative assent. The picture which emerges from these interrelations goes something like this: we are led to create poetry because poetry uses 'imitations' and we find pleasure and astonishment in producing and dealing with these. This kind of imitation, which strives to conform to reality, invites surprise and astonishment when it compares well with its object, and in this role - in wasf - was a standard part of traditional Arabic poetics. Here, it is because we gain pleasure from a successful imitation that we give imaginative assent to a poem. Such pleasure is distinctive of poetry because it involves imitations. These have a peculiar position, somewhere between reality and mere fancy: the ontological distance between image and original explains, first, the element of wonder that an imitation possesses but which the truth lacks. Its nature as an imitation prevents it from becoming a 'recognised truth...devoid of novelty' because it is always something other than an original. Such a relation to the original is ever present, but the reference to the latter is never realised because the imitation can never become the original. And this tantalising position is the source of our wonder or awe, for the imitation 'is and is not' the recognised truth. Second, its peculiar status goes to make our response distinctively aesthetic. Because it is an imitation - a mere image - it is free of the ordinary pleasure which we might have gained from its original; therefore it generates an 'imaginative assent' rather than one dependent on our actual experience of pleasure in the original. Yet because it could not be an imitation if it lost its reference to the original, the pleasure occasioned by the imitation is not simply arbitrary. It is based on a rule derived from the original object, and so is quite properly described as 'assent'. In this way, poetry may be explained in terms of a pleasurable awe that constitutes our imaginative assent to imitations.

Such a picture may be attractive, but it has a number of drawbacks, not least of which is that it does not quite coincide with Ibn Sina's claims. Among the major problems is this: for imitations to succeed here, we cannot suppress their relation to the original. Yet whenever we see them as imitations, so to speak, we also deprive them of their independent force. For if we stress that 'imitation' is counterpoised to and, therefore, also related to an 'original', then we are forced to consider the imitation for its relation to reality, rather than for itself, and to find the imitation wanting. We relegate imitations to some realm where, because they are not real, they do not participate effectively in our actions and their consequences. If we assent to them, it is in the imagination, and they cannot rival demonstration or dialectic in causing real actions and actual dispositions. Further, so far as our concern is with Ibn Sina's explanation of poetic validity as a part of logic, by relegating imitations and imaginative assent to an unreal realm we deprive them of any independent validity. Poetics can no longer be regarded as a part of logic, but must depend for its limited authority on what it can derive from a resemblance to logic, empirical knowledge, and rational validity. Accordingly, the term 'poetic syllogism' does not denote a term of logic but is a tool for identifying analogies between poetry and scientific discourse. Yet the analogy does not rest on a validity that both can claim: logic has necessity, poetry does not, though it is analogous to demonstration. But we cannot prove that poetry is valid because of its analogy to objective, demonstrative discourse, because analogies may rest on any similarity. As they are wild in this way they must be qualified to distinguish important from peripheral analogies. Yet, in order for this distinction to apply to analogies, it
must depend on something more basic that the analogies themselves, and so the latter are not the basis for proving the validity of poetry. And whatever that more basic rule is, it will justify validity – though we do not at all know what that might be.

Instead of making poetic validity parasitic on logic, we must join with Ibn Sina in seeing poetics as a part of logic. As it is one among the logical texts of the *Organon*, by understanding its nature we add to the comprehensive picture of valid human reasoning and discourse that Ibn Sina, following Aristotle, is trying to develop. More immediately, the account criticised above confuses two different senses of imitation and ascribes one sense a role that Ibn Sina does not. Imitation, in the sense that stresses a relation of contrast with an original, may well be pleasurable, but in that sense it is only one of the 'causes that make the human mind create Poetry' ³¹. Imitation is delightful to men, but 'what is delightful is not [the] form nor what is portrayed but its being a precise imitation of something else' ³². This precise imitation clearly has to do with copying and so with what is conveyed rather than simply with 'the utterance for itself'. And while such successful copying gives us pleasure, this cannot be identified with the pleasurable awe that evokes imaginative assent. The latter must concern the utterance for itself, its balances and meanings, and does not deal with its success as a copy. For as Ibn Sina makes clear, our interest in imaginative representations, in an utterance for itself, differs from our concern with and pleasure in an imitation for its relation to the original. 'Men ... find great delight in portrayed forms if they can well relate these to their originals', and such pleasure has its standard of success in how well the imitation approximates to the original. But as Ibn Sina goes on to point out, even if they have not perceived the originals, people can delight in 'the form [of the imitation] itself – its manner, composition, and so forth' ³³. This latter pleasure cannot have the same standards of success as the former because, by hypothesis, the original has not been perceived, and so the imitation cannot have been measured against it. In terms of those standards of success in copying, where we 'have not perceived [the originals] before, [our] pleasure could not be complete, but approximate' ³⁴. Yet we are able to delight in the form itself – in the balanced manner, the sense or meaning composed, and so forth, of the imitation itself.

**Pleasure in imitation and in form.** These two experiences of pleasure are related, but there are distinctions to be made. This need not involve us in identifying different kinds of pleasure. Nor need there be two kinds of 'imitation', if these are supposed to be qualitatively different kinds of mental entity. Imitations are imaginative representations in the soul regardless of whether we stress their relation to the original or stress their distinction from objects, and they retain their nature whether we apply to them standards of success in copying or whether we apply standards of gaining a successful balance of parts. Similarly, pleasure is pleasure whether it arises from copying or appreciating balances. It is just that we must distinguish between the things we find pleasurable: a pleasure in copying is not a pleasure in appreciating balances ³⁵.

Further, the two accounts explain different things. One explains why we create poetry. There may be a number of such causes, each of which trades on evoking pleasure in us. Ibn Sina mentions not only our pleasure in copying but also 'men's natural love of harmonious composition and melodies' ³⁶. But these causes why we create poetry, the delight we derive from copying reality or appreciating harmonies, by themselves are not, and cannot justify, the imaginative assent we give to poetic discourse. Delight in copying reality or appreciating harmony tell us why we create poetry, they do not explain what justifies our assent to the poetry we construct. Even if creating poetry did not
cause pleasure, we could assent to poems for the pleasure they themselves gave, and even if such assent were independent of pleasure, we might enjoy creating poems.

Conversely, it should also be made clear, although our love of harmonious combination and melodies explains why we create poetry, that need not be the only part played by such delight. The love of harmonious combinations will be satisfied, for example, when we discover harmoniously composed utterances, and this satisfaction may be pleasurable. If so, then because in poetry we assent to the sense composed in the utterance, our love of harmony could be the basis for our imaginative assent to the utterance and its balances. That is, it may be plausible to identify a pleasure we get from satisfying our love of harmony with the pleasure and wonder on the basis of which we comply with or give imaginative assent to a balanced or meaningful poetic utterance. A parallel case cannot be made for identifying pleasure in copying with the basis for imaginative assent. Even at this general level it is apparent that a balance within the utterance can be procured at the expense of failing to make a faithful copy. By hypothesis, our concern with the utterance is not for itself but is constrained by our interest in its relation to an original. Consequently, pleasure in successfully copying is only contingently related to the pleasure we get from procuring a balance. It is true that copying precisely and gaining a balance may both depend on the same mechanism of the imagination — such as composing, manipulating, adding, and subtracting parts of images — but because manipulation in copying has its goal in exactness to something outside the imagination or the utterance itself, it need not be appropriate to the requirements of rhythm, intonation, cadence, and creation of sense which are needed in poetic imagination and imaginative assent.

In summary, there may be two causes that lead us to create poetry, both of which give us pleasure. Copying yields a pleasure that is not restricted to poetry, and need not always be gained in poems or utterances we appreciate for themselves. If appreciation is an imaginative assent based on feelings of pleasure in the balances in an utterance, then the contingent relation of pleasure-in-copying to poetry suggests that pleasure in copying is not the basis of imaginative assent. The other cause of poetry is our natural love of harmony. As imaginative assent depends on appreciating balances in utterances, it is possible that assent to the utterance is justified by the pleasure we get from satisfying our natural love of harmony. If so, then a justification of such assent and its basis in harmony will differ from the account we may give of the causes of poetry making.

It must be clear also that Ibn Sina has not explained why we love, and so gain pleasure from, a harmonious combination or melody. It is his insight that we do: there is little more to say in explanation. And instead of trying to find a more basic set of concepts and faculties that explain why we feel pleasure in harmony, Ibn Sina fills out this conception by distinguishing it from other sources of poetry and their attendant pleasures. To the same end, we can develop Ibn Sina’s account further by drawing out some implications of the discussion above. It will turn out that just as copying is a cause of poetry and not the basis of its validity, so too our love of harmony is a cause and not clearly a justification of the validity claimed in imaginative assent.

The first implication to be clarified is this: pleasure in harmony is not restricted to poetry or poetic imagination. Ibn Sina does not develop the issue to any great extent, but from what he says we may expect that other harmonious combinations will also satisfy that love and give rise to pleasure. Thus, things as diverse as achieving a balanced unity between countries, or forming a harmonious community out of individuals, will also satisfy our natural love for harmony. Consequently, if a love of harmony leads to imaginative assent
in poetry, we must point to something in addition to harmony to explain why the soul yields to poetry. Ibn Sina has provided some part of the answer by distinguishing imaginative representations, but the need for such clarification points to a second implication, which is something of a reminder. Imaginative assent was said to result from feelings of pleasure and wonder or awe: it is 'a compliance due to wonder (ta'jib) and pleasure (lidhdhah) that are caused by the utterance itself'\(^57\). And to make full sense of how harmony leads to assent, we have to explain how harmony is related to pleasure and to wonder. Ibn Sina proposed that 'imitation' has a sense of wonder that the truth lacks, and earlier this was used to develop a picture of aesthetic activity that was later rejected for other reasons. What we must do now is to free the relevant part from that picture and show how wonder relates to pleasure in harmony.

The sense of imitation we are concerned with, here, is what we referred to earlier as 'imaginative imitation'. Ibn Sina does not say so explicitly in the relevant passage\(^58\), but that he is attending first to the imitation of a thing that may be true or untrue, and second to the fact that 'human beings are more amenable to imaginative representation than to conviction', both suggest he is opposing imitation to reality and is not concerned with precisely copying some segment of reality. In any case, we know Ibn Sina writes that 'imitation has an element of wonder that truth lacks'. As he goes on to explain, 'the reason is that a recognised truth is evident and devoid of novelty, while an unknown truth is neglected'. It is important to note that the contrast is not between truth and falsity but between novelty and already knowing or finding evident. 'Truth' is being used for 'known and evident facts'; 'wonder' is associated initially with what has been 'neglected', and Ibn Sina later refers it to 'that which is invented or created'\(^59\). We feel wonder in an utterance, it seems, because it is unknown and novel, and in poetry this is because it has been created. Images and imitations here 'are neither limited nor fixed'\(^60\), but this does not make them false or incapable of truth.

Given that this contrast is not intended to abolish poetry to the realm of nonsense or falsity, we may expect that wonder is still associated with sense or meanings. Although poetry does not share in the cognitive interest guiding analytic thought, for poetic language 'does not pertain to understanding but rather to wonder - it makes the speech pleasant and dignified'\(^61\), nevertheless, it is still speech that concerns us. That is, for us to feel wonder, the utterance must still be meaningful, even if it is invented and created, and even though we do not judge it in terms of truth or falsity. So poetic or wonderous utterances do not escape the requirement of being rational and comprehensible. Rather, the last quotation shows that poetry is directed at our nature; and, instead of seeking veridical claims about what is 'recognised and immediate' in the world of nature, they deal with an affect on subjects, who feel wonder or pleasurable awe.

**Pleasure and Wonder.** For Ibn Sina wonder is a pleasurable or distressful emotion. It is a fascination, a pleasurable or displeasureable sense of amazement in something recognised but incompletely understood. In Aristotle's work wonder was a prelude to seeking out the explanation of some event or object, and could connote a theoretical contemplation that was pleasurable in itself. 'It is owing to wonder that men now begin and at first began to philosophise. [A] man who is puzzled and wonders thinks himself ignorant (whence even the lover of myth is in a sense a lover of wisdom, for myth is composed of wonders)'. All men begin 'by wondering that things are as they are, as they do about self moving marionettes, or about solstices or the incommensurability of the diagonal of a square with the side'\(^62\). It seems that full knowledge, which we hope to gain eventually, has its beginnings in our experience of particulars we see and appreciate but do not understand. The
particulars are not 'evident' because we cannot explain them, but we can appreciate them for themselves. Thus, al Farabi, in writing of the philosophy of Aristotle, proposes we can delight in using our senses even when they do not serve any other purpose. We can appreciate 'statues, elegant sceneries, objects delightful to hear and to smell, and objects pleasurable to touch - for nothing else besides having them as pleasurable objects of sense perception' 63. Similarly, we may delight in discovering that some things we experience in sense and imagination can fit well with knowledge. The focus here is on our modes of apprehension and knowledge rather than on the individual particulars which are perceived or explained, and the fit between sense and knowledge leads us to delight in 'the myths, stories, histories of peoples, and the histories of nations, that man narrates and to which we listen solely for the delight they give' 64. To this he adds that 'looking at imitators and listening to imitative statements, listening to poems, and going over what one comprehends of the poems and the myths he recites or reads, are used by the man who delights in them and is comforted by them only for his pleasure in what he comprehends' 65. Both accounts of pleasure seem to rely on the Aristotelian conception of pleasure, as a fit between sense and what is sensed 66, which al Farabi takes up in his claim that pleasure involves 'apprehending most excellently a most excellent object of apprehension' 67. Moreover, the discovery that there is such a fit - a realisation that quite naturally develops into a search for explanations - is also the occasion for wonder and a search for explanations.

These interconnections are accepted and promoted by Ibn Sina. He too thinks that wonder suggests a feeling of anticipating full explanations. The connotation of 'reasoning out the explanation' that is present in Aristotle's account of wonder and in al-Farabi's conception of self-sufficient pleasure has a parallel in Ibn Sina's work, where wonder comes within the compass of reason. This feeling accompanies the pleasure of apprehension because the latter is addressed also to the fit between imagination and intellect. It is rational because, as wonder is a response to a balance, the elements in the balance must be understood if their relation is to be appreciated. This appreciation is a matter of pleasure and awe. But where Aristotle saw such wonder as the first step towards a larger goal, so that pleasure and awe pointed beyond wonder to the later stages of full understanding, Ibn Sina does not see it as merely a step in the right direction. Like al-Farabi, he gives weight to pleasurable awe itself, and identifies its basis and nature as an independent experience: it is more than merely a means to further knowledge and, instead, results from an interest we take in the object for itself while also seeing its relation to knowledge. In the case of poetic utterances, pleasurable awe is our response to the meaningful harmony they are composed of, and it must be seen as a qualitatively distinct experience even if it has parallels with and eventually may even depend on demonstrative certainty 68. It is because Ibn Sina wants to define its distinctive nature that he not only compares wonder with what is evident and known but also strives to fit it within a logic of poetic syllogisms.

Yet Ibn Sina is not entirely given to thinking of wonder only as a pleasurable awe, for when considering the 'imagined propositions' which serve as premises to poetic syllogisms, he argues that they have as their disposition feelings of pleasure or distress. The example he gives, of 'honey is vomited bile', is hardly intended to suffuse the hearer with a sense of comfort, but Ibn Sina still identifies this disposition as wonder. Moreover, he proposes that the disposition is external to assent. The latter bears connotations of 'imaginative assent', and as both this and wonder are of interest to us, we shall have to give more attention to the passage mentioned.

In the 'Sixth Method' of Remarks and Admonitions: Logic, Ibn Sina's immediate concern is with 'the types of propositions employed by syllogisers' 69.
but much of what he says about 'imagined propositions' is comparable to the discussion in the *Commentary* where he sets out four elements which make an utterance poetic. Some writers have argued that both texts deal with exactly the same matter. The claim will not be disputed in any detail here, though we must set out some cautions: in the *Commentary on the Poetics*, because Ibn Sina is dealing with poetic utterances generally, he does not clearly state whether his descriptions apply to premises or conclusions in poetic syllogisms. The latter distinction is not raised explicitly in that text, except insofar as the first chapter sets out his conclusion that poetry has a peculiar logical status, for only when dealing with logic does he need to examine his theory of poetics from the perspective of its syllogistic. When we turn to the *Logic*, in the Sixth Method we find Ibn Sina analysing kinds of propositions to identify how they are accepted as premises in syllogisms. But his full purpose is made known only in the Ninth Method, where he makes plain that every type of discourse depends on a distinctive kind of premise, so that poetic discourse - dependent upon poetic syllogisms and poetic validity - also needs a particular kind of premise. Thus, when Ibn Sina examines the nature of the 'imagined proposition' in the Sixth Method, he is trying to describe the premises of poetic syllogisms and to explain why we accept them. That is, his concern is with premises, not with the syllogisms as such or as yet, and while there will be a great many similarities between the reasons for identifying premises as imagined propositions and describing poetic utterances, nevertheless not every feature of poetic premises can be ascribed to the conclusions of poetic syllogisms - to poetic utterances generally. Instead, the meaningfulness and validity of poetic utterances depends on their logical structure - the poetic syllogistic - and an account of the latter will incorporate conclusions about poetic premises. In turn, this distinction between premises and conclusions suggests that we would be too hasty if we simply identified the four criteria of 'imaginative utterances' with the two basic distinctions which structure 'imagined propositions'. Or, more correctly, these sets of criteria may well identify similar or the same object, but we must still consider whether this object - the proposition or utterance - is a premise or a conclusion. Further, whatever other similarities the two sets of criteria may bear to each other, the passages from *Remarks and Admonishments* also put forward claims about 'wonder' that can be examined.

With this last concern in mind, we note that Ibn Sina identifies imagined propositions as ones which 'when they are stated, ... leave in the soul an astonishing effect of distress or pleasure'. As an example, he says, 'honey is vomited bile' influences the soul because of the fact that 'honey resembles bile, something which makes the soul reject honey and pull away from it'. Wonder here involves forming a non-veridical association with an utterance that results in the subject being drawn to or away from the object of the proposition. And he elaborates that such 'a moving imagined statement depends on the element of astonishment [wonder, *ta'jib*] which it produces either by [1] the [quality *guda* of the form *lai'a* of the statement], [2] the force of its truth, [3] the force of its notoriety or [4] the goodness of its resemblance. But we reserve the name 'imagined propositions' for those which leave an effect [on the soul] by resemblance. These may move the soul by disposition external to assent.

Many issues are raised by these claims, not all of which are important to explaining the nature and role of wonder in imaginative assent. To begin at the end: first, the suggestion is that in one case at least, which is the central case of imagined propositions, wonder may be the disposition that results from grasping the proposition, and so may cause us to act in one way or another, but that dispositional effect is 'external to' and cannot be identified with 'assent'. So, where our interest is in discovering the source of 'imaginative assent', presumably this explanation of the role of wonder is not of much help.
Second, as we call 'imagined propositions' those which evoke wonder as a disposition because of some resemblance, it is important to know whether the resemblance is between the proposition and some original lying outside or between the object compared (the *primum compartionis*, or *musabah*) and the object compared to (the *secundum comparadionis* or *musabbah - bihi*) in the proposition itself.

It is unlikely that the resemblance is between proposition and reality. That is the relation either of truth or of *wasf*, and as we saw earlier, neither sense is really a part of Ibn Sina's theory. Resemblance between objects compared and compared to in the proposition is much more appropriate to the example of 'honey is vomited bile', where some similarity between their appearances is used to evoke a displeasurable awe. The imagined proposition is not tested by the truth of any relation between objects that it asserts, and so it is not literally true. It depends rather on a generalisation which is quite extravagant - 'Everything which is yellow and has a certain texture is like vomited bile' - whose measure seems rather to lie in how striking and original are its comparisons and resemblances. For Ibn Sina, the fact that the comparison gains and holds our attention, through our grasp of the resemblance, is reason for saying we assent to it. It may be bold, appropriate, startling, winning, and so on, and will evoke our assent because it seems 'just right'. There are no necessary rules for constructing such resemblances. Putative poets may train themselves by studying exemplars, practising comparisons, or carrying out technical exercises and learning various linguistic tricks, but none of these can guarantee that any resemblance or comparison they produce by following rules will be brilliant, apt, striking, or 'just right'. In some cases individuals simply have this gift. Moreover, the feeling of wonder that constitutes our attitude to the elements in comparison, so that we dislike honey because of its associations, is a result of our finding the comparison 'just right'. That is, the disposition is a consequence of our assent to the resemblance in the comparison, and therefore 'external to assent' 73. We do not think the comparison striking, novel, and exemplary because we feel wonder but, rather, are led to wonder because we assent to the comparison even though it seems illogical or untrue.

Arguably, Ibn Sina is subverting the traditional poetic *wasf* - the astonishment we feel at discovering that our imitation coincides with reality. First, he frees 'imitation' and 'resemblance' of any standing that is judged by their reference to reality; second, he explains wonder as a feeling of pleasure or distress that attaches to our assent to 'imaginative propositions' rather than to the veridical relation of images to reality; third, he proposes to substitute aptness of comparison within the proposition for a similarity to reality as the measure for imagined propositions or imitations in his sense. In so arguing, fourth, Ibn Sina also retains the connection between reason and wonder that was established by Aristotle and developed by al-Farabi, for feelings of wonder occur only with our assent to a comparison, which occurs only when we find its parts meaningful and their relations significant.

The example we have used above, invoking a generalisation that 'Everything which is yellow and has a certain texture is like vomited bile', exemplifies the fourth manner of producing assent. Ibn Sina opposes this fourth manner to the other three. Wonder is produced 'either by [1] the [quality *guda*] of the form (*laila*) of the statement, [2] the force of its truth, [3] the force of its notoriety or by [4] the goodness of its resemblance'74, and also 'we reserve the name 'imagined proposition' for those which [like {4}] leave an effect [on the soul] by resemblance'. Although we shall not define the poetic syllogism until later, we may suggest that such imagined propositions have a special status because they usually go to form the major premise in a poetic syllogism, and our non-veridical assent to them goes to identify them as the resemblance-suggesting
propositions which are peculiar to poetic syllogisms. Of course, the minor premises also are not always considered for their veracity. Ibn Sina's three criteria - the pattern of its form, the force of its truth, or the force of its notoriety - show clearly that assent is given to these premises for a variety of reasons. A false claim too may gain assent so long as it is generally accepted, in the way that a false theory about human action may be used by people because it coincides with some other prejudices even though it may well be false, and a well established and central truth may be assented to not merely because it is true but because it is so central to our lives. An example Ibn Sina gives is 'N.N. is fair of face'. This can be construed as a matter of opinion, which may be generally accepted ('Laila is lovely, and not only to Majnun'), but it is not a true statement of the kind that 'All metals expand on heating'. Another example is of a currently favoured proverb that is generally thought to contain an important truth. Further, assent to these premises could also give rise to wonder, but it may be suggested that they differ from major premises precisely in that generally they embody conventional associations and so are unlikely to be as startling and original as the comparisons contained in imagined propositions. Arguably, this is Ibn Sina's reason for distinguishing between them and reserving for the latter the title of 'imagined propositions'.

Even if we accept these distinctions between types of premise, we are left with problems over 'wonder'. One problem has to do with the mechanisms by which assent and wonder are gained. These depend on the quality of resemblance contained in the major premise, and we must give a fuller account of how this is gained. Ibn Sina proposes five forms of combination, which shall be considered in more detail later. A second problem relates more directly to wonder. Even if this feeling is identified as the result of our assent to an imagined proposition, we must explain how it works in the poetic utterance. As the latter is constituted by its logical form, if wonder is essential to poetic utterances we must explain how the feeling relates to the poetic syllogistic. The explanations proposed above conceive of the feeling as an epiphenomenon of assent to premises, where the latter bear connotations of the imaginative assent we give to the poetic utterance. But Ibn Sina also says clearly that we give assent or compliance to the poetic utterance 'due to wonder and pleasure'. Pleasure and awe are here the basis of imaginative assent, not the result, and Ibn Sina wants to involve pleasure only, saying nothing of the distress in wonder we might expect in our assent to premises. To explain this difference, we must show how imaginative assent to the logical structure - the poetic syllogism - of the poetic utterance involves wonder essentially. To do so we must go on to make clearer just why a poetic utterance is explained by poetic syllogisms.

Before we enter that domain, there is another matter we can deal with briefly. It will lead us to issues of logic. The matter is this: If we must understand the imaginative assent we give to poetic utterances in the ways suggested by reference to premises and poetic syllogisms, then once again, even at this general level, it seems that wonder cannot be identified with the pleasure we get from satisfying a love of harmonious combinations. The latter was one of the causes of creating poetry and, like the other cause, the pleasure it gives rise to in this role fails to justify our imaginative assent to poetic utterances. The main reason for the distinction between cause and assent is that pleasure from a love of harmony is formal - it does not turn on the nature of the elements involved, only on their inter-relation. Any harmony will be pleasurable, including one of meaningless sounds. Wonder, by contrast, seems to turn on the elements in relation. It depends on understanding what is related and on what sense is thereby gained. If we did not grasp the meanings constructed, invented, or created, we could not feel wonder as the latter depends on whether truths are known or unknown.
To develop this understanding of wonder further, we may consider an objection. The objection is this: wonder seems to describe a psychological state which is subjective in that we may expect it to vary from subject to subject depending on his or her familiarity with known, recognised, and immediate truths. Whereas one subject is likely to feel wonder because he does not know some recognised and evident truth, another subject will not feel wonder because she is already familiar with the same truth. Especially if we must understand the content in order to feel wonder, the feeling of wonder is a variable psychological state determined in the individual by the knowledge, experience, etc., he or she has of the elements in an utterance. As it is variable in this way, it cannot be the basis for a valid assent which, as compliance to the utterance, resembles the case of rule governed and generalisable cognitive conviction.

Problems like these show best the folly of taking 'wonder' to be a psychological state. The nature of wonder is ill understood as 'mere' subjectivity. Given the connotations of Ibn Sina's notion of wonder or pleasurable awe, I suggest that his contrast between 'wonder' and 'known and evident facts' should be understood as reaffirming a difference in logical status. If imitation has an element of wonder which truth lacks, it is not because pleasure is subjective and variable but because recognised and evident truths are based on demonstrative truths while poetic utterances lack the same justification. Nevertheless, poetic utterances do claim validity. Demonstrative conclusions are known and evident: their premises are based on unquestionable foundations, they follow clear and ultimately self-evident inferential rules and they lead to undeniable conclusions. Meanings are determinate and subject to objective testing. Analytic thought, 'the clearest and most desirable state of affairs', is achieved by direct statement, made up of language which is authentic and standard' because its concepts are used consistently and correctly not only to define and identify objects but also to make assertions. Through the use of these concepts in syllogisms, knowledge requires compliance with the conclusion of an argument and so brings about conviction in subjects 'due to the realisation that the thing is what it is said to be' 77. That is, in an important sense, logic and knowledge compel our agreement to the evident and proven nature of things. If the premises are correct because they use appropriate definitions and concepts, and the argument is valid, then the conclusion must follow. A subject cannot accept the premises and the validity of an argument yet deny the conclusion without showing himself to be mistaken or irrational. Similarly, knowledge claims can be assessed by comparison with objects and events existing in a world independently of subjects. A rational subject cannot accept given grounds of evidence yet reject the relevant conclusion: the grounds are the basis from which, by some given inferential rule, we gain the conclusions for which they are evidence. The relation of premises or evidence to the conclusion exerts a compulsion in both cases, in that the relation holds independently of the desires of the subject, and the premises and conclusion must be acceded to by any rational and cognisant being. This is what objectivity consists in, and it is possible to reject a subject's claim, where it fails to tally with an objective state of affairs, because truth depends on the way the world is, not on subjects or how they want it to be. Accordingly, compliance with the conclusion of a demonstrative argument characterises cognitive conviction. Further, cognitive and logical conviction consider the 'matter being conveyed' rather than the utterance itself. The language used is attended to as a means for grasping some feature of the objects to which it refers. The utterance succeeds by virtue of the content it articulates and which subjects accede to: it is not appreciated for its balance or inner harmony, and must abjure all invention and creativity.

When Ibn Sina talks of recognised truths being evident, he is
referring to our ability to place them in the objective syllogistic structure of proof and disproof outlined above. From this understanding of conviction, objectivity, and compulsion, he goes on to contend that poetry is effective because it has a comparable logical structure. But although it shares this structure, poetry does not share in the cognitive interest guiding analytic thought. Poetic language 'does not pertain to understanding but rather to wonder - it makes the speech pleasant and dignified'\textsuperscript{78}. The last reference shows that poetry is directed at our nature - and the pleasure and awe we feel - rather than to any knowledge of reality. But instead of using the fact that it is directed towards feelings to dismiss poetry as a subjective, emotive, and arbitrary exercise, Ibn Sina wants to defend the claim that poetry has a logical structure and a commensurate validity. Instead of seeking a measure for poetic utterances in states of affairs in the world, which we do in seeking cognitive truths or in avoiding untruths, in poetry we seek a measure for our utterances in the feelings of pleasure and awe evoked in our response to the harmonious balance of sense which they contain. Pleasure and wonder are criteria for grasping meanings and appreciating balances in poetic utterances. Where the realisation, that the world is as demonstrative arguments had claimed, was the basis of conviction and compliance with demonstratively known and evident truths, the occurrence of feelings of pleasurable awe when we correctly grasp the meanings and balances of a poetic syllogism is the occasion for compliance as imaginative assent. Pleasure and wonder are no more merely psychological states than cognitive conviction, and are not any more subjective, variable, and uselessly idiosyncratic. Rather, they are the measure for grasping utterances, considered for themselves, for the balance of their senses. Wonder and pleasure do not occur unless we appreciate the balances in a utterance, and the latter relation is not gained until we understand the meanings that compose the utterance.

From Pleasure and Wonder to the Poetic Syllogism. To explain this further, we may look at the way feelings of pleasure and wonder are evoked. Ibn Sina has said that we attend to the utterance itself, so that the important relation is one 'among the parts' of the utterance and we should 'delight in the form itself - its manner, composition, and so forth'\textsuperscript{79}. We may again borrow the metaphor from al-Muzani that we used to exhibit these workings of poetic language, but it should be made clear that 'metaphor' does not display all the relevant aspects of figurative language. For one thing, even in the Greek original, Aristotle considers comparison, substitution, and analogy as varieties of metaphor. So any general conclusion arrived at about 'metaphor' must be developed further to show how these varieties will function. For another thing, Arabic poetics uses majaz and isti'ara, among other concepts, to analyse poetic language, and it is clear that 'metaphor' is not adequate to all these terms. In addition, Ibn Sina has a complex account of poetic and figurative construction\textsuperscript{80} to which metaphor would be an inadequate label. Nevertheless, 'metaphor' does reveal some central aspects of validity and so may be pursued here for the light it casts on this issue - but with the caveat that our conclusions will have to be supported and deepened later.

In any case, we take 'the horses of youth' as the figurative expression to be explained\textsuperscript{81}. Ibn Sina can point out that its meaning is constructed out of two terms: 'horses' and 'youth' - which are independently capable of literal use. The meaningfulness of the figurative expression depends on recognising the resemblance between the two elements: the vivacity and insouciance of youth is compared to a horse, ascribing to the former a sense, derived from the latter, of wildness that must be trained to be ridden. The metaphor embodies a comparison between these two elements just as if it were the conclusion of a syllogism and embodied the result of a comparison between two premises. In both cases of premises and elements, the comparison requires an
exercise of our rational ability. By juxtaposing the literal terms, we invite a comparison, which gives rise to a meaning that synthesises elements from both terms. Just as an argument begins with premises which provide a context through some common element in comparison (Zyad is a man; All men are mortal) to result in a new claim (Zyad is mortal), so a comparison between elements - 'horse' and 'youth' - suggests a further sense or meaning that is the metaphor. Meaning results from a comparative process similar to the one found in syllogisms. It is a comparison between two elements just as if it were the conclusion of a syllogism that compared a mix of true premises and valid argument.

Ibn Sina puts forward his conception of the logical forms of figurative language in texts other than the Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle. Some very important details are developed and made clear only in this book - for example, the forms of poetic construction are presented there - but only in the texts on logic does he present and analyse the poetic syllogism among other parts of logic. In Remarks and Admonishments: Logic, when enumerating the various types of syllogism, he asserts that 'poetical syllogisms are composed of imagined propositions, inasmuch as their imagined aspect is considered, be they true or false. In short, they are composed of premises, inasmuch as these premises have a certain disposition and composition, which the soul receives by virtue of their resemblance or by virtue of their truth. [That is as long as] there is nothing to prevent this [reception]. And metre enhances this [reception]' 82. In this later work Ibn Sina provides a fairly short summary of his conclusions about logic and a few admonitions against typical errors. A briefer summary, which adds little except a reference to emotions, is proposed in the Essay on Logic 83. In the Kitab al Qiyas we find a longer exposition of the poetic syllogism, which is worth quoting in full 84.

The poetic syllogism, although it does not make any assertions which claim truth, instead seeks to evoke a representation, [and] seems nevertheless to make an assertion claiming truth. So far as it is poetry, it is not said to be false, when the premises are used as if they were accepted [musallama]. For example, when one says 'N.N. is a moon' because he is fair of face, then one concludes as follows: N.N. is fair of face. Everyone who is fair of face is a moon. Therefore N.N. is a moon. There also applies to this assertion [tasdiq] that if one accepts what is in it, then an assertion follows from it. But the poet does not at all want this conclusion to be believed, even if he seems to, so far as he is a poet; rather, his aim is to suggest through his conclusion that the soul [of the audience] finds the object of praise to be fair. Likewise, when [the poet] states: 'A rose in the anus of a mule, in the middle of which dung is visible', it is as if he has said: everything which is in this way the dung of a mule (i.e. red outside, yellow inside) is filthy and dirty. Even though it is a syllogism - i.e. one accepts the premises and proves from that the conclusion, the poet in no way intends to state that his opinion [statement] is correct, rather he wants the soul to feel disgust for that which the statement is about' 85.

This description of the poetic syllogism does not coincide in every respect with ones given elsewhere. Nor does it agree wholly with the conclusions Ibn Sina relies on in his first chapter of the Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle. We cannot expect to resolve all such differences, and, in any case, the central claims are similar in all the texts. As the most useful explanation is given in the longer passage just cited, it is as well to use that one. Ibn Sina is claiming that whether its structure is explicitly expressed or merely implicit, poetic utterances have a logical form which follows the pattern of demonstrative reasoning. Any combination of terms in a poetic utterance, if it is meaningful, can be analysed and its logical structure displayed. Indeed, it is only because it has this logical structure, among other features, that the poetic utterance is
meaningful. In the passage cited Ibn Sina seems content to display examples of logical structure in the 'Barbara' mood. It is possible also to use a Celarent mood, and in the *Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle* he uses both as the fundamental mechanism to identify five poetic forms that structure poetic meanings.

However, this talk of Barbara and Celarent moods should not disguise the distinctive character of poetic syllogisms. Ibn Sina's example of an explicit syllogism is 'N.N. is a moon'; the structure of this metaphor is easily proposed: it is a conclusion. The minor premise, that 'N.N. is fair of face', and the major premise that 'Everyone fair of face is a moon', lead to the conclusion that 'N.N. is a moon'. Other metaphors will have a similar structure, being capable of analysis into premises which parallel these. Some may be more complicated, and figurative language generally may involve other kinds of poetic forms in addition, or may contain more than one poetic syllogism, but the ordinary syllogisms in their Barbara and Celarent moods remain important. In any case, the major premise appears to have the form of a statement of identity, though in fact it only affirms a similarity. Clearly everyone who is fair of face is *not* a moon, even if it is possible, in a given cultural context, to see a resemblance. The problem is that as the comparison contained in the metaphor - the conclusion - is not strikingly different from the similarity proposed in the major premise, we do not seem to have advanced very far in understanding and justifying the use of metaphors by analysing them to display their logical structure. It seems that both the premises and the conclusion are infected by the same lacunae. The suggestion was that 'N.N. is a moon' should be understood as affirming a similarity where such an affirmation can be analysed into the logical structure of the poetic syllogism. That is, 'N.N. is a moon' or 'the horses of youth' seem at first to be incomprehensible. They proclaim a resemblance as if it were an identity, and we do not know how to interpret them meaningfully. To solve this difficulty, Ibn Sina proposes that we consider that such metaphors are meaningful as the conclusions of poetic syllogisms, and suggests that therefore we seek to understand them by analysing the premises from which, as syllogistic conclusions, they were constructed. This will show us something of their meanings and why they are valid. But when we carry out this analysis, it turns out that the premises themselves contain the kind of comparison they were supposed to resolve. The major premise of 'N.N. is a moon' makes a comparison which is not true and seems to assert an identity when, at best, it only affirms a similarity. In other words, the poetic syllogism contains a premise which latter itself proclaims a resemblance as an identity and so presumably also stands in need of analysis into logical structure to explain its affirmation of the similarity. Accordingly, as the premise itself stands in need of explanation, and as Ibn Sina has proposed that such explanation is provided by treating these statements as syllogistic conclusions, it seems that we must analyse the premise into a subset of further premises.

This analytic process need not lead to an infinite regress. It could be argued that a poet's success depends on his or her ability to make meanings clear by providing representations whose comparison is effective. Its effectiveness is thought similar to the truth and validity of the conclusion of a syllogism; therefore, just as cognitive syllogisms arrive at their undeniable results by combining true premises in a valid argument, similarly, poetic or figurative language arrives at its meaning by combining literal terms such that they can be appreciated by the audience. Accordingly, to explain the metaphor we identify its literal terms. The metaphor is effective and persuasive when its comparisons seems apt just as a conclusion is satisfactory when its premises are true and its argument valid. However, while an objective syllogistic conclusion is satisfactory by virtue of its grasp of a state of affairs, it seems that what makes
for the aptness of a comparison raises a problem. For if a metaphor must be explained by identifying its literal terms, then its meaning is gained by reducing it to its cognitive component. In other words, the meaningfulness of the metaphor is gained by paraphrasing it into literal terms, and therefore into statements capable of truth and falsity, because that is how any literal term is understood. Consonantly, its aptness will be determined in just the way in which knowledge claims are assessed. Thus, arguably a metaphor will be apt when the comparisons it contains are true. So ‘the horse of youth’ is an apt metaphor because horses need to be trained just as youth needs to be trained. But this reduction makes metaphors nothing more than disguised true statements. And if this understanding of the claim is correct, then Ibn Sina must give up his attempt to discover a distinctive validity for poetry through its similarity to demonstrative syllogisms because poetry is not merely similar to but is reducible to the truth or falsity of its literal terms. He must accept that its validity is not distinctive and that the account of poetry as a distinctively subjective and free creativity etc., is a failure.

This objection can be rejected by pointing to our earlier account of poetic premises. We assent to them because the resemblances and comparisons they contain are striking, original, hold our attention, and so on. Instead of analysing these comparisons into known and evident truths which, so to speak, belie the wonder we feel at discovering a premise that is ‘just right’, we assent to premises in spite of their truth or falsity. Ibn Sina maintains that we do not need to go further in analysing the basis of poetic premises. Poetic ‘arguments’, like other deductions, must start from somewhere, and their premises are the basic units of a poetic syllogistic. There is nothing else more basic in terms of which we can explain why ‘the horses of youth’ or ‘N.N. is a moon’ seem to work except by saying that their premises seem ‘just right’. It may seem that we could explain the premises further by clarifying their logical nature, but that only leads us to show how a poetic premise relates to other basic logical concepts, it does not explain this premise in some other more basic terms outside logic. Nor can we expect to explain the poetic premise by translating it into a more literal language, for clarity gained through literal terms at best also dissipates the urgent and cumulative sense of a metaphor or figurative term, so that a reduction to such cognition is not a gain in poetic sensibility. An attempt to reduce poetic utterances to veridical claims in order to provide them with some foundation supposes that poetic assent could not suffice by itself. But that assumption stands in need of justification. For us to seek a basis for assent to poetic premises in literal truth is to reject poetic assent without argument and, instead of accepting that this sensibility exists and is a part of our humanity, to assume without argument that literal truth is the only satisfactory state of assent or conviction. Ibn Sina accepts neither of these claims, though he does see the need to argue for a logic for poetic utterances in order to explain why poetic premises and syllogisms possess validity.

In providing that explanation, Ibn Sina has different things to say of premises and conclusions, and while he associates the first with wonder, which can be pleasurable or distressful, he thinks that the second is more clearly concerned with pleasure. Further, he proposes that conclusions are gained by using particular devices or forms which, in poetic utterances, parallel the work of syllogistic forms in demonstration. Just as the latter forms are of many kinds, including the Barbara and Celarent moods, so too poetic syllogisms can be identified by the relations between elements which they sustain. Moreover, wonder is the result of assent to premises whereas pleasure and wonder are the bases of imaginative assent. However, these conclusions and his supporting remarks on the issues are scattered over a number of texts, as we have already seen, and rather than pursue the issue by developing an argument, it will be
more direct to present what we see as his conceptions of assent to premises and imaginative assent to poetic utterances.

As we said, wonder is a feeling of pleasure or distress that results from our assent to a major poetic premise. We may now suggest that Ibn Sina develops his account of premises and their combination when, in the *Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle*, he considers the five poetic forms or 'devices of artifice', and maintains that their use generates pleasure in a way which, later, is identified as the basis for our imaginative assent. These claims can be developed in the following schema: assent to premises can lead to pleasure or distress, and these premises and the poetic meanings they constitute through a relation of terms are grasped by using language. It would be too schematic to claim that the distress is used to identify a contrast, the pleasure a proportion; but we may expect that proportions and contrasts are involved in the forms given to poetic premises. And it may be that something like Barbara and Celarent moods are used to gain proportions and contrasts respectively. The Celarent mood, for example, permits us to assert that 'Youth is not a sheep' because 'Youth is brave' and 'No sheep are brave', while we have already seen the Barbara mood affirming that 'N.N. is a moon'. Further, poetic premises result in wonder as pleasure or distress. Presumably it is as possible to use either pleasure or distress to construct a contrast as it is to use them to produce a proportion, though we may expect that the final harmony gained in the poem by using poetic devices to relate proportions and contrasts will successfully balance not only such contrasts or proportions but also the feelings of pleasure or distress which attach to the premises incorporated into the poetic syllogistic conclusion. That is, poetic devices construct an order of proportion and contrast to gain certain meanings, where the latter are validated by reference to the poetic syllogistic. Ibn Sina sets out five such poetic forms or devices, and the suggestion is that a poet deploys these devices because first they allow him to grasp a poetic meaning through the proportional and contrastive elements of language in a poetic device, and second the harmony gives rise to pleasure. That is, pleasure and distress at the level of premises is used to gain a pleasurable harmony at the level of the meanings constructed by using these poetic devices or forms. Thus, Ibn Sina's discussion of poetic forms is not just a summary listing of figures of speech and thought, but is a part of the more serious aim of defending the validity of poetic utterances by showing that the variety of poetic meanings we gain, which depend for their success on using these poetic forms, are valid because the forms can be justified through poetic syllogisms. Similarly, examples of successful informal reasoning can be shown to depend on obvious syllogistic forms.

We shall examine the nature of poetic devices and of the figurative language they constitute in the next chapter, once we are clearer about the logical validity of that use of language. Ibn Sina's proposal seems to be that poetic forms must be associated with syllogistic forms in that both go to determine the order and relation of elements in the poem: the validity of a figurative meaning gained by using a poetic device depends on it being like a conclusion gained by comparing elements in a syllogism. In any case, Ibn Sina writes as if these five forms were exhaustive, so that the only way to gain imaginative meanings is by using terms in a synthesis that follows one of the five forms he has identified. That is, we gain meaningful poetic utterances by combining statements in the proposed forms. Ibn Sina does not explicitly argue that these poetic forms are constituted by different kinds of poetic syllogism, but the implication is clearly there. If these poetic forms are exhaustive - Ibn Sina thinks that 'every artifice occurs in terms of a certain relation of parts', so that they must be exhaustive - then all poetry must follow these forms, and if all poetry has validity because it is structured by
poetic syllogisms, regardless of whether we are conscious of that logical structure, then it is an easy step to associate poetic forms with poetic syllogistic forms by saying that poetic forms structure poetic discourse and, in turn, are justified by the forms of poetic syllogisms. This claim must be explained further.

We have already seen examples of this syllogistic structure in examining metaphors and analysing the premises which go into constituting poetic utterances. Metaphors were understood as poetic syllogistic conclusions, and their meaning explained by reference to that logical structure. Further, metaphors are not the only kind of poetic device available to poets writing in Arabic, and Ibn Sina has just been seen to identify five poetic forms; accordingly, we may expect that just as metaphors have a logical structure that allowed them to be understood as syllogistic conclusions, similarly the five poetic forms will have a logical structure in which poetic premises will give rise to poetic syllogistic conclusions. That is, even if the poetic forms are understood as merely linguistic devices, as opposed to logical structures, nevertheless we can expect them to have a logical structure. This is because Ibn Sina not only proposes that poetic validity depends on the poetic syllogistic, but he also proposes a particular relation of language to logic. 'Because there is a certain relation between expression and concept, and [because] some states of expressions often affect some states of concepts, the logician must also pay attention to the non-restricted aspect of the expression insofar as that [aspect] is not restricted to the language of one group of people rather than that of another except rarely'

Given that the poetic devices which generate meanings need not be restricted to Arabic, even though their deployment in Arabic poetry will be particular to that language, we may expect to study them as poetic devices or rules for gaining poetic meanings generally. Ibn Sina suggests this also by speaking equivocally of 'words and meanings', acknowledging that wording becomes important in how we construe meanings and vice-versa; and although we have yet to argue fully for the logical status of poetic devices, it must be clear that their validity ultimately will turn on their logical structure rather than merely on their linguistic structure. Conversely, in understanding poetic devices, it will not suffice if we argue for the validity of the poetic syllogistic by identifying its similarity to demonstrative and other kinds of syllogism, yet ignore altogether the distinctive discourse of poetry and poetic devices. Rather, in examining the nature of poetic syllogisms and in justifying their validity, we will have to construe them as logical structures, one of whose most important features is that they incorporate the operation of poetic devices.

Clearly these claims for poetic forms and syllogisms must be defended further. We need to show that the forms do and can function within a poetic syllogistic. It is necessary also to understand Ibn Sina's claim to have exhausted all the possible poetic forms. Before proceeding to these issues, there are other matters we may consider in order to suggest first what is at stake in these claims. One issue concerns pleasure. Ibn Sina writes that we give imaginative assent to poetic utterances 'due to wonder and pleasure'. The case of wonder has been considered earlier, where it was seen to result from our assent to poetic premises. As these premises are incorporated into poetic syllogisms, wonder must continue to attach to syllogistic conclusions because their meanings are constituted out of premises which occasion wonder. Accordingly, in the poetic utterance the experience of wonder serves as a symptom of the poetic or aesthetic nature of its premises, and as such it is a signal or criterion for saying that the compliance appropriate to this case is that of imaginative assent. That is, wonder attaching to poetic premises is a basis for imaginative assent.

Now, wonder itself consists in pleasure or distress, and this dual character prevents us from identifying it with the pleasure that forms the second basis for compliance. For one thing, the suggestion is that wonder characterises
our assent to premises only, while imaginative assent is due to pleasure in the utterance structured by the five poetic forms and considered as a syllogistic conclusion. For another, we have already been introduced to the idea of our love of harmony and the pleasure we gain from satisfying that love. Poetic forms, of course, embody relations between parts of speech and so are modes of balance and harmony in poetic utterances. But these claims suggest an anomaly: if we assent to premises because of the relation they assert, we may also expect to assent to conclusions which similarly assert certain non-veridical relations between elements. The latter may be more complex, but they are not essentially different from premises because, after all, they have a logical relation determined by syllogistic forms. If there is this similarity, however, then both premises and conclusions must be the occasion for wonder, and nothing justifies us in saying that the former involve wonder while the latter involve pleasure only.

In a sense, this claim is correct. It identifies an important similarity between premise and conclusion. But it fails to take account of important differences. One such difference is this: conclusions are not simply assented to but are conclusions just because we arrive at them by following a required route. The route and its rules give validity to the conclusion, and we accept the latter because we acknowledge that the poetic and syllogistic forms have been satisfied. Assent to premises does not follow such a route and is not justified in any commensurate way. Because premises are basic, we accept them only on their own terms and we do not reduce them to some other more fundamental claims. If they could be so reduced, they would not be the premises to an argument or syllogism. And because premises have this logical role, they cannot contain the balances and harmonies available in conclusions. This does not exclude premises from determining conclusions, but it does suggest that their distinctive role will inform our response to them. Another difference is this: wonder is a result of assent to a premise; wonder and pleasure are the basis of imaginative assent to an utterance considered as a conclusion. Even if we could wonder because of our assent to the balances in a conclusion, this occurrence of wonder would not explain the feeling of pleasure which is the basis of our imaginative assent to these balances in the first place. So, we may well wonder at poetry, but Ibn Sina does not develop such a claim in his theory, and the theory he does develop makes imaginative assent depend on pleasure and wonder.

We must explain the part played by pleasure in generating imaginative assent. Ibn Sina has maintained that we have a natural love of harmony, and we expect pleasure from satisfying that love. We have seen also that poetic utterances are composed of elements in contrastive or proportional relations ordered into one of the five poetic forms. The order of elements does not follow and is not intended to correspond to reality, and the success of such figurative language is not assessed by reference to the truth or falsity of its literal terms. Rather, our concern is with the utterance for itself - with the inter-relation of elements within the utterance that follow the rules of poetic forms. But there are other considerations we might raise about this internal inter-relation. Just as not every demonstrative syllogistic proof will exhibit the genius of its author, and some syllogisms may be more efficient or less insightful, similarly, poetic syllogisms and poetic forms may be deployed with different degrees of effectiveness. This effectiveness in the poetic syllogism is assessed by considering the relation between its elements, and does not reside in a faithful reproduction of reality. Poetic conclusions are composed of meaningful elements, and to appreciate the inter-relation of elements is at least to understand the meaning that emerges from the order given to elements by the poetic form. This meaning, such order of elements, may be harmonious, and Ibn Sina's claim is that an occurrence of harmony satisfies our love for harmony and so occasions pleasure. In other words, this occurrence of pleasure is a signal of the
harmonious relation between elements ordered by poetic forms. The suggestion is that poetic discourse is effective because it occasions pleasure in harmony. Pleasure is subjective but not arbitrary for, first, not any feelings of pleasure are considered appropriate, only those which result from a harmony between meaningful elements. Second, as the feelings of pleasure are occasioned by a use of devices which have a syllogistic validity, the pleasure in harmony that we feel resides in a logically valid relation of elements and is not merely subjective and idiosyncratic. That is, so far as our concern is with poetry, to appreciate an harmonious relation between elements we must understand those elements; the elements are related by a poetic form, and a poetic syllogistic form sustains that deployment of form and elements; therefore, the feeling of pleasure is occasioned by that set of elements with that valid meaning, and every subject capable of understanding the meaning and of experiencing pleasure may be expected to respond appropriately. Pleasure is appropriate to that deployment of elements and, conversely, we may expect to know that an harmonious balance between meaningful poetic terms in a poetic form has been gained when we feel pleasure. Further, it was seen that our assent to the terms or elements in the harmony — i.e., the poetic premises — occasions wonder. So, our appreciation of harmony involves not only pleasure and wonder, even if these have related but distinct sources, but also a meaningful syllogistic order. As pleasure is gained through a harmonious and syllogistically justifiable order, and wonder is gained when we assent to the premises that are related in that order, the occurrence of pleasure and wonder lead us to assent to the poetic utterance.

The poetic utterance here has correctly gauged our participation in a community of feeling. Because pleasure is occasioned by such balance, it is not merely subjective in the way that a preference for sweet or sour tastes might be. The balance is a result of the meanings and imaginative imitations present in harmony in that work, and it is capable of being appropriate or inappropriate there. As a part of this approach, a poet’s ability is assessed by the skill with which he gains this balance and the originality and brilliance of the comparisons he proposes; and the audience’s sensitivity is exhibited in the pleasure it is able to feel in grasping poetic utterances and their inner harmony. We may expect that the riskier but still successful comparisons and harmony ventured by the poet will draw praise, for we feel pleasure and awe when the greatest poets take their magnificent risks with imagery and form yet still attain comparisons which we understand.

In summary. We began this section by considering poetic imagination, seeking to distinguish it from a cognitive use of imagination. It became clear that poetic imagination was 'imitative', but Ibn Sina gave this a special sense showing that it was distant from merely copying reality. And rather than stress the imitation's relation to some objects in reality, he emphasised inter-relations which imaginative representations bore 'in the utterance itself'. Although we had been at pains to distinguish poetic imagination from its counterpart, it was also proposed that the two bore significant similarities because of their logical structure and the relations they could enter. Cognitive imagination gained its validity from both correctly applying to objects and from its part in demonstrative proofs deploying syllogistic forms, and we suggested that Ibn Sina proposes a similar set of relations and logical structure for poetic imagination and utterances. To develop this suggestion, Ibn Sina argues for the important role of pleasure and wonder in gaining a ratiocinative compliance to poetic utterances. This raised some complications: our dealings with poetic utterances generate pleasure in a number of ways, not all of which have to do with our ratiocinative compliance to poetic utterances. Two sources of pleasure, in imitation and in appreciating harmony, were causes of our creating poetry, and did not clearly have a part in justifying the validity of the poetic utterances we create.
To clarify the role of pleasure in explaining validity, Ibn Sina says that our compliance to poetry is due to pleasure and wonder, and, to clarify the different logical elements in poetry, he points to the relation of poetic premises to syllogisms. In this account, he maintains that poetic premises give rise to wonder. Next, we examined the nature and role of poetic syllogisms: here pleasure was a criterion for giving imaginative assent to a harmony between poetic elements that was gained by using a poetic form that in turn gained validity through its syllogistic form. As such a harmony is pleasurable, an occurrence of pleasure could be construed as a criterion for gaining a harmony. Further, as the relation between elements was determined by a poetic form that was said to be valid, the harmony itself was ultimately justified by a poetic syllogistic. Moreover, the elements in harmony, being premises, also generated feelings of wonder. Thus, wonder and pleasure were distinct but related elements on the basis of which we gave imaginative assent to poetic utterances.

As we shall see below, this account of the relation between pleasure and validity must be qualified by understanding the nature of the poetic syllogistic. The summary shows that we have made at least one major assumption, which needs to be defended. It is supposed in our relating poetic forms to the forms of the poetic syllogistic and in claiming to have exhausted all the possible poetic forms. Its implications are present in most of what is said about poetic validity—for example, in describing the nature of poetic utterances and forms in terms of poetic syllogisms and premises. The assumption is that we can validate the poetic syllogistic in spite of the peculiar character of the poetic devices that it must sustain. That is, although we may have given a plausible account of how poetic forms and utterances may be described and understood in terms of poetic premises and syllogisms, we have not as yet considered whether validity can be claimed for a poetic syllogistic; and in the next section we shall examine claims for the validity of the poetic syllogistic.

POETIC AND DEMONSTRATIVE SYLLOGISMS

Ibn Sina wants to justify the validity of poetry by arguing that figurative or poetic language involves a procedure that is comparable to objective demonstrative syllogisms. Figurative devices generate meaning through a process of rationally comparing constitutive elements that is similar to the process of arriving at the conclusions of a valid demonstrative syllogism from its premises. Accordingly, to justify the validity of poetic meanings, we may explain a poetic syllogism by examining the validity of demonstrative syllogisms. The structure and nature of the latter will tell us of what we must look for in order to explain and justify the former.

This construal of the issue seems already to beg an important question. We raised the issue earlier when speaking of the relation between linguistic devices and logical structure. Ibn Sina does not explicitly argue that poetic devices are dependent on poetic syllogisms though he proposes a general relation of the universal characteristics of language to the rules of logic. Although poetic devices are among the universal characteristics which are related to logic, in now attending to poetic syllogisms it may seem that we are merely assuming that by dealing with poetic syllogisms we will have said all that needs to be said of linguistic poetic devices when we have no warrant for doing so. For example, poetic devices bring about a synthesis of elements where the poem gains nuances and complex senses or expressive subtleties by a careful combination of terms; yet an account of poetic syllogisms may succeed in justifying their validity without considering whether and how a nuanced and complex meaning can be sustained by a poetic syllogistic form. Accordingly, in order to be useful to
Ibn Sina’s conception of poetics and poetic forms, we must show that the poetic syllogistic can sustain the characteristics yielded by poetic forms. In other words, the objection raised above is premature – we have said something about the relation of language to logic; and although we have not given an independent argument to justify any specific relation of language to logic, nevertheless, in an important sense, by clarifying how the poetic syllogistic sustains poetic devices we are giving just that argument, for we are showing how poetic devices, having a particular linguistic character, are still capable of being logically valid. We shall argue to the latter conclusion by showing, among other things, that syllogisms generally have a certain character, and must satisfy given requirements – the proof procedures cannot be infinite, for example, and the procedures must be complete in a sense to be explained; that poetic syllogisms have this character; and that the cumulative and poetic senses generated by poetic devices can satisfy this requirement of poetic syllogisms.

Ibn Sina exhibits the nature of syllogisms in diverse texts. It is outside the scope of this section to consider all the details of Ibn Sina’s arguments and explication, and it is more sensible to examine such details of the nature of demonstrative and poetic syllogism as will both ground the theory and show where it needs development. Ibn Sina initially identifies the syllogism as ‘a discourse composed of statements. If the propositions which the syllogism involves are admitted, this by itself necessarily leads to another statement’ (Ibn Sina, On the Nature of Syllogism, 90). But then he clarifies his interest in the relation between propositions by saying that ‘it is not a condition of [this kind of proof] to have admitted propositions in order that it be a syllogism. Rather, its condition is such that, if its propositions are admitted, then another statement necessarily follows from them. This is the condition for its being a syllogism’ (Ibn Sina, On the Nature of Syllogism, 91). The necessity with which one statement follows from another, of course, parallels Aristotle’s definition of syllogisms as a ‘discourse in which, certain things being posited, something other than what is posited follows of necessity from their being so’ (Aristotle, On the Nature of Syllogism, 92). Consonantly, Ibn Sina’s comparison of figurative language with logical necessity stresses the rational and meaning-dependent nature of conviction in both cases (Ibn Sina, On the Nature of Syllogism, 93). We saw that the deployment of poetic syllogisms makes poetic works meaningful and successful. These poetic syllogisms are ‘composed of imagined propositions, in as much as their imagined aspect is considered, be they true or false. In short, they are composed of premises [having] a certain disposition and composition, which the soul receives by virtue of their resemblance or [their] truth’ (Ibn Sina, On the Nature of Syllogism, 94). Although both kinds of syllogism instantiate a similar ‘comparison between premises’, the poetic case uses ‘premises inspired by emotion’. And, as we saw, this reference to the emotions is extended by saying that we give compliance or imaginative assent to a poetic syllogism due to the pleasure and wonder which we feel in response to understanding a poem and thereby appreciating the harmony of its elements. Our concern is with the meanings given to poetic premises when their synthesis, structured by poetic forms, gives rise to pleasure and wonder in a process which is comparable to the conviction we gain in understanding and accepting the demonstrative syllogism.

Ibn Sina writes that we not only conceive of and assent to propositions but we also accept the conclusions of proofs using the propositions as premises. Cognitive conviction turns on, first, grasping meanings and so identifying the terms in the premise of an argument; second, knowing that their use in premises is appropriate to the object, so that, third, given the validity of the proof, fourth, the assertion they go to form is true. Similarly, where metaphorical or figurative language leads us to perceive resemblances and identities of meanings, the syllogistic form is at work. We understand the meaning of ‘the evening of life’ because we can grasp the juxtaposition of the span of day with the span of life. But, in poetry, we...
understand meanings in order to generate assent through experiences of pleasure rather than by regarding the truth or falsity of the relations apparently asserted in the terms of the poetic syllogism. Thus, our metaphor works because of its syllogistic structure, yet not because life really is identical with a day but because the associations suggested by the comparison evoke a particular response in us.

This brief review of the comparison between poetic and demonstrative or cognitive syllogisms needs to be deepened by explaining their necessity and validity. Logical necessity is defined by saying that conclusions must follow if the premises are accepted and are related by semantical and syntactical relations to the conclusion. 'If its propositions are admitted, then another statement necessarily follows from them' \(^{(97)}\). The logical necessity operating here was taken by Aristotle to be primitive and obvious, and so to need no explanation or defence beyond exhibiting its exercise in particular cases. The thought behind this manoeuvre, roughly speaking, is this: We ask for explanations in order to clarify meanings. For example, we may clarify 'Zayd is mortal' by explaining that it is the conclusion of two premises that 'Zayd is a man' and 'All men are mortal'. But these premises may be thought to stand in need of further clarification to show what it is for a statement to serve as the premise of a syllogism or to explain what it means to say that 'Zayd is a man'. The latter may be explained by defining 'man' by reference to terms that are better known, or more easily understood, or more precise. But when we define 'man' as 'a featherless bi-ped', of course it seems possible to ask for the definition to be explained further. So, a 'bi-ped' may be explained in terms of 'any animate creature that usually walks on two legs', and so on. Aristotle maintains that such clarification cannot proceed infinitely. At some point, our explanations must come to a stop, usually in the basic categories and terms which we must accept if we are even to ask for clarification. As Ibn Sina argues, 'if every conception requires a prior conception, then such a state of affairs would lead either to regression or circularity' \(^{(98)}\). These basic terms and concepts cannot be explained further because all explanation and thought proceeds by accepting their validity. We might label these as first principles: they must be known directly, without being explained in terms of some more basic definitions, for if they could be so defined, they would not be first principles. The first principles, for Aristotle, included both the concepts which make up the categories and the logical rules which structure all thought \(^{(99)}\). Ibn Sina identifies the basic concepts in the following way: 'The ideas of "the existent", "the thing", and "the necessary" are impressed in the soul in a primary way, this impression not requiring better known things to bring it about'. Similarly, 'in the category of judgement[s]... there are primary principles, in themselves found to be true, causing [in turn] assent to the truth of other [propositions]. If these primary propositions do not come to mind or if the expression designating them is not understood, then it would be impossible to know whatever is known through them...'. Among judgements, these 'primary intelligibles' include obvious and primitive logical truths \(^{(100)}\). The suggestion is that these logical truths, being the basis for all other explanations and reasoning, cannot be proved by any further set of propositions, but must be known directly, for themselves, and so must be obvious and primitive. On the basis of these logical truths, demonstrative syllogisms, relying on the use of primary concepts and definitions to grasp objects and to assert relations in premises, are the most certain, while the other kinds of syllogism are varying degrees away from demonstration in certainty \(^{(101)}\).

However, a defence by reference to primitiveness and obviousness, even if it works for demonstration, need not work for poetic syllogisms because the latter are based only on a similarity with the former. What is obvious in the case of logical necessity may need to be explained and justified when used in
poetic syllogisms. Of course, a defence of the former may give us clues of how to defend the latter. Ibn Sina defends the primitive and obvious nature of logical validity by displaying the syllogistic forms in examples, where their mechanism is clear, and then arguing that the exhibited forms are adequate for formalising all deductive arguments, whether formal or informal. Given their primitive and obvious character, this is the only way to proceed, for we cannot expect to explain them by impart[ing] knowledge not [already] present in the natural intelligence, but [can] merely draw attention to the comprehension of what [any] speaker intends and upholds. Further, he maintains that of the syllogistic forms, 'the first division, called "the first figure", had been found perfect with much goodness - in as much as its syllogistic character, i.e., the necessity of yielding to a conclusion, is evident in itself and not in need of a proof'. Naturally, 'the converse of this division has been found remote from our nature'. Because this first figure is basic, we cannot expect to prove it: it consists of four perfect and self-evident syllogistic conclusions: (1) All As are Cs; (2) No A are C; (3) Some A are C; (4) Some C are not A.

Next, we may propose that all non-formal and imperfect deductions, including the second and third figures Ibn Sina goes on to set out - therefore, any deduction can be converted into perfect and obvious deductions in one or more of these four syllogistic forms. For example, the moods of the second figure are explained by comparison with the first figure. Thus, the 'first mood of the second figure is something like the phrase "Every B is a C, nothing of A is B, therefore nothing of C is A".' To prove the validity of this argument, Ibn Sina converts it into a mood of the first figure. Accordingly, 'Since we convert the major, making it "Nothing of B is A", and then add to it the minor premise, thus forming the second mood of the first figure [, the] conclusion is of the mode of the major premise.' The procedure Ibn Sina follows in these passages, then, shows that the variety of formal arguments we use involve at their basis, as the test of their coherence and validity, the syllogistic forms of the first figure and its four moods. Similarly, non-formal deductions, of the kind present in our ordinary reasoning, bear a logical structure that may not be obvious, but if they are to count as reasoning, their procedures must be capable of being formalised, and so ultimately must rest on the obvious and primitive first figure. Moreover, if all non-formal and imperfect deductions depend on the perfect and self-evident first figure, then we can gain any conclusion only by using premises which link terms in the conclusion through a middle term in at least one of the four forms. That is, at least one of the four forms will apply in all deductions, and will validate the deduction in which it occurs. So, to prove the validity of any non-formal deduction, it is necessary only to clarify which of the four syllogistic conclusions or forms of the first figure lies at its base, for its four syllogistic forms are obviously valid and are primitive. To justify the non-formal syllogism, we need only to convert it or express it so that we exhibit the presence of the formal and obvious syllogistic at its basis. Consequently, the four syllogistic forms provide a complete and consistent set of rules for any deduction and so serve as criteria for validity.

Ibn Sina explains the above claims in his writings on Logic, and we may hold that his examination of poetic or figurative language and devices is intended to argue analogously to conclusions about their nature, formation, and validity. As we saw, for Ibn Sina, poetic discourse is constructed by using the five poetic forms. These forms are related to syllogistic forms in that a figurative meaning is like a conclusion gained by comparing elements in a syllogism. Given ordinary imperfect and non-formal deductions are validated by analysing their underlying logical structure, we may expect that poetic conclusions too are reducible to a simple logical form in much the way that ordinary non-formal arguments are analysed by reference to the first figure of
deduction. Further, our acceptance of poetic premises, for all that they have to do with wonder, is likely to parallel our assent to demonstrative, dialectical, or rhetorical premises. That is, to repeat what we said earlier, Ibn Sina's discussion of poetic forms is not just a summary listing of figures of speech and thought, but serves the more serious aim of defending their necessity and validity by showing that the variety of poetic devices we use depend ultimately for their success on having something like the four perfect, obvious, and primitive syllogistic forms at their basis. His claim is that all meaningful figurative language is constructed out of the five poetic forms, which, in turn, depend on a poetic syllogistic structure. This structure may not always be obvious in figurative language any more than the syllogistic forms are obvious in our informal deductions, and so may need to be made clear; but both cases of poetic discourse and informal reasoning can be shown to depend on obvious syllogistic forms. Thus, in keeping with this analogy, just as the logical necessity of a syllogistic conclusion is justified by displaying the obviously valid forms at its basis, so we justify the necessity of poetic conclusions by exhibiting the presence of poetic syllogistic forms.

We try to show that the basic syllogistic is inescapable. Ibn Sina distinguishes between different kinds of syllogism by pointing to the distinctive logical and epistemological status of their premises. Demonstrative proofs have premises that must be accepted; dialectical syllogisms are composed of widely known propositions; rhetorical syllogisms of presumed propositions; and so on. But such differences in premises fail to make the argument form any less syllogistic, for they all share in the same proof procedure identified in the three different syllogistic figures, all of which, ultimately, if valid, must be reducible to the first figure. To be valid as a syllogistic, then, the poetic forms must follow the rules that make a syllogism a syllogism. But having this formal structure does not make a poetic syllogism into a demonstrative one. All kinds of syllogisms include the dialectical, the rhetorical, and the poetic - fail to be demonstrative for reasons of their premises, but they are all syllogisms because they share in the obvious and primitive syllogistic in some way. And to show how poetic syllogisms can possess validity, we must see whether and how poetic forms satisfy the requirements of the syllogistic proof procedures and thereby satisfy the first figure syllogistic.

It may seem at first that poetic forms cannot claim any syllogistic validity. There is an important distinction between poetic form, as linguistic devices, and the syllogistic as a logical form. Only the use of linguistic devices gives rise to pleasure and, because linguistic rules are separable from logical validity, pleasure may be associated with a use of language without thereby necessarily being able to claim logical validity. That is, by using particular poetic forms, the poet produces a set of linguistic elements in a meaningful relation. This relation of elements, where it is harmonious, gives rise to pleasure. In other words, if these meanings were not gained by using those devices, then the harmony of terms which is embodied in those meanings would be lost and the pleasure occasioned by that harmony would fail to obtain. Thus, for example, the fifth type of poetic device involves 'combination and differentiation, e.g., "you and he make a sea -but you are for flooding, he for clamour;" and combining a statement in order to clarify it by minute exposition, e.g., "he is to be both solicited and dreaded: solicited for his enlivening rain and dreaded for storms". If this combination, contrast, and proportion works, and gives rise to pleasure, it is because of our use and appreciation of language and of linguistic poetic devices. If the words had differed or the language had been a different one, then this combination need not have occasioned pleasure. And there does not as yet, in this description, seem to be any room for logic or poetic syllogisms: pleasure arises from a use of words and linguistic devices, and changes in
language determine changes in pleasure.

Logic does not seem to add anything to this account of the linguistic basis of poetry and pleasure, yet we should not be too quick to dismiss it. If this last claim about the distinction between logic and language were correct, we should also be forced to deny logical validity to demonstration, dialectic, and rhetoric, for they all use language and linguistic devices to gain sense and meaning. Demonstration uses clear and direct language, but that use of language also claims to have a sound foundation in logic. The linguistic devices it uses, which make its language 'authentic and standard' 115, do not preclude it from having a logical necessity. Instead, the meanings contained in language operate according to logical rules, so that if language is standard and authentic, its meanings refer to things as they are, and the relation between meanings is governed by the rules of logic. Similarly, we may expect of poetic language that its meanings will be governed by syllogistic rules even though it does not bear reference to things in the way that demonstration does.

As we said earlier, Ibn Sina does not explicitly relate poetic devices and forms to the forms of the poetic syllogism. Nevertheless, the implication is there: he says both that all figurative or poetic language depends on using these poetic forms and that the validity of poetry depends on and can be analyzed into the form of the poetic syllogistic. Just as the meanings contained in standard and authentic language are governed by the use of logic, so too the meanings gained by the use of poetic devices are governed by the rules of logic. But where demonstrative language has some measure in the way the world is, poetic discourse has its measure in our feelings of pleasure in the harmony between meaningful elements that is obtained by the use of poetic devices. Neither is less capable of logical validity for all that, but their comparison does leave us with the problem of developing Ibn Sina's account of the relation between poetic device and syllogism.

One way to deal with this distinction and relation between linguistic device and logical status is to identify the particular syllogistic form or forms which underlie every poetic device in order to clarify the kind of logical structure and conclusion which each device embodies. In explaining the nature of metaphor we made a move of this kind, and we may expect that, like the devices involved in metaphor, other poetic devices are open to a similar analysis and justification. Such an analysis would be painstaking and worthwhile. Unfortunately, Ibn Sina does not offer any guidance on how it is to be carried out. Except for his analysis of metaphor, there is no analysis of the logical structure of poetic devices, and any attempt to provide this kind of analysis would be speculative so far as Ibn Sina's work is concerned.

However, there is another approach that Ibn Sina sometimes follows, which we might also pursue. Instead of analyzing each poetic form into a particular syllogistic form or forms which underlie every poetic device in order to clarify the kind of logical structure and conclusion which each device embodies. In explaining the nature of metaphor we made a move of this kind, and we may expect that, like the devices involved in metaphor, other poetic devices are open to a similar analysis and justification. Such an analysis would be painstaking and worthwhile. Unfortunately, Ibn Sina does not offer any guidance on how it is to be carried out. Except for his analysis of metaphor, there is no analysis of the logical structure of poetic devices, and any attempt to provide this kind of analysis would be speculative so far as Ibn Sina's work is concerned.
validity of poetic devices, we may consider the objections levelled against the use
and validity of 'poetic syllogistic forms'.

First, there is the claim that the success of any poetic utterance
depends on those five basic ways of constructing poetic meanings (the poetic
syllogism). We may question this claim by rejecting the assumption that every
poetic meaning can be expressed in those five forms: that is, by raising the
issue of the completeness of the poetic syllogistic. The issue may be explained by
reference to a similar problem that occurs elsewhere. In the case of logical
necessity, the completeness of a proof procedure is assessed by seeing how
completely it can grasp and exhibit all the logical consequences of a set of
premises. If the use of the four syllogistic forms yields a procedure for proof,
allowing us to move legitimately from a set of premises through inferences to a
conclusion, then that proof procedure would be thought reliable if it accounted
for all the possibilities contained in the premises and showed that the conclusion
arose from those premises. For this, the proof procedure must be finite, and must
be capable of incorporating all the logically possible variables resulting from the
premises. But if the proof procedure, first, were itself infinite or, second,
inadequate to all the possibilities contained in the premises, then the procedure
would be impossible to complete or its completion would be inadequate to the
premises. To take the second possibility - of the procedure being inadequate to
the premises - a procedure that could not account for all the possibilities in a
set of premises would be unreliable just because we could never use it with the
certainty that we had completely grasped all the implications of the premises.
Some implications, which intuitively we might have expected to follow from the
premises, would not be incorporated in the proof procedure, and if we were to
accept the implications it would have to be because we did not rely on the
procedure. This sort of inadequacy will be considered again below, and we need
not consider it further here. The first possibility raises other issues: conclusions resulting from the use of a procedure which was infinitely long could
always be doubted because it could never be known that any part of the
procedure was being followed correctly. This is because the procedure itself
could not be completed, and its full details would remain unknown; so any use of
it would be based on faith that the as-yet-untested parts of the procedure did
not contain any contradictions or that it did not thwart itself. If it is infinite, it
is incomplete, and so ultimately cannot be known to be valid. Therefore, any
proofs based on that procedure would also remain questionable and unreliable.

A defence of the infinitely long proof procedure may be suggested
as follows: it is true that the as-yet-untested parts of a proof procedure may
be contradictory, but that need not lead us to doubt all the procedure including
those parts we may have used without problems. It is always possible that the
parts we have used turn out to be mistaken because some other part of the
procedure could later turn out contradictory or self-defeating. But such
incoherence will only consist of particular errors, identified as the problems
arise. And even if such errors were identified, their existence does not show us
that the untested parts of the procedure are generally unsatisfactory, and so
we have no warrant for the claim that generally the proof procedure must be
considered unreliable, even in the parts we have used without problems, until
the reliability of the whole has been established. That is, if there is unreliability,
that will have to be shown as and when it occurs. We cannot infer from the fact
that it is possible for us to make mistakes to the conclusion that some part of
every step, including the ones we have already taken, must be mistaken. It is
equally possible that some part of the procedure is correct; we do not have to
show how that part fits with the whole in order to rely on that part.

This defence misconstrues the nature of the problems of completeness
and the role of a proof procedure in the particular arguments we provide. The
procedure sets out the rules for gaining particular proofs. If the procedure is itself mistaken, then the conclusions arising from the use of that procedure will be unreliable just because they depend on the mistaken proof procedure. If the conclusions are thought right, it can only be for reasons other than their following a mistaken procedure, for a mistaken procedure can yield truths only by accident, not by design. If a procedure remains infinite, then it cannot be completed, and so cannot be known to be satisfactory. Consequently, any proof based on that procedure will be infected by a doubt that afflicts the procedure: we cannot know that the proof is reliable because we can never know that its procedure is acceptable. If the procedure were not known in its entirety, we could not know that it was satisfactory, and so we could not know that its deployment in particular arguments was successful. Thus, its success depends on completeness, for only when it is complete is it known in its entirety.

Even if the proof procedure is finite, there are yet other ways in which the completeness of a proof procedure is threatened. Aristotle dealt with the threat to the completeness of his proof procedure by first displaying the four syllogistic forms and then arguing that every deduction must link its terms in one of these ways. We saw that Ibn Sina makes a similar claim for the first figure, but further, to defend this claim, he also develops two arguments. First, we can consider a complex set of premises. Its complexity raises the possibility that we cannot grasp all the logical consequences of all the possible premises and so our procedure may prove inadequate to understanding or ordering any argument based on those premises. Second, there may be an infinite number of such premises, so that our proof using the suggested procedure may never come to an end. In either case, because we have no guarantee that the procedure can cope with all the possibilities contained in the premises, we cannot be certain about any conclusions we arrive at using that proof procedure.

Against these possibilities, Ibn Sina proposes that a deduction with a large number of premises can be converted into a series of inferences having only two steps in one of the syllogistic forms. Further, as this leaves open the possibility that there may be no end to the number of inferences in this 'two-step' series, Ibn Sina argues that the process of two step inferences ends when all the premises of a syllogism are shown to be principles or axioms which we cannot be required or expected to prove - that the proofs must have an end when we reach those axioms and principles, and so cannot be infinitely long. This argument is expressed in the claims that, first, the premises of a two-step inference cannot both involve only particulars, second, that it is possible to demonstrate that the universal premises are ultimately necessary ones, and third, that the minor premise must ultimately rest on or be an axiom. Thus, the basis of a proof in axioms or principles, the ability to dissolve a set of complex premises into a set made up of a series of simple premises, and the use of syllogistic forms, are together taken to show that logical necessity is adequate to the full range of possible knowledge and demonstrative or cognitive deductions. The complexity of a set of premises is not a barrier to the deduction because a complex set is held to be qualitatively the same as a series of simple inferences, so that nothing of the sense of the complex set is lost when it is analysed and re-expressed as a series of simple inferences.

Such an argument for the completeness of a syllogistic may provide clues for defending the validity of poetic syllogisms. However, it is not clear that the analogies with poetic syllogisms are strong enough to warrant poetic validity. There do not seem to be clear principles operating in poetics, and the ability to simplify complex inferences into a series of simple ones seems inappropriate in poetry. Because poetic sense is cumulative and synthetic rather than analytic, we cannot assume that everything that follows from a complex combination of terms will also follow from a series of simpler constructions. Nuances and
meanings are generated by complex constructions and frequently are lost on being translated into simpler constructions.

In spite of such differences, we can defend Ibn Sina's poetic syllogistic against the threat of incompleteness. The poetic syllogistic does not claim completeness in the way that a demonstrative syllogism does, but poetry does provide grounds for satisfactory agreement. Instead of guaranteeing that proofs are finite simply by pointing to basic principles or by identifying axioms in poetic syllogisms, Ibn Sina proposes that the construction of meanings in figurative language involves a relation between terms that, when it is harmonious, occasions pleasure when we grasp it. Thus, in the poetic syllogism, in spite of the absence of principles and axioms, the pleasure occasioned by harmony serves to guard against incompleteness by showing that its forms and terms must be finite. Just as logical necessity would be inadequate if we could never be sure that the proofs were finite and capable of being completed, similarly if a figurative use of language involved so complex a set of terms that its mix were infinite, then we could have no certainty that the meaning which resulted from using the poetic syllogistic forms was adequate to all the possibilities in that mix of terms, and a grasp of meanings that depended on using those forms could never be known to be successful. But, just as, among other things, we pointed to the basis of logical proofs in axioms to show that the proofs must be finite, similarly we may point to the occurrence of pleasure to argue that there is a limit to the terms and premises involved in a poetic syllogism, for the terms are related in a harmony that occasions pleasure and wonder. As pleasure depends on the grasp of meanings, and assuming that we cannot hold an infinite number of terms in balance, the occurrence of pleasure serves to show that the mix of terms is not infinite and that the threat of incompleteness is dissolved. Further, a harmony between infinite numbers of elements is an implausible event: a harmony, or balance, presupposes some sense of a whole, so that the elements can be held in relation within the whole and found to have an harmony. The existence of an infinite number of elements would at best render partial or temporary any claim to have gained a balance between elements.

In this context, wonder in assenting to premises also puts a limit to the openness of poetic syllogisms. For poetic syllogisms cannot be proven indefinitely, as if, whenever we came to some premise it could be supposed that the premise must be capable of being clarified further. If such were the case, then again, any syllogism would be unsure of completeness because it would extend infinitely in the direction of its increasingly detailed premises. The occurrence of wonder, as a result of assent to premises, so to speak puts a stop to that infinite regress because wonder signals our acceptance of the premises for itself. There is no need then to look for further support for that premise from more detailed premises.

Ibn Sina's association of pleasure and harmony between poetic elements was explained by pointing to the origins of pleasure in the soul. Such an association was said to have a long history, extending from Classical to modern times. Ibn Sina is not the first nor the last to make it, and the best defence of the claim that harmony is pleasurable is that it allows us to juxtapose and organise our numerous insights about aesthetic activity and response into a comprehensive theory. Thus, we could use the coherence and comprehensiveness of the resulting theory to justify associating harmony with pleasure, rather than the link being first given some independent foundation for the theory to work. This will lead us to find the absence of pleasure in harmony counter-intuitive, and in need of explanation by reference to obstacles in the way of appreciation, rather than to seek explanations of the presence of pleasure and awe.

Once this is accepted, then the second requirement of completeness
in poetic syllogisms may also be explained through its analogy with the
demonstrative syllogistic. In the case of logical necessity, it was argued that
every complex set of premises in a deduction can be reduced to a set of simple
two-step deductions using one of the four syllogistic conclusions. However, this
ability to simplify seems questionable in logic \(^{122}\) and is surely inappropriate to
poetry. Because poetic sense is cumulative, and poetic nuances are gained, for
example, through complexities in construction, so that poetry is synthetic rather
than analytic \(^{121}\), so we cannot assume that everything that follows from or is
suggested by a complex set of terms will also follow from or be suggested by a
series of simpler constructions. And this again raises the issue of completeness:
the development of metaphors may require a complex combination of terms that
cannot be reduced to simpler constructions which, without any loss of overall
meaning, can then be grasped by using one of the five forms of poetic
syllogistic. That is, the syllogistic may be unreliable because the syllogistic forms
may be unable to preserve the sense of a set of complex combinations.

The answer to this problem is put forward when Ibn Sina identifies
the themes guiding the deployment of figurative language. He writes that 'every
theme [has] its particular measure, and each measure was given a name... One of
these kinds of poetry was called Tragedy. It has an exquisite and pleasant
measure and contains the commenmeration of goodness, moral excellence, and the
outstanding traits' \(^{124}\). Other themes include Dithyramb, Comedy, Iambic, Drama,
Didactic, Anthus, Heroic Epic, Satyrig, Poemata, Amphi Genesoes, and Acoustic.
More than rules for constructing figurative language, these embody something
about the ways figurative or poetic conclusions are gained. Just as all proofs of
logic must be simplified into two-step versions of syllogistic forms, so all
figurative language must involve, first, the five forms of poetic syllogistic, which
articulate contrastive and proportional relations between terms, and second, the
five forms must be deployed in ways which give rise to one of the above themes.
So, even if there is no guarantee that the terms in a poetic syllogism are capable
of being simplified, they are still amenable to being organised by showing which
themes are their guiding principles. To say that every theme has its own measure
and name is for Ibn Sina to say that its relation of terms instantiates the use of
particular syllogistic forms. So, tragedy uses musical notes for 'lamentation and
elegy' and involves associated contrasts and proportions, which differ from the
sorts of proportion and contrast appropriate to comedy. \(^{125}\). And just as
simplification to syllogistic forms guarded against the threat of incompleteness,
similarly, the deployment of themes having a basis in the poetic syllogistic forms
guards against the threat of incompleteness by determining whether combinations
of terms are appropriate or adequate.

This role of themes may be criticised generally and in particular in
Ibn Sina’s use. Generally, it seems to fail to establish that we will always be able
to understand figurative language because it does not show that or how themes
result from poetic syllogisms and it does not show that no other themes are
possible. For if other themes are possible, then the ones picked out will not
serve to organise all possible combinations of terms; and if they do not rest on
the syllogistic form, the latter cannot be known to be the basis for all
combinations of terms. That is, the proofs offered in such syllogistic forms and
themes fail to be finite and complete because, first, the number of themes cannot
be restricted without curtailing the senses we may gain by inventing and using
new figures of speech and language - therefore it disallows creativity. Second,
the relation of theme to syllogistic form has not been shown to be determinate,
and we need a further account of proof here, to know that the given uses of
language belong to one theme rather than another.

However, these objections fail against the claims made by Ibn Sina.
We want to include poetic syllogisms within the bounds of rational activity, and
to the first objection need only reply that though the themes pursued may change, and new ones be developed, to decide whether putative cases are poetic themes we only need to give reasons, defend our claims and accept or reject their status on reasonable grounds. The characterisation of themes is open to argument, but this defence of poetic syllogisms by defence of themes need not itself be a matter of poetry. So, of course the development of new themes cannot be excluded, but unless it is argued that new themes are incapable of justification and will depend on something other than the five syllogistic forms, this defence need not refute the completeness of the poetic syllogistic and show that its forms are vacuous. There is neither circularity nor contradiction in arguing that poetic syllogisms must have completeness because they rest on themes which organise the products of the five forms of poetic syllogistic, and then accepting that the themes are open to rational defence and development. We can add to the number of themes, perhaps by identifying a 'post-tragic epic', but this addition must be defended by argument; and it does not detract from the validity of the syllogistic that we are required to provide a defence of this kind. The themes and forms, once established by the given rules, will exhaust all figurative language, and so a poetic syllogism can claim validity because its order can be defended. Although we can establish new themes, arguing that something formerly found irrelevant can be incorporated into consideration as an organising principle, still we are not establishing a new status for themes by doing this, and the character of the order gained by syllogistic forms and themes - their logical status - remains unchanged. And the syllogistic can be complete.

We may still question the assumption that new and old themes are dependent on the syllogistic forms. The relation of theme to form presumably differs from that between syllogistic forms and the terms used in figurative language. Yet it is far from clear in Ibn Sina's writings on the Poetics what their relation is taken to be; and if there is a determinate relation between forms and themes, then again the creative development of new themes would seem to be made impossible. If so, then either we have only a restrictive sense of creativity or using the themes does not ensure that all possible sense of the relation of terms have been grasped. And if the latter is the case then we have failed to defend the validity of poetic syllogistic.

It is not clear what sort of reply can be made to an objection like this except to repeat and develop what has already been said. There is an important sense in which the themes cannot be restricted without doing damage to one usual notion of creativity, and there is an important sense in which the absence of all restrictions on the development of new themes will rob us of all guarantee that the poetic syllogistic forms are exhaustive of and comprehensive over all poetic and figurative language. As a result of the latter, the syllogistic will be unable to claim validity. But there is a way to have both: to leave open the possibility of discovering new themes and also to claim that the themes we have together with the syllogistic forms we use can bring completeness to the poetic syllogistic. This possibility is realised if we argue that the discovery and justification of new themes is a rational process - that while we may add to the themes we have, we do so for good reasons, and the themes serve to order and organise the combination of terms in figurative language. The five forms determine the combinations which are possible, and the themes guide the ways these combinations can be developed. Nor does this offend against creativity: if new work is not nonsensical, it must be capable of being understood and appreciated, and therefore must satisfy reason and feeling. The suggestion is that poetic forms provide the criteria by which we judge the meaning and rationality of the aesthetic use of language. Satisfying these criteria no more suppresses creativity than a use of logic prevents us from making discoveries, inventions, or new arguments. In all these cases rules are imposed as a means of
making communication and understanding possible. Without them we would have merely nonsensical strings of words instead of the creative works we seek. Of course, this leaves us with the task of explaining how a theme is related to and defined in terms of the poetic forms.

For the relation hinted at above to be plausible, we must at least suggest how new themes might be validated, for if that involves the five poetic forms, we need to understand how the latter go to construct the former. That is the issue we are required to consider by the second objection raised above. If we cannot provide an answer here, then the poetic syllogistic is made inadequate, for we no longer have the certainty that it is capable of grasping all the possible new combinations and meanings of terms.

To begin answering this objection, we must note that if an explanation of the basis of themes goes to validate poetic syllogisms, then we cannot expect to use examples of poetry to prove that a new theme is valid or an old one invalid. As themes organise figurative or poetic language and its devices, poetic language cannot independently prove the power of the themes. Nor can the relation between themes and forms be like that between terms and forms, for that is the relation which proved inadequate to completeness. It may be suggested, instead, that the relation of themes to terms is one of part to whole rather than of instance to generalisation. It is a relation dependent on using proportion and contrast rather than one in which the one is a necessary and sufficient condition for the other. We do not have sufficient and necessary conditions by which a particular phrase or combination of terms can be shown to have the characteristics that make it, say, tragic or comic. The same words or phrases may be used in either theme, and from the occurrence of the phrase we cannot deduce the theme being deployed. Nor would a theme be falsified, so to speak, if its application were rejected because it was inappropriate to some part of the set of terms and their combination. Rather than reject the theme as false, we would withdraw our claim that a set of phrases instantiated a particular theme and begin to search for another theme that was more suitable. In this sense, themes as such are not at risk when they are used to organise the use of poetic forms and syllogisms, and they are not refuted for their inadequacy to a particular use of phrases: this is because they do not depend on sufficient and necessary conditions for their application. Figurative language does not, in that sense, determine the theme: rather we choose or reject claims for the validity of a putative theme by considering its similarity to or continuity with other themes, its consistency, simplicity, comprehensiveness, and so on. The mix of terms does not prove the theme which organises it, but a recalcitrant term may indicate the need for a new theme by suggesting an extended meaning. Nevertheless, the justification of the new theme is pursued through considerations of continuity, simplicity, etc., for these are the criteria for themes.

Clearly this account needs to be developed further. So far we have paid attention mostly to poetic validity. Ibn Sina might also use Aristotle's distinction between theoretical and practical wisdom, and the notion of techne associated with the latter, to account for themes and thereby supplement the episteme of poetic validity. For the present, the outline given above suggests how he can defend the use of themes, and by doing so it serves to counter the objection that poetic syllogisms cannot claim completeness or coherence. As the latter claim is our concern, we may leave for another occasion the question of how themes are validated through techne. There was a threat to completeness because there was a possibility that the five poetic syllogistic forms were inadequate to all the meanings that could possibly be generated in figurative language. If we could produce new and strange figurative meanings that could not be grasped by the given themes, it would suggest that the order provided by the forms and themes was incomplete. But, as we proposed above, the relation
of meanings to theme and form was not a determinate one governed by necessary and sufficient conditions through which, where certain poetic forms and meanings were present, we could infer to a particular theme. Rather, as theme and form not only ordered meanings but were also found satisfactory on their own grounds of consistency, simplicity, and so on, they were capable of an independent and rational justification. So we may use and develop themes without supposing that new themes are needed only because poetic syllogistic forms can never be complete or valid. Thus, our conclusion must be that even though poetic syllogisms depend on an experience of pleasure and on a cumulation of meanings, they are capable of validity because they have a completeness which allows them to be comprehensive over all figurative language.

Another objection to claims for completeness is that if we can create new forms, then we must leave the set of poetic forms open and cannot argue that every poetic meaning will be expressed in one of the five forms. Creative development is possible only if we are able to appreciate works without relying on the given five forms, for if we are restricted to the latter we are unable to identify a new form in the new work we appreciate. Therefore, further, it must be possible to have some basic extra-analytic appreciation of figurative language, which allows us to respond to a work without relying on the devices and forms already available. But if an extra-analytic appreciation is possible, then linguistic analysis is contingent at best and its role in understanding aesthetic responses is made questionable.

To these objections, it may be said that Ibn Sina does not deny the role of creativity. By his account, it is possible to construct new meanings, though they must be constructed by synthesising terms using appropriate devices. There is a range of meanings we can construct in this way, and a claim to creativity in the use of figurative language is not refuted by pointing out that the forms used are restricted to the five listed by Ibn Sina. Similarly, utterances using logic cannot be decried for depending on syllogistic conclusions. These rules are rules for being understandable: a created poem does not escape the need to be rationally grasped, and it does not become less creative when it is understood. Moreover, it is not clear what the more basic, extra-analytic appreciation of figurative language, which was suggested above, could consist in. An extra-analytic appreciation would not clearly be an assent occasioned by the object we are concerned with. If it is not its meaning, contrasts, or proportion that we appreciate, it is not clear what connection our appreciation could have with the nature of that object. An 'extra-analytic' appreciation must also be arbitrary to the poem characterised as a figurative and meaningful use of language - unless the theory proposes to explain how assent is generated by a poem yet does not depend on its rational character. But if the latter claim is being put forward, then it does not so much work as an objection to Ibn Sina's theory as it expresses adherence to an alternative theory. It would work as an objection only if it proved impossible to develop Ibn Sina's association of pleasure and meaning and if the alternative theory could explain that inadequacy in Ibn Sina's theory.

In summary: we began by comparing demonstrative and poetic syllogisms to see whether the first yielded any clues for defending the validity of the second. For Aristotle and Ibn Sina, logical necessity was obvious and primitive and it lacked and did not need any more basic underlying principles that justified its validity. However, an indirect defence of validity was mounted by arguing against attacks that questioned the adequacy of the four syllogistic forms in which the basis of logical validity was expressed. These attacks held that the four syllogistic forms could not be relied upon because we could not know that they included every principle of valid inference. There is an infinite number of non-formal deductions possible, some with very complex sets of
number of non-formal deductions possible, some with very complex sets of
premises, and unless we have some guarantee that the syllogistic forms are able
to order every possible non-formal and formal deduction, we could not
comfortably suppose that a proof procedure using the four forms had grasped all
the logical possibilities contained in its premises. To defend the validity of this
syllogistic, Ibn Sina denied that the complexity or possible infinitude of the
number of premises could be used as objections against the claim to have
identified logical validity and its forms.

That brief presentation and defence of the syllogism provided a
model for understanding the validity of poetic syllogisms. In a similar move, Ibn
Sina first exhibited the forms of the poetic syllogistic. However, he could not
then provide for these syllogisms the defence given to their parallel case because
poetic syllogisms had a distinctive character. Poetic meanings are cumulative, and
the sense gained from a complex of terms is unlikely to be preserved if we tried
to translate the complex into a series of simple meanings, perhaps constructed by
applying the forms of the poetic syllogistic. To overcome the threat of
incompleteness raised here, we could construe Ibn Sina as proposing that these
cumulative meanings could be ordered under various themes, and their reliability
thereby preserved. Similarly, faced with the possibility that there may be no end
to the relation between terms in a poetic syllogistic, Ibn Sina pointed to the
pleasure and awe that results from our appreciation of an harmony constituted
from poetic premises and suggested that these feelings serve to limit the
possibility of an infinite or endless combination of terms and resultant meanings;
thereby, the experience of pleasure and wonder protects the poetic syllogistic
from incompleteness, for the combination of terms to yield meanings is governed
by the pleasure and wonder we feel in understanding the terms in combination.

By this account, it is important to note, pleasure and wonder are a
part of the formal structure of the poetic syllogistic, being essential to the
completeness of the syllogistic and so to its validity. These feelings are not just
factors added externally or arbitrarily, but serve to show that poetic syllogisms
have a distinctive nature. The nature and role of these experiences of pleasure
and wonder are crucial in other ways too, for they show why arguments
justifying the logical or formal validity of poetry not only involve an essential
reference to the subject's participation in aesthetic activity but also bar morally
unjustifiable content from poetry. These factors, in turn, reveal important aspects
of the community that is formed through aesthetic appreciation and activity. We
can begin to explain these claims by first rounding off the issues in this section,
for now that it is clearer just what sort of validity poetry can claim, and what it
is based upon, we can compare imaginative speech with the role of imagination in
the pursuit of knowledge, and thereby set out the epistemological power and
function of poetry. Once this is clarified, we can turn to the other issues of
poetics, subject and society.

IMAGINATION, POETRY, AND KNOWLEDGE

Ibn Sina gives the imagination a peripheral place within the field of
knowledge. To the extent that poetry is imaginative, it claims a commensurate
relation to knowledge, though its concern with feelings rather than truth
suggests for the poetic imagination a place at the periphery of the imagination's
commerce with rationality. This relation will also determine poetry's position in
the long advance of human development towards the ultimate end of a theoretical
contemplation of the world: it remains at the beginnings of the effort to
rationality.

That is, so far as knowledge and cognitive conviction are concerned,
poetry is relegated to a peripheral position because of its dependence on the
imagination. The picture lying at the basis of this claim about the utility of imagination is something like as follows. Ibn Sina appears to accept a Greek tradition by which a corporeal world, grasped by the sense, can be distinguished from an immaterial and eternal world that is understood by the intellect. Only in the individual human soul do these worlds meet, when through perception, imagination, and estimation, the soul gains sense experiences that come to be organised when the intelligible world, by rendering actual a potential intellect, gives those sensual experiences a valid order. Knowledge ('ilm) is gained by us not simply by empirical experience but through actualising the intellect ('aqil) 127. It seems that while we can gain some grasp of particulars by manipulating and retaining sense experiences in the imagination and memory respectively, this grasp is qualitatively distinct from knowledge. The former provides a means for reaching knowledge, but knowledge itself must be characterised in a distinctive way. It is not merely a grasp of particulars, a response to a changing flux of experience and events; knowledge is the assertion and acceptance of general claims, irreducible to any particular, and independent of any particular sensation or bodily experience.

Of course intellect depends on sensation, but only contingently (bi'il 'arad), never in essence (bi'il-dhat) 128. Images arise from sensations, and are used by the intellect to gain composite universals which, in turn, can be combined to form definitions, premises, and syllogisms 129. But the basis of apprehension in sensation, even though it can also both provide premises and recognise exemplary instantiations of universals, is only a contingent and sometimes dispensable basis for genuinely grasping a universal. Real knowledge, the sort we can be certain of and rely on, is never gained from sense experience alone. Indeed, some people have strong enough intellectual faculties to have no need for sensory perception, and even the less gifted with this intellectual ability can still develop their ability to a point where sense experience becomes unnecessary. Everyone, it seems, can gain some universals relating to the empirical world without using sense, imagination, or estimation 130. These latter provide dispensable aid to a knowledge only gained fully by the intellect.

Whether our assent (tasdiq) results from sensation by means of accident, 'individual syllogism' (qiyaq juzi'), induction (istiqra') or by tarjima (explanatory experience), it is still the responsibility of the intellect to fashion a universal, abstracting it, in tajriba, for example, from a constant conjunction in repeated occurrences. To this abstracted intelligible universal, sensation and its particulars will never have complete access, for the latter can never be adequate to the generalisation. Nevertheless, there is a faculty of 'active imagination' which comes closer to intellect in its ability to manipulate and represent images so that they may more clearly point to universals. By this account, presumably, an assertion such as 'the black cat sat on the red carpet' can be distinguished from 'the black cat is two inches from the edge of the red carpet' by constructing images to draw attention to specific features manipulating images 131. However close it comes to the intellect by instantiating and making communicable a knowledge claim, the imagination remains tied to particulars and is unable by itself to make the kind of universal statements which knowledge might consist in. Accordingly, arguing that imagination remains ever inadequate as a form of knowledge is compatible with the claim that imagination is indispensable to thought. For it may be indispensable in the sense of explaining the process and rules of thought without being necessary to a legitimation of the knowledge we gain through thought and reasoning. In the latter regard, we may consistently argue, it is less than effective.

To this placing of imagination we may add the non-cognitive impact sought by a poetic imagination. For Ibn Sina, this use of imagination cannot be identified with analytic thought and its search for a clear statement of truths
which can be justified through demonstrative syllogisms. Rather, its syllogisms are, first, dependent for their premises on an assent that results in a feeling of wonder, and, second, are themselves assented to because of the pleasure occasioned by understanding the harmony of their elements. This assent to premises is not irrational: it could be the prelude to the discovery of a new truth. Ibn Sina was seen to suggest that the feeling of wonder arises from our sense that the connections between antecedent and consequent proposed in the premises were ‘apt’ or ‘just right’ even though they were not true. Poets were valued as much for the striking comparisons they invented and set out as for the harmony they gained in the poem itself, and we may suggest that this striking quality was not a matter of the truth or cognition so much as it was a matter of being interesting in some indefinable way.

In keeping with this non-cognitive use, we could not hope to convince other subjects to agree to our assent to a premises by pointing to its correspondence with the truth. The end of persuasion was that of enabling other subjects to gain the same feeling of wonder. In relation to the whole poem, the end of any persuasion was at best to enable the other to feel pleasure in the harmony of elements. But such pleasure was clearly not a matter of cognition as such. It did not turn on the truth or falsity of premises and assertions such that other subjects could be compelled to give rational compliance to some argument and conclusion so that they experienced a feeling of pleasure as a result. Instead, the whole procedure of using poetic premises and imaginative assent goes to make clear that the aesthetic use of imagination may be rational but it is far from seeking or being ascribed a cognitive validity. And this makes the aesthetic use of imagination even more peripheral to theoretical contemplation, for at best it is at a remove from knowledge that is even further than the cognitive use of imagination. As we have seen, for Ibn Sina, the latter is already qualitatively distinct from knowledge.

Expressed in this way, poetry must seem unimportant: compared to science it is a meagre source of knowledge; compared to politics it may be expected to sustain a weak kind of social cohesion; by contrast to practical reason, its reliance on emotion and pleasure suggests that it does not presage a very self-conscious or autonomous form of behaviour or moral awareness. Yet, for all that, Ibn Sina, like al-Farabi before him, recognises and makes important claims for the power and purpose of poetry in binding individuals together in the community of the Virtuous City. Given the role of poetry within Arabic culture, Ibn Sina’s analysis becomes a powerful instrument for understanding one important force at work in the community’s self-identification and development. Regardless of the weakness of poetry as an agency for gaining knowledge or morality, its limitations are counterbalanced by the power it exercises in the public domain and the seriousness with which we must consider it in understanding how social life operates. A philosopher who is concerned seriously to bring about a state where all individuals, so far as possible, may live a good life, would be foolish to ignore how effective poetry has long been in Arabic culture in maintaining cohesion among individuals and groups.

In the next section we shall consider Ibn Sina’s conception of the power poetry has in maintaining society and its relation between individuals.

II.

POETICS AND SOCIETY
In the last section we considered the validity of poetic syllogisms, but did not deal fully with one important aspect of their nature. To provide a full justification of poetic validity, we must clarify the rules governing the relation of themes to poetic forms, for if we cannot explain these rules, we will fail to defend claims to the completeness of poetic syllogisms, and consequently fail to justify their validity.

To discover the nature of the rules governing the relation of themes to forms, we proposed to explain poetry in terms of techne and poesis rather than episteme alone. This proposal leads us to consider further aspects of Ibn Sina's theory. First, we must clarify some implications of the episteme-oriented account given in the last chapter, to show that poetic validity implicates a particular emphasis or subjects. This emphasis will make clear that Ibn Sina is not merely left with a 'tension between (1) an essentially lyrical and formalist view of poetry...[which sees] the end of poetry as primarily wonder and pleasure, and (2) a view that stresses the moral bent of poetry, its social function'\(^{132}\). Instead, his theory can be developed to incorporate both factors without contradiction. Second, in clarifying the 'moral bent of poetry, its social function', we can show that subjects are engaged through poetry in diverse ways. Third, these 'diverse ways' can be clarified by reference to the themes guiding poetry. This is not to identify themes with social relations; but because their association suggests what kind of considerations enter into constructing poetry with given themes, it shows how the completeness of poetic syllogisms can be justified.

To exhibit these moral and social features of poetic validity, we shall first consider the role of the subject's pleasure in poetry. Poetic or figurative language was found satisfactory not because its meanings could be paraphrased into the literal terms of which it was composed but because its meanings were embodied in 'imaginative imitations' that contained a harmony. A grasp of this harmony occasioned pleasure, which signaled the success of the poetic syllogism constituting any poem. Consequently, not only did such success involve our rational capacities in understanding the elements of figurative language, but also, as we saw in the last section, pleasure was among the formal properties of the poetic syllogism.

The formal role of pleasure, given its commensurate subjectivity, leads us to consider the role of the subject. In turn that will indicate the kind of relation between subjects which is sustained by poetry. And, when Ibn Sina's account of the latter is developed, it becomes clear also how the rule-governed construction of works involving themes and forms militates towards using different themes to provide commensurate relations between the members of its audience. And in order to explain the latter fully, we will have to resolve the issue of the validity of poetic syllogisms that we left hanging towards the end of the last section.

**POETICS AND PLEASURE**

Pleasure is a formal feature of poetic syllogisms. It is subjective in that it depends essentially on the subject; but it is not arbitrary, for it has an object which must be understood. This rational and intentional component makes pleasure in poetry intersubjective and leads us to consider the subjects who construct and appreciate poetry. This may be explained further.

Following Aristotle, Ibn Sina identifies a number of pleasures occurring in our relation to poetry. These include the already mentioned
pleasures in imitation and in gaining harmonies that cause us to make poetry. Ibn Sina cites as evidence that imitation is delightful the fact that we 'are pleased by contemplating the portrayed forms of hateful and disgusting animals which [we] would avoid if seen in actuality' 133. The second cause of poetry making is our 'natural love of harmonious combination and melody', towards which 'the soul becomes favourably disposed' 134. Pleasure is gained also when we 'delight in the form [of the work] itself - its manner, composition, and so forth' 135. There is also a pleasure associated with tragedy, where 'all high and noble deeds are dealt with in a pleasurable and mannered speech' 136. Finally, there are the pleasure that leads us to assent to poetic syllogisms and the pleasure or distress that arises from assenting to poetic premises.

These diverse pleasures are united in that they are all rooted in attention to objects and that they all involve some kind of cognition of those objects. Ibn Sina is supposing that pleasure has a rational component. To understand pleasure we may examine what it is to be in a pleasurable state, or we may consider its referent - at the object that is giving us pleasure - or we may look at the reason for pleasure - what grounds we have for it. Thus, we may feel pleasure or distress on assenting to a striking poetic premise: the feelings arise from attending to the object; and the pleasure we gain from harmony, which is the basis of our assent to the poetic syllogism, depends on appreciating the harmony in the object by understanding its elements and their relation. Similarly, pleasure in form has its object in the relation of particular parts, and so involves cognisance of the elements in harmony. Further, pleasure in imitation must also depend on grasping the similarity between the object and its imitation. Thus, pleasure neither occurs in isolation, nor is merely an automatic and blind reflex, but must have a referent and a cause or reason. This cognitive or rational element is essential to pleasure, for it involves claims about the object that explain and perhaps justify our response. Cognition and understanding are not just contingently related to pleasure in this instance, but are essential to and the cause of pleasure. The occurrence of the latter depends on objects and on the subject's beliefs, cognitions, and relation to those objects. When we feel pleasure in a work, it is not simply a blind impulse, but depends on our understanding the work and its structure or order 137. Thus, by Ibn Sina's conception, pleasure and pain in poetry have a reasonable component and are open to persuasion, conviction, and appropriateness to an object. This renders them capable of being incorporated into the area subject to logic 138. Pleasure in the object arises from the ratiocinative character of works, and may be available to anyone who similarly grasps the object.

Such a focus on its rational component is not intended to make pleasure into something objective. Ibn Sina insists that poetic discourse is distinguished from objective scientific language precisely by the roles of pleasure and the subject. Analytic thought (fikri) is the clearest form of reasoning. It is achieved by 'direct statement ... made up of authentic and standard language' 139. Its use of concepts can be codified and given determinate correspondences with the world in a system of scientific reasoning. Through their use, knowledge requires compliance with the conclusion of an argument and so brings about conviction in subjects 'due to the realisation that the thing is what it is said to be' 140. Thus, in an important sense, logic and knowledge compel our agreement. If the premises are correct, use appropriate definitions and concepts, and the argument is valid, then the conclusion must follow. A subject cannot accept the premises and the validity of an argument yet deny the conclusion without showing himself to be mistaken or irrational. Similarly, knowledge claims can be
assessed by comparison with objects and events existing in a world independently of subjects. From their basis in experience, and given the validity of arguments, we can infer from what is known to what is unknown. A rational subject cannot accept the grounds of evidence yet reject the relevant conclusion: the grounds are the basis from which, by some given inferential rule, we gain the conclusions for which they are evidence. The relation of premises or evidence to the conclusion exerts a compulsion in both cases, in that the relation holds independently of the desires of the subject, and the conclusion must be acceded to by any rational and cognisant being. This is what objectivity consists in, and it is possible to reject a subject's claim, where it fails to tally with an objective state of affairs, because truth depends on the way the world is, not on the subject or how he wants it to be. Accordingly, compliance with the conclusion of a demonstrative argument characterises cognitive conviction. Further, cognitive and logical conviction consider 'the matter being conveyed' rather than the utterance being used. The language used is attended to as a means of grasping some feature of the objects to which it refers. The utterance succeeds by virtue of the content it articulates and which subjects assent to: it is not appreciated for its balance or inner harmony, and it must abjure all invention and creativity.

From this understanding of conviction, objectivity, and compulsion, Ibn Sina went on to contend that poetry is effective because it has a comparable logical structure, so that the aesthetic use of language has a parallel way of evoking conviction. However, he also denies to this discourse a share in the cognitive interest that underlies analytic thought. Literary and poetic language 'does not pertain to understanding but rather to wonder - it makes the speech pleasant and dignified' \textsuperscript{104}. Rather than seek true or false generalisations about what 'is recognised as immediate in the world', the aesthetic use of language denotes our affective capacity; and it is the subjective responses of pleasure and awe, generated in our appreciation of works, that characterise aesthetic or 'imaginative compliance'.

As they share a comparable structure with demonstrative syllogisms, poetic syllogisms can be deployed to bring about something which is other than an expression of personal preference alone and more than just a feeling of pleasure. This is because in figurative language we construct meanings, and this activity is both rational and pleasurable: we are pleased with the constructed meanings when they bear an harmony between elements; and to experience that pleasure we have to exercise our reason in understanding the elements. That is, the pleasure is occasioned by the rational process of comparing the meanings of terms involved, and we understand meanings, without concern for their truth or falsity, by attending to the balance of terms that is procured. We consider only how well the balance of terms, considered as a conclusion, has gauged our capacity for pleasure. Accordingly, a poet's or writer's ability is assessed by his or her skill both in gaining this balance through comparison, proportion, and contrast, and in the originality of the comparisons he proposes. Consonantly, the audience exhibits its sensitivity by its facility for appreciating the author's skill in constructing figurative and other meanings. And we may expect that the riskier but still successful metaphor or image ventured by the poet will draw praise, for we feel wonder and pleasure when the greatest poets take their magnificent risks with imagery and style yet still attain comparisons which we understand. Further, because it is occasioned by this balance of rational materials, pleasure is not merely subjective, like the preference of sweet over sour tastes, and is related to its object, yet is not objective in simply being a quality possessed by the object. The balance which generates pleasure is a result
of the meanings, images, imaginative imitations, and harmony which are present in
the work, and it is capable of both being understood and being appropriate or
inappropriate. Moreover, the rational component of this aesthetic response, which
is brought out by the syllogistic character of the construction of meanings, goes
to support our expectation that others will give 'imaginative' assent to a
particular work.

Pleasure and the Subject. The character and role of our subjective
responses of pleasure and awe leads us to consider the subject in Ibn Sina's
conception of poetic subjectivity. Imaginative imitations may be thought to serve
a purpose here: in poetry we are satisfied with pleasure and awe in gaining a
correspondence between subjects as feeling and thinking beings. Clearly, poetry
is subjective in that it depends on the affective character of persons; but also,
the subject is treated as the end of aesthetic discourse, for the success of this
language - our attaining a feeling of pleasure as the conclusion of a poetic
syllogism - depends on the sensitivity of the subject. In this sense, because it
addresses the subject essentially, aesthetic language can be said to imitate the
subject, and poetic or literary discourse is intersubjective in that it depends on
generating a community of feeling between subjects, who are considered as
thinking and feeling ends for poetry, where subjects gain a common response to
works through mutually appreciable images, symbols, etc., in line with the five
syllogistic forms and their themes. That is, the subject is the lynch-pin of poetic
activity, and poetry is intersubjective in that it depends on generating a
community of feeling between subjects. In appreciating and making poetry, the
subject is treated as the end of the process of construction, for the success of
figurative language and the attainment of the conclusion of a syllogism depend on
the sensitivity of the subject. Whereas the success of a cognitive or logical
argument was in an important sense independent of the subject because it
carried a rational force to which the subject had to submit either because of the
way the world was or because of the relation between concepts, in the poetic
syllogism the only real criteria for success is the subject and his or her feelings
of pleasure and awe. While it is possible to dismiss a subject's logical or
empirical claims as false or self-contradictory because they do not correspond
with the nature of concepts or with the nature of the world, poetry carries a
different force. As the subject's feelings of pleasure or awe are crucial formally
to the validity of the syllogism, those feelings provide the final ground for
accepting or rejecting an aesthetic use of language. The subject has to validate
the syllogism by having the appropriate feelings. But this has other
consequences.

The most important result of this understanding of the role of the
subject and its feelings of pleasure is this: poetry can only succeed by
bringing the subject to give agreement to the poetic syllogism it contains by
responding in an appropriate way, for the ultimate ground for appreciating a
poem is the subject's own experience of pleasure. From this other things follow:
only the occurrence of this feeling will allow the subject to succeed in
appreciating an aesthetic use of language, and only the occurrence of pleasure
can validate agreement or assent to the aesthetic use of language. A subject
appreciates a work when he or she has the appropriate feeling in response, not
when someone else does so. In this sense, the poem imitates the person in being
directed essentially at his or her own nature. Consequently, the occasioning of
pleasure in one subject cannot be the basis for accepting or rejecting another's
claim for the aesthetic use of language. The frequency, facility, or seriousness
with which others respond to a work cannot be any evidential basis for the
subject's own conviction over a poetic syllogism, for the only ground for his own
conviction is his own experience of pleasure. That is, a subject cannot assert of another, on the basis of his feelings, that she should appreciate a piece of literary or poetic discourse. Similarly, she cannot dismiss his claims as false on the grounds of her own lack of pleasure. Only the subject's own feelings are the basis for their own judgments. Their feelings cannot validate any claims about others' responses, which those others must have for themselves, individually. Discussion may occur here, of course, but because of the subjective nature of conviction, it can only succeed by persuading another subject, perhaps by pointing to features and nuances he may have missed or misunderstood, that it is appropriate for him to feel pleasure. But in all this, subjects must still be treated as rational and feeling beings who can only independently give assent to a work when they feel pleasure in it. Thus, poetry is intersubjective in the dual sense of depending on the subject's common feelings and of having to treat the subject as he or she is in rational, emotional, and affective nature.

But this raises a further issue, for if we must consider the subject in this context, then because the success of a poem is warranted by the feelings of pleasure which a subject has and which lead him to assent to the work, a fuller understanding of the validity of the poetic syllogism must be gained also by examining the nature and role of the subject. That is, it is necessary to characterise the 'subject' further, if we are to understand how and when and why assent is gained, for it is the subject who gives assent to the poetic syllogism and thereby makes works successful.

POETRY AND THE NATURE OF THE SUBJECT

The intersubjectivity of poetry is a consequence of the formal properties of the poetic syllogism. It leads us to consider more fully the nature and role of the subject, for it is by giving assent to the syllogism that the subject, so to speak, makes the syllogism successful. Ibn Sina's claims here seem to involve a theory of what a whole person consists in, where that theory determines what we take poetry to be addressed to in the subject and how it incorporates poetry and our response into a community of feeling. At various points in the text, he proposes that poetry implicates a reference to the subject which can be developed further. In writing of the origins of poetry-making, he urges that 'poetry making originated according to the instinct and natural talent of every individual [poet] and according to his moral character and habit. Of them, he who was nobler was disposed to the imitation of noble actions and their likes, and he who was of a baser soul was disposed to invective'\(^{142}\). Indeed, it is not just the subject who produces poetry who might be characterised in this way; but those subjects who are represented in works and those who appreciate these poems p\(\)so may be considered in terms of their nature. Later in the same chapter, Ibn Sina identifies another theme by reference to the work when he says that 'comedy is meant as an imitation of that which is very base', of that 'which is immoral and is intended for ridicule and mocking... The comic is an account [or imitation] of meanness and a propensity for the despicable\(^{142}\). This description of the work is enlarged by explaining how these qualities are gained. For example, we might examine the use of masks in plays, where their appearance is changed for ridicule by combining three attributes, that is (1) ugliness, because it is necessary to change from the natural shape to contempt; (2) bad-temper, because it is meant to portray a general lack of esteem towards someone and an appearance of prejudice against him - thus the bad-tempered mask is a shape the mocker needs; and (3) freedom from any sign of grief; not
as in anger - for an angry man's facial expression shows the combination of both pain and grief, while a mocker's facial expression is gay and merry - neither dispirited, sad, nor pained. These descriptions rely on reading the mask as if it were a face with expressions appropriate to the character of a soul, but nevertheless, this character is ascribed to the work which uses these masks.

Such an interest in the work also imposes certain requirements, stemming from the needs of its intended audience, which constrain the way the work is constructed. So, for example, 'when satirizing the wicked as individuals, [the poets] used to include noble and praiseworthy actions in order to make wickedness even baser by comparison'. These constraints are necessary for the sake of the audience: the reason why satire sets up so bold a contrast between nobility and wickedness is that 'he who states that iniquity is a vice and stops there would not leave the same effect on the soul as when he adds that probity is a sublime and irreproachable life'.

To develop further this interest in the audience, Ibn Sina proposes that comedy is not 'a thing that requires the care of serious, virtuous and knowledgable men', suggesting that not only is it necessary to constrain the aesthetic object in various ways in order to gain a particular effect on the soul, but also that certain kinds of quality in the subject are appropriate to particular kinds of work. Clearly, then, the suggestion is that the nature of the successful poem, whose meaning is constituted by the poetic syllogistic and that depends formally on the subject's experience of pleasure in a harmony of elements, remains incompletely understood if we do not also examine the nature of the subject whose experience warrants the poem's validity. In addition, Ibn Sina suggests that the nature of the subject is to be described in moral terms - of nobility, baseness, wickedness, sublimity, irreproachability, meanness, a propensity for the despicable, seriousness, virtuousness, and knowledge.

Arguably, this conception of the subject, which we have outlined above, underlies Ibn Sina's claim that Arabic poetry can be distinguished from its Greek counterpart on the basis of their respective references to the person. He writes that the 'Greeks did not primarily occupy themselves with the imitation of persons, as did the Arabs.... The Arabs used to compose poetry for two purposes: (i) to affect the soul by presenting a given matter that moves it in the direction of an action or an emotion; and (ii) for pleasure alone - everything was imitated for the pleasure of its imitation. On the other hand, the Greeks intended, by means of speech, to induce or prevent action. Sometimes, they did this by means of oratory, sometimes by means of poetry. Thus poetic imitation, as they practiced it, was confined to actions and emotions - and to persons in so far as they have those actions and emotions.'

One way of clarifying the contrast proposed is to detail the nature of the subject by identifying the distinct 'physiology' involved in each conception. It can be argued that the Greek conception of the subject depends on a particular connection between outward action and inner nature, according to which only some part of the person's inner nature is relevant to explaining certain actions. Accordingly, in this context, Ibn Sina's suggestion, that Greek poetry is mostly rhetorical and directed towards using a non-demonstrative rational persuasive technique to bring about certain emotional states and behaviour, may be understood to depend on an understanding of what it is for persons to choose, be affected, and to act. This may be developed in the following way, commensurate with the character being ascribed to Greek poetry.
In the *Rhetoric*, for example, Aristotle argues that 'no art considers the individual... Rhetoric will not consider what is plausible to an individual such as Socrates or Hippias, but what is so to such-and-such people, as does the dialectic. For this does not reason from chance views'\(^{150}\). He suggests a contrast between paying attention to the nature of each individual and attending only to certain features which the subject has in common with others. Thus, the rhetorical device must persuade a subject, yet such persuasion is not directed at random individuals but is addressed to types of individuals and to relevant parts of their physiology. Our study of rhetorical procedures must be ordered on the basis of considering some features of our motive and active capacity as relevant and others as irrelevant. Accordingly, where such arts as rhetoric aim for universality, as they must do if they are to claim a syllogistic validity, they abstract from particular individual reactions on the basis of some criteria such as, for example, that the reactions are of the majority, and so of interest, or are the reactions of some especially gifted individual or group \(^{151}\). This 'abstraction from the individual' can be used to distinguish rhetoric from poetry.

Poetry differs from rhetoric in its emphasis on the subject, who must give assent to the poetic syllogism. But given the above account of how the subject - or what of the subject - is denoted in rhetoric, and given that poetry has to be understood by the person in order to be persuasive, the concern with persons involved here may similarly be based on a particular physiognomy, by which only certain parts of the person's soul are engaged in the actions and emotions native to aesthetic activity. The whole individual, possessed of rational, emotive, and affective parts, it seems, is not needed to explain this rhetorical efficacy of poetry. Thus, where cognitive judgements intend to gain a correspondence with states of affairs in the world and therefore carry an objective conviction, they also require the subject to abjure creativity and to set aside emotional preferences or pleasure for the sake of a search for truth. From the point of view of the subject, this requirement may be described in terms of a concern with his cognitive abilities rather than with the capacity for generating an emotional response: that is, our interest is in certain features of the subject in the case of cognitive judgements but with other features in the case of poetic claims. A consequence of this way of viewing different kinds of judgement is that by the conception suggested here Greek poetry imitates persons only so far as it is necessary to use them in embodying or illustrating that which will move people to action or emotion. Our principal interest is in action and its moral quality and only secondarily if at all do we concern ourselves with some character or personality as a source of those actions. That is, the suggestion seems to be that Greek poetry concerns itself only with those features of the subject that are needed to explain motivations and emotional states. It does not consider what we might now identify as a personality and its tribulations. This has implications for the way we see a work, its construction, and its reception, that may be suggested as follows.

For example, in relation to the work itself, presumably where our purpose is to inculcate a respect for the law, there we represent people on the stage or in verse in such a way that their actions embody behaviour showing why the law is inescapable. So, to misuse an example, Oedipus appears on the stage as part of a sequence of actions to illustrate the force of moral or other necessity. Events in the play are ordered to clarify this purpose, and details of the life and personality of Oedipus are revealed only if they have some bearing on this point of the play. Our concern is not with Oedipus as a person,
possessed of idiosyncracies and a history independent of the events in the play, but is with only those features which are relevant to the purpose of the drama. As a character, the person is unimportant, and our only concern is with the persona, caught up in the flow of events represented on the stage. Further, the kind of focus present here may also be ascribed to the audience and the playwright. Thus, similarly, we may expect that the playwright is not concerned with subjects in the audience as they are in their particular collections of habits, desires, and so on, but only with their moral and motive capacity. Accordingly, the imitative activity of the play and its audience are here qualified by the moral and ameliorative or deprecatory purpose that all imitation serves. That is, the conception of subjects suggested here sees them only in terms of their capacity for such actions and emotions - as capable of accepting praise or blame. The playwright, for example, does not need to seduce and attract his audience to the play; rather, the suggestion might be, the audience comes to the play because of the ameliorative and deprecatory - the moral - qualities and issues involved in going to the theatre. These qualities and issues are, so to speak, a foundation on which both the audience and the playwright rely and take for granted. For given that the play depends on a focus on only the persona, and this focus is gained by means of imitations, and that imitation is ameliorative or deprecatory, then as the latter are value laden, the focus on the persona is a focus on moral qualities of persons. Given this moral tenor of the theatre, it could be argued that those who fail to join the audience may be condemned for insensitivity towards its moral purpose. And the ability to rely on this moral tenor allows the playwright to address only those parts of his audience's intellectual and affective capacities which are capable of being engaged in the moral concerns governing the theatre. Consonantly, by being insensitive to the play or poem, people show themselves morally culpable; and if a play fails to win an audience, it could be because of a moral failure on the part of its audience rather than an artistic failure by the playwright.

By contrast with this conception of Greek poetry, Arabic poetry is taken to stress that although the conception of subjects developed for Greek poetry may be central, nevertheless it is not definitive of human beings or of poetry. The suggestion is that Arabic poetry considers the whole person, including the capacity for pleasure, persuasion, and reason. Thus, for Ibn Sina, Arabic poetry is composed for itself and therefore, so far as it is imitative, because the pleasure and awe that it occasions allow subjects to participate in the community of feeling. Such poetry and its audience will not be satisfied at being identified with the conception of the subject implicated in Ibn Sina's understanding of Greek poetry, for at one level Arabic poetry need not serve a moral purpose in order to claim validity. Indeed, Arabic poetry will have a distinctive attitude to the subject: namely, as Ibn Sina suggests, it will 'occupy itself with the imitation of persons'. Consequently, the poet cannot simply rely on any moral tenor of poetry that focuses only on certain features of a person. He has to take account of the audience as it is, with its given idiosyncracies, and has to attract it to the poem - usually through devices used in the nasiba. This additional non-moral component of poetry, as we saw, was identified as the second purpose of Arabic poetry: that it was produced 'for pleasure alone - everything was imitated for the pleasure of its imitation'. Here, in this role, we must separate out from imitation the ameliorative and deprecatory connotations usually ascribed it, for these were said to belong to another purpose of poetry - 'to affect the soul by presenting a given matter that moves it in the direction of an action or emotion'.
Yet this latter purpose is served by poetry only when, through their ameliorative or deprecatory quality, imitations move subjects to action and emotion. That is, imitations can be considered for both their motive power and for their nature as imitations. The motive and emotive role of poetry is developed by Ibn Sina when he indicates that the subject, its qualities, and its response, have a specific relation to the object. As a pleasurable response must be given, the suggestion is that such-and-such a response is given by a particular kind of subject to objects of a particular kind: satire attracts response from those who are base, nobility of soul is necessary to appreciate tragedy, and so on. And whatever particular claims Ibn Sina is making by reference to types of person and object, underlying the particular relation between, say, satire and meanness of spirit, there is a more general claim about the moral quality of any work. That is, for the particular association between satire and meanness or tragedy and nobility to make sense, we must suppose that there is a plausible general account of the relation between the aesthetic and moral validity of works.

Moreover, this relation cannot simply be that between moral quality and the content of a work, as if we might argue that, in addition to the aesthetic validity of a poem, there is the matter of the moral approbation or blame we ascribe to it because of its content. That is, it was said that the mix of terms in figurative language can be grasped by any rational and feeling subject so that his response is valid. However, one of the two purposes of poetry suggests another element, which seems at first to have to do with the content of a work, where the latter is suitable or not for some other non-formal reason. So the distinction between aesthetic and moral validity can be explained by reference to the distinction between form and content. Given that imitations make up the content of a work, they would naturally be ameliorative or deprecatory, and so would constitute the moral quality of a work. Thus, for example, the form of a love poem might invite its author to be deeply frank about his feelings. But while such honesty remains decorous when the subject is love, it may be completely indecorous when the theme is lust, and the poem could be rejected by its audience for its immoral content even though its formal structure, the facility with which the author gives expression to the convolutions of sense and emotion wrought by lust, and the order of ideas, images, and thoughts are all excellent. Accordingly, by this conception of Arabic poetry, there are two grounds for validity, one formal and poetic, the other moral and governing the content. The first is a restriction that makes the poem a poem, the second is a restriction which makes the poem acceptable in polite society.

Fortunately for the power and range of Arabic poetry, this way of making the distinction seems to rely on restrictions which are more Victorian than Medieval. Nor do they correspond with Ibn Sina's account of poetic validity. First, the poetic syllogism, which is the basis of poetic validity, is made up of terms in relation such that their meaning is what is yielded by their relation. It is not as if there is some independent content which is then given a certain form. The 'content' is intransitive in that we cannot suppose it always capable of being paraphrased into some other content without loss of meaning. Rather, the two - form and meaning - are interdependent and do not need separate and independent justifications. Pleasure in the poem is occasioned by the rational process of comparison of meanings to grasp the sense that develops, and this pleasurable awe is part of the 'formal' character of poetry. As it is gained through appreciating the harmony between terms, and these are meaningful words and expressions, consequently, where the occurrence of pleasure is essential to the validity of the forms of the poetic syllogistic, there we may expect that the
meanings or sense are also essential to the formal validity of a poem using that poetic syllogistic. And it is difficult to see what room there is, in this description, for a distinction between a logically valid poetic form and a content made up of a material that claims moral validity.

In other words, an explanation of the distinction between logical and moral validity that relied on the difference of form from content would make the relation between a work's aesthetic validity and moral content merely contingent, and make it possible to say that a poem is beautiful but evil because the two - its moral quality and its aesthetic validity - are judged by separate criteria. If so, then it may also be possible to argue that a poem is satiric yet not mean-spirited, for satire is a theme, and constitutes the form of the poem and gives its parts their order, while its being mean-spirited is a result of its deprecatory content, and the two may be judged separately. Yet Ibn Sina clearly does not want to allow for that sort of contingency. He wants to conclude that a stricter and necessary relation exists between them. For him, tragedy, comedy, or satire are themes of the works and therefore part of their form: they constitute the work, providing an order and arrangement of parts that gives it the meaning it has and makes the content of the work what it is. And Ibn Sina's claim is that whatever makes the work tragic or satiric also gives it a moral quality necessarily, for he says clearly that tragedy requires a nobility of spirit while satire depends on a baseness or meanness of spirit which allow us to ascribe moral qualities to them. By this account, then, it is not possible for a poem to be beautiful yet evil, satiric but generous in spirit, or tragic but ignoble.

The Question of Moral Validity. The argument given above does not deny that there are important issues of moral validity which must be considered. It only concludes that they cannot be resolved by reference to a distinction between form and content. It is still possible to claim that so long as there are meanings involved, they invite moral approbation or blame. However, it is not clear how Ibn Sina might argue to the conclusion he wants, for by distinguishing between the two purposes of Arabic poetry he has made it more difficult to understand their inter-relation. If the first purpose of poetry is the pleasure we get in imitation as such, then it must be possible to account for that purpose and validity of poetry without reference to any of the moral connotations commensurate with the second purpose. If such an argument could not be made, then the two purposes would not be separate. And we have seen that it is possible to defend the validity of the pleasurable response to poetry and its imitation by reference to the nature and validity of the poetic syllogistic. Here, pleasure was among the formal properties of the syllogistic, and was gained by understanding the imaginative imitations which made up the work and its meaning. It also implicated a role for the subject. But Ibn Sina has now gone on to make claims for the latter that are not justified by the account of validity so far given. For he seems to want to ascribe to poetry a capacity for moving particular, morally judgeable kinds of audience towards or away from morally valid behaviour. This supposes that there is an account of moral validity involved here, which determines whether any subject and its action is morally justified. Yet this notion of moral validity is not clearly justified by the given account of the poetic syllogistic, which is concerned with the logic of poetry. Nor is it clear how that account of validity could be developed or used to defend the claim to moral value or validity. Yet, further, if the relation between the moral and logical validity of poetry cannot be made clear, then Ibn Sina's claim that tragedy is by nature noble or satire by nature base would become incomprehensible. We would no longer have any grounds for accepting such claims.
A clue to how we may resolve this difficulty is presented through Ibn Sina's stress on the subject. As poetic validity is based on assent given by the subject, who is also capable of being judged good or bad, we may expect that the two purposes of poetry can be resolved with one another through the role of the subject. That is, the account given earlier of the role of the subject and the peculiar inter-subjective validity of poetry suggests why the proposed picture of deploying moral or logical poetic validity, where the first might lead us to reject a poem even though it satisfies all the requirements of the second, or vice-versa, must be an artificial description of Arabic poetry. There cannot really be a conflict between moral and poetic validity because the basis of poetic logical validity in the subject's experience of pleasurable awe precludes us from entertaining immoralities in a poem. Moreover, this is a formal requirement, not a separate moral one. Further, by supporting this general claim, we also see how we might defend it in the particular cases of satire and meanness and of tragedy and nobility. Of course, we must explain these claims further.

The general claim turns on the nature of virtue. In his *Metaphysics*, Book X, among other places, Ibn Sina suggests first that individuals need partnership and that virtue is a matter of balance. By this account, a morally good life needs balance and the exercise of judgement. The goodness of a man's actions will depend on his place in the world - on his defining characteristics, in which the capacity to act and to live well or badly are important factors. To live well, we must exercise reason and judgement not only in understanding the world, but also in behaving well in it. We must be able to appreciate the nature and depth of the balances these activities require, which will include not only the ability to live harmoniously in a society with others, but also where we are held responsible for our actions. Here moral awareness essentially involves the concept of the mean, and virtue is in important ways a form of balance. Thus, the most reliable moral agent is best able both to grasp the wholeness and balance of our characteristics and to live in harmony with others and their virtuous balance.

This talk of balances and harmony might suggest that where the most reliable moral agent is best able to grasp wholeness and balance, there similarly he or she will understand poetry best who is best able to grasp the wholeness and balance between terms without too one-sided an interest. Conversely, the ability to appreciate harmony in poetry may indicate a potential for virtue. But something more than this analogy must be suggested by Ibn Sina's account if it is to lead us to an essential relation between moral and poetic validity. For his claims that satire must be base and that tragedy must involve nobility will not be defended satisfactorily by arguing that there are homologies of balance between poetry and morality and that the capacity for appreciating harmony in the one case could lead us to be sensitive to it in the other. The general relation between moral and aesthetic validity has to be established in some stronger sense before we can explain, for example, the relation between satire and baseness or tragedy and nobility as particular instansiations of the general relation. That is, Ibn Sina's account seems to depend on, first, arguing for a necessary general relation between the two kinds of validity and then, second, proposing an hierarchy of arts in which particular relations between moral and aesthetic validity can be identified in terms of how they approach the norm. Thus, we may expect that because of its association with the virtue of nobility, tragedy will better exemplify the relation to virtue than does satire with its relation to baseness. Accordingly, in this context, we may begin by arguing for the general
relation and then, because the argument allows it, can introduce qualifications that justify a more complicated form of the relation between poetic and moral validity. The more developed form, with its qualifications, will allow us to argue that the considerations which distinguish art forms from each other also provide the qualifications by which different relations between poetic and moral validity are constituted.

To argue for the general relation between moral and poetic validity, we can claim that it leads us to preclude immorality from a beautiful poem because evil may not be poetically beautiful: evil cannot garner that pleasurable awe which is part of the formal character of poems, and so its presence would preclude poetic validity. To explain: evil will be an imbalance; it will involve not only a rejection of the mean and balance which constitutes a moral life but will also result in a commensurate stress on some one aspect over others. As an imbalance, evil serves to exclude or mis-stress some feature of ourselves. Because it sustains an emphasis on only some aspects, it cannot account for all the qualities whose possession makes us virtuous human beings. Moreover, the sense of moral balance, involving subjects in maintaining a mean in their moral personalities, can be construed as denoting a society or group of individuals – as a collection of personalities possessing appropriate moral balances, engaged in moral relations with each other, under the influence of a lawgiver, to constitute a Virtuous City. Ibn Sina speaks of this in terms of 'partnership' and of the existence of a community being necessary for individual existence. Conversely, the evil rejection of a mean is also the rejection of the Virtuous City or an exclusion from the moral society. Moreover, the persons who are citizens of the Virtuous City are also the subjects who give assent to the beauty of poems. And these factors make it impossible for an evil lack of balance to evoke pleasure in the way necessary to valid aesthetic pleasure. For an evil poem would be morally imbalanced yet have to procure an aesthetically pleasing balance or harmony between terms. But given Ibn Sina's theory, this could not obtain, for this pleasure – the aesthetic assent or conviction necessary for a valid poetic syllogism – has to be given by the subject; yet the partial stresses in an evil poem will connote a description of society which is divisive and which excludes people from the moral mean or is itself excluded from the moral mean; but those people who are excluded by the evil poem are also the ones who must appreciate it and constitute its poetic value by grasping its meaning and giving assent. That is, to find this kind of poem beautiful, they would have to thwart their own participation in the community just when they give assent to the . In other words, a beautiful but evil poem would be self-defeating: by this account, 'beautiful evil', so to speak, is an oxymoron and implicates self-defeating or contradictory behaviour. These points can be set out somewhat more systematically as follows.

As we have asserted, virtue and good are understood in terms of a mean or balance. "The mean in morals or customs is sought for two things. The first, involving the breaking of the dominance of the passions, is for the soul's purification and for enabling it to acquire the power of self-mastery so that it can liberate itself from the body unimpaired. The other, involving the use of these passions, is for worldly interests." The mean involves both a balance between reason and the passions, where self-mastery depends on controlling the passions, and a hierarchy where passions serve the pursuit of virtue. This balance can be disrupted by an excess of passion or of an excessive pursuit of self-mastery. The latter seems to occur when virtue, as wisdom, is misunderstood as a matter of theoretical knowledge. Ibn Sina rejects such misidentification as 'it
is deception to concentrate on the knowledge of this wisdom. Theoretical wisdom does not involve any mean; it is only in practical wisdom, 'in worldly actions and behaviour', that we need criteria for relating particular actions and their consequences to each other and to their source in reason and passion. To treat practical wisdom as if it were theoretical knowledge is to abjure all reliance on a mean and to concern ourselves only with gaining ends for ourselves. But this results in our 'carefully guarding the ingenuous ways whereby one can attain through it every benefit and avoid every harm, to the extent that this would result in bringing upon ones associate the opposite of what one seeks for oneself' 160.

Ibn Sina's claims here seem to depend on exploiting the relation between concepts of 'individual', 'self', and 'selfishness'. That is, given that virtue is a balance between reason and passion, if we treat self-mastery as a matter of theory, which involves no sense of a mean, we are also lead to look without qualification or constraint for ways to gain whatever is defined as the self. But this has an unfortunate consequence, for self-mastery in the sense of freeing the self from the control of the passions, where it seeks to promote this self over the passions, also becomes a matter of promoting this self per se as defined by reference to or against subjective, individual passions and against other selves. That is, this self is defined by being counterpoised to subjective passions, and so is still understood in terms of the subjective individual; but further, it is also distinguished from other selves and objects as the only self whose fulfillment it understands, desires, or pursues. In pursuing such self-mastery, we lose sight of the use of 'these passions ... for worldly interests', and lose our commensurate pursuit of virtue as a balance within individuals or with other selves. Thus, a natural result of treating virtue as a part of theoretical knowledge is that of 'distracting oneself from the attainment of other virtues'. To so 'cause the hand ... to be fettered to the neck', Ibn Sina writes, 'means the loss of a man's soul, his whole life, the instrument of his well being' 161.

Moreover, Ibn Sina makes clear what virtue consists of in the case of our motivating powers. These latter are the source of action and so part of the domain of practical reason. In the case of each power, moderation or balance in harmony with others is of paramount importance, and he writes that since 'the motivating powers are three - the appetitive, the irascible, and the practical - the virtues consist of three things: (a) moderation in such appetites as the pleasures of sex, food, clothing, comfort, and other pleasures of the sense and imagination; (b) moderation in all irascible passions such as fear, anger, pride, hate, jealousy, and the like; (c) moderation in practical matters' 182. And while the details of Ibn Sina's position call for further analysis, for our purposes it is enough to note that individual virtue is seen as a matter of balance - that we seek a mean that will allow us to continue to seek other virtues.

This conception of virtue, as a mean or balance denoting the individual, is related to that of community. Ibn Sina goes on to clarify how our individual concern with attaining virtues is committed also to seeking a proper balance between individuals. When we misunderstand virtue as theoretical wisdom, we are led to bring 'upon one's associates the opposite of what one seeks for oneself' 183. The result of treating others in this way is that we are distracted from 'the attainment of other virtues'. By contrast, a correct understanding of practical wisdom as 'pertaining to actions and behaviour' leads us to understand the latter in their public character, but so far as they have consequences for the individual and so far as his actions and behaviour support or disrupt the
individual’s relation to the community. Indeed, 'man cannot lead a proper life when isolated as a single individual... One man needs to be complemented by another of his species, the other, in turn, by him, and one like him... For this reason men have found it necessary to establish cities and form associations' 164. Humans need each other to confirm and promote their humanity, it seems, and Ibn Sina goes on to identify such associations as 'partnerships' that are 'only achieved through reciprocal transactions' which demand 'justice'; and justice, we know, is the mean regulating transactions between individuals.165

These last few claims are vital to understanding Ibn Sina’s conception of the individual. The claim that 'partnerships' are 'only achieved through reciprocal transactions'166 suggests that the relation to other individuals in a community is necessary to individual human development and fulfillment. We have found it necessary to form associations because in their absence, where we fail to be complemented by others like ourselves, we also fail to be our human selves. Without reducing the individual to the community or vice-versa, Ibn Sina is proposing that a particular kind of relation between individuals is essential to our own humanity. The importance of these claims will become clearer later. In any case, the upshot of these claims, when related to those made for self-mastery, is that virtue implicates two inter-related balances, one within the individual, by which he seeks self-mastery and frees himself to pursue virtues, and another, by which individuals are related to each other in just transactions and so maintain a balanced or virtuous city. For Ibn Sina, then, the good life is a balanced individual living well in a just society.

If this outline makes clearer Ibn Sina’s conception of the nature of virtue as a mean, it also shows that its balance involves diverse elements both within and among individuals, and so includes a heterogeneity such that the balance between elements is best described as a harmony of all those elements. By contrast, then, vice is generally an imbalance or a disharmony in the individual or in his relation to others. Given that we are dealing with a public realm of action and behaviour, evil must involve either intentionally rejecting or ignorantly subverting that harmony. Whether through intentional action or ignorant behaviour, Ibn Sina proposes, the resulting evil is either an excess which disrupts the individual’s balance or a deficiency that disrupts the just relation between individuals. That is, the ‘vices of excess are to be avoided for the harm they inflict in human interests, while the vices of-deficiency are to be avoided for the harm they cause the city’ 167. An excess of passion threatens self-mastery; while deficiencies of passion or reason, where practical reason is substituted by theoretical knowledge, disrupt the balance proper to a good life and so lead to evil.

In this context, to identify anything as evil is to denote the individual and social disharmony that it subtends. Accordingly, to describe a poem as evil or vicious is to claim that it causes or is suited to a social or individual disfigure. And given that a poem is structured by a logically valid relation between terms, in an evil poem the relation of its terms leads to or is suited to social and individual disharmony 168. And the last claim serves as the first step of Ibn Sina’s argument: that a poem is evil when it depends on or generates an individual or social imbalance.

As Ibn Sina’s second premise, we may reiterate the conclusion arrived at in the last chapter, where it was proposed that poetic syllogisms succeed where subjects give assent through an experience of pleasure in the
balance and harmony of terms in the poem. This pleasure depends on the subject — or is subjective — yet it is not arbitrary. It is part of the formal structure of the poetic syllogism, where it plays the role equivalent to the one assigned to conviction in a demonstrative syllogism, and so has a validity that makes it more than an expression of personal preference. Nevertheless, because pleasure is an experience which only the subject can have for himself, it retains a subjective character and, further, just because it is so closely tied to the individual, it cannot be substituted for by anything or anyone else. Only the subject can experience pleasure for himself, and so far as the occurrence of pleasure signals the success of a poetic syllogism, this success is made possible only by the subject assenting to the syllogism by having that experience of pleasure.

This experience of pleasure also fails to be idiosyncratic or arbitrary for other reasons. As the third step of the argument, we may reaffirm that pleasure in poetic syllogisms has a rational component in depending on understanding the terms and their relation in the syllogism. Figurative or poetic language may be subjective because it depends on the subjects' experience of pleasure, but pleasure is far from being some automatic or blind reflex. It was seen to depend on the relation between terms when these were considered for the harmony between them rather than, for example, for their correspondence to reality. Thus, assent as pleasure involves a reasonable procedure in which terms and their balances are understood to be appreciated. And this third claim, together with the two earlier ones, should lead us to deny that a beautiful poem can also be evil. This conclusion depends on certain suppositions about the role of the subjects' activity, and may be explained as follows.

So far as the poem, first, is evil because the terms which it contains generate or depend on a social or individual disharmony and, second, where our aesthetic response is a matter of pleasure, in the balance of its terms, through which we give assent to the poetic syllogistic which the poem contains, and, third, where we must understand the terms in order to appreciate their balance and to assent to the poem, there, fourth, a poem containing individual or social disharmonies will be unable to generate pleasure in the balance of terms because the individuals who are excluded from the disharmonious social or individual order will be unable to give assent to the poem's relation of terms which, by hypothesis, denotes a disharmonious order that excludes those very subjects on whose assent it depends in order to be successful. In other words, an evil poem cannot expect to gain some balanced subjects' assent without also confirming their exclusion from its society just when they give that assent. Those individuals will render their own participation in the disharmonious social group vacuous by assenting to the disharmonious order denoted by that poem. Yet if these subject's assent is vacuous, then the poem cannot be beautiful, for its beauty is constituted by subjects assenting to its order and relation of terms. Thus, the poem is successful where it gains assent; but an evil poem can be assented to only by also making vacuous the balanced subjects' assent because the poem excludes, from the disharmonious relations subtended by the evil poem, those balanced subjects who would give assent in order to make it beautiful, and thereby it also excludes their assent. That is, we must suppose that the balance of terms in a poem can generate a pleasurable response if it is beautiful; yet, if the poem is evil, and it lacks balance because it is evil, then it cannot gain the assent of subjects so far as the latter are also excluded from the society implicated by the poem. If they are excluded, it becomes impossible to find the work beautiful by giving assent, for if they cannot give assent, the work cannot be said to be beautiful as its beauty is constituted by the subject's response.
Conversely, where subjects assent to an evil poem, there they exclude themselves from the virtuous community, and so make their assent vacuous. Only a balance of terms that is compatible with a virtuous balance will be able to avoid divisiveness among subjects and so be able to seek and gain the pleasurable assent of every member of the community. And if it lacks a procedure for gaining assent from all, then it cannot clearly be said to be beautiful. Or so it may be argued.

However, the claims made above may be questioned as follows. The association between moral and political validity that is being proposed here depends on the role of the subject, who both embodies a moral mean and gives assent to poetic syllogisms. Because the same subject is involved in both activities, it seems, and as both activities involve a balance, it is argued that the balance procured in the case of virtue must determine that gained in the case of poetic validity. Consequently, the claim is, the subject will not assent to the balance of terms that constitutes aesthetic validity if it means thereby excluding himself from the balance of, or introducing an evil element into the virtuous community. But against this claim we may argue that it merely conflates the assent given to the poetic syllogism, by which a subject participates in an aesthetic community, and the balance within and between subjects that is procured in the moral community of a virtuous city. The considerations which underlie imaginative assent need not necessarily bear any relation to moral balances. A subject may assent to a poetic syllogism by grasping the harmony of terms in a poem without thereby adopting the virtuous mean and, so, without considering whether the poem is evil. As the criteria for poetic and moral validity are distinct, a subject may or may not participate in both communities. Just because a set of subjects happens to form a moral community, it does not follow that any related aesthetic community must incorporate the same set of subjects. The extent and nature of either community will be determined by the kind of validity it depends on, and which subjects accede to, and will not be decided by who happens to be involved. That is, an aesthetic community formed by subjects on the basis of assent to the harmony of terms in works need not coincide with the community of moral, balanced subjects in the virtuous city, even though some of the same subjects may be involved in both communities. Here, the fact that subjects give assent in the case of poetic validity is idle, for they give assent on the basis of poetic validity, which is when such assent can be asked of them, and do not give or withhold .. on moral grounds. What is important is the validity that is claimed for the poem through assent, it is not important who gives this assent. The fact that subjects give assent does not justify the validity that is claimed through giving assent, and so does not warrant any implication that if we value assent we should also value everything about the actual or potential assenters, including their moral character. In other words, the nature and scope of poetic validity determines the range and nature of membership in the poetic community that it subtends, it is not the case that the nature of the community determines the scope of poetic validity. Thus, considerations of morality or moral balance do not enter into imaginative assent to poetic syllogisms, and we may seek persons’ imaginative assent in spite of such assent being incompatible with or possibly opposed to the virtuous mean. This may be explained further in the following way.

**Aesthetic and Moral Communities.** According to this account, aesthetic and moral communities are distinctive in validity and scope. Such a distinction allows us to talk of validity as requiring assent without concerning ourselves with the question of who is the source of assent, and so without concerning
ourselves with the moral community. For example, this separation between morality and aesthetics could obtain in the use of metaphors in a poem. Faced with a metaphor like 'the evening of life', an audience would be struck by its juxtaposition of the span of day and of life, and the metaphor might be used in a poem which presents a sense of calm and repose that informs old age. It could then be urged that to appreciate the poem we must first grasp its terms and their relation, and that this understanding is separate from the feeling of pleasure by which we assent to the poem. Moreover, we can appreciate the poem by assenting to it without concerning ourselves with the moral balance or imbalance that might be connoted by this treatment of old age. Thus, even if the poem intends to exclude the older members of its putative audience, relegating them to a political limbo by stressing their need for calm, inactivity, and rest, and regardless of whether we find this relegation immoral, we may still grasp and assent to the poem for its successful syllogistic. Further, an evil but beautiful poem works in much the same way: its poetic validity holds in spite of and separately from any moral condemnation we may level against it. Even if evil is a matter of excluding individuals from the moral community, that exclusion is separate from their participation in the poetic community subtended by the poem because of its beauty. Even if they are excluded from the moral community, they may still assent to the poetic validity involved. Thus, there can be beauty that is evil.

For Ibn Sina we may argue against this objection that because it misunderstands the role of the subject and its assent in determining validity, it also fails to appreciate the relation between moral and poetic validity that he wants to establish. The objection was that poetic and moral validity depended on distinctive criteria, and so each could be gained independently of its counterpart. Moreover, the subject's involvement in poetic validity, it was argued, was idle in an important sense, for the subject became important only as a source of assent to given criteria while a poem was valid where it satisfied certain criteria, and its validity was not dependent on who gave assent to poetic syllogisms. Consequently, the scope of the aesthetic community, which is a claim about who are its members, was decided by the force and nature of poetic validity, rather than its validity being determined by considering whether all the members of a given community gave assent. But this objection misunderstands the role of giving assent in constituting poetic validity. First, for Ibn Sina we might argue that giving assent is not contingent or external to validity, as if we had a procedure by which we recognised a successful poetic syllogism claiming validity, and a separate procedure where a subject assented to the syllogism by feeling pleasure. Instead, for Ibn Sina, this kind of separation cannot obtain: the meaning of the poem is constituted by its poetic syllogism which, in turn, is successful when it occasions pleasure and so leads us to give imaginative assent. There is no sense of 'understanding the meaning of a poem' that can be both separated from imaginative assent yet also given poetic validity, for by giving assent we constitute the poem with its terms, their inter-relation, and their meanings.

Second, to give imaginative assent is to feel pleasure in the order and relation of elements, and this pleasure is subjective in the sense that only the subject can feel this pleasure for himself or herself. The fact that others do or do not feel pleasure forms no ground for the subject's own response. Yet if this pleasure and assent are vital to the success of a syllogism, and that pleasure involves the subject necessarily, then consideration of the validity of any poem cannot exclude consideration of the subject who gives assent. In this
sense, the poem subtends its own community. Given that the subject is necessary to assent and so to validity, only if reference to the subject is not vacuous or idle can we describe the poem as having validity. Consequently, the subject and his or her assent go to constitute the aesthetic community, and so must belong to it, if we are to have that poem at all. In other words, we do not first identify poetic validity by certain criteria and then find ourselves constrained to assent to it, so that those who do feel constrained in this way also participate in the aesthetic community. Rather, there is no poem or community except where subjects participate through pleasure and assent.

Third, in distinguishing Arabic from Greek poetry, Ibn Sina also makes clear that he thinks the 'whole' person is involved in assenting to poetic syllogisms. Thus, the subject's participation in the aesthetic community brings in considerations of his moral and other qualities. Given that we cannot simply emphasise some parts of the subject's faculties over others when we explain how the poetic syllogism is constituted, as we might have done in understanding Greek poetry, there is also no clear distinction to be made between, say, the aesthetic and moral communities on the basis of which faculties of the subject participate in each community. In both cases, the same subject is involved. This is not to say that no distinction can be made between moral and aesthetic validity, for the second depends on agreement gained on the basis of experiences of pleasure while the first depends on agreement over what should be, but it does say that for Ibn Sina the distinction cannot be made by reference to the different faculties of the subject. Moreover, given that the subject who constitutes the valid poetic syllogism in turn is constrained by a moral and social balance, the latter will determine the parameters within which the former may be constituted. And these parameters are those of a just society, for a 'man cannot lead a proper life when isolated as a single individual', but 'needs to be complemented by others' in order to affirm and promote his own humanity. Therefore he cannot consent to an evil poem for, by doing so, he will not only exclude himself from the community because he will thwart his participation in the moral balance, but he will also thereby make his assent or pleasure vacuous because he will fail to affirm or promote his own humanity. This needs further explanation.

To clarify this last claim further, we can develop some features of the concept of evil. We suppose that evil tends towards so complete an imbalance and disharmony within and between individuals as to destroy the possibility of affirming the humanity of subjects. Given, first, that good is opposed to evil and, second, that Ibn Sina's account of a Virtuous City, based on reciprocal transactions between partners where the pursuit of virtues is made possible, embodies what is a good life, then there is reason for defining evil negatively as the most complete impossibility of good. And that negative definition can lead us to deny the presence of balance and to affirm the presence of such excesses in individual pursuits or deficiencies in communal order as to render impossible any likelihood of gaining any virtues. But where this disorder prevails, partnership and reciprocal transactions become impossible, and at best other individuals are only used for the subject's own purposes. Far from being partners, other individuals are considered only in terms of how they might be useful to the subject's purposes. And to consider individuals in this way is to suppress their humanity, rendering their actions and reasons irrelevant in the sense that these are denied all independent legitimacy and are considered only in the context and terms of the evil subject's own purposes - other individuals are merely like any other objects. Consequently, any assent those individuals may wish to give
to a poetic syllogistic is rendered vacuous because it has no weight or meaning in this scheme of things, for assent has none of the basis in subjectivity and in the humanity of the other that gives legitimacy to assent as valid and meaningful behaviour. Or, conversely, by giving assent to such an evil imbalance, the individual also thwarts his very ability to give assent meaningfully because he has sought to enter a scheme of things where his humanity, his substance as a subject, the basis for validity in assent, are all void. In other words, an evil poem cannot gain assent from the subjects because it excludes them just when they give it assent; but if it excludes them, then their assent is of no consequence because it cannot constitute the poem and its community. On the other hand, if their assent is included in order to gain the poem as constituted by their assent, it is no longer an evil poem. Conversely, if the subject were given to the immoral balance denoted by the evil poem, then his assent would be excluded from the virtuous city and its mean. That is, an evil subject might be thought to find the poem beautiful by assenting to its disharmony. But, in this case, the evil person would have excluded himself from the virtuous community because of the imbalances in himself, and his assent cannot form part of the community. In either case, then, evil and beauty do not intermix.

Of course, the partiality of terms, stresses, and their harmony need not be obvious, and may have to be explained, even to the subjects themselves. Various psychological factors may prevent subjects from seeing that the poem serves to exclude them wholly, so that the assent they may be tempted to give thwarts their participation in the virtuous community. Ibn Sina's argument suggests that we can make mistakes in these cases, and that error can be explained to a subject. But the refusal to reduce poetic validity to moral validity, in spite of the former depending on the latter, also implies that any such explanation of the evil of a putative poem must take a particular form: it is not enough to dismiss a poem for having some evil content; it is necessary to argue also that the immoral quality exhibits an inadequacy in the poetic structure and validity of the poem itself. Conversely the requirement of adequacy will exclude the kinds of poetic dissonance that are generated by immoral partial stresses.

However, if this provides a plausible account of the relation which Ibn Sina proposes between moral and poetic validity, it is because it depends on assuming an extreme contrast between virtue and evil. The contrast is not mistaken in itself; but the suggestion made here is that the distinction is exclusive and exhaustive when applied to individuals. Yet surely Ibn Sina does not see virtue as an absolutely pure state of being, and he recognises the existence of such degrees of goodness as would prevent us from dismissing a subject as evil simply because he is not perfectly good. In this context, then, it is possible to consider the degree to which a work is good and, consequently, the degree to which it permits or thwarts assent to a poetic syllogism. Further, given that poems subtend their own community of individuals, we might expect that the order and relation present in the latter will determine the scope of any assent. Thus, a poem may implicate a balance most appropriate to assent from subjects of a particular character, where the latter may be identified morally, in terms of individuals given to actions and behaviour which are good, or noble, or naive, or vapid, or ignorant, or base, etc. And by understanding these variations, we may expect, we can come closer to understanding Ibn Sina's contention that baseness supports satire, that nobility is native to tragedy, and so on.
This expectation, while not unwarranted, is not satisfied as easily as might appear. To begin with, the relations we have usually mentioned, of satire to baseness, tragedy to nobility, and comedy to superficiality and ignorance, are all drawn by Ibn Sina from Aristotle's *Poetics* with the acknowledgement that they are Greek examples, which must be considered in a commentary on the Greek text, but are not necessarily inherent in Arabic poetics. Further, Ibn Sina has distinguished Arabic from Greek poetics in terms of the former's reference to a subject. Thus, an explanation of the Greek connection between poetry and morality, that would emphasise the moral quality of actions depicted or spoken of over any concern with character and subject, will remain inadequate to an understanding of Arabic poetry and its poetic subject and moral community. Ibn Sina seems to confirm this by writing that his commentary is addressed only to 'that part of the First Teaching [i.e., the *Poetics*] which we are able to understand, since it mostly includes discussion of poems and descriptions peculiar and known only to them [i.e. to the Greeks]'\(^7\). Accordingly, it must seem that there is a limit to any use we can hope to make of Ibn Sina's explication of Aristotle's theory because the latter is directed at understanding Greek poetry. However, the passage also suggests there are some conclusions we will be able to extract that, because they are universal, will also be applicable to Arabic poetry. Thus, just as Greek poetry has a 'fixed number of poetic kinds with definite themes' and for 'each kind, [the Greeks] had certain conventions peculiar to them', similarly Arabic poetry uses 'conventions, e.g., the description of deserted habitation, the erotic motif, the depiction of landscape, and the like...'\(^3\). So, in spite of differences in particular themes and conventions, there are similarities in that both have themes and conventions. Consequently, we may expect to speak more generally of 'poetry, its kinds and the characteristics of each kind; the principle of excellence in making likenesses and poetic fictions, i.e., imaginative utterances; and the exposition of the parts of each kind - qualitatively and quantitatively' \(^4\). What we say here will be applicable to both Greek and Arabic poetry. Consequently, we must expect to use Ibn Sina's study of Greek themes and conventions to arrive at conclusions about Arabic poetry, but with the proviso that differences between the two kinds of poetry will mean that such comparisons cannot be unconstrained. For example, where conclusions about Greek poetry depend on assumptions about the priority of action over character and a distinction of 'character' from 'subject', there we can apply those conclusions to Arabic poetry only by arguing for the role of the subject. Similarly, where Greek poetry yields conclusions which follow from the use of appropriate themes, there to apply those conclusions to Arabic poetry we will have to argue for the validity of those conclusions for Arabic themes.

Another restriction on any comparison is this: many of the claims that can be made about, say, the relation of baseness to satire, are the result of insight rather than theory. We may provide genre-related arguments for the appropriateness of baseness to satire, where both elements are defined at some level of generality, but claims about particular works and their subtended community will be gained only by insight into the work and its workings. The general theory at best can only point to the elements involved in understanding and interpreting any work of a particular kind, but it will not say more than that. That is, there are limits to the general explanatory power of theory, be it applied to Arabic or Greek poetry, for beyond theory we need a sensitivity to works and insight into them. The latter depends on a theory to explain what we should look at and why, but the theory does not determine how the categories it identifies can be exploited or developed. So, a theory such as the one Ibn Sina ascribes to Aristotle will identify and explain works by reference to genres,
themes, and conventions, but this says little of what makes a particular tragedy powerful or leads us to distinguish al-Munatabi from Buhutri or Oedipus from Trojan Women. Similarly, any insights we garner into the nature of tragedy may fail to apply to satire or to the erotic motif of a nasiba.

The last paragraphs imply serious constraints over what we can expect from Ibn Sina's analysis of Aristotle's Poetics at least so far as our interest is in the relation of theme to moral quality. First, Ibn Sina is undertaking an exercise in philosophy rather than art appreciation or literary theory, and so is not concerned simply with providing insights into particular poems. Second, in his analysis of Aristotle's claims for the relation of tragedy to nobility, satire to baseness, or comedy to superficial ignorance, Ibn Sina will be concerned with Aristotle's argument at a general level, from which conclusions can also be applied to Arabic themes and genres, rather than with the issues specific to Greek drama and poetry. This implies that, third, Ibn Sina is interested in the mechanisms by which an association of theme to moral quality is gained, and with the consequences this has for a subject's assent, rather than with the specific relation of tragedy to nobility in Greek drama, and so on. Of course, these claims do not deny that Ibn Sina has some insightful claims to make about Aristotle's conception of Greek tragedy - as evinced in his emphasis on action over character in explaining the 'Greek conception of poetry', for example - but the main thrust of his analysis of the text must be seen to lie in explaining Arabic poetry with its concomitant subjectivity.

But such constraints also suggest that we have already done as much as we can to explain the relation of genre to moral quality, for we earlier provided an argument showing that the nature of poetic validity was such that poetry implicated a community of partners. We might fill this out by showing how a noble community differs from one which is base or how one work fits the first category better than another does, but these sort of cases fail to go beyond the general argument. His general conclusion is the only one which Ibn Sina is able to provide if he does not want to become involved in analysing particular works of Arabic or Greek poetry in order to show what their moral community consists in. That is, his general argument can only be filled in by analysing particular works to show why, say, Trojan Women depends on a nobility of response and subject. But that is also a step he is prevented from taking by the constraints imposed on him because his concern is with general arguments rather than with particular analyses. And instead of trying to produce more arguments at this specific level, it may be more sensible to understand how genre or theme is related to the manner, means, and aim of imitations, for the latter are what make up the poems whose nature we are concerned to understand.

Further, from Ibn Sina's concern with the mechanisms by which themes are associated with moral qualities another result follows that brings us back to the issue which we left at the end of the last chapter. For if we can explain those mechanisms, and can do so by clarifying the rules for constructing works with given themes, then we will have gone some way towards showing the rationality of themes and of their development out of poetic forms. And by explaining how themes and forms are gained, by setting out the rules by which they are assessed, we show how the poetic syllogism may be completed. Indeed what we will find is that by explaining how theme and form are related, and the syllogism completed, we can begin to clarify the moral quality of different poetic forms. Naturally, all this needs further argument; and we can begin by seeing how poetic themes are given moral qualities.

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In addition to the examples given earlier, we may indicate numerous other instances where, following Aristotle, Ibn Sina brings out the moral quality of works. At Chapter Six he identifies tragedy as a "type of imitation which is proper and which makes the soul [of the audience] disposed for the acceptance of noble deeds" 173. Tragedy presents "what is connected with error, straying from the path of duty, and losing sight of what is more noble" 179. But by multiplying these examples we show only that moral qualities are often ascribed to works 177; what we need to do is understand how such ascriptions can be gained. In regard to this issue, Ibn Sina's claim is that if works, poets, and the audience are all ascribed moral qualities, it is because all these are involved in the business of poetry, where the latter depends on imaginative imitations, and these in turn naturally militate towards moral qualities. To explain this further, we shall have to consider the issue of the completeness of the poetic syllogistic, for only by resolving that issue can we explain the moral qualities ascribed to poetry where the latter is made up of imaginative imitations in a designed order.

Ibn Sina's claim about the moral qualities of imaginative imitations seems to depend on stressing the fact that imitation is not only distinct from reality and produced by subjects but also that it imitates certain objects. In terms of its object, since Greek poetry imitates actions, and as 'every action is either base or noble', imitation had to concern itself with the means proper to portraying the moral qualities of these actions. It thereby also introduces moral qualities into consideration. Now, it may seem that as Arabic poetry primarily concerns itself with subjects rather than actions, arguably it does not depend on the moral nature of actions, and so resists any attempt to apply some parallel strictures on its objects. Yet this conclusion does not follow, for although Ibn Sina says that Arabic poetry imitates persons, he maintains that its second purpose is identical with the function ascribed to Greek poetry. Thus, both seek in part to 'move the soul in the direction of an action or emotion', and therefore concern actions; but, in addition, Ibn Sina maintains that Arabic poetry depends on the subject, and he associates actions and emotions with the subject in a way that Greek poetry, it seems, does not stress. But, as we have seen, the reference to the subject itself invites a concern with moral qualities, and so Arabic poetry also, because it concerns subjects and actions, must satisfy the moral strictures which apply to Greek poetry so far as the latter has its object in noble or base actions.

But it is not only because 'every action is either base or noble', and Greek poetry imitates actions, that this poetry involves moral qualities. And Arabic poetry is in a similar situation: there, first, actions are thought symptomatic of subjects, who are base or noble, and second Arabic poetry imitates the actions and emotions of subjects; but this is not the only reason why Arabic poetry is said to involve moral qualities. Rather, in addition to issues raised by the moral quality of the object it imitates, moral considerations also arise from the fact that poetry is constituted of imaginative imitations by subjects. If every action is base or noble, and poetry is constructed by subjects, then the action of constructing poetry from imaginative imitations will be capable of being noble or base. This intentional and active feature of constructing poetry - the deployment of imaginative imitations - leads Ibn Sina to write that the 'aim
of every imitation is either amelioration or deprecation, for a thing is imitated
either to be made better or worse"178.

The last claim is qualified immediately when he writes that some
people "imitated [actions] for pure similitude, neither for amelioration nor
deprecation", perhaps suggesting that a mere similitude would also be morally
neutral in intention. But if this implies a qualification, it is minimal, for if every
action is base or noble, then every imitation, even if it is formally a 'pure
similitude', must still consider an action for its baseness or nobility, such that
the baseness of an action, for example, may make it unnecessary to add some
deprecatory element in the similitude of its imitation. So, an intention to
deprecate may be served best by providing an imitation that is 'pure similitude'.
Accordingly, Ibn Sina is able to claim that 'every imitation and similitude ... [is]
... implicitly prepared towards amelioration or deprecation, or, in general terms,
towards encomium or invective'179. And he can then go on to explain that 'the
categories of imitation are these three : deprecation, amelioration, and
correspondence. The means [of imitation] are ... speech. Correspondence is a fixed
category which may be deflected towards baseness or towards nobleness, and
thus become an intended imitation... [It] may be transformed into either
amelioration or deprecation by having something imparted to it.180

Later Ibn Sina clarifies that the 'manners of imitation are three :
similitude, metaphor, and the combination of both; the ends are three :
amelioration, deprecation, and correspondence'181. Thus, the suggestion is that
the moral quality invoked for poetry is explained by reference to its being
constituted by imaginative imitations, and these in turn are explained in terms of
their means, manner, and aim, all of which involve moral considerations. As the
means and manner make it possible to satisfy their purpose, we can begin with
the former pair in order to grasp Ibn Sina's theory more fully.

Unfortunately, a problem with pursuing this aim is that the notion of
mimesis as imaginative imitation does not seem to be developed systematically in
Ibn Sina's Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle. Even though it plays a central
role in his theory, he nowhere presents a clear account of the notion itself. We
may explain the paucity of Ibn Sina's explicit discussion in part by pointing out,
first, that his language oriented account of imitation, which is presented in the
first chapter and depends on conclusions drawn from his logical works, does not
entirely coincide with Aristotle's, and, second, that the latter's use of the concept
of mimesis develops throughout his own text. The account given at Chapter 3 of
the Poetics, for example, is added to at Chapter 4, and neither coheres fully with
that given at Chapter 24. Moreover, that discussion is expressed in terms of
Greek works which Ibn Sina would not have known. Thus, where Aristotle
discusses imitation at Chapter 3 in terms of action and narration in particular
works, given both Ibn Sina's own language-oriented account of poetic speech and
the unfinished nature of Aristotle's reflections at this juncture, his commentator
is left unwilling to say very much about imitation at this point in those terms.
But another reason for this alleged paucity is this : Ibn Sina is seeking the
basic principles at work in Aristotle's discussion in order to see how they
enlighten us about poetry generally. Our commentator distinguishes the manner of
Greek poets - they 'make mere likenesses' or they 'imitated noble deeds alone'
or both 'noble and ignoble deeds' - from what he suggests are more general
'manners of imitation [such as]: similitude, metaphor, and the combination of
both'. As general manners of imitation, these must underlie Homer's imitation
of noble or ignoble deeds as much as they underpin Arabic poetic conventions. In
the context of this discussion, we may suggest, Ibn Sina’s concern is with explaining further conclusions about imaginative imitations generally by reference to these ‘manners’; and this explanation is not best gained by pursuing Aristotle’s discussion of particular Greek examples or by reiterating what Ibn Sina has already said earlier in his commentary and in other texts about the nature and logical validity of imaginative imitations. Hence, given his concern with the general nature and use of imaginative imitations, his explicit discussion of them may seem unsystematic and indirect; but that is because in fact in Ibn Sina’s work the discussion is couched in different terms and serves another purpose - of explaining further conclusions about the use of imaginative imitations. This purpose does lead Ibn Sina to examine particular works, rather than to explicitly or arbitrarily develop the concept of mimesis, but also his is interested in them only to the extent of wanting to derive general rules from what Aristotle has to say about these Greek works. Ibn Sina is not especially concerned to say something about the particular works themselves. In these circumstances, a systematic discussion of the nature of imaginative imitations becomes untenable and seems poorly developed, but in fact Ibn Sina has already proposed in other texts what the logical status of these imitations is and has set out earlier in this text an outline of how they function generally.

That is, another part of his general purpose of understanding poetic speech was served by his discussion of the nature and logical status of poetic syllogisms, and at this point it may be as well to reiterate some of the conclusions we arrived at earlier. To begin with, it should not be surprising that Ibn Sina not only identifies the means of imitation as speech182, but also claims that the manner of imitation involves similitude and metaphor183. His theory is language oriented, and spoken language or speech is central to the oral tradition of Arabic poetry. Further, language may be used in given ways, which Ibn Sina chooses to identify as 'manners'; and producing similitude and metaphor - this manner - is one of the ways that speech is used. In this context Ibn Sina is concerned principally with poetry and has distinguished cognitive from aesthetic contexts by reference to their distinctive uses of language. Poetic imitation is speech used affectively, being dependent on evoking feelings of wonder and pleasure rather than being concerned only with imitating reality. Cognition and rhetoric, for example, would be other manners of using the same means - speech - though the reference to wonder and pleasure goes to distinguish 'imaginative imitations' from the more prosaic use of imitations in making cognitive claims or from the persuasive use of metaphors in rhetoric.

Further, 'imaginative imitations' were said to bear an essential reference to the subject because they were reconstructions out of past intuitions and so were something more than mere imitations 184. In the language Ibn Sina uses, we may stress again their nature as phantasia over their mimetic quality, for although deliberative imagination deals with particulars which are originally given in sensory experience, its images are reproduced as particulars 185. For Ibn Sina we use 'the precepts which have been stored in the imagination and then proceed[ ] to combine and analyse them, constructing quite different images, for instance a flying man or an emerald mountain' 186. In other instances too, Ibn Sina was seen to oppose imitation to reality rather than think of its mimetic qualities in terms of precisely copying some part of reality. For example, imitation gives 'the likeness of a thing, not the thing itself'187. Accordingly, while the products of the imagination are mimetic, nevertheless, they are not understood simply in terms of reality but must also be seen as constructions by a subject. Further, elsewhere Ibn Sina showed that imaginative imitations may be identified
by reference to the subject's contribution in generating these imaginative
imitations and images, which are 'neither limited nor fixed... What is proper to
poetry is that which is invented or created' 188. That is, the poet develops and
presents new images and imaginative imitations in poems, which may be read as
symptomatic of the subject. Such a reference is perfectly congruent both with
Ibn Sina's stress on the subject and with the tradition of Arabic poetry in which
the poet or spokesman was venerated for his ability to use language and imagery
to express ideas, to preserve and develop the tribe's honour in relating its
accomplishments and defending it in disputes 189. This reference to the subject
in imaginative imitations is expanded in Ibn Sina's contention that the appropriate
response to imaginative imitation is a feeling of wonder, which distinguishes our
interest in imaginative imitations from one in the veridical relation of image to
reality, for the 'soul yields [to imaginative speech], accepting or rejecting
matters without pondering, reason or choice'190. These emphases on the
distinction of imaginative imitation from reality and on the subject's construction
or creation, when combined with the central role Ibn Sina ascribes to imitation, to
its means, and to its manner, have implications for his theory of poetics. And to
understand more fully Ibn Sina's further conclusions about these poetic means
and manners, we must consider that constructive aspect of imitations.

Given that for him poetry is of central concern, Ibn Sina differs from
Aristotle, who sometimes writes as if the visual or dramatic arts were
paradigmatic cases of mimesis. Ibn Sina too has something to say of this kind of
visual representation - as when he discusses imitation in masks - but even there
he thinks these visual and visible features are symptomatic of temperament191 or
of 'moral character and thought which give rise to .. action' 192. This not only
frees imitation from a merely iconic role, where it might be restricted to 'looking
like' its object, but also reminds us that mimetic material must be understood and
responded to by a subject. By this account, poetry is mimetic because in its
relation to subjects it bears reference to human speech, action, and character
through literal devices such as metaphor and similitude. That reference which
mimesis bears to the subject has already been considered above, when it was
suggested that poetry imitates the subject in that its validity is intersubjective
and directed at eliciting a valid response from subjects who must give assent to
a poetic syllogism 193. The poem is mimetic in that it must accord with the nature
of the subject. Of course, a poem is also mimetic in that it must make sense and
convey meaning about objects, events, emotions, and so on - it must refer to
these items - and Ibn Sina has explained another part of how such mimesis works
by explaining the distinction between a thing and its appearance and the
connection between poetic and demonstrative syllogisms. Poetry involves a use of
language and imagery that, while it bears reference to experience and knowledge,
is considered for its affective qualities

But something more than these explanations - of the logical status of
poetic language, imagery, and imaginative imitations and of the way in which this
language imitates the subject - is required if we are to understand the working
of poetic language. That is, we may know what we do about the logical status of
poetic language but still not know enough about the particular ways in which a
language having that logical status is used. So we may know that poetry has a
certain status, but that means that a great many devices and items of language
have that status, and the fact that they all have this status tells us nothing
about the particular items and devices used. A number of linguistic devices and
ways of gaining order and significance are compatible with this status, for
example, so that metaphors, similes, synecchodes, personifications, odes, sonnets,
and nasiba, all share the logical status of poetic language, yet clearly they differ
from each other in exemplifying that status. In other words, by ascribing this logical status we do not limit the number of items what can be considered but rather open out a whole field of items and devices in which that status is exhibited.

Ibn Sina is aware of this issue. One of the ways in which he phrases the matter is to distinguish Arabic from Greek poetry, saying that some devices and uses are possible in one language but not in the other. That is, the logical status is exemplified in one way in Greek and in another way in Arabic. But he does also think that there are some similarities in the ways these languages are used, and seems to suggest that the two languages may be similar also in the mechanisms and devices each has for exploiting and developing that common poetical logical status. His most extensive consideration of the nature and use of these poetic devices – the poetic forms – in Arabic occurs in the first chapter of his Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle, in which his own theory and approach are most clearly at work.

The Poetic Forms. By Ibn Sina’s account, where we construct and order language into poetic forms there the use of imaginative imitations can be seen as the exercise of practical reason. That is, there are rules governing the use of phantasias or mimesis, where the latter are understood as imaginative imitations, and these rules must be understood in their use in poetry in terms of a variety of practical reason. We saw what their validity consisted in when we considered them in terms of theoretical reason and clarified the status of the poetic syllogistic. What we saw there was that poetic speech depended on pleasure for its formal validity, and that consequently the completeness of the poetic syllogistic was dependent on the rules by which themes and forms could be gained. These rules and form are now to be understood by reference to a concept which, for Ibn Sina, becomes central to the activity of constructing poems: imitation as a conscious and rational activity. His specific claims are worth quoting at length.

The five poetic forms by which imaginative imitations are delineated as follows:

'Starting with the first type, we say that some of the forms of this type are like syllables at the beginning or end of clauses, [parallelism], and the interlocking of articles, their contrast (such as "from" and "out of").

'Forms of the second type are either according to complete proportion, when words (i) that agree in declension but differ in substance, or (ii) that agree in substance but differ in declension, recur in the same line; or those according to incomplete proportion: when the words are (iii) related in substance, or (iv) in substance and declension. Examples of the first are 'ayn and ghayn (the 18th and 19th letters of the Arabic alphabet); of the second, shami and shamal ("north wind"); of the third, farif and harif ("swift" and "rash"); or 'azim and 'alim ("great" and "knowledgeable"); of the fourth, sabih and sabiih ("early" and "floating"), or suhad and suha ("sleeplessness"). This is the proportion in wording as such; it may be in wording according to meaning such as when two words known as synonymous or correlated are used in a different way (i.e. figuratively), e.g., kawkab and najm ("star") used to mean bayt ("tent" or "house"), or sahm and qaws ("arrow" and "bow") used to mean athar 'ulwi ("heavenly trace").

'As to artifice according to contrast, a word does not merely differ from another in terms of sound, but also in terms of meaning, i.e., the meaning it commonly has. The form of this type exists in two, or more, words of which one means something and the other means its opposite, what is supposed to be its
opposite or contrary, or what is proportional to, related to and connected with its opposite, e.g., sawad ("blackness") which also means "arable land", bayad ("whiteness" and "wasteland") rahmah ("mercy"), jahannam ("hell"), and all such words.

'Forms according to the third type are (i) those characterised by proportion: when the expression is compared to another which is made up of parts which are singly declinable and which form a sentence of an ordered composition, or the composition may be compared to another which is made up of words that are simple in form; and (ii) those according to contrast: when there is a contrast between the sentences of two composite utterances in the ordering of their parts, whether these parts are common to both or not.

'Forms of the fourth type are (i) according to complete proportion: when one meaning recurs in the line in different use; and (ii) according to incomplete proportion: when there are single meanings, opposite or related, such as the "bow" and "arrow" and the meaning of "father" and "son". Proportion may be through a similarity in relation, common practice, sharing in predication, or sharing in name. An example of the first is "king" and "intelligence"; of the second "bow" and "arrow"; of the third, "length" and "width"; of the fourth, "sun" and "rain". Proportion may be explicit or it may be implicit. If explicit, it may be either according to the [nature] of the thing itself or according to convention.

'Contrast is either complete in opposites and their likes, or incomplete. It exists between a thing and that which is similar or analogous to its opposite, and between the similars or analogues of two opposites. Contrast may be [based on] a mentionable reason; it may inhere in the thing itself.

'Forms according to the fifth type are (i) those characterised by proportion: when two composite meanings resemble one another in composition or have common parts; and (ii) those characterised by contrast: when they differ in composition or order, with or without having common parts. Examples of this type are: the saying, "either so-and-so or so-and-so"; combination and differentiation, e.g., "you and he make a sea - but you are for flooding, he for clamour"; and combining a statement in order to clarify it by minute exposition, e.g., "he is to be both solicited and dreaded: solicited for his enlivening rain and dreaded for storms". This has been a brief enumeration of poetic forms.

Neither the status nor the nature of these poetic forms is immediately clear from this passage. Ibn Sina prefaces his list by arguing that 'the pleasurable in sound or sense is of two types'. Having already associated poetry with pleasure, Ibn Sina is now clarifying that such poetic pleasure is gained in part by actively manipulating speech. The use of sound to mark the measures of an utterance may be one device for identifying a speech as poetic and, so, as imaginative. But sound does not seem as basic as sense, and we may expect the sound to be governed by sense. This is because a poem must be understood if it is to be appreciated as a poem. And as sense is more basic, we may concern ourselves initially with the sense of any utterance, expecting that in essential respects the use of sound will be governed by the requirements of sense. Thus, presumably where the sense or meaning of a poem may be lost if we pursue a concern with gaining measured sound, then we are likely either to sacrifice a sound pattern to preserve the sense of the poem or will seek to discover another sense that fits with the sound we want. As few poems in the Arabic tradition are valued if they lack sense, so that sense is basic, sound may be thought secondary - even if it is essential in providing rhythm, measure, and so on. Further, where sound and sense are crucial, we may expect that the type of thing said of the latter will suggest what may be said of the former. For these
reasons, given our interest in grasping the nature of poetic devices and the poems they make possible, we may consider sense to be the primary object of our concerns.

Even if we presume an interest in sense rather than in sound, Ibn Sina's wording leaves us with the problem of understanding the nature of these devices. That is, even assuming that our principal interest is in what these devices contribute to poetic sense rather than to poetic sound, we are still left with the claim that in poetry, the pleasurable in 'sense is of two types: (i) it may be without artifice, and in this case, the wording itself is eloquent and yet without "art"; or the meaning itself is unusual not through art but due to the strangeness of its imitation and imaginative representation; or (ii) the pleasurable may originate in a simple or composite artifice in either wording or meaning. Examples of a composite artifice in wording are internal rhyme, material proportion, decoration, inversion, and other [devices] mentioned in the Rhetoric. And immediately following this, Ibn Sina sets out the relations of parts that 'every artifice occurs in terms of', where those relations yield the five poetic forms quoted above. What this shows us, it may be argued, is that poetic forms are not exhaustive because they only govern devices of artifice. As they do not necessarily govern the pleasurable in the sense which is 'without artifice', they cannot claim any special status in exploring the general validity and sense gained for poetry. For although they provide one mechanism for gaining the pleasurable in sense, the latter can also be gained in other ways.

But this conclusion raises other problems, for if there are alternative accounts of validity 'without artifice', then the arguments given in the last chapter, to show that a syllogistic validity can be claimed for poetry, must remain inadequate. Those arguments at best defend only the validity of the five poetic forms because the latter are exhaustive and we could show that they were structured by poetic syllogisms in the sense that our ability to gain poetic meaning by using those forms could be justified by showing that and how the poetic forms were based on the poetic syllogistic. It poetic forms could be created in abundance and if poetic meanings could be established merely by the use of these poetic forms, that would surely increase the unlikelihood of ever bringing the poetic syllogistic to completeness, for the more it seems we are able to create poetic forms which give rise to poetic meanings, the more it must seem that the poetic syllogistic remains incomplete because there is no guarantee that it will serve to justify the new form; and the less complete the syllogistic remains, the less will it be able to claim validity.

It may be thought that his fear of the syllogistic remaining incomplete can be dismissed for three kinds of reasons. The first was given in the last chapter when discussing the relation of poetic forms to syllogisms. Even if poetic forms are understood as merely literary devices, as opposed to logical structures, nevertheless we can expect the devices to have adequate logical structures because the latter provide the validity of any poetic language, including ones using new linguistic devices. Thus, there will not an occasion when we have a poetic form that cannot be linked to and justified by the poetic syllogistic that is already available. However, this answer is useless just because it supposes that we already have a justification of poetic validity and of poetic syllogisms, and that this justification can be extended to support the logical validity of any meaningful poetic phrase which is gained using a new or given linguistic device. It was not necessary to make this assumption for the purpose of the earlier argument, but in the present context just that assumption is being questioned. Consequently, we cannot gain very much by using this reason.

The second kind of argument seeks to vitiate fears about the abundance of poetic forms by distinguishing the process by which a work is
produced from the work itself and then trying to argue that all works must be understood as constructs and so must be seen as artifices made up of poetic forms and devices. In other words, poetic devices are crucial to and paradigmatic of all poetic speech, regardless of whether that speech results from a process of trial and error in which a poet actually does the work of constructing a poem or the poet creates 'naively', out of an inspiration in which the work somehow comes to mind without his or her painstakingly and consciously putting it together. This argument is suggested when Ibn Sina claims that in a poem 'without artifice', the wording may be eloquent yet without "art", or the meaning is unusual not through art."... For the poem to be without 'artifice' or 'art' is for the poem to be produced without consciously following the rules embodied in poetic devices. The meaning in a poem is some how direct, and the wording is eloquent, in spite of the author failing to use the usual forms of expression. Earlier we saw that Al Farabi had stressed that some people produce superior poems through a natural disposition, employing 'this gift without being acquainted with the art of poetry as it should be [because] they lack a perfect deliberation and careful consideration in the art.' Al Farabi also mentioned that 'whoever [of these natural poets] says he is "syllogising poetically" does so only because of the artistry he displays as a poet'. And in his own Commentary Ibn Sina seems to be reminding us of the same possibility: that poems may please as poems without having been produced in accordance with given rules for constructing them.

This last claim implies that we may draw a distinction between the poem itself and the manner in which it is produced. The poems are pleasurable in sense. But this pleasure in sense, these poems, can be gained in two ways: either by some naive and unstudied constructions that follow no given rules or by following the given rules and devices for constructing poems. The first may be striking because its 'meaning itself is unusual ... due to the strangeness of its imitation and imaginative representation', while the second may be striking because it employs poetic forms on new material and thereby produces new and valuable imaginative imitations. In either case, however, because these items are understood and appreciated as poems, regardless of how they are produced, we may expect them, first, to have a certain logical status and validity simply by virtue of their being poems. Consequently we would expect they are capable of analysis into poetic syllogisms and therefore pleasurable in sense. Secondly, we may expect that the naively constructed poem will have a structure or poetic device. An unusual meaning escapes banality because of the strangeness of its 'imitation and imaginative representation', and not because it is incomprehensible or lacks order; and even a strange imaginative imitation is still an imaginative imitation, bearing both a relation of terms to each other in a poem and a relation of the terms to a structure that makes it meaningful. Consequently, even if it is formed 'without artifice', we may expect that because it must be structured in order to be meaningful, some rule can be extracted from the instance and construed as a poetic device. Thus, as the naively constructed poem too depends on poetic devices, although the two kinds of poems can be distinguished by reference to the naive or artful manner of their production, nevertheless, in terms of their 'pleasure in sense' and their deployment of poetic structure and meaningfulness, they seem similar. Therefore to grasp the nature of all poetic language, regardless of whether it is produced naively or by art, we may explain it by reference to poetic devices.

Unfortunately, this defence of the exhaustiveness of poetic devices does not succeed for two reasons. To raise these objections we set aside another, that it is not clear just what is being claimed by saying that naively constructed poetry must have a structure and that it embodies a rule or device. For even if
we could explain how this is the case, and it does seem that we can, the first reason for failure is that this still does not show us that the five poetic forms identified by Ibn Sina are exhaustive. A poem may be produced naively yet have a structure because a poet who fails to find any given device satisfactory may still produce a new device in the poem. If so, then the five previous forms can not be exhaustive because new devices can be generated. This conclusion leads to the second reason for failure. The argument assumes that all poems have a validity that can be justified by analysing the poetic syllogisms they contain. Whether the poem is created by artifice or naively, it seems that we can appreciate the poem for its pleasure in sense and so can understand it as a poem possessing all the validity warranted by the successful poetic syllogistic at its base. The suggestion is, further, that once we are assured of its poetic nature, then we can turn to discover whether it was constructed artfully or naively. Yet by raising questions about the exhaustiveness of the five poetic devices we are also questioning just that claim to validity, for if the five forms are not exhaustive, it may be argued, then the poetic syllogistic cannot claim completeness and the pleasure in sense which we want to associate with a poem cannot claim any validity. If so, then we do not ever successfully appreciate any of the poems which we purport to examine for their naive or artful construction.

*From Forms to Themes.* If these two defences of the exhaustiveness of poetic devices are unsuccessful, it is possible to suggest an alternative strategy and defence. The strategy is to accept both that poetry is constructed, whether with or without art, and that a naive construction of poetry may yield new poetic forms, so that the five poetic forms which Ibn Sina identifies are not exhaustive. But, by this strategy, we do not need to concede the conclusion that because poetic forms are not exhaustive, therefore poetic syllogisms remain incomplete, for we may point out that there are other ways of defining the completeness of poetic syllogisms. One such defence is to argue that we may be able to identify many more than those five poetic forms - Ibn Sina describes his discussion as merely a 'brief enumeration of poetic forms' - but all the forms will be based on a small set of principles and will be deployed in a particular way. This small set of principles is identified by saying that 'every artifice occurs in terms of a certain relation among parts. This relation is either proportional or contrastive; and both proportion and contrast are either complete or incomplete. All this is either according to wording or according to meaning'. And the particular way in which these principles are deployed is identified by saying that the construction of poetry using imaginative imitations is a rational business best understood as techne and practical philosophy. These principles of artifice and the rule-governed nature of techne provide a rationale for the devices we use in constructing poetry such that the particular devices may be numerous, but their rules and basis will remain qualifiedly constant. And that constancy of rules for constructing devices goes to guarantee the completeness of the poetic syllogistic.

By arguing that 'every artifice occurs in terms of a certain relation of parts', Ibn Sina identifies the way in which figurative language is gained. His claim is that this relation is proportional or contrastive. It would be too crude to identify these relations with particular logical relations, as if assent to premises leads to pleasure in the case of a proportion but leads to pain in the case of a contrast. This seems plausible at first because the Celarent mood, for example, permits us to assert that 'Youth is not a sheep' because 'Youth is brave' and 'No sheep are brave', while we have seen the Barbara mood affirming that 'N.N. is a moon'. Further, poetic premises result in wonder or pleasure or distress, and it seems an easy next step, given Ibn Sina's, Aristotelian psychology, to find that contrasts which deny an association or harmony lead to
distress and are naturally expressed in the Celarent mood, while proportions, being harmonious, result in pleasure and are naturally expressed in the Barbara mood or in some variations of it. But not only has Ibn Sina failed to make any claims about contrast being painful or proportions being pleasurable, but also any such association between poetic constructs, feelings, and logical relations depends on conclusions about a general relation of language to logic which is just what is the relation at issue. That is, talk of 'relations of parts in contrast or proportion' identifies the way poetic language operates; and we have claimed that poetic language bears a particular relation to logic - to the poetic syllogistic - in that poetic language follows rules which go to complete the poetic syllogistic and thereby justify poetic validity. But this shows that we seek to to justify poetic validity. Accordingly, we cannot presuppose that validity. Yet we would have to presuppose that validity if we wanted to argue that say contrasts which deny associations lead to distress and naturally are expressed in a Celarent mood. However, if we can justify poetic validity by making clear how poetic or figurative language functions, then we will have succeeded in showing what is the relation of language to logic. So we cannot assume a relation of language to logic of the kind suggested above, which associates contrasts with the Celarent mood, but are required to argue for it.

The problem with asserting that there is a direct relation between language and logic is that we need to provide a warrant for it. Ibn Sina goes some way towards doing this when he sets out the elements involved in the poetic forms. Every artifice is a relation that is proportional or contrastive, but each of the latter is either complete or incomplete, and each of these is 'either according to wording, or according to meaning; if according to wording it may involve words of incomplete or no significance ... or significant words, simple or composite; if according to meaning it may be with respect to either simple or composite meaning'.

The five forms which Ibn Sina abstracts from these possibilities are all based on contrastive and proportional combinations of syllables, phrases, words, and sense to yield meaningful imaginative imitations. So, for example, the fifth poetic form includes constructions such as 'combination and differentiation, e.g., 'you and he make a sea - but you are for flooding, he for clamour'. Although cognitively false, the phrase is not literally meaningless for the combination of terms suggests a confluence of personalities or souls that is constantly moving in accord with two impulses, one of which is embracing and accepting, the other of which seeks attention. The poetic meaning is suggested by incorporating the contrasting phrases such as 'flooding' and 'clamour' within the sense of combination provided by 'the sea'. Further, as this combination and contrast goes with others to make up a poem, the suggestion is that these forms may, in turn, be combined with each other to develop meanings further. And in all these poems we may expect that as-yet-unconstructed poetic forms may be generated through naively constructing poems, rather than it being the case that poems are always constructed by using the five poetic devices. Further, even where such poetic forms are produced naively, they will involve some kind of contrastive and proportional combination of linguistic parts, for it is only by such combinations that imaginative imitations are gained in any given language.

However, given that poems are made up of such proportion and contrast, we cannot expect to discover what guides their combination of proportion and contrast merely by looking at the latter. That is, poems are constructed out of proportion and contrast in some given poetic forms, but the poetic forms themselves alone do not determine how they are combined to form a poem. Whether a poet uses the fifth type of form to describe the relation between two people, and whether he goes on to combine the resulting phrase with
another, which develops that relation by using another poetic form, depends on
the intention behind of the poem. The phrase that 'you and he make the sea -
but you are for flooding, he for clamour', can be developed to suggest a tragic
irresolution between the two personalities or a comic but but bearable conflict,
and the choice of additional poetic forms and their contribution to the
construction of meanings will be determined by which suggestion we want to
develop. And while this development will occur by combining words and phrases
having given forms, the choice of forms will be appropriate to something beyond
the poetic forms themselves. This 'something beyond' Ibn Sina identifies as the
theme in Greek poetry and as conventions in Arabic poetry such as 'the
description of deserted habitation, the erotic motif, the depiction of landscape,
and the like'205.

These themes or conventions govern the combination of poetic forms
and so guide the deployment of proportions and contrasts. Ibn Sina at first
identifies 'measure' as the mechanism by which themes work. 'Every theme had
its particular measure, and each measure was given a particular name'207.
Tragedy, for example, 'has an exquisite and pleasant measure'. However, he soon
develops his understanding of themes to say that tragedy 'contains the
commemoration of goodness, the morally excellent and outstanding human
traits'208. By this more developed account of tragedy, a theme may provide a
guiding thread for poetic forms by using appropriate measures, but the more
important contribution the theme makes is by ordering poetic forms and their
proportions and contrasts in a way that evokes some intended response in
subjects. Tragedy, for example, leads us to celebrate or commemorate 'outstanding
human traits'. Later Ibn Sina clarifies that themes gain their appropriate tone
-tragedy celebrates the outstanding human traits, comedy enriches our sense of
the ridiculous - by the simple mechanism of bringing about in our souls the
imitation of sorrow, anger, and the like209.

This brief description of the relation between form and theme is
sufficient to suggest that it bears an essential looseness. The need to develop a
theme does not determine which particular poetic forms will be used, and the
occurrence of a given poetic form is not sufficient by itself to determine which
theme is being developed. The two do not bear a sufficient and necessary
relation to each other, so that for example our use of the fifth poetic form of
combination and differentiation to construct the phrase 'you and he make a sea -
but you are for flooding and he for clamour' does not by itself determine
whether it fits into a tragic or comic theme. Instead, by using various poetic
devices we build up an emotional resonance and tone, which may be classified as
a tragedy or a comedy depending on its nature and measure. When the tragic or
comic theme is gained, we can explain how its particular poetic forms work in
combination to produce the given tone and theme. Further, in a given example,
we may adumbrate poetic forms and their content in order to explain why, say, a
satirical theme is not developed acutely because it fails to use antithesis
satisfactorily in deploying contrasts and so fails to 'include noble and
praiseworthy actions in order to make wickedness even baser by comparison'210.
Thus, the relation of forms to themes allows the kind of claims we usually make
in appreciating or criticising works, but, in all this, the forms work as parts of a
whole that produces or follows a theme: the forms are not sufficient and
necessary elements determining what theme is actualized.

Such a part-whole relation between form and theme - this absence of
a necessary and sufficient relation - raise a problem for the claim that poetic
syllogisms can have completeness. Although we have raised this issue a number
of times above, it may be as well to be reminded of why completeness is
necessary. In arguing for the validity of poetic language in the last chapter, we
sought to develop a notion of a poetic syllogism and to show that it was comparable to other syllogistic forms such as demonstration. Cognitive claims were valid because, first, they rested ultimately on premises which were true because they instantiated definitions and, second, observed the basic rules of logic and demonstration in extrapolating from known to unobserved cases. We could show that cognitive language was valid by analysing it into both a set of basic truths which were true by definition and valid arguments based on syllogisms; and similarly it was proposed that we argue for the validity of poetic language by analysing it into its basic emotional and syllogistic structure. The problem arose when we sought to identify that poetic syllogistic: for any syllogistic structure must have a proof procedure that can be complete. In the case of demonstrative arguments, it was possible to show completeness by reducing problem cases to simpler ones. Thus, it might be claimed that an argument involving a large number of predicates could not be ordered by syllogisms because the complex of predicates cannot be accommodated within the four simple syllogistic forms. Against this it was argued that any complex set of predicates can be analysed and reduced to an appropriately long series of two-step predicates. Thus, proof procedures can be completed because they consist only of the simpler argument steps, even if the latter are large in number. One assumption made here is that none of the sense, meaning, or truth of the complex would be lost by its translation into simpler steps. That assumption was warranted in the case of demonstration, but poetry presented a different problem. In the case of the poetic syllogism, combinations of terms could not be reduced to simpler forms because combinations of terms generated meanings that could not be preserved when the combination was reduced to its elements. If poetic meaning is irreducible, this raises again the issue of incompleteness, for the profusion of meaning and nuance does not seem capable of being reduced to simple logical forms without loss of meaning and consequently we have no guarantee that the syllogistic forms we use are complete in the sense that they can account for all the possible combinations of terms in poems. These combinations are determined by the poets' intention; they break out of the bounds of standard meanings and create new senses that logic cannot grasp. The rules of the syllogistic, then, are such that proof procedures remained open and the syllogistic is incomplete.

Against this threat of incompleteness, in the last chapter it was proposed that theme and form, and the way the former delimited the latter, provided some account of limits to proof procedure. But considering what we have since learnt of theme and form, their relation does not appear as determinate as it would need to be to thwart incompleteness: there is no limit to the number of themes we can develop and none to the forms we may use. While all the forms must be constructs out of a relation between parts, the relation of parts to and in themes remains indeterminate. And if the latter is open, then again, there is no limit to the poetic syllogistic rules we might need to grasp these new senses, and consequently the proof procedure using those poetic rules will be capable of completion only at a price: the price is that the proof procedure would not be able to cope with newly produced themes and forms.

Forms, Themes, and the Completeness of the Syllogism. To answer such doubts it is necessary to stress the constructed nature of poetry. Poetry is composed out of poetic forms and themes; these may be open ended in the sense that new forms and new themes may be developed. But then innovated forms and themes are also constructed, for new themes and forms will be used to order and structure the linguistic parts brought into contrastive or proportional relation to yield new meanings. Such construction can be seen as a matter of solving practical problems of composition, perhaps of adjusting contrasts and
proportions and their deployment in order to gain an intended tone, or of producing a new poetic form because it best uses some novel and valuable elements which we want to introduce to gain a theme. This kind of problem-solving is essential to producing poetry, and while some poets may be able to solve problems intuitively in the poems they produce, others may need to consider and solve technical problems independently of the process of producing a poem. For example, the usual account of Mozart's genius, according to which he produced his music whole, almost ready to be performed, and solved technical problems intuitively, represents a contrast with the work of Mahler, who pursued and resolved the technical issues of symphonic works in order to use his conclusions to produce music. But neither kind of production is any less a matter of constructing a work, and neither is any less structured by appropriate forms and themes. Moreover, we can abstract from these works the technical and practical mechanisms their authors used to solve problems and can use them as models for producing work in the future. Accordingly, although there is an open endedness in producing and deploying poetic forms and themes, this construction must follow a pattern. There are rules present, which can be abstracted and considered for themselves in terms of the reasoning, skill, and problem solving or general rational standards which the works embody.

This constructive aspect of poetry is not discussed explicitly by Ibn Sina, yet it is clearly fundamental to his account of poetry. Poets are thought of as makers of poetry; poems are composed, and the audience gives assent on the basis of grasping that composition. Where Ibn Sina talks of the artifices, poetic forms, and themes which structure poems, he must see them as things made by their authors. Poems are objects which would not come to exist without such activity. In poems, poetic forms were used to construct 'metaphors or similitudes or both' out of 'imaginative imitations' which, by nature, are open to such construction. They differ from the reality which they represent because they are produced by the mind - the original sensory experience, we saw, was manipulated to conceive of a man who can fly or an emerald mountain.

Some part of this constructive aspect is explained by reference to poetic forms and themes. The latter embody the manner in which construction occurs, and by examining them we can admurate particular rules for making poetic language of a given kind. Arguably these rules have a curious status. In one sense, they may serve as instructions setting out how to compose a poem, for an author intending to produce a tragedy may use these devices to construct metaphors and imaginative representations having the tone, exquisiteness of measure, and effect upon the soul that commemorate goodness, moral excellence, and the outstanding human traits. In another sense, though, they cannot be seen as instructions for producing tragedy, comedy, or other poetic language and form. This is because instructions must be expressed separately both from the activity which they guide and from the material they apply to and eventually come to form; but even if particular poetic forms and themes serve as rules, they are not separate from the tragedy they are used to form, as the particular tragedy is the work it is because of the way its forms compose that theme. Consequently, they do not have that distinctness from a material which is necessary for rules to serve as instructions. Yet there is a sense in which we may consider these 'instructions' for themselves, and so gain a variety of knowledge as we gain expertise in grasping the nature and function of forms and in deploying them when constructing poetical works. In this sense, by understanding the nature and our deployment of poetic forms and themes, we articulate what it is to produce an object by pursuing rules. Such knowledge as we gain here covers our activity in generating objects which come into being because of our activity. The skill, reasoning, problem solving and ordering that
yields any particular work will embody a rule which others can pursue, and that rule can be abstracted to provide a kind of knowledge of this activity.

Further, the success of such a rule can also be assessed. In the work all its relevant elements are ordered by using poetic forms to suit a theme. The success of this use of forms and theme depends on its ability to generate a response in the subject. Ibn Sina writes of themes that they have their 'proper tone in accordance with its eloquence or "softness"' and by means of that effect, the soul itself becomes imitative of sorrow, anger, and the like. Thus, the theme, which governs the order and development of material in given poetic forms, has its end in allowing 'the soul itself' to have an appropriate feeling, and its success is determined by how well its forms and elements are ordered to bring about those feelings.

These rules which structure our production of works are exhibited by Ibn Sina in the discussion of tragedy. 'The most important part of tragedy is the design [or intention, al-maqsud] of those meanings that are imaginative, remarkable, and splendid; then upon these, tone and speech are structured. Imitation is achieved by combining these. Speech means measured language; tone, the force which reveals how the poetry has its meaning as a whole. Such a force means that the melodious intonation and the singing proper to every theme are the basis of moving the soul towards the meaning - hence the understanding [of the theme] is enhanced and a form indicative of potency is given to it.'

And so on. All the details displayed in the discussions which follow this quotation in the text can serve as rules for those who follow. Here, it may be that rules can only be discovered through works by producing new tragedies or comedies containing more combinations of proportion and contrast, and so on, but nevertheless, rules are still present. They serve to make us conscious of what is being done, and to rationalize the procedures, rules, and order being deployed. Thus Ibn Sina writes that the 'most important of all are the things which compose the structure of the tragedy', and goes on to list fiction and four other 'parts' as 'the principle and cause' of tragedy. All these - fiction, portrayal of habit, poetic composition, and melodious intonation - are structural elements, and they are all directed towards gaining that imitation of 'sorrow, anger and the like' which the soul itself imitates.

Numerous other such examples can be cited from the text. Their purpose remains the same: they seek to grasp what is being done in constructing poetry, in developing poetic forms with an intended tone, according to a design, to suit a theme. Of course, there is no end to the ways in which a theme is developed out of given materials. As there are no sufficient and necessary conditions for the relation of theme to poetic form, there is an openness in their relation. But that lack of sufficient and necessary conditions does not make the enterprise any less rational. Further, the set of rules which Ibn Sina was seen to extract is defensible as a description of the procedures followed by the poets; but other readers may be able to extract other rules, and we will consider one more right or wrong than the other by seeing how closely it tallies with the works themselves. But in all these cases agreement and disagreement will occur for good reasons rather than arbitrarily. And just these good reasons will establish the completeness of the poetic syllogistic. This may be explained further as follows.

What we have seen is that the relation of themes to form is rule governed. This implies that even if there may not be an end to the number of themes and forms that can be produced, there is a given and rational way in which such production and construction occurs. Further, there must be such rules for production, for the work serves a purpose, and its success, which can be measured by how well it generates appropriate feelings in a subject, depends
on understanding the elements which make up the poem. This standard of success must be satisfied even by the newest theme and form, and once these radically new and successful works have been produced, they may be understood and their rules abstracted. These rules will then join the established canon, and so there will still be a determinate set of themes governing the deployment of all poetic forms. Any attempt to add to or lessen their status or number will have to be justified, for example by showing how a new instance fits the standard of success, or by showing why a purportedly new theme is only a misconstrual of an already established one, or by explaining how a previously accepted theme fails to tally in some way with a preferred set of themes and so on. There is no way of predicting which issues about which themes will occur nor how they can be dealt with, but we may expect that in every case where items become issues, they do so for good reasons, which can be set out and explained, and are not arbitrary or mysterious. Thus, we may say that themes and forms are open ended but also complete because we can allow for new themes and forms but also insist that they must be defended in reason and feeling, and can be found completeness through their success in providing appropriate feelings. As the open-endedness of themes was the source of our doubt about the completeness of the poetic syllogistic, by arguing that a reasoned openness is compatible with completeness and by showing that for Ibn Sina the successful imitation of a feeling is a standard of success for all themes, we have precluded those doubts about the completeness of the syllogistic. Even though the themes are not open ended in going beyond appropriate feelings, the structures and rules which are deployed can be changed. But of course that does not raise again the problem of incompleteness, because where changes occur, they are defensible and occur for good reasons. When changes occur, it means that still a given set of rules is operating, and its operation and validity leads us to exclude the possibility of sheer open-endedness. For these are rules: they may allow for development, but they are rules nonetheless.

The use of feeling to resolve this issue of completeness parallels our use of pleasure, in the last chapter, to resolve another issue about completeness; and it further serves to exhibit the affective nature of poetic validity. Whereas simply by identifying the few basic principles and axioms of their proof procedure we could show that demonstrative syllogisms had finite proofs, and so were capable of completeness, unfortunately poetic syllogisms lacked basic principles and axioms. Instead, figurative language involved a relation of terms that threatened to become intractable to proofs and completeness because figurative meaning was synthetic, cumulative, and nuanced, and would be lost if it were reduced to simple two-step argument forms. To circumvent this incompleteness, Ibn Sina proposed that a construction of meanings involves a relation between terms and elements that, when it is harmonious, occasions pleasure when we grasp it. So, in spite of the absence of principles and axioms, in a poetic syllogism the pleasure occasioned by harmony serves to guard against incompleteness by showing that its forms and terms must be finite. Just as logical necessity would be inadequate if we could never be sure that the proof procedure were finite and capable of being completed, similarly, if a figurative use of language involved so complex a set of terms that its mix were infinite, then we would not be certain that the meanings which resulted from using the poetic syllogistic form were adequate to all the possibilities in that mix of terms; and so a grasp of meanings that depended on using those syllogistic forms could never be known to be successful. But just as logical proofs were finite because they rested on axioms and were reducible to obvious two-step argument forms, similarly the occurrence of pleasure shows that there are limits to the terms and premises involved in a poetic syllogism; for the terms are related in a harmony.
that occasions pleasure and wonder. As pleasure depends on grasping meanings in that harmony of elements, and as a harmony between an infinite number of terms is an implausible event – because harmony presupposes some sense of a complete whole whose parts are in appropriate relation to each other and the whole, whereas a sense of complete wholeness is incompatible with infinitude – so the occurrence of pleasure serves to show that the mix of terms is not infinite and that the threat of incompleteness can be dissolved. Now, in response to the second threat of incompleteness, stemming from the fact that we cannot reduce complex and nuanced poetic meaning to a series of simpler meanings, and so have no guarantee that the complex meaning can be grasped by using the rules of the poetic syllogistic, Ibn Sina first proposes that themes organise the deployment of poetic forms and second maintains that themes succeed where they evoke an appropriate feeling in the subject. So, we know that the mix of elements must be finite because it can be ordered under themes and the latter have their end in generating the subject’s response. This response of ‘sorrow, anger, and the like’ is evoked as a result of understanding the elements of the theme, and so is rational but yet is a matter of being affected. Thus, in this case too, given that we would not be able to understand the whole theme if the forms and terms it organised were infinite, as in the earlier case we justify the validity of the poetic syllogistic by showing how its completeness is guaranteed, so to speak, by our affective response on understanding the terms, forms, and themes. The role that a pleasurable appreciation of a finite harmony plays in defending the completeness of the poetic syllogistic in the first case is played by our response of ‘sorrow, anger, and the like’ being generated by understanding the work, its terms, forms, and themes, in the second case.

Completeness and Moral Validity. As a result of this detour through the issue of the completeness of the poetic syllogistic, we are able to return to consider the moral connotations of different works. We have seen that poetic works use poetic forms to order materials and, in turn, are ordered by themes. Works are completed and valid when they realise a theme, and they succeed in realising a theme when they evoke ‘sorrow, anger, and the like’ in the subject as an appropriate response to understanding the elements of the work. In other words, and put simply, themes are realised when subjects’ souls imitate the feeling in question and thereby validate the poetic meaning of the work. To validate the work, then, the subject has to be responsive to those feelings: he or she has to discover this response in himself or herself, and to give assent through it. But this emphasis on the subject’s response can be expanded to make clear another factor – the nature of the subject. To evoke an appropriate response to the work, to validate its poetic meaning, the subject must be capable of having the appropriate feeling in question. For if he cannot feel sorrow at certain events, then he will be unable to validate the tragic poem by appreciating its theme. Similarly, if she cannot understand why anger is the appropriate response, then she will not have grasped the relevant theme.

This interaction between the work and the subject is necessary to validating the poetic meaning of a work, but it also shows that the subject, so to speak, has responsibility for responding in an appropriate way to relevant material. But having an appropriate response depends on the subject being sensitive to the issues in a work, and so on the subject having a character and capacity for moral discrimination which can be deployed in response to a work. For a subject will show that he has these qualities through giving an appropriate response. For example, we may expect that a base person will remain insensitive to tragedy because, so far as being base involves possessing moral turpitude and leaves the individual in possession of a moral balance that renders him incapable of some sympathies with other subjects, he will be unable to grasp the full
extent of another character's rise, agrosis, and hubris. In such cases, by describing a subject as base, we also explain why his reactions, say to a tragedy, are always inappropriate: he is unable to attain that balance of moral factors which would allow him to understand the play of natural forces and moral needs constituting any tragedy. Because he cannot understand the forces operating in and structuring the work, he is unable to respond with appropriate feelings, and cannot validate the given tragic theme. Of course, faced with a play of forces and characters that is base, he can respond to the ridicule heaped on any comic character. And just because he shows himself amenable to one balance rather than another, again we are able to explain the fact of his response by describing it as base. Similarly, with other reactions, we may describe subjects as noble, and so on, depending on the appropriateness of their responses. Further we may expect that a sensitivity to tragedy requires a more complicated grasp of and response to a work, and that a subject capable of tragedy will also be able to respond at some level to comedy, but that the reverse need not hold.

By identifying and explaining responses by these moral categories, we not only avoid the objection that, as responses are merely subjective and arbitrary, poetic validity is weakly founded, but also we clarify how works subtend particular moral communities. It might be argued that Ibn Sina's explanation of poetic validity is unsuccessful so far as it depends on subjects' reactions which vary from subject to subject. Just because one person responds with anger to a theme does not show that or why others ought to do so. In fact, variations in responses suggest that there is no principle uniting them. But such an objection may be dismissed for being naive in the face of variations in our capacity for moral discrimination and response. Such differences as there are, we can suggest, may be explained by reference to the moral character of subjects and the forces at play in a work. Without also arguing that a capacity for moral responses is congenitally determined, and so without implying that people are incapable of developing their moral character, we can use Ibn Sina's 'physiognomic' understanding of the relation between a subject and his moral character to argue that the capacity for responding appropriately to works exhibits moral character; and as these variations can be analysed and grouped in diverse ways including 'nobility', 'baseness', and so on. Similarly the 'manners of imitation - similitude, metaphor, or the combination of both', and the ends of 'amelioration, deprecation, and correspondence' can be analysed and provided parallel groupings. As to why we should maintain that nobility is tragic or that ridicule and baseness are comic rather than any other way - that is a matter of Aristotle's insight and Ibn Sina's development of that insight. Naturally, there may be other ways of explaining that moral quality and so there may be other ways of relating the quality to emotions. But those alternatives have to be argued for, and we would have to give good reasons for deploying some alternative insight that perhaps all tragedy has an element of ridicule, and so on. Whatever our arguments and conclusions are here, however, they do not seem to effect the essential point that some moral quality of the subject is crucial to his or her response to a work. Moreover, just that moral quality and sensitivity to works goes to identify a community because it circumscribes all those subjects who share an ability to respond appropriately.

Another doubt we might raise here stems from another response that is appropriate to works. It was said earlier that pleasure was the basis of assent to works and that its occurrence went to validate the poetic syllogism. This might suggest a contradiction or at least an issue that needs to be addressed: what is the relation between 'a feeling which the soul imitates' in responding to a theme and the pleasure which is the basis for our assent to poetic syllogisms? Both are
feelings necessary to poetic validity for their occurrence goes to warrant the completeness of the poetic syllogism. And the different quality of these feelings does not lead to conflict or confusion, for they are not opposed to each other. The pleasure we gain in recognising a harmony does not detract from the sorrow or anger evoked in us by tragedy or ridicule in a comedy. The feelings may occur together, but they are not identical, and there is no need to confuse them since each is the result of a distinctive rational process. Ibn Sina suggests a positive result of the occurrence of feelings, for example, in that we can even tolerate in art the presence of ugliness, depravity, or sorrow, which would completely repel us in real life, because the harmony constituted by these and other events in the works leads to pleasure. Pleasure is appropriate to the order in a work, sorrow to the events having a theme which are depicted in that order; and the occurrence of both signals poetic validity.

In any case, if this section has clarified the moral connotations of poetry, it has done so by using a notion of emotional responses to themes to justify poetic validity. The latter claim may be developed to raise an issue of the relation of logical validity to language.

LOGIC AND LANGUAGE IN POETICS

In the last chapter we raised the issue of the relation between logic and language in Ibn Sina's poetics. It was first proposed that we give poetic devices a logical validity by showing how each was constructed out of particular logical form or forms, where the latter possessed validity. The difficulty with this proposal lies in its crudity: it is generally the case that poetic language, using poetic devices, is supposed capable of logical validity; but as the meanings constructed by using the device are going to differ, depending on the context of its use and the other devices also used, there is no guarantee that the same logical form that served the poetic device in one use to generate one meaning will also serve in the same way in every other use and context. The meaning gained by using a poetic device is changed by the different relations the device enters in any theme, and the different meanings each relation produces; so the logical relation implicated in each use of the device may differ correspondingly, and we should not expect to find a strict identity between particular devices and particular logical structures.

This claim may be illustrated in a general way by showing that the same poetic device can be used in a context which connotes tragedy or comedy, in which the meanings it promotes will differ. Further, it is far from clear how we can identify devices with logic. All devices are constructions out of proportional and contrastive relations, which lead to pleasure or pain. It may seem clear enough that contrasts involve some kind of opposition or negation, but that is surely to assume a great deal. Ibn Sina explains how such contrast is gained, and explanations in terms of negation seem at best a very small part of the more subtle balances procured by using opposing positive terms, oblique references, and so on. And any attempt to collate all those ways of constructing contrasts by including them under the rubric of negation seems implausible if no other explanations are added.

Moreover, as the success of poetic devices lies in generating pleasure and an appropriate response to their theme, they must seem closed to logic. If our concern is with feelings, which are notoriously inexact, then any use of logic, which involves some command of determinate relations, will be less than precise because no determinate and precise logical relation will be able to grasp the
inexact play of feelings in poetry. However, in making this last claim, the position set out above seems to go too far. It takes inexactness in feeling to be an issue in this case, but it is not. Our concern in proving the validity of the poetic syllogistic is with a communality of feeling, which is all that a poetic work hopes for; and this communality of feeling is not arbitrary or less rational just because it is 'inexact'. Indeed, it is not clear what exactness is, here, unless it is merely masquerading for the determinate force of logic as contrasted with the persuasive force of poetic language. A comparison between logic and poetic devices that talks of exactness seems otiose because it only succeeds in by-passing the real issue: of the manner in which poetic language using poetic devices is able to claim validity. The point is not to show where poetic device joins with demonstrative validity and exactness but to explain what gives poetic language validity - and that purpose is not served by reducing particular devices to particular logical relations.

A second model for understanding the relation of poetic language to logic proposes that the poetic syllogistic supports the use of poetic language to gain figurative meanings. This model, which seems the most plausible, is comparable to the relation of language and its grammatical rules to the rules of logic. Ordinary cognitive speech must follow the rules of grammar to be understood, but that allows us to use it to grasp and convey meanings, which are grasped and clarified by logic. By this understanding, language conveys to its linguistic community the truths which gain exactness in meaning through logic. The latter are universal in the sense that they hold true (or false) regardless of a particular language and because of the order and nature of objects and events, whereas their expression in a particular language is a translation from logic into the practices of that linguistic community, where the grammatical and other rules it follows are restricted to that community. In this case, to grasp the truth about objects and events, we must translate from say Arabic, or Armenian, or Latin into logic. Only the possibility of so translating knowledge claims from their expression in a particular language into the terms and constants of logic can assure us of the truth and epistemological validity of those claims. Where we fail to carry out this translation, there is always the danger that our knowledge claim is nothing better than a simple accretion of linguistic rules rather than a successful grasp of reality. Of course, not every use of a particular language will be mistaken, but the expression of truth in that language will be available and meaningful only to the speakers of that language, and while the linguistic form of a truth will change in its expression in different languages, the logical expression of that same thought will be constant because it grasps the thought which underlies all the diverse linguistic expressions. By this conception, it is possible to use language to deal with the rules of thought - logic - but without supposing that every rule of language is vital to establishing the universal validity of logical expressions. Indeed, too great an interest in the linguistic rules particular to any single language is detrimental to grasping the trans-linguistic structure of thought and logic. Conversely, any linguistic expression must be capable of being expressed in ways that display its logical structure if it is to claim validity. Logic thereby underlies the use of language to express thoughts, and in the study of logic, say in the form of demonstrative syllogistic, the use of language is in important ways contingent because other languages could have been used to serve the same purpose. However, the truths of logic which the language yields are valid for all language because they are valid for thought.

If the relation of logic to language set out above is to serve as a model for poetic language, however, we might argue that it would prove that the poetic syllogistic is vacuous. Instead it is more plausible to see poetic validity as
an instance of the inter-penetration of logic and language, for that coincides nicely with our own suppositions about the nature of poetry. To see these points, we can begin by understanding how the poetic syllogistic differs from demonstration. One point is this: in the case of demonstrative arguments, the syllogistic underlies language in a way that is not possible in the case of figurative language and the poetic syllogistic. In the latter, language and the validity of the syllogistic are more closely inter-dependent. In the case of demonstration, the issue of logical or syllogistic validity can be handled entirely within the domain of thought and without any feature of that validity being dependent on the particular language in which any issue of logic is considered. This claim may be explained by reference to issues of the completeness of the respective syllogistics.

We saw that we could prove the completeness of the demonstrative syllogism by showing that expressions were formalised in logical claims which, in turn, were always reducible to the basic syllogistic. If they were not reducible in this way, we could never know that the basic syllogistic provided all the needed rules for thought. If it did not provide all the rules, if the basic syllogistic could not govern all the implications of every rational statement or set of statements, the syllogistic would be inadequate. In cases of failure we should have to show why the syllogistic failed and would need to explain what new rule could both prove adequate to the material and compatible with the given syllogistic. To answer doubts about inadequacy, it could be argued that there must ever be a finite set of predicates involved in any statement or use of language and that even the most complex meaning must be reducible to a series of simple two-step arguments using the primitive and obvious forms of the syllogistic.

The important features of this reduction have to do with logic rather than language or grammar. A complex of arguments and predicates may be expressed in language, but the relations between elements of that complex, even if they can be entertained in language, are part of the thought, and so those relations are governed by logic. Such reduction as there is, is carried out by using just those basic syllogistic forms and following the meanings expressed in any language. Thus any given meaning may be expressed in numerous languages by using the appropriate grammar, etc., but the logical status and nature of the meaning will remain the same, regardless of the diverse requirements of the many languages. And if language is used meaningfully, that is because the meanings it expresses can be grasped and validated by reducing them to the basic syllogistic forms.

A similar reduction is not available in poetic language, and so its validity cannot be justified by any simple reference to logic and a clearly non-linguistic syllogistic. The principal reason why poetic language lacks this foundation in logic has to do with the arguments we have given above for the completeness of the poetic syllogistic. For although in demonstrative claims it was plausible to propose that a complex meaning could be reduced to a series of primitive and obvious two-step arguments without any loss of meanings, such a step was not viable in poetic language. Because poetic meanings are synthetic and cumulative, where we add to a complex meaning there we also change that meaning in a radical way; similarly to subtract from that complex meaning is to disrupt its nuances. Further, poetic language invited a creativity that demonstrative language did not. we could generate new poetic devices to gain different meanings in figurative language but could not do so in demonstration, where we abjured all claims to creativity. One consequence of such creativity is that a syllogistic may become inadequate or, more precisely, we cannot know that it is adequate because we cannot simply assume that the new forms we produce
will always be reducible to the given syllogistic. To counter this threat of possible inadequacy, Ibn Sina proposed that as all poetic forms, new or old, were guided by themes, and the latter were established, to prove the adequacy of the syllogistic, all we have to do is to show that the themes are reducible in the required way and it would follow that because themes governed forms, the latter would be accommodated to the syllogistic if the former were. But the problem with this answer seemed to be that themes themselves were capable of change and development. However, as any changes in themes were made for good reason, and we had criteria for judging the success of any theme - the feelings they evoked - the fact that themes changed did not show that the syllogistic's proof procedure was infinite because by deploying feelings we were able to establish an end for the mix of terms and forms.

What this may seem to make clear is that the relation of logic to language, of syllogistic to poetry, is far from the reductive one useful to demonstration. For here, it seems that as the completeness of the syllogistic cannot be made clear simply in terms of logic, it cannot play the role of an independently founded procedure of reasoning that provides a basis for poetic validity. Instead, quite the reverse, it seems clear that the validity of the poetic syllogistic would fall victim to incompleteness unless it is possible to show how the use of language serves to evoke certain responses - of pleasure in a harmony of words and their meanings and of emotions appropriate to tragedy and so on. Without these emotional responses, the poetic syllogism would remain incomplete; but, conversely, these responses can only be gained by subjects understanding the meanings put forward in poetic works, and so the poetic syllogistic depends for its justification on the affective power of figurative language and the poetic devices which constitute it. Further, we may expect, that poetic language is not easily, if at all, translated, for the nuances available in one language need not be possible in any other, so that the completeness of any syllogistic gives validity only to the use of figures in that particular language.

One problem with this emphasis on language and poetic devices is that it is not clear that they can play the role being assigned to them. This is because the mutual dependence between language and logic that is being proposed will ensure that neither logic nor language succeeds. Without logic, language cannot become meaningful; yet without language, logic remains incomplete. The force of this objection can be seen if we question the claim that we need to have emotional responses or feelings of pleasure, evoked by the use of words and linguistic devices, in order to warrant the completeness of the syllogism. While affective responses do play a part in showing that the syllogistic is complete, the role of feelings cannot be as this claim projects. For feelings to be generated in a subject in response to a poem, he or she must first understand the meanings put forward; but an understanding of these meanings is gained, if at all, only because the relation of terms which constitutes this meaning is justified by the validity of the poetic syllogistic. In the absence of such logical validity, the validity of poetic meanings would remain questionable, for the mix of terms and the affective responses this generates would remain arbitrary and subjective until we can be assured that the mix is rational and rule-governed, and where feelings of pleasure, wonder, and those appropriate to themes serve to warrant the completeness of the poetic syllogistic. But Ibn Sina's reply to this objection would be simple and correct: grammar may have a practical priority, but the syllogistic form has a logical priority in any grasp of meanings. The opposition and inter-dependence being proposed in the objection therefore could not arise.
2. Ibn Sina, Avicenna's Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle, translated and edited by I. Dahiyat, 1974, Ch.1, Introduction, I, 61. In what follows I shall refer to passages in this text only as here by reference to the Chapter and Section in Ibn Sina's Commentary, followed by the chapter in Aristotle being commented on, followed by the page in the translation by Dahiyat.
3. ibid, Ch. X, XXVI, 8, 120
4. Ibn Sina op. cit., Ch 1, Introduction, I, 61
5. Or, in Kitab al-Najat, the imagination is referred to as al-mutakhyilun. See Avicenna's Psychology, edited and introduced by F. Rahman, 1956. This Arabic title of the text translated here is al-Najat; it forms a chapter in Avicenna's magnum opus: Al Shifa.
6. This is the Kitab al Nafs in Al Shifa.
8. Kitab al Najat, p31
9. ibid.
10. Initially the imagination seems to be completely free. It is the ability to manipulate representations, adding or subtracting parts or qualities, in large or small measure. Yet such constructions do not occur arbitrarily, and we need to become clearer about their mechanisms. It has been argued that in such construction the imagination is passive. For example, the more we know about these mechanisms, the clearer it becomes that imagination is determined by sense. Whatever occurs in the imagination must have been presented previously in some experience. The latter may be deprived of its original associations and given new ones, yet even so the imagination will be bound to experience. But the material or content and form of experience are not identical - we can experience the form of 'man' in numerous guises determined by as many material causes as there are people. This distinction enables Ibn Sina to grant the imagination some independence from experience. He allows it to deal with a content in which 'the faculty of representation purifies the abstracted form to a higher degree, since it takes it from matter in such a way that it does not need the presence of matter for the presence of form' (Kitab al Najat, 39). Sense experience is tied to the form and matter of its objects because it is a response to a particular object with all its quiddity and accidents. We do not just see 'any man'; rather our experience is caused by this man, possessed of the form of man together with those accidental properties of location, size, shape, colouring, and so on, which make him the particular man that we see before us. So, although sense does not reproduce the matter
'in us', so to speak, but rather 'abstracts the form from the matter along with [its] accidents and its relation with matter', nevertheless, 'if this [latter] relationship is removed, then the process of abstraction will be nullified' (ibid).

From the above, it seems that the accidents involved in our present experience of this man have their material cause in this particular, and sense experience never loses that relation to matter. 'Sense neither abstracts [the form] completely from matter, nor from the accidents of matter'. This is because the particular sensory experience must be explained by the nature and accidents of its matter, and so is still tied to the latter. By contrast, in preserving the 'imprint' of sense experience, representation abstracts 'completely from matter', though not from 'the accidents of matter', 'since the forms in representation are, in this respect, the same as the sensed forms and they possess a certain quantity and position' (p39). By this account, sense experiences and representations differ in that the former result from the external senses responding to a present object while the latter, although they may have their ultimate basis in those present experiences, are a result of preserving those experiences and evoking them later. Accordingly, as each representation is not the effect of a particular present object which is causing its every occurrence, it is free of the object as material cause. (But nor does this freedom from its matter transform the representation into a universal: 'it is impossible for a form in representation to be such as to admit all the individuals of the species to share in it, for a man in representation resembles always a particular man among men' (ibid, 41)).

Yet the latter does seem to indicate that representation is passive: we can only imagine a particular individual, which cannot be so replete with qualities that it is not only black and white, tall and short, fat and thin, but also resembles all the other particulars which share its form. Further, if representations must always be of a particular, then so far as imagination differs from representations only in being able to manipulate representations, it too is tied to the particular. And, like the representations it manipulates, imagination may differ from sense in abstracting from matter but it remains tied to the senses for its material. Moreover, just as 'the faculty of representations cannot perceive without the represented forms being imprinted on the body in such a way that both it and the body share the same imprint' (ibid), so too the imagination, so far as it depends on representation, must also depend on the body. Accordingly, it is passive to sense experience.
To explain this quality of imagination, Ibn Sina provides an elaborate argument, that turns on imagination’s dependence on the body. And to explain the interdependence between imagination and representation, he describes an hierarchy of faculties. The first tells us more about the nature of the imagination than the second clarifies further how imagination is passive to sense experience. The second - the interdependence between imagination and representation - is straightforward and it does yield some further information about the imagination. Ibn Sina sets out the power of different faculties by ordering them into a heirarchy. He writes that 'the faculty of representation is served by two faculties of different origins: the appetitive faculty serves it by obeying it, for the representative faculty impels the appetitive to movement, and the faculty of imagination serves it by accepting the combination and separation of its images. In their turn these two are governors of two groups. The faculty of imagination is served by *fantasia* or *sensus communis*, which is served by the five senses...'(ibid, 37). (We shall leave aside consideration of the second set because it does not enter into the argument for representation and imagination. This relation of imagination to representation, then, is the one we have already proposed. Imagination 'serves' representation in the sense of using its objects, and is governed by it to the extent that both are restricted by what is experienced. At the same time, imagination is more free in what it makes of these representations. However, the suggestion is also made that the relation of imagination to intellect - here linked through estimation - must occur through representation (ibid). For Ibn Sina goes on to argue that estimation abstracts from and acts on representations (ibid). In this argument imagination is not mentioned as a separate faculty, except in the title of this chapter, and the suggestion is that if imagination serves estimation, it is only because it involves representations in whatever changed form they occur. Such a claim invites consideration of issues of the activity of imagination, of the way in which represented images can be manipulated to satisfy estimation in one way rather than another, and implies that the imagination can be subject to the will. However, as these issues are fairly wide, and involve concepts such as estimation and intellect which we have not as yet introduced, we shall set them aside to consider after we have examined Ibn Sina's argument for the imagination’s need for the body and particulars.

That argument reveals something of the nature of the imagination. At first it seems Ibn Sina wants to argue that this faculty deals with particulars and so must depend on the body because all perception of the particular occurs through the body. But the argument he actually provides seems rather to assume this dependence on the body and, by showing that the image could not be a matter of form or accidents, concludes that it must be of a particular - which is owed ultimately to some bodily organ. To illustrate his claims, Ibn Sina presents a figure made up of a large square abij with two smaller equal squares - acef and bdgh - contiguous with its line ab. The figure looks like as follows, and although it is divisible into three contiguous squares, the figure is perceived as a whole.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{a} \\
\text{b} \\
\text{d} \\
\text{e} \\
\text{f} \\
\text{g} \\
\text{h} \\
\text{j}
\end{array}
\]

\[
ab = 2ac \\
bc = ai \\
dh = ej \\
hj = bg
\]

8-6
Ibn Sina asks what about this image warrants us in ascribing the right hand square its distinctive location. That position is not determined by its form, for the concept applies also to the other squares and cannot be used to distinguish between them. It is true that the form of 'square' can be qualified by the concept of rightness, but this combination can only be gained with universals, and not in the realm of particulars. Nor can the position be due to accident: an essential accident would belong to both squares, and so would not serve to account for the distinctive position of one of them, while if location were the result of a non-essential accident, then, 'when [the non-essential accident] is removed, the position of the square is changed' (Rahman, 98). Yet, obviously, we do not accept the latter either, and prefer to explain positional change in its own terms rather than by reference to some change in accidents. Finally, the location cannot result from the material characteristics of the object which is reproduced in the imagination. This is because the imagination is capable of producing images which have no corresponding object, in the sense that the imagination can put together an image of, say, a unicorn, even when it has never had sense experience of an object that corresponds to that image, and it is also able to provide that image with an imagined location. The location ascribed to the image in this instance could not have come from the object in sense experience corresponding to that image, for there was no such object, but if the image has location, then that location must be the result of something other than the initial sense experience. As the possibilities set out above seem to account for all the likely sources except the organ used by the representative faculty and so ultimately used by the imagination, Ibn Sina argues, it must be our possession of imagination that explains our ascribing a position to the figure.

Leaving aside the issue that Ibn Sina's argument fails to establish his conclusion - because the conclusion is presupposed by the argument - these passages do fill out the conception of the imagination. They do so by raising what seems to be a contradiction: on the one hand, imagination is active in manipulating images. It is capable of changing images by adding or subtracting parts, by relocating them, and even by representing right as left. On the other hand, Ibn Sina's present argument seems to depend on making the imagination passive: 'imagination cannot change, or add anything to the images, but simply perceives them as they already exist. It cannot suppose them as right or left at its own will, but must accept the relative positions as they are, such supposition being only an intellectual operation' (Kitab al-Najat, 31ff and Rahman, 99). Unless the imagination were passive, it is claimed, Ibn Sina could not have eliminated it as one of the possible causes of location. However, arguably the opposition between active and passive which is being pointed to here does not so much amount to a contradiction in Ibn Sina's conception of the imagination as it adds layers to its meaning. This may be explained as follows.

We may argue that the imagination is shown to be passive in this context because it cannot determine location. If the right-handed square is reckoned to be on the right, which it clearly is, such a position does not result from any faculty but is owed to a bodily organ. But this cannot be acceptable. First, such passivity to location does not prevent the imagination from actively putting what it wants in that location. Second, it is something of a misnomer to say the imagination is passive because it does not determine what location is even though it
may determine what is located, say, at the right. Rather, reference to location points to the structure of the imagination, suggesting that this faculty’s activity occurs within the parameters of location. Accordingly, the imagination may change images, and even move their parts about, but such division into parts and their manipulation is possible only because the structure of the imagination permits it. If the structure were different, then the manner in which imagination divided or added or moved parts or wholes of images would become impossible. The structure of the conceptual realm, for example, differs from that of the imagination in that it is not constrained by the magnitudes of location. It is possible to consider the concept of square for itself or to qualify it by adding 'right' or 'left' or 'black' or 'white' but without involving location. Concepts, and the realm of concepts, do not have any spatial magnitude or colour; but it is impossible to imagine a square without either locating its parts at the right or left, or ascribing it colour, and so on. The imagination, the realm of images, is characterised by location, divisibility, colour, and so on. In effect, its structure constitutes the nature of the imagination, and it is a mistake to interpret this account of its nature as indicating that it is passive. It would be like saying that reason is passive because it operates by the rules of logic. The operation of reason is characterised by logic just as the operation of imagination is determined by its structure. Neither is passive in the relevant sense, though both are rule-governed, and it is because there are rules which each follows in its activity that we can even describe their operations as activity rather than merely random and irrational movement. Instead of being a symptom of their passivity, their structures give them an order which makes them what they are, and clarifies the nature of their activity. (This structure of reason and imagination is clarified also in Ibn Sina’s Commentary on De Anima. For example, imagination, (as khayal) is distinguished from the sensus communis by virtue of its form (p165), and from reason by its dependence on sensory experience (190 ff.).)

As it happens, Ibn Sina seeks to clarify the structure of the imagination by explaining that its source lies in the five senses. That is, he provides a genetic account of structure by saying that imagination owes its structure to the bodily organ. This account of its genesis may be questionable, but any inadequacy in this genetic explanation need not imply that he has failed to identify the structure correctly. And if we want to show that his understanding of the structure of imagination is mistaken, we would have to consider the elements and details of that structural account rather than merely take issue with the genetic explanation that it is caused by bodily senses. Those elements and details are examined by Ibn Sina in the passages we have just been considering, it may be suggested, and in arguing that the structure of the imagination cannot be owed to form or accident, Ibn Sina is proposing that the way in which this faculty behaves differs from the structure of the conceptual realm and of material accidents. As he says: the imagination actively deals with representations, which are of particulars and are abstracted from matter but not from the accidents of matter.

12. From the discussion in al- Najat it became clear that imagination differed from sense perception in that it could produce images even in
the absence of the object. It differed also from representation in that
the latter only conserved images given through perception whereas
imagination is able to manipulate them (Kitab al-Najat, 31ff). So,
although all three deal with similar material (These differences are
accounted for in Najat in terms of abstractions and in the De
Anima (p165ff) in terms of a contrast between substratum and
form), there are differences in form and in closeness to experience.
These differences have other implications.

13. Cf Aristotle, Metaphysics IV,5,1010b1-14; De Anima
III,3,428a5-16, especially 428a12-15).
14. The discussion in De Anima, 190-1, is not clear on
this, and can be construed as saying that the imagination
is passive because it has no power to change a given image.
However, Ibn Sina is here contrasting imagination with
intellect. Being therefore more concerned with differences
than with similarities, he fails to make clear just how
imagination can manipulate images. Moreover the point of the
contrast, I suggest again, it to differentiate the
structures of the imagination and the intellect. Once this
intention is made clear, we can see that of course
imagination relies on content given by the sense, and so
must reproduce what it has received, but it need not do so
by reproducing all and every part and quality of its
original sensations. It can reproduce the image of a green
square, for example, even though its original sensations may
have been of a green flag and the black outline of a
square, and it does not have to produce an image of a flag
every time it produces an image of green.
15. pp235-7 (khayaal); Cf. also Najat, Chapter XI,55-6, and
Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima, III,7,431a17.
17. pp174-6; 249; Imagination is here referred to by wahm.
In De Anima and Kitab al-Najat, he also exploits this faculty to explain
the workings
of prophecy.
18. However, 'it does not abstract the form from all accidents of
matter, because it apprehends it in its individuality and according to its
particular matter and its attachments to sensible images conditioned by
material accidents with the cooperation of representation' (Kitab al-
Najat, 40).
19. Quoted in Rahman, op.cit., 82. My discussion of wahm is
owed to Rahman’s commentary.
20. ibid,82-3.
21. ibid,32.
22. Indeed, his account of the animal soul is amongst the
more obscure corners of his work, and although sensitive
imagination is ascribed to animals also, it would be
mistaken to exclude it from amongst the human faculties just
because of obscurities in its use to explain animal
behaviour.
23. Ibn Sina is concerned with the role of animal faculties
here rather than with imagination as such, but the claims he
makes are also applicable to imagination because that is one of the animal faculties involved.
25. Remarks and Admonitions on Logic. There are also irrational sources which determine the imagination, such as instinct, divine inspiration, and intense past experiences (See Commentary on De Anima, 183-5). And to understand fully Ibn Sina's conception of the imagination, we would have to attend to these determinations. But that task would take us some distance from our concern with poetics, because it would require us to consider the role of imagination in prophecy and prophetic inspiration, where the imagination functions in a distinctive manner. As our interest is in Ibn Sina's theory of poetics, instead of considering the details of his theory of prophecy, we may simply focus on the use of imagination in constructing poetry and figurative language generally. This will cause us to refer to the primary syllogistic forms and to the irrational sources of images, but such references need only occur within a context, and we need not enter into the larger task of providing and arguing for every detail in the relation of imagination to demonstrative, dialectical, rhetorical, sophistic, or inspired discourse. As it is, the role of imagination in figurative language raises quite enough issues.

27. See also Stephen Halliwell Aristotle's Poetics, 1986.
28. As we shall see, his use of Al Farabi's Canons of Poetry also fits within the same story.
30. This central sense is related to estimation, and so is also involved with judgement in thinking. The relation between imagination and judgement seems to be that of thinking to the disposition or act of judgement which is the result, and the suggestion is that imagination is a faculty which provides images or mental representations whose use in any judgement results in a disposition. This last factor is the basis for Ibn Sina's ascription of wonder and awe, as we shall see later.
31. II,1.3,71, Commentary.
33. ibid.
34. ibid.
35. I,4,63.
36. I,6,64. But see also note 86 below.
37. See Fi Ma'ani Kitab as-Sir in Kitab al-Magmuan al-Hikma al Arudiya, quoted in Georg Schoeler, 'The Poetic Syllogism'.
38. Cf Ma'ani, p23,13-4, quoted in Schoeler.
39. I,8,64.
40. I,5,63.
41. Cf page 12, above.
42. 7,XXII.8,115.
43. 1, Intro.4,63.
44. 1, Intro.4,63.
45. 1, Intro.2,62.
55. Ibn Sina does suggest that our pleasure in these two activities is related, for he proposes that delight in the form approximates to pleasure in copying, but this suggestion is not developed.

56. 3, IV.4, 79.

57. *op. cit.* page 63.

58. 1, Intro.3, 62.

59. 1, Intro.5, 63.

60. *ibid.*

61. 7,XXII.8,115.


64. *ibid.*

65. *ibid.*


67. *ibid.*, p73.

68. Even if it were claimed that Ibn Sina follows Aristotle in seeing wonder as a first step towards full understanding, it could be argued that wonder does not thereby simply become an inferior form of knowledge. That is, wonder is not made into some quantitatively lesser kind of knowledge which comes to be mixed in with a desire for a full pleasurable theoretical contemplation, and can only be understood by reducing full knowledge to some lesser kind of thing which is 'poetic'; rather, wonder operates by its own rules, in which the experience of pleasurable awe is occasioned by a harmony of meanings.

69. p.118.

70. For example, Schoeler links the two explicitly.

71. p.127.

72. *Remarks*, 128, italics added. I have amended [1] in the Inati translation. Schoeler's translation of this passage differs in sense and style. To paraphrase from the German, Schoeler writes that 'wonder can be the result of (1) The quality (guda) of the form (lai'α) of the statement, (2) The strength of its truth, (3) The strength of its general acceptance, and (4) The beauty of its imitation.' It is (1) and (4) that differ most from the rendering proposed by Inati. Schoeler's (1) is more self-explanatory, and its association between wonder and proposition seems more plausible. Inati's translation might be thought also to raise some confusion. To identify the source of wonder by
reference to 'goodness of disposition' -Inati's (1)- when 'wonder' or 'astonishment' is the disposition, is to confuse matters. Even if 'goodness' of disposition is understood through its connotations of 'force' and 'effectiveness', the disposition's forcefulness or effectiveness is unlikely to be the source of the disposition (i.e. wonder). Inati could be suggesting that only a forceful disposition can give rise to wonder whereas other dispositions are weaker and less like astonishment. Arguably, this is an extrapolation onto Ibn Sina's theory. On the other hand, Schoeler's (4) seems to take too much of Ibn Sina's theory for granted in saying that wonder has its source in 'the beauty of its imitation'. Because these are the sources of wonder, and as the latter, in turn, is a basis for our claim that the poetic utterance is distinguished from demonstrative and other utterances, so we may expect that beauty is a quality ascribed to the poetic utterance that results rather than being a quality of the 'imagined propositions', used as premises, from which we gain the poetic syllogism that, in turn, constitutes the poetic utterance we find beautiful. Instead, the 'goodness of its resemblance' may be understood as a reference to things like aptness, brilliance, insightfulness, appropriateness, and so on of the comparisons contained in the 'imagined propositions'.

73. ibid.
74. op.cit. 128, italics added.
75. op.cit.
76. While there are questions of what constitutes a harmony, these can be answered by empirical study to determine what is in harmonious combination and satisfies the love of harmony and what does not.
77. op.cit.
78. op.cit. p115.
79. op.cit. p78.
80. See 1, Intro.8-15, 64-6.
81. 'Honey is vomited bile' or 'N.N. is fair of face' are other examples we might have used.
82. p148.
83. See the translation and edition by F. Zabeeh.
84. See Part IV of Logic, p57-8.
85. See also Burhan, 16; and I'yun, 13.
86. An analogy with negation or affirmation may well be intended here, but Ibn Sina does not develop his claims by explicitly making that connection.
87. 1, Intro.9-15, 64-66.
89. We might mistakenly think the pleasure appropriate when it is not, but the incongruity between pleasure and that meaning can be made clear by education, persuasion, etc..
90. Remarks and Admonishments: Logic, 130.
91. ibid. 130.
92. Aristotle, Prior Analytics, op.cit.
93. Schoeler, op.cit.
95. Cf., for example, Remarks and Admonishments, Logic, pp48-58.
96. ibid., p130. In addition to the syllogism, Ibn Sina also discusses two other kinds of proof - induction and analogy - but both of these are dependent on syllogisms, and the latter are 'the underpinning' of all kinds of proof. (Cf. Remarks and Admonishments, Logic, p130.
97. ibid., 131. Demonstrative syllogisms are distinguished not by the set of relations they require between terms but by their premises. All premises are such that if certain things are posited or accepted for various reasons, then something other than what is posited, which bears certain syntactical and semantical relations to what is posited or accepted, must follow. The relation between premises is what a syllogistic determines, and that remains constant whether we are concerned with rhetoric, poetics, or demonstration. However, the basis for accepting or positing premises will differ, depending on whether we are dealing with poetic premises, rhetorical ones, or ones in demonstrations. These differences in premises go to distinguish one kind of syllogism from another.
99. In the Metaphysics, Aristotle evokes the need to avoid apaideusia - and its resulting isolation from the rational community - by accepting the law of non-contradiction if there is to be meaningful discourse between rational and cognisant beings. An excellent account of the issues involving philosophical logic in Aristotle's Prior and Posterior Analytics is provided by Jonathan Lear in Aristotle and Logical Theory, 1984. I am indebted to this book for clarifying the role of a number of arguments which Ibn Sina, in following Aristotle, also adopts.
100. p219, Mamura, op.cit.
102. Ibid.
103. Metaphysics, op.cit., 222.
104. Logic, 134.
105. ibid. 135-7.
106. This is the Barbara mood: All A are B; All B are C, therefore All A are C.
107. This is the Celarent mood: All A are B, No B is C; therefore No A are C.
108. This is the Darii mood: Some A are B, All B are C, therefore Some A are C.
109. This is the Ferio mood: Some A are B, No B are C, therefore
Some A are not C.
110. ibid., 134.
111. See Remarks and Admonishments: Logic, for a succinct
statement of a number of these arguments. Other of Ibn
Sina's logical works bear out these claims. For example,
Burhan and the passages from al Shifa contained in The
Propositional Logic of Avicenna, translated and edited by
Nabil Shehaby. For other approaches to these issues, see
Lear, op. cit., Heinrichs, W., Arabische Dichtung und Greische
112. op. cit.
114. Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle, 66.
115. ibid., 115.
116. Aristotle, Prior Analytics, op. cit; Lear, op. cit.

117. These arguments have their counterparts in Aristotle's
work. Cf. Lear, op. cit.
118. Remarks and Admonishments: Logic, pp 135-137. To
demonstrate that the universal premises are ultimately
necessary ones, ..... (Cf. Metaphysics).
119. For problems with reducing a set of complex premises
into a series of simple one, see T. Smiley, 'What is a
120. The claim that we cannot hold an infinite number of
terms in balance is defended further below. It is
appropriate to say that Aristotle defends the claim
indirectly by arguing that nature is such that it could
never be open to infinite predication. Therefore it is
unnecessary to defend syllogisms against the possibility of
infinite predication because the possibility could not arise
in our dealings with nature.
121. See above; Ibn Sina, Commentary on the Poetics of
Aristotle, pp64, 74.
122. T. Smiley, 'What is a Syllogism?', Journal of
Philosophical Logic, op. cit.
123. The contrast of poetic thought with 'analytic'
scientific discourse is proposed by Ibn Sina in arguing that
analytic thought is the clearest and most desirable state of
affairs.
125. ibid. 74.
126. Changes in these devices may occur without altering the
status and role these forms play, as we shall see.
127. Cf. H.A. Davidson, 'Al-farabi and Avicenna on the Active
Intellect', Viator, 3 (1972), 109-178; Ibn Sina, Avicenna's
'De Anima', (1959), 234-250, and Book 1, Chapter 1, Book II,
Chapter 2, Book IV, Chapter 2, and Book V, Chapters 1-3.
128. See al-Burhan (Al-Mantiq, Vol.5,) ed., with intro., by
130. Cf Kitab al-Nafs, V5.6; Avicenna's Psychology, 35-37.
133. Ibid., 3, IV.3, 78.
134. Ibid., 3, IV.3, 79.
135. Ibid., 3, IV.3, 78.
136. Ibid., 4, IV.7, 89.
137. We may be mistaken in the latter, because we have developed false beliefs about the work and so will misconstrue the harmonious relation it contains, and here our response may be unjustified. But, conversely, our response may also be justified by reference to the qualities of the object, and so will be thought reasonable.
138. This reasonable character of pleasure links the latter not only to cognition but also to moral behaviour - as we shall see. Cf also Nicomachean Ethics, 1105b19-1106a13; 1104b13-14; 1106b16-17, where Aristotle argues that the virtuous man is properly disposed towards emotional response.
139. Ibid. p. 115.
140. Ibid. p. 63.
141. Ibid. 115.
142. Ibid. 3, IV.5, 79; italics added.
143. Ibid., 83.
144. Ibid.
145. Ibid.
146. Ibid.
147. It is an understanding of poetry that echoes the claim Aristotle makes in the Politics, that 'spectators are of two kinds - the one free and educated, the other a vulgar crowd composed of mechanics, labourers and the like... Music... correspond[s to the mind]; for as [people's] minds are perverted from the natural state, so there are perverted modes and highly strung and unnaturally coloured melodies. A man receives pleasure from what is natural to him...'. Politics, 1341b32-1342a27.
148. Ibid. 2, II.11, 74.
149. The term 'physiognomy' and its use are borrowed from Michael Baxandall, Giotto and the Orators, Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition 1350-1450, 1971, 83, 95, passim. Baxandall uses it to describe the mechanics of expressive creativity, which are 'spelled out in terms of Aristotelian faculties - nous,
psyche, phantasia - and an Aristotelian physiology'. ibid.
83.
150. Rhetoric, A2, 1356b30-6.
151. See Topics, A1,100b21-3; this issue is discussed in
J.D.G. Evans, Aristotle's Concept of Dialectic, 1977, p76f, 79ff. I follow Dahiyat, op.cit., in seeing the influence of
the Rhetoric on Ibn Sina's Commentary on the Poetics of
Aristotle.
152. See A Literary History of the Arabs, by R. 
Nicholson, 1957, where the role of the nasiba is dealt with
greater detail.
153. op.cit.
154. See Medieval Political Philosophy, A Sourcebook, edited
by Muhsin Mahdi and Ralph Lerner. It contains extracts from
the Metaphysics, Book X.
155. Ibn Sina's understanding of the relation between moral
behaviour and action is complicated by a conception of
agency that does not clearly free human action from
determinism by causal forces. The ability to choose and act
must be qualified in various ways. See Gabriel Lahood, A
Comparative Analysis of the Concept of Agency in Aristotle
156. See 'Avicenna : Healing : Metaphysics, X' in Mahdi and
Lerner, op.cit..
157. See Metaphysics, Book X, op.cit..
158. ibid.
159. p110, 'Healing : Metaphysics X', in Ralph Lerner and
Muhsin Mahdi (editors), Medieval Political Philosophy : A
Sourcebook, New York, 1963. It is of interest also that Ibn
Sina describes this process of gaining balance in terms of
purification, for the latter is the sense Aristotle gives to
catharsis in the passage from the Politics which we have
cited above.
160. ibid.
161. ibid.
162. ibid.
163. Italics added, ibid.,
164. ibid, Chapter 2, p99.
165. ibid,110.
167. ibid.p110.
168. Of course, such disharmony as the evil poem possesses
need not be identifiable with any aesthetic dissonance in
the relation between terms in the poem. However, if the
claims we will go on to present for Ibn Sina are plausible,
then we will show that an aesthetic dissonance depends on or
determines an individual or social disharmony.
169. op.cit..
170. It is worth adding here that if they were evil, no
assent would be valid, for the reasons we have given above.
Thus, the presence of evil may provide a base limit for the
meaningfulness of assent, while if they are good, then as
the pursuit of virtue has no limit, assent too is unlimited in scope.


172. 2,0.I,70.

173. ibid.

174. 1, I.2, 70.

175. 6,XIII.4, 106.

176. 6,XIII.6,106

177. Other instances where the same connection is made include 2, I.9,73; 2,II.13,76; 3,IV.5,79; 3,IV.12,82; 4,V.2,87; 4,IV.14, 92; 6,XV.11,108; 7,XXIV.12,116; 8,XXV.2-7,119-120.

178. 2,II.10,74.

179. 2, II.12,75; italics added.

180. 2,II.13,75-6.

181. 2,III.15, 76.

182. 2,II.13, 75-6; quoted above, note 49.

183. 2,III.15, 76.

184. cf above, 'Imagination in Poetry'.

185. cf above, 'Ibn Sina on the Imagination'.


187. n47.

188. n56.

189. Such a veneration of the subject is not native to Greek poetry, it seems, which stresses action over character and is concerned with the moral qualities exhibited through action rather than the character of the subject.

190. n62, p40 of Ch1.

191. 3,V.15, 83.

192. 4,IV.9, 90.

193. See above discussion of the role of the subject.


195. 1,Intro.7,64.

196. Intro.7,64.

197. ibid.

198. cf. p.29.

199. cf. above, n108.

200. This should be clear from the above argument.

212. I, Intro. 16, 67
213. 7, 1. 4, 71, italics added
214. 4, VI. 8, 90
215. 4, VI. 14, 92
216. 4, VI. 18, 94
217. 4, VI. 18, 94-5
218. 2, III. 15, 76.