FROM ATHENS (VIA ALEXANDRIA) TO BAGHDAD: HYBRIDITY AS EPISTEMOLOGY IN THE WORK OF AL-KINDI, AL-FARABI, AND IN THE RHETORICAL LEGACY OF THE MEDIEVAL ARABIC TRANSLATION MOVEMENT

By

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
With A Major IN RHETORIC, COMPOSITION, AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

In the Graduate College

The University of Arizona

2010
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SIGNED: Maha Baddar
DEDICATION

To my parents and Seif with love and appreciation.
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ABSTRACT

This is a dissertation project on medieval Arabic rhetoric and philosophy that focuses on the innovative nature of the knowledge produced while translating and commenting on foreign works of science and philosophy in Abbasid Baghdad. Chapter One challenges colonial attitudes toward the Translation Movement as exclusively imitative and preservative. The chapter shows that the translations had practical and ideological purposes to fulfill, not simply archival ones. Translation genres are discussed to show how deletions, additions, and new material were introduced during the translation process to ensure that that translation work met the goals of the sponsors. The work of the most renowned translator, Hunayn Ibn Ishaq is discussed in some detail to illustrate the process of translation and to show that translation overlapped with knowledge making. The chapter also covers the translation done in fields such as medicine, astronomy, and philosophy. Chapter Two covers how the work of theorists such as Edward Said, Michel Foucault, and Mikhail Bakhtin enabled me to challenge an Orientalist attitude toward medieval Arabic philosophy as was as show its innovative nature. In Chapter Three, I provide a translation of al-Kindi’s “A Statement on the Soul,” followed by an analysis of the epistemological and persuasive significance of the treatise. The chapter illustrates how the Arabic engagement with Greek and Neo-Platonic knowledge was dialogic in nature. Chapter Four is a translation of al-Farabi’s book of rhetoric. Chapter Five is an analysis of al-Farabi’s theory of rhetoric that is based on the previous chapter. It focuses on his understanding of rhetoric as a logical art, how logical and rhetorical terms acquired new meanings when translated from Greek to Arabic in his
work, and the rhetorical nature of his work as he adapted Platonic and Aristotelian models to suit his monotheistic context.
PREFACE

This is a dissertation project on medieval Arabic rhetoric and philosophy that focuses on the role of hybridity in knowledge making. The project covers the Translation Movement as whole as well as the work of two prominent Arabic thinkers, al-Kindi (whose work was produced during the Translation Movement), and al-Farabi, whose work was produced after the Translation Movement was over but that was based on its intellectual legacy.

As a historian of rhetoric, I was driven by two interrelated goals: The first goal is to draw attention to the availability of a rich rhetorical tradition in the medieval Mediterranean basin and Middle East that is currently largely untouched in our field. Such a tradition is based on and is a continuation of the classical rhetorical tradition that should be of interest to rhetoricians not only from an historical, but also from an epistemological standpoint. This is of interest to historians of rhetoric because the work of the Greek and Roman rhetoricians and philosophers did not stop with the fall of Athens and Rome, but was simply moved to other thriving centers of learning. Because of the shift in geographical and historical context, significant adaptations were introduced to the works of these ancient philosophers that deserve our attention. In fact, our knowledge of the classical rhetorical tradition should be deemed incomplete without a knowledge of its journeys through the medieval period. These Alexandrian, Syriac, and Arabic adaptations are also significant to rhetoricians in general, not only those who identify as historians. They illustrate that knowledge making is a dialogic, hybrid process
that does not take place in vacuum but is inspired by what comes before it while simultaneously paving the way for what comes after it.

The second goal of this dissertation is to address and challenge a predominantly Orientalist attitude that labeled the work produced during the Translation Movement period as merely preservative and imitative, thus denying all of the significant unique contributions to different fields of knowledge that Arabic translators made. This attitude is the result of a condescending attitude toward non-Western cultures that was prevalent during the era of European colonization of different parts of the world. At the peak of such an Orientalist attitude, many medieval manuscripts of Arabic science and philosophy were discovered, edited, translated, and studied by Orientalist scholars who interpreted this body of scholarship through a biased lens that did not entertain the idea that this scholarship could be original. Therefore, I propose in this dissertation that 21st century rhetoricians that medieval Arabic scholarship merely preserved Aristotle, and that they should practice a more critical approach to this less studied body of knowledge.

In Chapter One, I challenge colonial attitudes toward the Translation Movement as exclusively imitative and preservative of Greek heritage. I do this by showing that the works selected for translation included not only Greek texts, but also Persian and Indian ones. I also show that because the translations had practical and ideological purposes to fulfill, not simply archival ones, adaptations had to be made during the translation process that involved the addition of new material based on local research. The fact that the translations were not always faithful to the original, but included several genres such as commentaries and summaries, is presented as evidence of the creation of new
knowledge generated during the translation of foreign texts. As a case in point, the work of the most renowned translator, Hunayn Ibn Ishaq, is discussed to illustrate the process of translation and to show that translation often overlapped with knowledge making. An account of how practical and ideological motives were behind the translation in fields such as medicine, astronomy, and philosophy is provided to show that the imported knowledge was closely evaluated and adapted for these goals to be accomplished.

Chapter Two covers in detail the theoretical lenses I used to challenge the Orientalist attitude toward medieval Arabic philosophy through exposing the innovative nature of the knowledge produced during that time. The work of Edward Said in *Orientalism* is the basis for my understanding of the modern Western bias toward oriental civilization. An understanding of Said’s notion of “Orientalism” and the relationship between power and knowledge in his work requires first a review of Michel Foucault’s concept of power-knowledge which inspired some of Said’s work. I cover both of these theorists’ understandings of the relation between power and knowledge in some detail. The work in this dissertation also relies heavily on the work of Bakhtin and his concept of dialogism which I use to support the claim that knowledge based on previously produced knowledge can be considered original. Finally, in this second chapter, I argue that medieval Arabic scholarship should be called “dialogic” rather than “comparative.”

Chapter Three provides a translation of al-Kindi’s “Statement on the Soul” and a commentary on it. The chapter challenges the Orientalist myth through illustrating how translation, in its different genres, had immediate goals to fulfill in the Abbasid society. Al-Kindi’s treatise, for example, illustrates the evolution of metaphysical knowledge
across time and place: we see how al-Kindi negotiates Greek and Neo-Platonic concepts, examines their compatibility with his cultural milieu, and then modifies them accordingly. Moreover, al-Kindi’s work is a project in persuasion: by presenting Greek and Neo-Platonic knowledge as a homogeneous body of scholarship that does not contradict Islamic teachings, al-Kindi attempts to persuade his audience of the legitimacy of studying this scholarship.

Chapters Four and Five are related: the former is a translation of al-Farabi’s book of rhetoric and the latter is a commentary on this book showing that al-Farabi’s theory of rhetoric, although based on Aristotle, has its own unique characteristics. Chapter Five covers three main points about al-Farabi’s contributions to rhetorical theory: his understanding of rhetoric as a logical art; how logical and rhetorical terms acquired new meanings when translated from Greek to Arabic; and the rhetorical nature of al-Farabi’s own work in adapting Platonic and Aristotelian models to suit a monotheistic audience. Emphasizing a dialogic approach to rhetorical study, I show how al-Farabi used different parts of Aristotle’s *Organon* to create a unique theory of rhetoric that was appropriate to his context in tenth century monotheistic Baghdad.
CHAPTER 1, POWER/KNOWLEDGE IN MEDIEVAL BAGHDAD’S
TRANSLATION MOVEMENT

Introduction

In this chapter, I challenge colonial attitudes toward the Translation Movement as exclusively imitative and preservative of Greek heritage. I do this by showing that the works selected for translation went far beyond Greek texts, routinely including languages such as Persian, and Indian; and that the translations had practical and ideological purposes to fulfill, not simply archival ones. Moreover, in order for these purposes to be achieved, textual adaptations had to be made during the translation process that involved the addition of new material based on local research. The question of genre will also be discussed as evidence of the creation of new knowledge generated during the translation of foreign texts. As a case in point, the work of the most renowned translator, Hunayn Ibn Ishaq (Hunayn), will be discussed in some detail to illustrate the process of translation and to show that translation overlapped with knowledge making.

In the Translation Movement, knowledge was coordinated with power of multiple types: religious, political, and material. This chapter will document this phenomenon, showing how translations in fields such as medicine, astronomy, and philosophy contributed to the establishment and maintenance of financial and political power among the groups that had access to the knowledge provided through translation. The ideological underpinnings of the Translation Movement informed the selection of the works to be translated and the manipulation and adaptation of these works. This is of interest to the scholar of rhetoric because it illustrates in an important historical context the process of
knowledge production and the use of this knowledge to establish power in one of the most intellectually impressive and influential periods in human history.

When scholars refer to the Translation Movement, they are usually referring to the two-century long period in Baghdad during the Abbasid rule from the eighth to the tenth century CE. While it is true that the intellectual environment in this time period is considered one of the richest in human history, this totalizing approach to history ignores the presence of translation in the different parts of the Islamic empire in its earlier days. Translation work took place earlier in the history of the Islamic empire during the rule of the Umayyad in their capital Damascus. Moreover, some of the goals were similar to those of the Abbasids, especially the practical needs and the ability to engage dialectically with people of different religious dispositions, whether within Islam itself, or members of different faiths, especially Christians.

Pre-Abbasid Translation

During the Umayyad period, the Muslim Arabs ruled over many Christians who enjoyed the freedom to keep and practice their faith. This religious diversity led to curiosity, religious debates, and attempts at reconciliation among these groups. Such engagement necessitated the translation of the Bible and other texts that facilitated such discussions. The oldest surviving document of an Islamic-Christian disputation illustrates the central role that translation played in facilitating communication among members of the expanding Islamic empire. The document is an anonymous letter written in Syriac of a debate that took place between Patriarch John (Yohanna) and an emir of the Mhaggraye. The letter survives in an 874 CE manuscript and is believed to date back to
the 640s. The letter was published by Francois Nau in 1915 (Roggema 23) and includes the following interesting note:

The emir Ibn Sa’d hated the Christians and it may be that he wanted to stop them calling Christ God; . . . he summoned by letter the patriarch John. . . . the patriarch, helped by God’s Grace, answered all the emir’s devious questions. When the emir heard his spirited and fearless defense he said: “Put that Gospel of yours into Arabic speech for me and do not change anything except the word GOD, where it is applied to Christ, the word BAPTISM and the word CROSS. These words you are to omit.” The Spirit strengthened John to answer bravely: “may Christ, my God, forbid that I should take away one jot or one title [sic] from my Gospel. . . . I would rather not write it at all.” . . . Then the patriarch sent for pious people from the Banu Tanukh and from Aquilo and selected those most fluent in both Arabic and Syriac and knew how to translate words eloquently from one language to another. When they had, with great difficulty, interpreted the Gospel at his command and collated it repeatedly, they produced immediately a final version in elevated calligraphic style free from technical blemishes and most skillfully illuminated with (gold and silver) leaf. (qtd. in Rogemma 23-24)

This excerpt from the Syriac letter not only illustrates the need for translation work to facilitate communication in theological matters, but also the technical steps involved in the translation process including choice of translators, collaboration, and revision, all
issues that continue to appear in the history of the Movement. This early document foreshadows the long and highly sophisticated path that translation took in the Islamic empire.

Medieval historical accounts provide support for the claim that translation was a common activity during the Umayyad period. We learn from Ibn an-Nadim in his famous history, *al-Fihrist*, that the Umayyad caliph Khaled Ibn Yazeed Ibn Mu’awaya commissioned Greek philosophers who lived in Egypt to translate philosophical works from Greek and Coptic into Arabic (50). According to Dimitri Gutas, during the Umayyad period, Greek-speaking functionaries and the Greek language continued to be used in the Umayyad imperial administration: the practical needs for translation included the translation of the administrative apparatus—called the *diwan*—from Greek into Arabic; Aristotle’s correspondence with Alexander was translated into Arabic for the Umayyad caliph Hisham for military and administrative purposes; and in Egypt and Syro-Palestine, translation took place on a daily basis for commercial and social purposes as illustrated by the bilingual Greek and Arabic papyri of deeds and contracts (*Greek Thought* 23). Oral translation was also widely practiced. According to Franz Rosenthal, in the tenth century historian Hamza al-Isfahani relates that “when he needed information of Graeco-Roman history, he asked an old Greek, who had been captured and served as a valet, to translate for him a Greek historical work orally. This was accomplished with the help of the Greek’s son, Yumn, who knew Arabic well” (qtd. in Gutas *Greek Thought* 23).
Clearly then, translation was a common practice in different parts of the Umayyad empire, and was hardly a new endeavor elsewhere in the Islamic empire, namely Persia, even before the advent of Islam. The familiarity of a culture of translation in Persia can be regarded as an element that facilitated, through a sense of familiarity, the translation from Persian into Arabic during the Abbasid rule. Translation that took place in Persia before Islam, according to Ibn an-Nadim aimed to “restore what Alexander the Great had taken and sent to Egypt and translated into Latin and Coptic. According to Ibn an-Nadim, the Sassanian King Ardsheer, and his son, Sabour, commissioned the translation of Roman, Syriac, and Greek works into Persian (500).

The Translation Movement during the Abbasid rule was motivated by ideological and political goals which were met by the determination and the support of the Abbasid administration, and was facilitated by certain administrative and material factors. Some of these include the unification of Egypt, Iraq, ash-Sham, Persia, and India under the rule of the Abbasids, which led to the transmission of raw materials as well as ideas across the Islamic empire; the unification of different centers of learning that adhered to opposing Christian sects took place; the adoption of a philhellenic spirit by the Abbasids, and the increasing availability of paper (Gutas, *Greek Thought* 11-13).

Myths about the Translation Movement

The Translation Movement is shrouded in numerous Orientalist myths that minimize the role of the Arabs in advancing human knowledge during a period that is no less in its impact that the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods in the West. These myths interfere with a comprehensive understanding of the contributions that the
Translation Movement made to human knowledge. The myth with the greatest long term impact is the misconception that medieval Arabs merely did humanity the favor of preserving Greek heritage that would have otherwise been lost under the anti-Hellenic medieval Christian church. The rest of this chapter and indeed the entire dissertation challenge this myth. Chapter One documents the innovative nature of the Translation Movement by addressing the different genres associated with the translation work as well as the new knowledge that was produced alongside the translation work. In the rest of the dissertation, the work of al-Kindi and al-Farabi illustrates the critical approach these scholars took to the imported knowledge they were exposed to and the new knowledge they produced.

Another Orientalist myth is the claim that the Translation Movement relied on its success in what Gutas describes as the scholarly zeal of a few Syriac-speaking Christians who engaged in translation for the improvement of society. Gutas attributes this attitude to Benedicte Landron, J. M. Fiey, and Joel L. Kraemer (*Greek Thought* 3). Another scholar who makes similar claims is F. E. Peters, arguing that the multitude of translations was not undertaken through direct contact with Hellenized cities like Alexandria or Antioch, but through Hellenized Syrio-Christians in Iraq and Iran (59). This is a highly dubious claim because correspondence between al-Ma’mun and the Roman rulers to acquire original Greek works in storage is documented in the accounts of historians such as Ibn an-Nadim (504). Moreover, autobiographical accounts exist of Hunayn travelling to different cities in pursuit of original Greek works. Hunayn speaks of his multiple trips in pursuit of a complete version of *De Demonstratione*: “I sought for it
earnestly and travelled in search for it in the lands of al-Iazira (Mesopotamia), Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, until I reached Alexandria, but I was not able to find anything except about half of it in Damascus” (qtd. in Meyerhof 690). We also know that some of the translators in Hunayn’s circle studied medicine in Alexandria and as a result became translators as well as practitioners of medicine. Hunayn mentions in his Risala that “Sergios had translated [De Causis et Symptombaitus] into Syriac twice, once before he studied at the Alexandrian School and once after that” (qtd. in Meyerhof 691-92).4

This is not to say that Syriac centers of learning that focused on Greek learning, primarily Aristotelianism, did not play a major role in the success of the Translation Movement. Indeed from the sixth century onward, centers like Nisbis, al-Hira, and Dayr Qunna monastery (Griffith 78-79) as well as the seminaries of Harran, Edessa, Qinnesin, and Antioch (Fakhry, Al-Farabi 11) were active centers of learning. Moreover, Syri-Christian Nestorians also flourished in the Persian city of Jundisapur where they moved to escape religious persecution. The medical doctors mentioned in the following section as well as other scholars such as al-Farabi’s mentors Abu Bishr Matta Ibn Yunus and Yahya Ibn and Yuhanna Ibn Haylan to mention only a few were all Syriac-speaking Christians.

Such an active participation in the Abbasid intellectual life is a testimony to the tolerant cosmopolitan ambience of medieval Baghdad, but should not be mistaken for lack of competence on the part of the Arab patrons. These Christians moved to Baghdad to become both intellectually and economically elevated. They worked at the invitation of their Arab patrons who commissioned the translations and the knowledge that evolved
from it. It was the Arabs who took the initiative and recognized the need for the translations, and the Syrio-Christians provided their knowledge and expertise. These needed to be sharpened and developed, as will be shown later, to meet the high demands of the intellectual atmosphere of Baghdad. Moreover, moving to Baghdad was an intellectual privilege because there were no bans placed on what works could be read or translated such as the ones placed by the church where they came from. As a result, access to works such as Aristotle’s *Topics* and *Posterior Analytics*, deemed too dangerous by the church, were readily accepted and even promoted by the Islamic caliphate.

The misconception that translation into Arabic relied predominantly on Syriac intermediaries could be attributed to some confusion resulting from the fact that during the Arab Abbasid rule both Syriac and Arabic translations were commissioned. Syriac translations were done for Syriac-speaking sponsors, especially physicians who needed translations of Galenic texts. Ibn an-Nadim mentions that *Hippocrates’ Time* was translated by Hunayn into Syriac while ‘Isa Ibn Yahya and Hubaysh Ibn al-Hasan al-A’sam, the most prominent pupil of Hunayn, translated it into Arabic, and that Hunayn translated three Hippocratic texts including *The Chapters (Al-Fusul)* and *Breaks* into Arabic for Muhammad Ibn Mussa (577). The fact that Hunayn produced translations in both Arabic and Syriac shows that Syriac was not necessarily the intermediary language; sponsorship was the determining factor for which language the original Greek would be translated into. Hunayn himself writes that he translated *De Causis et Symptombaitus* into Syriac for Bukhtishu’ Ibn Jibril, a member of the Syriac-speaking Nestorian family of
physicians who practiced medicine in Jundisapur before moving to Baghdad to serve the caliphal family. Hunayn adds that Hubaysh translated six parts of the book into Arabic for Abul Hasan Ali Ibn Yahya, an Arabic-speaking sponsor (Meyerhof 691-92). We are also told by historians about translations that were done from Greek directly into Arabic. Ibn an-Nadim records that Aristotle’s *De Caleo* was translated straight from Greek and specifically notes that it was not translated into Syriac (515). Sometimes translations even went from Arabic into Syriac: Hubaysh, for example, translated from Arabic into Syriac *De Motu Pulmonum*, *De Motibus Musculorum*, and *De Natura Humana* for Yahya Ibn Massaweyah (Meyerhof 708-9).

The exaggeration of the role of Syriac-speaking Christians in the success of the Translation Movement overshadows not only the fact that many of the translations took place directly from Greek, but that there were other intermediaries through which translation into Arabic took place. There are historical accounts that translation of astronomical works took place from Sanskrit and Pahlavi sources as well as Greek ones.5

There is also the misconception of attributing the success of the Translation Movement to one person, in this case the Abbasid caliph al-Ma’mun. As with most historical developments, the Translation Movement was an increasingly powerful apparatus that spanned more than two centuries and depended on hundreds of scholars, translators, sponsors, and scribes. Evidence that dispels the myth that al-Ma’mun was the founder of the Translation Movement comes from primary source material; eleventh century historian Ibn Sa’id al-Andalusi (Ibn Sa’id) credits al-Mansur as being the founder of the Translation Movement, mentioning the translations that were done in his court.
before covering his grandson’s, al-Ma’mun’s, efforts (Salem and Kumar 46). Gutas provides a more complex alternative to the Ma’mun theory by arguing that support for translation “cut across all lines of religious, sectarian, ethnic, tribal, and linguistic demarcation. Patrons were Arabs and non-Arabs, Muslims and non-Muslims, Sunnis and Shi’ites, generals and civilians, merchants and land owners, etc.” (Greek Thought 5).

Traditional historical accounts of the Translation Movement are shrouded in yet another myth: a common view is that the translation took place in phases, starting off with a literal, word-for-word approach and developing into a more stylistically polished enterprise later on. Peters, for example, proposes three such stages (59-67). Many Western sources have picked up on this approach Riesman and McGinnis. Peters divides the stages of the Translation Movement into the literal ones adopted by al-Kindi’s earlier circle, and more polished ones produced by the Hunayn’s later circle. This approach has been prevalent and is widely adopted in the literature despite the contrary evidence present in the work of al-Kindi’s circle as well as the research of scholars such as Endress and Gutas. Chapter Three challenges this view in detail by showing that al-Kindi and his translation circle produced more than just word-for-word translations of Greek works.

Practical Application of Translated Knowledge and Creation of New Knowledge: The Case of Medicine

The knowledge acquired through the translation of medical works is directly connected to financial and political power as well as good standing in the caliphal court in the case of the physicians and the government officials who sponsored the translations. The fact that many of the translators themselves were students and practitioners of
medicine illustrates the practical nature of the Translation Movement. The ambiguity of the different genres associated with translation work in the field and the fact that many of the translators authored their own books is a fine example of the dialogic nature of knowledge making in Abbasid Baghdad.

Many of the physicians in Baghdad were Nestorian Christians who practiced medicine in Jundisapur, Persia, and were summoned early on in the history of the Abbasid dynasty by the Abbasid caliphs to serve at their courts. One of these families was the Bukhtishu’ family who, over the course of seven generations, earned considerable wealth through practicing medicine (Ibn Abi Usaybia 55; Ibn an-Nadim 591). Ibn Sai’d’s account sums up not only the financial but the political power such a family had through access to knowledge in their professional field:

Among the Christians, there was Bukhtishu’ and his son Jibril Ibn Bukhtishu’: they were two noble physicians. Bukhtishu’ served and treated Abu al-Abbas al-Saffah and those in his court. After him, he passed his services to Abu Ja’far al-Mansur. After his death, his son took over and served the kings of Banu Abbas. Bukhtishu’ was the author of many well-known medical treatises. (Salem and Kumar 32-33)

To maintain such a position in the caliphal household, the Bukhtishu’ family was one of the most generous sponsors of translation in the medical field. They also, as Sai’d’s passage indicates, sponsored and conducted research beyond the translated works when the knowledge acquired through translation was not up to date. According to Gutas, these sponsors “had a stake in maintaining their scientific superiority because their high
social status and caliphal positions and the consequent wealth they amassed depended on their medical expertise. Their paramount concern was the need for expert medical knowledge” (Greek Thought 118).

The magnitude of the medieval Arabic translation project, reflected in the number of works translated in a field such as medicine, shows the significance of the knowledge and the power associated with acquiring it. Hunayn, according to Meyerhof, completed, entirely or partly, ninety five Syriac and thirty nine Arabic versions. Moreover, he produced translations of Aristotle, Plato, Euclid, Hippocrates, Oreibasios, Paul, Theomnestos (on veterinary surgery), the Bible, and a Syrio-Arabic dictionary. As mentioned earlier, Meyerhof also mentions one hundred works that Hunayn authored himself (706-7). Another translator, Hubaysh, translated three Galenic books into Syriac and thirty five into Arabic according to the Risala (708-9). Ishaq Ibn Hunayn, Hunayn’s son, translated two Galenic works into Syriac and ten into Arabic. According to al-Fihrist, he translated more philosophical and mathematical works than medical ones (709). Another translator is ‘Isa Ibn Yahya Ibn Ibrahim, author of one Syriac and fourteen Arabic versions of Galenic works.

Translation helped solve problems that interfered with access to certain knowledge. The inaccessibility of dissection was one such problem. Yuhanna Ibn Massaweyah, physician for al-Ma’mun, al-Mu’tassim, al-Wathiq, and al-Mutawakkil (Ibn an-Nadim 589-90), commissioned the translations of Galen’s anatomical books from Hunayn as the next best alternative. Hunayn translated two of these books, namely, On the Anatomy of Veins and Arteries and On the Anatomy of Nerves to serve the research
needs of Ibn Massaweyah (Gutas *Greek Thought* 119). The knowledge gained from these sources replaced the first hand knowledge that could have been acquired had dissection been legal at the time.

In addition to serving the practical needs of practitioners of medicine, translation of Hippocratic and Galenic texts also served an educational need. This could explain the interest of Arab government officials in sponsoring translation in the medical field: these works were necessary for the success of their educational initiatives by providing the backbone for a medical curriculum. We know that the medical school in Baghdad was built following the model of its predecessor at Alexandria where Hippocratic and Galenic works were the basis for a medical career. In Hunayn’s firsthand account:

> These [books 1-20 of the list he provides in the *Risala*] are the books to the reading of which the students of the Medical School at Alexandria were confined. They used to read them in the order which I have followed in my list. They were accustomed to meet every day for the reading and interpretation of one of the standard works, in the same way in which, in our day, our Christian friends are accustomed to meet every day at the educational institution . . . for the study of a standard work from among the books of the ancients. Concerning the remainder of [Galen’s] books they were accustomed to read them everyone for himself, after an introductory study of the aforementioned books; just as our friends read today the explanations of the books of the ancients. (qtd. in Meyerhof 702)
Acquiring knowledge in the medical field did not stop at translating the works of the ancients. The new knowledge that was produced took different forms, such as commentaries and explanations of canonical texts, as in the case of Qusta Ibn Luqa al-Ba’lbaki, a physician who, in addition to translating medical texts, also provided *tafsir*, and *sharh* (interpretation and explanation) of thirty four books, according to Hunayn’s *Risala* (Ibn an-Nadim 587-89). Ibn an-Nadim credits Hunayn with authoring thirty books as a physician (586), and Meyerhof mentions one hundred works by Hunayn, many of which were extracts and summaries of his translations (706-7). About this later point Ibn Sa’id al-Andalusi states: “It is this Hunayn who translated and clarified the works of Hippocrates and Galen and condensed them in the best possible way” (Salem and Kumar 33).

New Knowledge and Ideology: The Case of Astronomy

In medieval Baghdad the distinction between astronomy and astrology was vague, and that astrology was considered a branch of astronomy. Ibn Sa’id al-Andalusi describes astronomy as “verifiable and scientific” and astrology as “natural astronomy . . . which is the knowledge of the effect of the planets on the world of generation and corruption” (Salem and Kumar 55). On the practical level, the access to astronomical works from different cultures contributed to creating new and better theory and practice in the field. The direct translation of astronomical works fulfilled direct practical needs. Here is the account of Ibn Sa’id about the translation of Ptolemy’s *Almagest*:

Al-Ma’mun charged the scientists of his time with the construction of the equipment mentioned by Ptolemy in *Almagest* and with its use in the study
of the planets and their motions. Al-Ma’mun’s orders were carried out and observations began in the city of Shamasiyah in the region of Damascus, al-Sham, in the year A.H. 214 [A.D. 833]. They determined the length of the solar year, the magnitude of the sun’s declination, the eccentricity of its orbits, and the position of its apogee. They further studied the behavior of stars and planets (Salem and Kumar 47).

But the Arabs’ work on astronomy did not only rely on isolated translated works. The Arabs used the knowledge acquired through the translation of works that came from the different regions of the Islamic empire to create more advanced knowledge. One significant astronomical work that contributed to this new knowledge was from the Sindhind that was translated into Arabic from Sanskrit. Here is Sai’d’s account of this important work:

A person originally from India came to al-Mansur in A.D. 773 and presented him with the arithmetic known as Sindhind for calculating the motion of the stars. . . . In this work calculations of star positions were carried out to an accuracy of one minute. Al-Mansur ordered that the book be translated into Arabic so that it could be used by Arab astronomers as the foundation for understanding celestial motions. Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim al-Farazi translated it. This book was used by astronomers until the time of al-Ma’mun, when it was abbreviated for him by Abu Ja’far Muhammad Ibn Musa al-Khuwarizmi, who extracted from it his famous tables, which were commonly used in the Islamic world. In addition, al-
Khwarizmi made some changes in the Sindhind system and deviated from its relations and declinations; he adopted the Persian system in formulating his equations and relied on the method of Ptolemy for determining the declination of the sun. (Salem and Kumar 46-47)

Al-Khwarizmi combined Indian, Persian, and Greek-Alexandrian knowledge to create new knowledge illustrating how the access to knowledge that scholars of the capital of the Islamic empire had at their disposal was critically evaluated and used to create new knowledge. He is an example of a scientist who chose to adopt and combine knowledge.

Not all Arab scholars agreed with the knowledge they received through translation, however. One such work is none other than aforementioned influential Sindhind, and the not-very-impressed scholar is al-Baghdadi. According to Ibn Sa’id:

Among those who were known for their contribution to the science dealing with the motions of the stars and the form of the universe, we have . . . Ahmad Ibn Abd Allah al-Baghdadi, known as Habash. He lived during the reign of al-Ma’mun and al-Mu’tasim and has three tables of astronomy, the first of which was prepared in accordance with the Sindhind system, in which he generally differed from the work of al-Farazi and al-Khuwarizmi on most operations, because he adopted the use of the movements of the zodiac from the methods presented by Theon of Alexandria. This enabled him to determine the longitudinal positions of the planets. He prepared this table early in his career, when he still believed in the methods of the Sindhind. His second table, known as al-
Mumtahan [the Tested], is his most famous. He prepared it after his return to the practice of observational astronomy and included in it the motions of the planets as they were established by tests performed in his time. The third is the smallest of the three tables and is known by the name al-Shah [the King]. (Salem and Kumar 51)

In addition to the practical uses of the translated astronomical works (and the new knowledge inspired by them), translation in the field had ideological goals to fulfill. These goals were achieved through the translation of astrological texts, mainly from Persian. In al-Mansur’s reign, the translation of the Denkard, the official text of the Zoroastrian religion, helped the early Abbasid caliphs to legitimize their rule over the Persian members of their empire and contain potential opposition through an understanding of this groups’ cultural heritage. Gutas describes al-Mansur’s adoption of Zoroastrian ideology as “a pragmatic and sensible move on the part of al-Mansur who realized that while it was possible to eliminate opposition, it was impossible to eradicate entire cultural backgrounds” (Greek Thought 50).

Another example of the role of translation of astrological texts in establishing and maintaining ideologies is the date of the building of Baghdad and the choice of its circular shape (see fig. 1.1). The decisions involved in the process had astrological significance and direct ties to the Translation Movement. According to Gutas, the circular shape of Baghdad was indicative of a distinctive imperial ideology. Literally, it meant that the caliph was at equal distance from all sections of his capital (Greek Thought 51-52).
The availability of translated knowledge from different centers of learning aided in creating applications that guaranteed maximum power for those who had access to this knowledge. For example, in addition of taking the advice of Persian astrologers concerning the date of building the city, and possibly its shape, the planning of the city is also an application of Euclid’s definition of a circle in his *Elements* (Gutas, *Greek Thought* 52). Here, al-Mansur’s consultants combined the theoretical knowledge from Euclid with the ideology of the Persian *Denkard* to achieve maximum power.

As time progressed, so did the needs of the Abbasid caliphate: Al-Mansur’s grandson, al-Ma’mun, modified the Zoroastrian imperial ideology of centralized government substituting Islam for Zoroastrian ideology which was helpful because it established a strong connection between religion and politics (Gutas, *Greek Thought* 80-81). This illustrates the critical approach Arabs had to translated knowledge, adhering to it when it served their purposes, and modifying it when their needs required so.

Translation of Philosophical Works

The translation of philosophical works was part and parcel of the Translation Movement from its inception. We know that the works of Thales, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and Porphyry were available to Arabic thinkers (Ibn an-Nadim 507-11). As with other fields of knowledge, some scholars embraced the knowledge provided by the translated works, such as al-Mu’tazilah who were influenced by Neo-Platonic thinking, and the Brethren of Purity who adhered to Pythagorean thinking. Others expressed disagreement with certain views, such as ar-Razi who expressed strong resentment for Aristotle and adhered to Platonic thinking instead. We know that the translation of
philosophical works did not take place in vacuum, but that it served the needs of dedicated thinkers who were genuinely interested in using and modifying the knowledge produced in different places and time periods to resolve theological, political, and social problems that arose in their culture.

A definition of philosophy according to the first Islamic philosopher, al-Kindi, might be helpful in shedding light on the role of philosophy in the medieval Islamic world. According to al-Kindi in *On First Philosophy*, “[philosophy] is the knowledge of the reality of things, according to the measure of human capacity” and first philosophy is the highest part of philosophy and is defined as “the knowledge of the First, True One, who is the cause of every truth” (qtd. in Fakhry, *A Short Introduction* 22). In a similar tone, al-Farabi, in the *Book of Letters*, explains the human pursuit of philosophy to the “natural yearning of the soul to know the causes of sensible matters on earth, in it or around it, together with what is observed or appears of the heavens” (qtd. in Fakhry, *Al-Farabi* 13). During classical and medieval times, philosophy was a vast field of knowledge that included sub-fields such as logic, physics, metaphysics, ethics, and politics. Logic was based on the Alexandrian version of the *Organon* and included several branches including demonstration, dialectic, sophistic, and rhetoric. Unlike medicine and astronomy, the practical needs of translating philosophical works might not be immediately perceptible, but they were definitely present in Umayyad and Abbasid times. Philosophy was involved in formulating arguments in both intra- and interfaith disagreements, and it helped shape social and political theories that were inspired by the context of the Abbasid society.
Although most literature focuses on the use of philosophy, especially logic, in debates that took place between Muslims and Christians due to the cosmopolitan nature of the Islamic empire and the respect for freedom of religion, philosophy was also used as a tool for resolving theological controversies within the Islamic faith itself. For example, early in the history of Islam, according to Majid Fakhry, “theologians felt a growing need to turn to philosophy” to resolve problems where faith and politics intersected (*A Short Introduction* 2). One such controversy arose over the question of the accountability of the Umayyad caliphs between advocates of free will, known as the qadaris, and the advocates of predestination. According to Fakhry:

Did the Umayyad caliphs have the right to carry out the most repressive policies or perpetrate the most hideous crimes with total impunity, since their actions were all decreed by God? Qadari theologians Ma’bad al-Juhani (d. 699) and Ghaylan al-Dimashqi (d. 743) challenged these arbitrary claims and attested the responsibility of the caliphs, as well as their lowliest subjects, for their unjust deeds. (2)

The question of free will is one of many that would haunt Muslim thinkers for generations and, in addition to relying solely on the Qur’an and the *hadith* (the teachings of the Prophet), logical reasoning would be employed to resolve these issues. While some traditional theologians and other thinkers refused to resort to foreign knowledge to resolve issues within their faith, many believed that philosophy and theology were not mutually exclusive. One of these thinkers was al-Kindi who viewed philosophy as the
“handmaid of religion” (Fakhry, *A Short Introduction* 23). Fakhry describes al-Kindi’s approach as follows:

For the truth the philosophers seek is not different from the truth to which the prophets have summoned humankind. In fact, for al-Kindi the truth to which “Muhammad the truthful, may God’s blessings be upon him, has summoned, added to what he has received from God Almighty,” is such that it can be demonstrated by recourse to general arguments which only the fool can question. (23)

Other scholars attempted to examine the correlation between theology and philosophy with different degrees of adherence to the main tenants of Islam. For example, for the Brethren of Purity, whose thinking is rooted in Pythagoreanism, the study of numbers leads to knowledge of the soul, and the study of philosophy leads to the knowledge of God (Fakhry *A Short Introduction* 58).

The translation of philosophical works also played a role in providing the theoretical basis for the debates that took place between Muslims and people who held different belief systems, mostly Christians. The new Islamic empire was inhabited by different Christian groups who were well versed in the art of argumentation amongst themselves. This diverse religious environment led to debates between Christians and Muslims where the rules borrowed from the different branches of logic were relied on for persuasion. An example of such a document is Job of Edessa’s apologetics against Islam in his *Book of Treasures* (Reinink 70). Other documents include “On the Triune Nature of God” and the works of Theodore Abu Qurrah.
One work which aided the Muslims in engaging in debates with Christians is Aristotle’s *Topics*. In 782, Timothy I (728-823), the Nestorian patriarch, translated Aristotle’s *Topics* into Arabic at the request of al-Mahdi (Griffith 77). In this context, *Topics* was considered a good resource for learning about the art of argumentation for the sake of the debates that were sure to ensue. The letters of Timothy I are an example of the nature of these debates. He wrote numerous letters, fifty nine of which are extant, many covering religious issues. For example, Letter XXXV is a defense of the doctrine of the Trinity, and Letter XXXVI is against those who oppose the majesty of Christ (Griffith 75-76). After al-Mahdi learned about the rules of argumentation from this work, his first debate was with *Topics* translator, Timothy I, who refers to the debate in Letter LIX (Griffith 77). The significance of *Topics* is also reflected in the number of translations it underwent. After the translation for al-Mahdi, it was translated a century later straight from Greek by Abu-‘Uthman ad-Dimashqi. Fifty years later it was translated by Yahya Ibn ‘Adi from Ishaq’s Syriac translation (Gutas *Greek Thought* 61).

The debates with fellow followers of the Abrahamic faiths must have been the least of the concerns of al-Mahdi when he commissioned knowledge the translation of the *Topics*. At that time there was a serious concern about heresy, especially Manichaeism. Here is the account of historian al-Ahbari (who is cited by historian al-Masu’di in *Muruj ad-Dahab*) about this ideological challenge and how al-Mahdi handled it through knowledge about argumentation:

> Al-Mahdi devoted all his efforts to exterminating heretics and apostates. . .

> [He] was the first caliph to command the theologians who used dialectic
disputation (al-jadaliyyin) in their research to compose books against the heretics . . . . The theologians then produced demonstrative proofs against the disputers (mu’anidin), eliminated the problems posed by the heretics, and expounded the truth in clear terms to the doubters. (qtd. in Gutas, *Greek Thought* 65)

This means that in addition to using knowledge of dialectic for inter-faith communication, it was also used to resolve to face challenges that arose within Islam itself.

But the knowledge gained through the translation of Greek and Neo-Platonic philosophical works was not just used to emphasize disagreement in religious disputation. It was also used, mostly by Christian thinkers, as a common ground to highlight similarities between religions that helped make their life in a predominantly Muslim society easier. In reference to Hunayn’s *Adab al-Falasifah*, Sidney H. Griffith explains:

[T]his presentation of Christianity and Islam and their institutions in philosophical dress, so striking in Hunayn’s *Adab al-Falasifah*, seems to have been a bid on the part of the Christian intellectual elite in Abbasid Baghdad to find a shared moral discourse between Christians and Muslims which would leave their mutually incompatible, religious differences safely enshrined within a commonly accepted ethical framework which could then allow them to discuss these same doctrinal differences in
philosophical terms which would have the potential to convey clarity of thought if not a shared religious confession. (92)

Adaptations of Greek and Alexandrian Neo-Platonic philosophical thinking had serious social and political implications in the Abbasid society, where happiness was directly associated with knowledge gained through virtue which in its turn purifies the soul and makes it receptive to knowledge. In this school of thinking, the highest degree of knowledge was of the causes of things which is the realm of metaphysics, and an ideal state politically and socially was one whose existence relied on the ethics learned from this philosophical heritage. Many philosophers of the time wrote on philosophy as a means of establishing social and political well-being, such as Hunayn’s aforementioned Adab al-Falasifah, and, another Christian’s, Yahya Ibn ‘Adi’s Reformation of Morals (Griffith 92), but the most famous of these works is al-Farabi’s Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Divine City and On Civil Polity.12

Philosophy in the Muslim world was heavily based on the Alexandrian Neo-Platonism because it had “religious and mystical leanings” (Fakhry A Short Introduction 2) that were compatible with Muslim thought.13 In fact, Alexandrian Neo-Platonism and Islamic philosophy mark major steps in the evolution in the field of philosophy that deserve more attention from scholars in the different fields of humanities including rhetoric because they shed light on the process of knowledge making and the role of context in introducing changes in the beliefs held by people in different time periods. Some of the main figures of Alexandrian Neo-Platonism are Plotinus (d. 270), Porphyry of Tyre (d. 303), and Jamblichus (d. 330) (Fakhry A Short Introduction 2). In fact
Plotinus’ theory of emanation and his views on the soul constitute a major influence on al-Kindi’s treatise on the soul that will be covered in Chapter Three and that illustrates the shift that the field of metaphysics underwent when its context changed from a polytheistic pagan to a monotheistic one.

Translation Genres

The term translation is an ambiguous one when applied to the act of transferring foreign knowledge into Arabic between the eighth and tenth centuries CE in Baghdad. In the Orientalist tradition, the term traditionally invokes a process whose ultimate goal was to reflect as faithfully as possible the content of the original text into Arabic. However, as postmodern approaches to translation have taught us, translation is a process of knowledge making in which the translator’s culture and background influence how he/she delivers the text being translated. Indeed, in Abbasid Baghdad, the varying purposes of the translations and the ideological atmosphere in the Islamic empire interfered with the degree of faithfulness that the translators adhered to. It is therefore important to address the issue of genre because the term translation took different forms including the summary, the commentary and the explanation among others. Moreover, translated knowledge was often used as a foundation upon which new knowledge was created. The latter point should be kept in mind when examining these translations because, under these translation genres, major changes were sometimes introduced to the original work and many innovative ideas were included. Closely examining translation genres is therefore a significant factor in challenging the preservation myth.
Selectivity was a major characteristic of the Translation Movement. Ibn Abi Usaybia explains that translators conveyed the important ideas and deliberately ignored everything else. He emphasizes that this was neither out of ignorance nor misunderstanding, and that their lack of adherence to the original texts resulted in making some of the translations clearer than the original. Amir an-Najjar, editor of Ibn Abi Usaybia’s history, cites a lecture by Santala in which he states that most translators provided explanations as part of their translation as well as edited, criticized, and added ideas and meanings to the original (1: 42). For example, in Chapter Three I show how al-Kindi, while claiming to summarize Plato’s views on the soul, eliminates all the pagan references and inserts monotheistic Islamic ones. Similarly, the Arab authors of *The Theology of Aristotle*, a book based on the last four books of the *Enneads* and wrongly attributed to Aristotle, did not include the lengthy pagan passages of the original *Enneads* (Adamson, “Two Early Arabic Doxographies” 109). What constituted an important idea depended on the immediate context of these translations.

For the medieval historians, the term *translation* included other genres that today would not ordinarily be considered such. While providing a list of translators in history, Ibn an-Nadim uses the term *explain* several times despite the fact that his main topic is translation (505-6). In addition to explanation, other genres included simplifying complex works, such as *Hisab al-Ghubar*, an Indian mathematical work simplified by al-Khuwarizmi according to Ibn Sa’id’s history (Salem and Kumar14).

Ibn an-Nadim provides specific examples of these translation genres. He mentions that *Categories* was translated by Hunayn and that Porphry, Stephan of Alexandria,
Ammonious, al-Farabi, and Abu Bishr Matta explained it. He also mentions summaries of this book which include two subgenres in the Arabic tradition: *mukhtasraat* and *jawami'* (both terms were used to refer to summaries) by Ibn Bihreez, Ibn al-Muqaffa’, Ahmad Ibn at-Tayyeb, Ishaq Ibn Hunayn, and al-Kindi (511-12). Ibn an-Nadim’s list goes on in the same manner for several Aristotelian works including the *Rhetoric* and *De Anima*. Sometimes Arab scholars wrote commentaries on already existing commentaries of original works. For example, Matta Ibn Yunnus wrote commentaries on *Posterior Analytics*, *Sophistical Refutations*, *Poetics*, Alexander’s commentary on *De Caleo*, and *On Generation and Corruption* (Ibn an-Nadim 534). We also know that Matta Ibn Yunnus authored his own books including one on the conditional syllogism (535). The variety of genres indicates that the translations were not always strictly faithful to the original, but varied according to their context and needs of their sponsors.

Another historian who raises the issue of genre is Ibn Sa’id al-Andalusi when he describes Hunayn’s work: “There was also Hunayn Ibn Ishaq . . . one of the best translators of the Islamic era. He had perfect knowledge of both Arabic and Greek. . . . It is this Hunayn who translated and *clarified* the works of Hippocrates and Galen and *condensed* them in the best possible way (emphasis added Salem and Kumar 33).

Translation, explanation, and summary were three distinct processes at times, and overlapped at other times. They represented different options or methods that the translators had at their disposal when they handled a foreign work. A work was not necessarily translated, then summarized and/or explained. It could have been summarized or explained straight from the original.
One work that was introduced in different genres according to Ibn Sa’id is Ptolemy’s *Almagest*:

some scientists explained some of [*Almagest’s*] parts and clarified some of its contents, such as al-Fadl Ibn Hatim al-Nayryzi, while others abbreviated it and rendered it more accessible, such as Muhammad Ibn Jabir al-Battani. Understanding his book and the arrangement of its parts was the goal of the scientists who came after him; they worked and competed to attain this goal. (Salem and Kumar 28)

Ibn Sa’id also mentions an Ahmad Ibn Kathir al-Farghani who wrote summaries (*jawami’*) of thirty chapters of *Almagest* in one of his books (Al-Andalusi 77).

The question of genre is integral to understanding the nature and degree of innovation in both al-Kindi’s and al-Farabi’s works and will be treated in detail in Chapters Three and Five. The title of al-Kindi’s treatise indicates that it is a summary and al-Farabi’s book on rhetoric was described as a summary of Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric* by the book’s editor when in fact both these works are better described as adaptations of foreign knowledge to a new cultural context. Looking at a work by al-Kindi is informative because his scholarship took place at the peak of the Translation Movement when he himself headed a translation circle, and as such illustrates the selectivity of the Movement and the adaptation of the knowledge acquired to the ideological needs of the new empire. Al-Farabi’s work, on the other hand, comes after the extensive Translation Movement has slowed down, and illustrates a more advanced approach to knowledge making.
Sponsors

Studying the goals of the sponsors of translated works sheds more light on the all-important issue of purpose behind the Translation Movement beyond what has already been covered about it earlier. Without the funding that these sponsors provided, and the high standards that accompanied this level of funding, the Translation Movement would not have reached the level of professionalism that it did in Abbasid Baghdad.

The person for whom the translation was produced determined the approach taken by the translator. According to Hunayn:

we want to know . . . who those are for whom I (or others) have translated every one of the books whose translation I have undertaken, and at what age I translated them; for these are two points on which we must have information, the value of the version being different according to the scientific capacity of the translator and of the person for whom the book has been translated. (qtd. in Meyerhof 713)

Sponsors paid good money for the translation work and consequently had high expectations. We know from al-Fihrist that a group of sponsors known as Banu al-Munajjim, paid translators including Hunayn, Hubaysh, and Thabit Ibn Qurra, 500 dinars a month (Ibn an-Nadim 505). Another sponsor, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Malik az-Zayat, vizer of al-Mu’tassim, spent about 2000 dinars a month for translations.14

Such impressive funding demonstrates that translation was integral to the functioning of the Abbasid society. A professional product was expected; Hunayn’s Risala and Ibn an-Nadim’s al-Fihrist both include accounts of the high standards and
expectations of the sponsors. Hunayn states: “I translated into Syriac, some years ago, for Yuhanna Ibn Massaweyah and I took pains to express the meaning as clearly as possible; for this man likes plain (intelligible) expression and urges constantly in that direction” (qtd. in Meyerhof 717). Muhammad, one member of the famous family of sponsors known as Banu Musa, also had a reputation for being demanding of his translators. Hunayn states several times that Muhammad was not satisfied by an Arabic version and had it revised and corrected (Meyerhof 715). Of another sponsor, Salmasawaih Ibn Bunan, Hunayn says that he translated “according to the natural intelligence, the exercise in the use of books and diligence of Salmasawaih” (qtd. in Meyerhof 718-19).

The *Risala* names more than twenty men at whose request the Galenic works were translated. They can be divided into two categories: the first group was made up of prominent statesmen, who were learned men, nearly all of them Muslim; the second group was made up of men whom Hunayn describes as teachers, colleagues, and friends of the translators, nearly all of whom were Christian/Nestorian physicians of Jundisapur or Baghdad. The translations made for the former group were in Arabic while the translations made for the latter were in Syriac (Meyerhof 713). Some of the names of the sponsors belonging to the former group include Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Malik az-Zayat, vizer of al-Mu’tassim; Ibrahim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Musa al-Khatib, known as “the secretary;” Abu Musa Ibn Isa al-Khatib who held at least seven administrative posts; Ishaq Ibn Ibrahim at-Tahiri, general and commander of the Baghdad police; Abdallah Ibn Ishaq, judge of the western part of Baghdad; and Ishaq Ibn Sulayman, governor of Egypt in the time of Harun ar-Rasheed (714-16). Some of the names of members of the latter
group were discussed earlier in the section on medicine and include Yuhanna Ibn Massaweyah, a Jundisapur physician who moved to Baghdad to be at the service of Harun ar-Rasheed; Jibril Ibn Bukhtishu’, the most prominent member of the Nestorian family of physicians; Bukhtishu Ibn Jibril; Salmasawaih Ibn Bunan; Shirishu Ibn Qurtu, another medical practitioner from Jundisapur; Zakariyya Ibn Abdallah at-Tayfouri and his son Israil; Dawud al-Mutabbib; and Ali al-Fayum (Meyerhof 717-20).

It is easy to conclude why the latter group commissioned these translations: they were physicians and medical professors who needed this material for professional and academic reasons as well as to maintain the wealth and power that came with the prominent socio-economic status they acquired as a result. The goals of the statesmen who commissioned translations of medical and philosophical works are less obvious, however.

The primary historical accounts stop at informing us of the details and motive behind the generous funding and diligence of statesmen in pursuing original manuscripts. With medicine, the knowledge was probably utilized for ensure that the state’s control or oversight over the curricula studied at educational institutions. There might have also been a financial return for sponsoring the translation of medical works by those government officials, but the primary sources do not provide any details on that.

In such an intellectually rich environment, we cannot exclude passion for acquiring and collecting sources of knowledge. Abul Hasan Ali Ibn Yahya, the person to whom Hunayn’s *Risala* is addressed, is an example of a person who had such a passion. His father was an astronomer in the service of the caliph al-Ma’mun, and he himself was
a friend and secretary of al-Mutawakkil, and served as commander in the northern frontier provinces against the Byzantine Empire. Hunayn describes him as “a lover of science and possessed a library known as Khizanat al-Hikma” (qtd. in Meyerhof 714).

Translation as a Profession: The Process of Hunayn Ibn Ishaq and His School

Examining the translation process closely is informative because it reflects the high standards that the Abbasid society expected from this all-important profession. Training was a necessary element that guaranteed the high quality of the translations produced. Ibn Abi Usaybia’s history includes an account that the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil established a school of translation for Hunayn where the scholars translated the Greek medical works under his supervision. It is probably at this school that some of the challenges that translators routinely met were addressed. One of these challenges was the translation of terms, a problem that was carried over to the second Translation Movement before the Renaissance in Spain. According to E. G. Browne: “To render the medical works of the Greeks into their own language [the old Arabs] had . . . to invent new terms translated or imitated from the Greek . . . but they already possessed a fairly copious anatomical vocabulary” (qtd. in Meyerhof 712). But the level of competence of some of the Arabic translators sometimes interfered with the coining of accurate Arabic terms. Hunayn uses Arabic terminology which was adopted by the entire Arabic medical science community. On the other hand, in translating medical terms, Yahya Ibn Massaweyah for example, is very often obliged to give Syriac or Persian terms because he lacks the Arabic word. Ibn Abi Usaybia tells us that the person who produced the first translation of the Materia Medica of Dioscorides from Greek into Arabic, Istifan, one of
Hunayn’s students, was not able to translate most of the drug names. Hunayn revised
Istifan’s translation but it is the Spanish-Arabic scholars (after 951) who produced an
entirely new and complete Arabic version of this volume at the court of Abdur-Rahman
III, caliph of Cordoba. The famous physician Ibn Juljul revised the work in 982
(Meyerhof 705-6).

Style and readability—in addition to scientific and semiotic accuracy—were two
qualities that the translators strived to attain. According to Bergstrasser, in comparing
Hunayn’s translation work to his nephew’s and student’s, Hubaysh, claims:

The correctness is greater; however one is left with the impression that this
is not the result of anxious effort, but of a free and sure mastery over the
language. This is seen in the easier adaptation to the Greek original and
the striking exactness of expression attained without verbosity. It is all this
that which constitutes the famous fasaha (eloquence) of Hunayn. (qtd. in
Meyerhof 713)

This is an advantage that the Arabic Translation Movement had over the earlier Syriac
translations. According to Hunayn’s Risala these earlier attempts were “very bad.” This
view is confirmed by M. Pognon, who comments on a Syriac version of Hippocrates’
arborisms that he edited:

The Syrian translators, when they found a difficult passage, too often
contented themselves with rendering each Greek word by a Syriac word
without in any way seeking to write an intelligible sentence. Thus we find
in their translations many incorrect sentences, and even expressions which have absolutely no meaning. (qtd. in Meyerhof 711)

By comparison, Pognon credits Hunayn with improving the translation process by studying Greek, seeking correct manuscripts of the Greek books, and striving to understand the meaning of these texts before he began to translate (Meyerhof 711).

Translation was an elaborate and time consuming process that could become better as the translators gained experience and as better proof documents became available; thus, revision was at the heart of the process. Of the Galenic text, *Methodus Medendi*, Hunayn informs us that “Sergios translated this book into Syriac, the first six parts, when he was yet weak and inexperienced in translation work. He translated the remaining eight parts when he had acquired experience so that he did this version better than that of the first six parts” (qtd. in Meyerhof 692). Hunayn is equally critical of his own process and honestly admits his own shortcomings when he discloses that he had to revise his translation of *De Typis*:

I translated it first for Jibril Ibn Bukhtishu’ when I was a youth; this was the first of Galen’s books which I translated into Syriac. Later on, after having attained ripe manhood I revised the text and found a certain number of faults which I corrected with diligence, as I wished to have a copy for my son. I translated it moreover into Arabic for Abul Hassan Ahmad Ibn Musa. (qtd. in Meyerhof 692)

He describes his process of revision using the example of yet another medical work:
I translated [De Sectis] when I was a young man . . . from a very defective Greek manuscript. Later on, when I was about forty years old, my pupil Hubaysh asked me to correct it after having collected a certain number of Greek manuscripts. Thereon I collated these so as to produce one correct manuscript, and I compared this manuscript with the Syriac text and corrected it. I am in the habit of proceeding thus in all my translation work. Some years later I translated it into Arabic for Abu Ja’far Muhammad Ibn Musa. (qtd. in Meyerhof 690-91)

Translation in Abbasid Baghdad took place in professional organizations known as translation circles and was often a collaborative activity. The collaboration can be attributed to the existence of several manuscripts of the same text that the translators needed to compare and arrive at a consensus as to which one was the best available version if major differences existed. More than one translator would have been needed depending on the number of manuscripts available. Moreover, sometimes a previous translation existed that needed to be revised when a new manuscript in the original language surfaced or when the quality of the initial translation was in question. This case also necessitated the collaboration of more than one person. Hunayn’s account explains why collaboration was a practical thing to do:

Salmawaih urged me to correct the second half [of a translation of a medical text] for him believing that this would be easier than to make a new version. So he collated with me a part of the seventh section, he holding in his hand the Syriac version while I held the Greek text, he
reading the Syriac and I telling him of any variations from the Greek text and suggesting corrections. (qtd. in Meyerhof 692)

The collaboration at times took the shape of one senior translator revising or correcting the work of a less experienced one, something that Hunayn repeatedly did.

A final characteristic of the translation process is the passion and drive that pushed the translators to go through the agonizing process of pursuing sources, translating, and continuously revising their work. Hunayn provides a passionate account of such a pursuit: “I personally could not make up my mind to translate any part of [the incomplete parts of this book De Demonstratione] without having read them to the very end on account of their incompleteness and of the longing of the soul to find a complete version of this book” (emphasis added qtd. in Meyerhof 707). In another account he states: “I sought for it earnestly and travelled in search for it” (emphasis added qtd. in Meyerhof 690).

The high expectations and pay required a high level of professionalism that was accomplished through training, collaboration, a lengthy process, and a focus on revision. All of these that elements that were not available in previous attempts in history at translating canonical works and may explain not only the longevity of the Translation Movement, but its major contribution to the advancement of many fields of knowledge.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused on only a few branches of knowledge by way of example to illustrate the goals, contributions, and processes of the Translation Movement. However, translation was prevalent in many fields including professional and theoretical
fields. Translation was necessary to sustain the professional educations that produced secretaries, inheritance lawyers, engineers, and economists for the Abbasid society (Gutas, *Greek Thought* 110-15). Moreover, the development of theoretical sciences was necessary in producing successful applications as the section on astronomy above illustrates through the accounts of Ibn Sa’id al-Andalusi.

Generally speaking, the medieval Arabic Translation Movement was characterized by high demand, high salaries, professionalism, and manifold forms and expressions of power. Power and knowledge are synonymous in Abbasid Baghdad; gaining and maintaining power was a major incentive for many of the sponsors of the Translation Movement for ideological, political, and/or socioeconomic purposes. This can be seen in the purposes underlying the translation and adaptation of works in the varying fields of medicine, astronomy, and philosophy to name only a few.

But like any major historical event, the Translation Movement did come to an end. This did not happen because interest in knowledge dwindled, but because the level of knowledge and scientific research in the Abbasid society was sophisticated enough that the knowledge in the translated works was obsolete. As I explained earlier, many of the translators were themselves experts in their fields and the works they translated did not often go uncriticized. Even at the peak of the Translation Movement, works that disagreed with canonical Greek works were common. The Translation Movement ended largely because it had to make room for newer original work that subsequently shaped human thinking for centuries to come—and yet which would have been impossible to
compose had the Translation Movement not been so effective at integrating old and new ideas.

The following chapters will illustrate, through the work of al-Kindi and al-Farabi, the critical approach to knowledge that was taken during the Translation Movement as well as the innovative contribution to human knowledge that Arabic scholarship made in the wake of this massive movement. And by this illustration, the myth of “mere translation” will be further dissolved.
CHAPTER 2, MEDIEVAL ARABIC SCHOLARSHIP: A DIALOGIC ANALYSIS

Introduction

This dissertation covers different branches of knowledge related to the Translation Movement and its legacy. Scholarship that took place in the Islamic empire during medieval times covered other branches of knowledge, however. While this project focuses on the engagement of Arabic scholars in possession of knowledge from different parts of the Islamic empire as a result of their translation work, it is important for the reader to know that there were branches of knowledge that were specifically Arabic and/or Islamic. The field of rhetoric is a case in point. Before the advent of Islam, the Arabs took pride in their skill with language and wrote epic-length poems in which they showcased their eloquence. Also, at a time when literacy was rare, there was heavy reliance on oral communication. *Ilm al-balagha*, one of the two branches of rhetoric that the Arabs engaged in, was a well-established field before the Arabs were acquainted with the Greco-Alexandrian tradition. It was not until the Translation Movement was underway that *ilm al-khataba*, the branch of rhetoric based mostly on the Aristotelian tradition and the Alexandrian commentaries on it, was introduced. Other specifically Arabic areas of knowledge included Arabic grammar which gained popularity as the empire expanded and non-native speakers converted to Islam and needed to perfect the language, and when non-native speakers, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, needed to have an adequate knowledge of the new official language in non-Arabic speaking parts of the empire. Grammar was therefore a major field of study and constituted the criteria for both effective language use and thinking. The latter point inspired traditionalist scholars.
to argue against the adoption of logic on the basis that it was an unneeded, foreign field of knowledge that the Arabs owned an equivalent for, namely grammar. Other specifically Arabic and Islamic fields of knowledge included an array of theological sciences that specialized in interpreting the Qur’an, documenting the hadith—the Prophet’s sayings—and fiqh—Islamic jurisprudence.

As a scholar in the field of rhetoric who specializes in history, postcolonial theory, and hybridity, I was driven by two simultaneous goals to write a dissertation on hybridity in the knowledge produced by the Translation Movement and the work of two medieval Arabic philosophers, al-Kindi and al-Farabi. The first goal was to draw attention to the availability of a rich rhetorical tradition in the medieval Mediterranean basin and Middle East that is currently largely untouched in our field. Such a tradition is based on and is a continuation of the classical rhetorical tradition that should be of interest to rhetoricians not only from an historical, but also from an epistemological standpoint. Alexandria was a major center of learning in the middle ages, one that gave rise to rich commentary tradition devoted to Aristotle’s work developed. These commentaries interpreted the Aristotelian corpus from a Platonic-mystical standpoint that yielded a Neo-Platonic school of thinking that would be later adopted by the Arabic scholars in Baghdad. Moreover, the Alexandrian curriculum also packaged the Aristotelian works differently, changing their focus and in certain instances their meanings through this process. For example, the Organon was prefaced by Porphyry’s Isagoge and included the Rhetoric and Poetics, introducing a significant logical component to these arts that they did not necessarily have in their original Greek context.
These changes were also adopted by the Arabic scholars in Baghdad. The philosophical Greek and Roman works acquired new uses in medieval times: Christian Syriac-speaking learning centers used some of these works to interpret and promote their faiths, such as the *Prior Analytics* and the *Topics*, and banned others that they feared might interfere with their religious agenda, such as the *Posterior Analytics*. The use of these works to fulfill certain agendas continued with the ruling elite in the Islamic empire.

All of this is of interest to historians of rhetoric because the work of the Greek and Roman rhetoricians and philosophers did not stop with the fall of Athens and Rome, but was simply moved to other thriving centers of learning. Because of the shift in geographical and historical context, significant adaptations were introduced to the works of these ancient philosophers that deserve our attention. In fact, our knowledge of the classical rhetorical tradition should be deemed incomplete without a knowledge of its journeys through the medieval period. These Alexandrian, Syriac, and Arabic adaptations are also of significance to rhetoricians in general, not only those who identify as historians, because they illustrate that knowledge making is a dialogic, hybrid process that does not take place in vacuum but is essentially inspired by what comes before it and paves the way for what comes after it.

The second goal of this dissertation is to address and challenge a predominantly Orientalist attitude that labeled the work produced during the Translation Movement period as merely preservative and imitative, thus denying all of the significant unique contributions to different fields of knowledge that Arabic translators made. This attitude is the result of a condescending attitude toward non-Western cultures that was prevalent
during the era of European colonization of different parts of the world. At the peak of such an Orientalist attitude, many medieval manuscripts of Arabic science and philosophy were discovered, edited, translated, and studied by Orientalist scholars who interpreted this body of scholarship through a biased lens that did not entertain the idea that this scholarship could be original. Therefore, the agreement among rhetoricians that medieval Arabic scholarship merely preserved Aristotle should be revisited and a more critical approach to this body of knowledge should be adopted. While the Orientalist attitude is clearly unintentional on the part of these rhetoricians, an exposure to Arabic philosophical, especially rhetorical, works will play a major role in enriching studies of the history of rhetoric through exploring the evolution of the classical tradition beyond Athens and Rome in later centers of learning such as Alexandria and Baghdad. It will also enrich the field of rhetorical studies at large through illustrating the role of context, audience, and purpose in the process of knowledge meaning. In the process, justice will be done to the contributions medieval Arabic philosophers, ones that are at the heart of what we do in rhetoric and composition studies.

Michel Foucault’s Power-Knowledge and Edward Said’s Orientalism

The work of Edward Said in Orientalism is the basis for my understanding of the modern Western bias toward oriental civilization. An understanding of Said’s notion of “Orientalism” and the relationship between power and knowledge in his work requires first a review of Michel Foucault’s concept of power-knowledge which inspired some of Said’s work. Power and knowledge are in direct relation to each other in Foucault’s oeuvre; the compound noun, power-knowledge, was coined to refer to this close relation.
He clarifies this relation in *Discipline and Punish*: “Power produces knowledge; . . . power and knowledge directly imply one another; . . . there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (27).

Foucault defines power as a right that one possesses and transfers like a commodity; it is a repressive right that subjugates others (*Power/Knowledge* 88-90). Power is related to knowledge in that “we are subjected to the production of truth by power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth” (*Power/Knowledge* 93). This truth is context-bound: “we are forced to produce the truth of power that our society demands, of which it has need, in order to function” (*Power/Knowledge* 93). Here the role of wealth and the economy comes into play in the power-knowledge equation because this kind of truth that is tailored to the needs of a society is first and foremost used to accumulate wealth (*Power/Knowledge* 93-94). This connection between knowledge, power, and wealth are all constituent components of the nineteenth century colonial project where power over the colonized nations was supported by tailored knowledges about them that aimed to take advantage of their resources.

Essential components of power-knowledge are the notions of the *depositif* and apparatus. *Dispositif* (lit. *equipment* or *plan*) is used by Foucault to indicate the institutional, material, and bureaucratic mechanisms and knowledges that maintain and fortify various powers within society. An apparatus is the machine created when a set of power relations are coordinated with one or more systems of knowledge. Said’s
Orientalism can be described as a discursive apparatus put in action when the military superiority of the West and the body of knowledge produced by its intellectuals about the Orient are combined to facilitate the West’s imperial agenda. This agenda had as its main goal the economic exploitation of the Orient, another ingredient of Foucault’s power-knowledge, since, according to Foucault, the historical *raison d’etre* of political power is to be found in economy (*Power/Knowledge* 89).

Nineteenth century Orientalism had to create a certain version of the truth to enable its imperialistic, colonial society to achieve its goal of subjugating and financially exploiting the Other. In this (or any) discursive apparatus,

Truth isn’t outside power, or lacking in power . . . truth isn’t the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its own regime of truth, its “general politics” of truth: that is, the types of discourses which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as truth. (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 131)

The regime and general politics of truth of the Western nineteenth and early twentieth century society was one that viewed the Orient as a homogeneous group of people who
were the antithesis of everything that the West stood for in terms of progress and civilization, and that desperately waited for arrival of the Western civilization to rescue it from the darkness of its ignorance. Such a truth had no place for a civilized east that had contributions to make to human knowledge.\textsuperscript{16} This latter point is the focus of Said’s \textit{Orientalism}.

A central term in Said’s scholarship, Orientalism is the body of knowledge produced by the West about the Orient as a way of defining and having power over it. In the process, Said claims, the West defined itself as the opposite of the Orient; the general assumption underlying this system of thinking was the West’s superiority and the Orient’s inferiority. Such claims to knowledge, according to Said, gave rise to an Orientalism that was “a library or archive of information” (41) about the Orient, an archive where the Orient was denied any voice of its own in this process of representation and where it was labeled, classified, and evaluated with the ultimate goal of serving the goals of the empire. A creative, innovative Orient with contributions to human knowledge had no place in such a discursive apparatus.

The roots of Orientalism can be traced back to the medieval and renaissance periods when Islam, considered both a military threat and an enemy to Christianity, represented the Orient. A more secular Orientalism took place in the eighteenth century that reinforced the misconceptions of the Renaissance and cast them in a secular framework. Earlier Orientalism provided nineteenth century scholars and politicians with the attitude they had:
modern Orientalist theory and praxis (from which present day Orientalism derives) can be understood, not as a sudden access of objective knowledge about the Orient, but as a set of structures inherited from the past, secularized, redeposited, and re-formed by such disciplines as philology, which in turn were naturalized, modernized, and laicized substitutes for (or versions of) Christian supernaturalism. (122)

Orientalism had accomplished what Said describes as “its self-metamorphosis from a scholarly discourse to an imperial institution” when it became involved with colonialism and imperialism at a time when Europe had colonized 85% of the earth (95; 123). It is then that the colonial and intellectual agendas came together with the goal of serving the empire.

Influenced by Foucault’s concept of power-knowledge, Said’s Orientalism manifests knowledge and power as two sides of the same coin. It is a hegemonic relationship where the uneven distribution of power resulted not only in political but also intellectual power giving rise to fields of knowledge about the Orient (12). In such a system, knowledge is defined as surveying a civilization and being able to do that, according to Said. Such an ability allowed the labeling of the Oriental as “irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, ‘different’” (40). By defining the Oriental, the European was simultaneously defining himself as “rational, virtuous, mature, ‘normal’” (40). The Oriental is “contained and represented by dominating frameworks” (40). In this system of knowledge, the superiority of the knower and the inferiority of the known are taken for granted (32).
It is in this context of empire and colonialism that the discovery, editing, and translating of medieval Arabic philosophy and science took place in the West. In this context, the role of Orientalism was to serve the empire, and such an agenda would not have been fulfilled if an honest portrayal of Islamic civilization was provided. Instead, this Arabic scholarship fell victim to an Orientalism that viewed it through a predetermined ideology in which the Orient was inferior and the West was superior. In this system of “ideological fiction” (321), “the Orientalist provides his own society with representations of the Orient . . . that provided Orientalist discourse with what, at that moment, it seems most in need of, and . . . that respond to certain cultural, professional, national, political, and economic requirements of the epoch” (273). In the early twentieth century, Orientalist studies were considered an imperial obligation, or “rendering a patriotic duty to the Empire” in the words of Lord Curzon, British viceroy of India (214).

A consequence of the Orientalist school of interpretation was that cultural generalization acquired “the armor of scientific statement and the ambience of corrective study. . . . Thus a knowing vocabulary developed, and its functions as much as its style, located the Orient in a comparative framework. . . . Such a comparatism is rarely descriptive; most often, it is both evaluative and expository” (149). Medieval Arabic philosophy and science were victim to such an attitude. The prevalent attitude that Islamic philosophy was either a mere replica of the Greek, or (in the incidents when it was original) dealt predominantly with non-rational issues such as mysticism, was therefore a self-fulfilling prophecy.
Even though postcolonial studies generally cover scholarship produced by the West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is applicable to my project because I use it to question modern Western attitudes toward medieval Arabic science and philosophy. Said’s work is, therefore, applicable to my project but not in a straightforward manner. After all, the medieval Arabic scholarship I am covering is not about a colonized Eastern state and a colonizing Western power. In fact it is the opposite: I am covering a peak moment in the history of the East, a time when the Islamic empire expanded toward the East and the West taking over the Persian and the Roman empires. It is, however, not the medieval Islamic civilization that I am covering using postcolonial theory. It is the modern Orientalist attitude toward it that needs to be addressed using the work of theorists such as Said. Using postcolonial theory is important to my project because the significant contributions of the Islamic world were undermined, labeled as mystical and irrational, and at best described as preservative of the Hellenic heritage during the modern colonization of the West to the East.

Even though medieval Arabic philosophy fell victim to Orientalist power-knowledge dynamics, a discussion of power-knowledge regarding this body of scholarship would be incomplete without bringing to light how power-knowledge worked in medieval Baghdad. The Arab caliphate was aware of the crucial role that knowledge played in establishing and maintaining power over their people, especially members of different cultures that became members of the Islamic empire, such as the Persians. This will to power was one of the main motivating drives behind the state sponsorship of translation. One example of this connection is the design of Baghdad as a circle. A by-
product of power-knowledge, the literal and metaphorical application of panopticism can be used to explain the connection between power and knowledge in the case of the design of Baghdad. Panopticism is “an ensemble of mechanisms brought into play in all clusters of procedures used by power” (“Questions on Geography” 71). I believe that even though the term is used by Foucault to refer to the modern prison and governmentality, it is equally applicable to any moment in history when surveillance is used as a tool to maintain power. The decision to design Baghdad as a circle with the caliphal palace in the center is a classic example of panopticism: knowledge of astronomy and geometry was strategically utilized to maintain the power of the caliph through allowing surveillance of and equal access to all parts of the new capital by placing the government seat literally and metaphorically at the center of the city.

Other examples of the connection of power and knowledge were provided in Chapter One and include the translation of medical works to maintain wealth and social status, the translation of the Persian Denkard to prevent Persian rebellion, and the use of the Topics in interfaith debates. These are only a few examples that illustrate that power was at the heart of the pursuit of knowledge. It is therefore ironic that a discursive apparatus such as the Translation Movement that was driven by a need for power would be subjected to the same ideology in our modern times where it is appropriated and represented in such a way to suit the need for power by a dominating Western civilization.

Another Foucaultian concept that is not only related to power-knowledge but also imbricated in what might be termed the ideology of the book, is the archive. A traditional
definition of this term invokes a static accumulation of knowledge for only storage and preservation purposes. Such a traditional approach was adopted by Orientalists to describe the work of the medieval Arabic scholars because such an attitude was complicit with the colonial agenda. Foucault, on the other hand, defines the archive as follows:

By this word, I do not mean the mass of texts gathered together at a given period, those from some past epoch which have survived erasure. I mean the set of rules which at a given period and for a definite society defined: the limits and the forms of the sayable. . . . The limits and forms of conservation. . . . The limits and forms of memory as it appears in different discursive formations. . . . The Limits and forms of reactivation. . . . The limits and forms of appropriation. ("Politics and the Study of Discourse" 59-60)

In The Archaeology of Knowledge, Foucault treats the archive even more broadly, though it maintains its focus on the shifting power dynamics it enables: [the archive is] “the general system of the formation and transformation of statements” (130). For Foucault, then, the archive is the set of rules (the conditions) by which it is possible to know something at a specific historical point and the rules that determine how this knowledge can change. Archives organize statements into intelligible blocks of meaning. This notion of the archive better suits the work that was conducted during the Translation Movement because there were indeed rules that governed which works or ideologies were to be conserved and reactivated. There was a system that organized a massive amount of knowledge from different cultures and different time periods into usable and unusable
material. Some of this material was deemed adaptable and other material was combined with other material from a different culture to produce more efficient knowledge, and so forth. Moreover, the very undertaking of a comprehensive and systematic translation initiative suggests a particular set of relationships extant among the caliph, the caliphate’s power, and knowledge. It is to an understanding of these relationships that I now turn.

Bakhtinian Hybridity: Challenging Orientalism and Dialogic Epistemology

An argument that a body of scholarship based on an older tradition through translation could be innovative requires definitions of concepts such as knowledge and meaning. This is essential to the main argument of this dissertation project because a substantial amount of medieval Arabic scholarship was produced within what was known as translation circles and was based on imported, translated knowledge. Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism is key to resolving this problem of originality. Dialogism is a central idea in Bakhtin’s thinking that is well-suited for projects like this one that aim to challenge reductive attitudes toward the relationship between history and discourse. Medieval Arabic scholarship, for example, exemplifies the kind of situation that the idea of dialogism can readily clarify: it defines meaning making as a continuous process that is continuously responding to what was said before it while simultaneously anticipating what will come after it.

Dialogism is a meaning-making process that is characterized by the mixing of intentions between speaker and listener; the creation of meaning out of past utterance; and the constant need for utterances to position themselves in relation to one another (Vice 45). In “Discourse in the Novel,” Bakhtin mentions that “every word is directed
toward an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering that it anticipates [. . .] Responsive understanding is a fundamental force, one that participates in the formulation of discourse” (qtd. in Vice 52). In this theory of discourse, new meaning is never the sole property or creation of a particular person, but is the reshaping of a previous utterance or utterances in the responding process. In dialogism, every speaker is both a listener and respondent: “he is not after all, the first speaker, the one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe” (qtd. in Vice 64). This response is always shaped by the speaker’s social, historical, and ideological context.

In “Marxism and the Philosophy of Language” Valentin Voloshinov states:

> There is no reason for saying that meaning belongs to a word as such. In essence, meaning belongs to a word in its position between speakers; that is, meaning is realized only in the process of active, responsive understanding. Meaning does not reside in the word or in the soul of the speaker or in the soul of the listener. Meaning is the effect of the interaction between speaker and listener. (qtd. in Vice 35)

It is this interaction between the Arabic scholars and their predecessors from different cultures that allowed them to build on older knowledge and produce more innovative scholarship on the practical and theoretical levels, as Chapter One has shown. It is important to note here that Voloshinov and Bakhtin worked collaboratively and, following their belief that knowledge making is a collaborative, dialogic process, refuse to claim authorship of the works they wrote. It has been agreed by scholars recently,
however, that “Marxism and the Philosophy of Language” is Voloshinov’s, not Bakhtin’s.

In dialogism, the two most fundamental aspects of language are its creative capacity and evaluative nature (Morris 4). I have shown in Chapter One, for example, how translated works in astronomy from different civilizations were combined to produce more advanced knowledge. Arab scientists, for example, clearly did not rely only on previous knowledge, but rather evaluated that knowledge before responding to, and extending it—ultimately creating new knowledge. In Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism, “new” is not a term that means doing something or inventing something that did not exist before; this is simply not possible from Bakhtin’s perspective.

This dialogic approach to meaning making is also applicable the original source material itself that the Arabic scholars engaged with and challenges the Orientalist attitude toward it in a new way. Dialogism is a theory of discourse that is applicable to all knowledge including the Greek material that Arabic scholars translated. For example, Plato’s Republic, the inspiration for al-Farabi’s Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City, is itself based on a model that Plato observed in ancient Egyptian temples. Plato—through the persona of Socrates—credits Egyptian civilization with much in dialogues such as the Phaedrus and Timaeous. Moreover, in the fifth century CE, the Persians sponsored translations of Greek works claiming that this knowledge was originally their own and was exported to the West by Alexander the Great when he conquered Persia. Martin Bernal claims in Black Athena that it is only recently, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (in what he describes as the Aryan model), that
European thinkers started denying such contributions to their heritage because it interfered with an imperial, racist ideology prevalent at the time. Adopting a dialogic approach to knowledge challenges this Aryan (in Bernal’s words) or Orientalist (in Said’s words) attitude by proposing a model that places all knowledge in a transient state where an utterance is simultaneously responding to what came before it and anticipating what will follow. Bakhtin describes this aspect of dialogism as addressivity (Vice 46; Holquist 48). In this system, Greek knowledge responded to Pre-Socratic and Egyptian knowledge while anticipating Neo-Platonic thinking. Neo-Platonic thinking, in its turn, responded to Greek thinking and anticipated Arabic scholarship, Arabic philosophy responded to Greek and Neo-Platonic thinking (among others) and anticipated the Renaissance, and so forth. For example, Plato’s *Republic* is a Greek remodeling of the caste system of the ancient Egyptian temples. This Greek model inspired an Islamic version by al-Farabi, which, in its turn inspired other versions by later Andalusian philosophers such as Ibn Bajja. While this previous example clarifies the addressivity involved in knowledge making, it is important to note that this latter process was more complicated in medieval Arabic scholarship. The Arabs responded to Greek and neo-Platonic thought, but they did so while drawing on an extensive history of utterances from a wide range of other sources, such as Persian and Indian, and they combined and evaluated scholarship from diverse source material in one specific field producing knowledge that surpassed the source material they drew on.

Tension characterizes dialogism, according to Bakhtin, resulting not in peaceful relativity, or inert co-existence, but in the clash of discourses. Dialogism is therefore
oppositional; a word provokes its “counter-word;” words are “an arena for the clash and criss-crossing of differently oriented social accents. A word in the mouth of a particular individual person is the product of the living interaction of social forces” (Bakhtin, “Marxism and the Philosophy of Language” qtd. in Morris 12). Bakhtin’s claim in “Discourse in the Novel” that the word in language is half someone else’s conveys this sense of battle. If the word is half owned by another, pressure must be exerted to gain at least the remaining half of that word, or perhaps, temporarily, the whole of it. In Sue Vice’s words, dialogism “refers to the ceaselessly shifting power relations between words, their sensitivity to each other, and the relativizing force of their historically motivated clashes and temporary resolutions” (5). This hegemony characterizes the Translation Movement; as Chapter Three will show in detail, al-Kindi reshapes the polytheistic content of the documents he claims to be summarizing and injects them with a monotheistic style and semantics that are mandated by his context. In this process, the original source material is stripped of one of its basic characteristics—its polytheistic nature—and appropriated to suit a monotheistic one. Similarly, Chapters Four and Five show that, in accordance with an Alexandrian approach to the Aristotelian curriculum, al-Farabi treats rhetoric as a logical art, an intention that is not clearly or directly stated by Aristotle. Moreover, he adapts it to suit an Arabic grammar and thought system.

In addition to the claim that each utterance is a response to a previous one, dialogism proposes that a specific utterance acquires meaning through anticipating the response that it will receive. Morris explains that “the dialogic quality of meaning whether it is at the microlevel of individual consciousness or at the macrolevel of class
and historical social consciousness is more complex than one-directional responsiveness’’ (13). According to Bakhtin “Word is a two-sided act. It is determined equally by whose word it is and for whom it is meant. As word, it is precisely the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee” (qtd. in Morris 13). Morris explains this characteristic of dialogism by stating that “each word is doubly-oriented; it looks back to the word it is answering and forward to the anticipated word it will partly determine in advance. Words are thus borderzones between self and other and moments in the open-ended historical continuity of past and future” (13). Similarly, Holquist reminds us that in addressivity, “[n]othing means anything until it achieves a response” (48). In dialogism, “meaning is understood as something still in the process of creation, something still bending toward the future as opposed to what is already completed” (24). Adopting such an approach to language and meaning-making, one can claim that the Neo-Platonic and Arabic responses to classical Greek and Roman thinking contributed meaning to this ancient heritage and that a study of this heritage would be incomplete without tracing its development in Alexandria and other Mediterranean centers, Baghdad, and later al-Andalus.

Other thinkers have come up with similar theories of knowledge making. For example, in The Archaeology of Knowledge Foucault introduces the notion of the enunciative field:

At the very outset, from the very root, the statement is divided up into an enunciative field in which it has a place and a status. Which arranges for its possible relations with the past, and which opens up for it a possible
future. Every statement is specified in this way: there is no statement in
general, no free, neutral, independent statement; but a statement always
belonged to a series or a whole, always plays a role among other
statements, deriving support from them and distinguishing itself from
them: it is always part of a network of statements. (99)

Foucault emphasizes the importance of historically positioning a statement while
analyzing it: “The analysis of statements, then is a historical analysis, . . . one that . . .
questions them as to their mode of existence, what it means to them to have come into
existence, to have left traces, and perhaps to have remained there, awaiting the moment
when they might be of use once more” (The Archaeology of Knowledge 109). Foucault’s
enunciative field and focus on analyzing a statement’s location in history echo Bakhtin’s
concept of addressivity where an utterance positions itself in response to what came
before it and in anticipation of what comes after it.

A Problem of Terminology: Is Medieval Arabic Rhetoric Comparative or Dialogic?

I do not believe there is an easy answer for this question, nevertheless reflecting
on it sheds light on a new theoretical challenge for historians of rhetoric. To attempt to
answer the question requires that medieval Arabic scholarship be looked at from two
vantage points: first, from the point of view of those scholars who produced this
knowledge; and, second, from the point of view of contemporary scholars studying this
body of knowledge. A question I would like to address is in this section is whether the
term comparative rhetoric is adequate for describing the scholarship that this dissertation
project covers, namely the medieval Arabic scholarship produced during and shortly after
the Translation Movement as well as how contemporary scholars study this body of scholarship. Comparative rhetoric denotes the existence of two or more works or traditions that are analyzed comparatively. George Kennedy defines comparative rhetoric as: “the cross-cultural study of rhetorical traditions as they exist or have existed in different societies around the world” (*Comparative Rhetoric* 1). Its objectives include using “comparative methods to identify what is universal and what is distinctive about any one rhetorical tradition in comparison to others” and developing terminology that could be used to describe rhetorical practices cross-culturally (1).

Based of Kennedy’s definition, I believe that the scholarship conducted during and shortly after the Translation Movement can be accurately described as comparative: these Arab scholars had at their disposal foreign treatises belonging to different cultures that they studied comparatively; they compared the different theories coming from different cultures in fields such as astronomy and metaphysics adopting what they found useful and/or applicable to their needs and rejecting what was not. In making these decisions comparison with their Arab-Islamic culture was at work as well because harmony with or service to this culture determined which work was deemed worthy of further study and which work was not. This comparative trend is evident, for example, in al-Kindi’s “Statement on the Soul,” covered in Chapter Three, where the Platonic and Neo-Platonic notion of advocating a virtuous life to guarantee the salvation of the soul is promoted on the grounds that it is compatible with Islamic teachings. On the other hand, al-Kindi omits references from this same Greek and Neo-Platonic heritage that do not work for his context.
Kennedy’s definition of comparative rhetoric is not enough, however, to describe medieval Arabic philosophy because those scholars did not just stop at comparing material then borrowing what worked for them and rejecting what did not. The knowledge they borrowed underwent massive adaptation. This process was at times so complex that material from three different cultures was combined, and then additions were made to it producing more advanced knowledge. This took place in fields such as astronomy, architecture, and metaphysics. This goes beyond mere comparative scholarship. Here, Bakhtin’s dialogism and his definition of meaning complicate the comparative work that took place in medieval Baghdad, making the term “dialogic scholarship” a more accurate description of medieval Arabic scholarship. Such a description highlights the positioning of medieval Arabic scholarship as a response to previous scholarship and in anticipation of future scholarship creating meaning in the process as the previous section shows in more detail.

Another problem with terminology is how to describe the current scholarship that examines the Translation Movement and its heritage, such as the work I conduct in this dissertation. Using the term “comparative” to describe my work is largely inaccurate because it implies a comparative situation between two different rhetorical traditions that are compared to each other with the purposes of gaining a deeper understanding of one’s own tradition, learning something new from the different tradition, and/or creating a universal tradition and terminology. This is not applicable to a contemporary study of the translation and commentary tradition of medieval Baghdad like the one I am undertaking because I am not comparing an indigenous Middle Eastern tradition to a Western one, nor
am I studying one translation school’s rhetorical techniques with another’s. Instead, I am studying in a Western intellectual context (the US academy), predominantly Western subject matter (Aristotle) as it was adapted in medieval times to suit an Arabic-Islamic context, and how this scholarship was represented in Orientalist scholarship.

Here, again, Bakhtin’s notion of dialogism is an appropriate term to describe contemporary scholarship of medieval Arabic philosophy. Studying how the Aristotelian curriculum evolved in centers of learning such as Alexandria and Baghdad is not comparative analysis because it is Greek knowledge all along that gets modified in different contexts and that acquires newer dimensions in these contexts. These adaptations are more in accordance with a Bakhtinian dialogic framework than a comparative one. It is a meta-dialogic analysis of epistemological evolution because, by studying this body of knowledge, I am tracing the dialogic handling of material across time periods, cultures, and geographical centers of learning. It is also dialogic because as such studies are undertaken they are themselves caught up in the network of utterances that motivate the power-knowledge dynamic across history.

In the next chapter, I take up this issue directly by examining al-Kindi “Statement on the Soul.” In this treatise, al-Kindi evaluates and adapts Pre-Socratic, Greek, and Neo-Platonic metaphysical thinking to suit his Islamic context and the ideological agenda of the Abbasid empire, creating new knowledge in the process.
CHAPTER 3, HYBRIDITY AS PERSUASION IN AL-KINDI’S “A STATEMENT ON THE SOUL”

Though deficient in some of the truth, [earlier philosophers] have been our kindred and associates in that they benefited us by the fruit of their thought, which have become our approaches and instruments, leading to much knowledge of that the real nature of what they fell short of obtaining [sic]. (We should be grateful) / [sic] particularly since it has been clear to us and to the distinguished philosophers before us who are not our co-linguists, that no man by the diligence of his quest has attained the truth, i.e. that which the truth deserves, nor have the (philosophers as a) whole comprehended it. Rather, each of them either has not attained any truth or has attained something small in relation to what the truth deserves. When, though, the little which each one of them who has acquired the truth is collected, something of great worth is collected from this. Al-Kindi, “On First Philosophy”

Introduction

When twenty first century readers approach a medieval treatise with the word “soul” in the title, they would do well to recall that many of rhetoric’s central questions concerning epistemology and communication are in fact historically connected to pre-modern discussions of the soul. Many of the faculties that we currently associate with the mind, such as the abilities to reason and acquire complex language skills, were originally associated with the soul. Greek and Neo-Platonic philosophers describe three or even
four different souls; one of these is always described as the rational or articulate soul and through it knowledge, language, and communication take place. These thinkers include Plato, Isocrates, Aristotle, Plotinus—a major influence on al-Kindi’s “Statement on the Soul”—and Porphyry.

Many Arabic philosophers had at their disposal a long heritage of Greek and Neo-Platonic treatises; in these texts the soul was considered responsible for performing many of the complex functions that make human knowledge and communication possible. Marking a major step in the evolution of the field of metaphysics, some of these ideas are examined through an Islamic lens, appropriated, and re-presented in al-Kindi’s philosophical and metaphysical treatises to accommodate an Islamic audience. Readers of this chapter will likely feel resonances to some of those earlier works themselves. The hybridization of these concepts with Islamic elements is a key component of al-Kindi’s philosophical project and is of particular interest to rhetoric scholars studying the history of intertextuality and other forms of discursive hybridization.

Al-Kindi’s engagement with Greek and Neo-Platonic knowledge marks the beginning of a long and rich Arabic philosophical tradition that actively aimed at effecting substantial social and political changes through the modification of translated philosophical works to suit the different context they were examined in. In this chapter, I provide a translation of al-Kindi’s “A Statement on the Soul: From Aristotle’s Book and Plato and Other Philosophers” (hereafter, “A Statement on the Soul”), followed by an analysis of the epistemological and persuasive significance of the treatise its generic nature. “A Statement on the Soul” illustrates the evolution of metaphysical knowledge
across time and place: we see how al-Kindi negotiates Greek and Neo-Platonic concepts, examines their compatibility with his cultural milieu, and then modifies them accordingly. Based on this first point, and also of interest to the scholar of rhetoric, is the fact that al-Kindi’s work is a project in persuasion. By presenting Greek and Neo-Platonic knowledge as a homogeneous body of scholarship that does not contradict Islamic teachings, al-Kindi attempts to persuade his audience of the legitimacy of studying this scholarship. Moreover, he indirectly adopts certain ideologies that support the belief system of his sponsors and thus may be reasonably be viewed as a promoter of them.

Background and Influences

Abu Yusuf Ya’qub Ibn Ishaq al-Kindi (800-873 CE) was born in Basra but received his education in Baghdad. He is considered the first Arabic philosopher and, according to the primary historical sources that describe his scholarship, was a polymath with knowledge of fields as diverse as arithmetic, astronomy, music theory, optics, and pharmacy. According to Ibn Abi Usaybia, he was “of great standing under [the Abbasid caliphs] al-Ma’mun and al-Mu’tasim” (Adamson Al-Kindi 4). This means that the work of the scholarly circle he headed took place during the peak of the Translation Movement.

The work of al-Kindi’s circle was integral to the effort during the 8th-10th centuries to translate major works of Greek philosophy and metaphysics into Arabic. As the first known Arabic thinker to work with Greek philosophy, al-Kindi is credited with finding Arabic syntactic structures to accommodate the Greek structures with which he was working, as well as with creating an Arabic vocabulary that reflected the technical
Greek lexicon his school was adapting (Adamson *Al-Kindi* 59). This work on translation set the scene and established a lexicon on which the work of later Arabic philosophers depended.

Al-Kindi’s school of translation has been inaccurately described as providing awkward, word-for-word translation of the original, unlike the more sophisticated translations of the other well-known circle of Hunayn Ibn Ishaq. To complicate the simplistic attitude, Endress shows that different styles can be identified in translations that belong to the same phase. For example, the translation of the *Metaphysics* by Ustat is literal while that of the *Theology of Aristotle/Enneads* is not, even though both works were contemporary and translated in al-Kindi’s circle. Endress’ analysis of the translations produced in al-Kindi’s circle produced a number of characteristics, or “guide fossils,” of the translation style of the school: the use of transliterated Greek and Persian words; the influence of Alexandrian lecture-course style in the phraseology of the translations (e.g., use of introductory, summarizing, transitional, and connecting phrases); interpretation through a Neo-Platonic lens while eliminating the Neo-Platonic plurality of deities; and the common use of paraphrasing as the form of translation (qtd. in Gutas *Greek Thought* 146). These characteristics, especially the latter three can be seen in “A Statement on the Soul.”

Several elements simultaneously influenced al-Kindi’s thinking. Al-Kindi was influenced by the Mu’tazelite school (a school of Islamic philosophy rooted in Neo-Platonism), *ilm al-kalam*, Islamic theology, (theologians used Greek metaphysics to understand the nature of God (Adamson, *Al-Kindi* 15-16), Platonism, Aristotelianism,
and Neo-Platonism. Another factor that influenced his thinking that is often and curiously overlooked in the literature are the Qur’an and the teachings of Islam in general.

It might seem contradictory that al-Kindi adopted both Aristotelian and Platonic views regarding certain issues such as metaphysics. This, however, was not an uncommon practice in the Neo-Platonic Alexandrian tradition that influenced al-Kindi’s thinking. Following an Orientalist trend, some scholars—Sheik, for example—attribute al-Kindi’s collage of seemingly contradictory influences to al-Kindi’s confusion (relatively common in his day) over who wrote the Neo-Platonic work the *Enneads*, Plotinus or Aristotle. Other scholars—for example, Adamson—argue that al-Kindi’s Aristotelian views simply take the form of Neo-Platonism. Adamson proposes that it was a conscious decision on al-Kindi’s part to make Aristotelianism and Neo-Platonism compatible. Because al-Kindi was determined to propagate the truth of Greek philosophy in general, he presented this philosophy as a single, coherent system. Additionally, al-Kindi was exposed to Aristotle through Aristotle’s original works as well as through commentaries written by Neo-Platonists such as Porphyry and John Philoponus, which explains (according to this scholarly view) al-Kindi’s Neo-Platonic attitude toward the Aristotelian corpus (Adamson, “Al Kindi and the Reception” 32-33). In accordance with al-Kindi’s harmonizing approach to knowledge, “A Statement on the Soul” is an example of a Kindian treatise that integrates Aristotelian, Platonic, Neo-Platonic, and Islamic thought. The treatise thus represents one of the earliest attempts in Islamic history at adopting a philosophical lifestyle as a means of achieving happiness, defined in this tradition as the combination of knowledge and virtue.
Al Kindi’s “A Statement on the Soul”

The Arabic text of “A Brief Treatise on the Soul” is included in a collection of sixteen treatises titled رسالة الكندى الفلسفية (Rasa’il al-Kindi al-Falsafeya, or Al-Kindi’s Philosophical Treatises). Published in 1950, the collection was edited by Muhammad A. Abu Rida. Abu Rida mentions that he himself discovered the manuscript in the 1930’s in al-Maktaba al-Taymoureya in Dar al-Kutub al-Masreya (The National Library and Archives of Egypt) in manuscript number 55, pages 63-76. In my translation of the text, I have added square brackets to index exact points in Abu Rida’s manuscript.

Abu Rida states that the treatise does not have a specific date and contains a number of scribal errors. Unfortunately, Abu Rida neglected to carefully note where he did and did not correct these errors, thus, his manuscript contains references to only some of his corrections. I have followed Abu Rida’s corrections without referring to them except when he replaced one word by another. Clearly a new scholarly Arabic edition is called for under these circumstances, one that includes both scribal errors and subsequent corrections.

In this translation, I have used the paragraph divisions found in Abu Rida’s version. Because of the distinctive syntactic structure of Arabic and the fact that certain stylistic moves do not translate well into English, I have broken up some of the lengthier sentences to make them more readable in English.

Finally, I initially translated this treatise unaware that Peter Adamson had recently published his own rendering. I consulted his translation while revising my own. Readers comparing the two translations will find some differences. The result of the ambiguity of
the Arabic original has probably led to some of these differences, while the lack of an exact English equivalent has led to others. In general, I have tried to be faithful to the original, even when the translation of a specific term or concept sounds somewhat recondite. For example, I use the concept of the “abstraction of the soul” to refer to the virtuous state the soul reaches when it rids itself of sin because it is more faithful to al-Kindi’s original wording.

Translation of al-Kindi’s Treatise on the Soul

A Statement on the Soul: A Summary from Aristotle’s Book and from Plato and Other Philosophers

May Allah guide you toward the truth and assist you in overcoming the difficulties involved in striving for it.

You asked, may Allah the Great bless you with the happiness of obedience to Him, that I summarize for you a statement on the soul and to follow and present the goal that the philosophers have sought in that matter, and [provide] a summary of Aristotle’s book on the soul. I would never hesitate to put the greatest effort into attaining your affection and fulfilling what you have asked by providing a sufficient summary and a clear commentary by Allah’s will because He is the one who provides strength. I say:

The soul is simple. It has dignity and is perfect. Its essence is from the essence of *al-Barei* (the Creator), the Great and Almighty, in a way similar to how the light of the sun originates from the sun.
He has shown that the soul is independent from the body and different from it. Its essence is divine and spiritual as can be seen from the nobility of its nature and its opposition to the desires and anger that the body is exposed to.

The faculty of anger may occasionally be stirred within a person, moving him to commit terrible deeds. The soul opposes this anger and stops the person from committing these deeds. It stops rage from committing its actions and controls it in a way similar to that of a horsemanship regulating or pulling his horse if it attempts to run away.

This is evidence that the faculty through which humans become angry is different from the soul which prohibits anger from reaching toward its goal because the prohibitor, clearly, is different from the prohibited, because no one thing contradicts itself.

[Similarly,) the sensual faculty sometimes yearns for some desire. The rational soul thinks that these are mistakes that lead to an inferior state so it stops and opposes it [the sensual faculty]. This is also proof that each of these [anger, desire, and the rational soul] is different from the others.

When the soul, which is from the light of al-Barei, the Great and Almighty, departs the body, it learns everything that is in the universe and nothing is hidden from it. The proof for this is Plato’s statement that when many of the ancient pure philosophers stopped preoccupying themselves with the world, neglected sensual things, and were devoted to observing and searching for the truth of things, the unknown was revealed to them, they knew what people hid in their souls, and they became aware of the secrets of creation.
If this is the case when the soul is still attached to the body in this dark world which, if it were not for the light of the sun, would be extremely dark, what would be the case if the soul were to become abstract, depart the body, and enter into a world of truth where the light of \textit{al-Barei}, the Great and Almighty, exists!?^{21}

[66] Plato professed the truth and arrived at an accurate demonstration in this analogy. Following up on his [previous] statement, Plato observed: for the person whose goal in this world is to enjoy the food, drink, and pleasure of intercourse [that satisfies his ultimately] perishable body, there is no way for his rational soul to learn these noble things and there is no way for it to arrive at the semblance of \textit{al-Barei}, praise be to Him.^{22}

Plato compared the sensual faculty in man to the pig, the anger faculty to the dog, and the rational faculty which we mentioned to the angel. He said: whoever is overcome by desire such that it is the ultimate goal, he is like a pig; whoever is overcome by anger he is like a dog; and whoever is mostly overtaken by the faculty of the rational soul, who exerts effort in thinking, distinguishing, knowing the truth of things, and looking for [examining] [67] the ambiguities of knowledge, he is a virtuous person closely resembling \textit{al-Barei}, praise be to Him. This is because the things which we find in \textit{al-Barei}, praise be to Him, are wisdom, power, justice, benevolence, the beautiful, and truth.^{23} A person may prepare himself with these strategies to the best of his abilities to become wise, just, generous, benevolent, and having preference for the true and beautiful. All of these qualities are of a quality inferior to those of \textit{al-Barei}, praise be to Him, in His power and ability, because these qualities have acquired a quality similar to His due to their closeness to Him.
The soul, according to Plato and the majority of the philosophers, survives after death. Its essence is similar to the essence of al-Barei, the Great and Exalted. When the soul is in an abstract state, it is able to know everything in the same way that al-Barei does, or in a manner that is a slight degree below His, because it has been filled up with the light of al-Barei, the Great and Almighty.

When the soul is in an abstract state, departs the body, and becomes [68] part of the world of reason above the celestial spheres, it sees al-Barei, the Great and Almighty, [its light] equals His light, and is exalted in His kingdom. Hence the knowledge of everything (!) is revealed to it. Everything becomes clear to it in the same way that they are clear to al-Barei, the Great and Almighty. Because we, while in this impure world, might see many things in it in the light of the sun, but if our souls become abstract, they become comparable to the world of eternity, and will start to see with the light of al-Barei! No doubt they will see, with al-Barei’s light, all that is apparent and concealed, and will be aware of everything that is secret and public.

Pythagoras used to say: if the soul, while attached to the body, is rid of desires and clear of impurities, is continuously searching and looking into knowledge of the truth of things, it becomes polished with an apparent luster. [In this state], it is united to an image of the light of al-Barei. This light is united to it and reflects His light. [This happens] because of the polish that the soul acquires as a result of virtue. At this time the forms and knowledge of everything appear in it in the same manner that images of the reflections of all tangible things [appear] in a polished mirror. This is a metaphor for the soul, since no image at all is clear in a rusty mirror. But if the rust is removed, all
images appear and are clear in it. The same applies to the rational soul: if it is rusty and impure, it is most ignorant and the forms of knowledge do not appear in it. [But] if it is purified, refined, and polished, by getting rid of impurities and to acquiring knowledge (!), the forms of knowledge of everything appear in it. The higher the quality of its polish, the better its knowledge of things.

The more the soul is polished, the more the knowledge of things is apparent to it and for it.

This soul [70] never sleeps because at the time of [mortal] sleep it abandons using the senses and remains confined in a non-abstract state by itself.28 [While in this state,] it knows all that is in the worlds and all that is apparent and hidden. If this soul were to sleep, a person would not know—if he saw something in his sleep—that he is in fact asleep, and would not be able to distinguish between what he sees in his sleep and what takes place while he is awake.

If this soul reached the utmost in virtue, it would see in sleep wonders in its dreams, the souls that departed would address it, and al-Barei would fill it up with His light and mercy. Then the soul would enjoy eternal pleasure that is above every pleasure obtained through eating, drinking, intercourse, hearing, seeing, smelling, and touching. [This eternal pleasure is of higher quality] because these are sensual, impure pleasures that bring harm, but it [the eternal pleasure] is a divine, spiritual one that belongs to [al-Barei’s] supreme power and which brings about the greatest dignity. Only the miserable, arrogant, and ignorant [71] is satisfied with the pleasures of the senses and makes these his ultimate goal.29
We arrive in this world in the likeness of passers-by walking on a crossing or a bridge; we do not have a long residence. Instead the residence where we expect to dwell is the highest, noble world where our souls move after death, where they become close to their Creator and His light and mercy. The souls are able to see Him in a rational, non-sensual manner and He fills them up with His light and mercy. This is the statement of Pythagoras the wise.

On the other hand, Plato said on that matter that the rational souls, once they have become abstract, abide—as the ancient philosophers said—beyond the celestial spheres, in the realm of divinity where al-Barei’s light exists.

Not every soul, upon departing the body, directly reaches this place because some souls depart the body while having impurities and vicious things in them. Some of these only reach the sphere of the moon and dwell there for a period of time. Once they are refined and purified, they rise to the sphere of Mercury and they dwell there for a period of time. Once they are refined and purified, they rise to the sphere of a higher planet and dwell in each sphere for a period of time. Once they reach the highest sphere and are completely purified and rid of all the impurities of the senses and their phantasies and vices, they rise (!) to the World of Reason, go beyond the spheres, and reach the greatest, noblest of locations. They are in a position (!) where nothing is hidden from them, they become similar to the light of al-Barei, and know everything: the most trifling to the most monumental, like the way a person knows his fingers, nails, or one of his hairs. Everything is clear and prominent to them and al-Barei emanates into them.
knowledge of the way the world functions that these souls enjoy practicing and planning for. By my life, Plato has described and condensed many meanings in this summary.  

There is no way for [73] the soul to reach this state and noble rank in this world and the other one except through the cleansing of impurities. If a person purifies himself, his soul (!) becomes polished and is capable of knowing the mysteries of the unknown. This power of the soul, when it becomes abstract, is separated from the body, and has reached the divine world, is similar to the power of God, the Exalted.

I wonder at Man! How he neglects his soul and keeps it away from its Creator and this pure state!!

Aristotle describes the case of the Greek King who was sick; he remained in a state where he was neither alive nor dead for many days. When he awoke, he informed people about the arts of the unknown and told them about what he saw including souls, forms, and angels, providing demonstration while doing so. He informed [74] a group from his household of the life expectancy of each one of them. When what he said was put to the test [of time], none of them exceeded the age that he had mentioned. He also reported that an eclipse would take place in the land of Aws after one year, and that a flood would take place at another location after two years. Both of these took place as he anticipated.

Aristotle mentioned that the only way the king’s soul acquired this knowledge was because it was about to depart the body and was almost separated from it, and was thus able to see these things. What would be the case if it did depart the body! It would have seen wonders from the matters of the Upper Kingdom!
So tell the weepers, whose custom is to weep over sad things, that they should weep and do that repeatedly over the person who neglects himself and overindulges in inferior, base, vice, misleading desires which make him covetous and make his nature lean toward that of animals. [Such a person] avoids occupying himself by looking into this noble matter and ignores purifying himself to the best of his ability. True purity is the purity of the soul, not of the body. The wise sage who shows devotion to his Creator, even if his body is smeared with bakmah is still better and more noble in the eyes of the ignorant, not to mention the knowledgeable, than an ignorant person whose body is covered with musk and amber.  

One of the virtues of the person devoted to Allah, the one who has abandoned the world with its lowly pleasures, is that all the ignorant (except those whom he has ridiculed) admit his merit, glorify him, and are happy to learn about errors from him.

O you ignorant person: do you not know that your dwelling in this world is like the blink of an eye, and then you will reach the real world, where you will stay forever?! You are just a passer-by. God’s will, which the great philosophers have known and that we have summarized from their statements is that the soul is a simple essence.

If you understand what I wrote to you, you will be happy with it. May Allah, Glory be to Him, make you happy in this life and the afterlife.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the two worlds, and blessings be upon Muhammad and all his household.
Commentary

Al-Kindi’s attempt to summarize and explain ancient philosophers’ views on the soul illustrates the dialogic nature of Islamic philosophy and the importance of context in this process. As this commentary section will show, al-Kindi modifies the foreign content of Greek and Neo-Platonic philosophy to make it compatible with his audience’s views on virtue, a belief in an afterlife and the immortality of the soul, and the human pursuit of happiness which is accomplished through knowledge.

“A Statement on the Soul” is an example of what Bakhtin calls “reported speech” in his theory of dialogism. Reported speech is a type of dialogism that is not just a speech within a speech or an utterance within an utterance; it is also “speech about speech, utterance about utterance” according to Bakhtin in “Marxism and the Philosophy of Language” (Morris 63). In reported speech:

adaptation [is introduced] to the syntactic, compositional, and stylistic design of the author’s utterance while preserving (if only in rudimentary form) the initial autonomy (in syntactic, compositional, and stylistic terms) of the original utterance, which otherwise could not be grasped in full. (64)

This discursive technique abounds in “A Statement on the Soul” and provides a compelling lens through which one can rhetorically analyze al-Kindi’s stated intention to report what the earlier philosophers had written about the soul. Stylistic adaptations are at work where the content is presented in an Arabic style; the tone and generic structure of the treatise, as well as the terminology of the original texts, are appropriated and
rephrased in terms that appeal to an Arab/Muslim readership. In addition to the stylistic and compositional changes, “A Statement on the Soul” abounds in a different kind of adaptation: omissions and additions are introduced to the content of the original Greek scholars to suit the goals of al-Kindi’s philosophical agenda.

One such adaptation is the use of an Islamic name of God, al-Barei, and its qualification using Islamic descriptions such as “the Great and Almighty” throughout the treatise to replace Greek and Neo-Platonic references such as “Demiurge,” “First Cause,” and “First Intellect” that his primary sources used. These references are present throughout the treatise and represent al-Kindi’s critical attitude toward the new knowledge he was introducing to his audience. Such aggressive changes represent a different ideological standpoint than the ones undergirding the original Greek and Neo-Platonic texts. By eliminating the pagan references, keeping only those concepts compatible with monotheism, and adding Quranic references, al-Kindi is not only adapting a number of sources but introducing changes to the field of metaphysics. These changes were initiated by earlier Alexandrian Christian scholars like Ammonious and continued with the Muslim scholars in Baghdad and later in al-Andalus.

Al-Kindi goes beyond adaptation and adds to this foreign heritage. One such addition is the reference to angels. In his account of Aristotle’s views on the soul, al-Kindi tells us about a king who, after awaking from a coma, “informed people about the arts of the unknown and told them about what he saw including souls, forms, and angels.” Another reference to angels is when al-Kindi claims that “Plato compared the sensual faculty in man to the pig, the anger faculty to the dog, and the rational faculty to the
angel.” The comparison is based Plato’s *Republic* where Plato compares the three parts of the soul to three creatures: desire is compared to a chimera; spirit is compared to a lion; and intellect is compared to man (Adamson *Al-Kindi* 228 12n). Al-Kindi replaces Plato’s man with an angel, a creature closer to perfection according to al-Kindi’s monotheistic environment. Such an addition further illustrates the evolution that the field of metaphysics underwent at the hand of the medieval Christian and Muslim scholars who wrote under different circumstances than the Greeks. These circumstances mandated changes that made the content acceptable to the beliefs of the philosophers and their audience, presumably making the material more persuasive in the process.

The organization and tone of al-Kindi’s treatise follows an Arabic and Islamic rhetorical tradition that can be seen even today both in written and oral discourse. Al-Kindi starts by praying for his audience (“May Allah guide you toward the truth and assist you in overcoming the difficulties involved in striving for it”) and ends with a general prayer (“Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the two worlds, and blessings be upon Muhammad and all his household”). Moreover, al-Kindi inserts didactic passages to comment on the Greek philosophers’ views, such as when he says “If you understand what I wrote to you, you will be happy with it. May Allah, Glory be to Him, make you happy in this life and the afterlife.” These gestures shed light on the purpose of the treatise, namely to advocate an Islamic philosophy rooted in an Islamic version of virtue that purifies the human soul to a degree that qualifies the person to acquire knowledge, which in its turn leads to happiness. Thus, al-Kindi, unlike what he claims early in the treatise, is not summarizing other scholars’ views. Hybridity is at work here through
advocating knowledge based on Greek philosophers’ views, and virtue through didactic passages based on Islamic teachings. Both of these are the necessary conditions for happiness in both the Greek and Islamic philosophical traditions. He achieves his goal adapting Greek philosophy’s promotion of the good to a monotheistic kind of good that guarantees happiness to those who adopt it.\textsuperscript{41}

The tone of these passages creates a traditional Arabic and Islamic atmosphere reminiscent of \textit{khutbas} (sermons) and religious circles while simultaneously promoting a philosophical lifestyle through the emphasis on happiness rooted in virtue. This particular example of the compatibility between philosophy and faith is one of the strongest persuasive moves in the treatise because it shows that the ultimate goals of both fields are the same, namely happiness through leading a virtuous lifestyle.\textsuperscript{42}

Platonism and Aristotelianism are viewed as compatible in al-Kindi’s treatise adding an additional layer of hybridity. For example, al-Kindi uses Aristotle’s law of non-contradiction to explain the Platonic references to certain emotions and their control: “the faculty through which humans become angry is different from that which prohibits anger, because the prohibitor, clearly, is different from the prohibited, because \textit{no one thing contradicts itself}” (emphasis added). In this statement, Greek thought is viewed as homogeneous and none of the disagreements between Plato and Aristotle are brought up. This compatibility goes back to Neo-Platonic Alexandria where Aristotle was interpreted through a Platonic lens. His logical works were indispensable but some of his core concepts were not compatible with monotheism, and this is where Neo-Platonism emerged.
The way al-Kindi appropriated the Greek philosophers’ views could be described as “evaluative,” a term Bakhtin describes in “Marxism and the Study of Language”:

After all, it is not a mute, wordless creature that receives such an utterance, but a human being full of inner words. All his experiences—his so called apperceptive background—exist encoded in his inner speech, and only to that extent do they come into contact with speech received from outside. Word comes into contact with word. The context of this inner speech is the locale in which another’s utterance is received, comprehended, and evaluated. . . . Between the reported speech and the reporting context, dynamic relations of high complexity and tension are in force. (Morris 64)

Indeed complexity and tension characterize the encounter between a pagan culture and a monotheistic one when the ultimate goal is to use the former as a foundation for social and political development of the latter. Al-Kindi’s evaluative approach to Greek material can be seen in his selectivity regarding the qualities of God. In the section where he summarizes Plato’s views on the soul, he says: “the things which we find in al-Barei, praise be to Him, are wisdom, power, justice, benevolence, the beautiful, and truth.”

Al-Kindi only mentions qualities attributed to God by Plato that are compatible with Qur’anic attributes of God. I will focus here on one specific Platonic dialogue, the Phaedrus, where al-Kindi’s reference to unruly horses probably comes from. While presenting the charioteer metaphor, al-Kindi compares only the human soul to a horseman trying to control two horses omitting fully half of Plato’s account, one in which
the gods are described as also having two horses each, but theirs are both good. In Plato’s account, the gods in their chariots follow in a procession led by Zeus, a reference omitted by al-Kindi. Whether al-Kindi read Plato’s dialogue or only had access to a paraphrase/commentary, the result is the same: the Arabic Translation Movement and the scholarship based on it were selective toward the material that was borrowed from the Greeks. Another instance of this selectivity drawn from the *Phaedrus* occurs when al-Kindi borrows from Plato the qualities of God. As already noted, al-Kindi only includes divine qualities that are compatible with Islamic teachings. Moreover, he omits qualities such as the four kinds of madness which Plato attributes to Apollo, Dionysus, the Muses, and Aphrodite.

A second evaluative move that takes place in this treatise is the distinction between divine and human attributes. According to al-Kindi: “[a] person may prepare himself with these means to the best of his abilities to become wise, just, generous, benevolent, and having preference for the true and beautiful. All of these qualities are of a quality inferior to those of al-Barei, praise be to Him.” In accordance with Islamic teachings that stipulate that perfection can only be attributed to God, al-Kindi here and throughout the treatise, emphasizes that acquiring noble qualities such as wisdom, generosity, and benevolence resemble God’s qualities but are always of an inferior caliber. Unlike Greek deities who engage in human acts and even follies at times, like in Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, God’s sovereignty is highly preserved and distinguished from human qualities. A faithful account of Plato would have repulsed al-Kindi’s audience and rendered the project of incorporating philosophy as a way of life
impossible. It would have also had dire ideological consequences by widening the divide between the philosophers and the theologians that was already extant in the Abbasid society by giving strength to the trend among traditionalist scholars to dismiss philosophy as heretical and therefore unwelcome in their Islamic society.

This evaluative technique is representative of al-Kindi’s scholarship in general, scholarship that he conducted as a philosopher, scientist, and as the head of a prominent translation circle that was functioning at the peak of the Translation Movement during the Abbasid rule. Al-Kindi’s role as a “commissioner and knowledgeable master of a circle of translators” (Endress 44) put him in a position to be selective in the way he approached the material to be translated. His circle was responsible for translating a work known in medieval Arabic scholarship as the *Theology of Aristotle* that was in fact the translation of books four to six from Plotinus’s *Enneads* (Endress 53). The *Theology*, a major work that heavily influenced many generations of Arabic philosophers, was translated for al-Kindi’s circle by Ibn Na’ima al-Himsi and al-Kindi is said to have edited and revised it. The translator, who Adamson calls the Adaptor, skips a section that spans from *Enneads* VI.7.6.19 to VI.7.7.18, a section that includes references to pagan gods and demons (Adamson, “Two Early Arabic Doxographies” 109). The inclusion of such material would have compromised al-Kindi’s larger philosophical goal and illustrates that such evaluative gestures were quite common and strategically considered in light of the larger ideological atmosphere in Baghdad.

The treatise also includes a more subtle persuasive layer (Adamson, “Al-Kindi and the Reception” 33). Al-Kindi’s scholarship took place in the wake of the Inquisition,
a theological controversy revolvin\textsuperscript{g}g around the question of whether the Qur’an was eternal or created that took place in Baghdad during the reign of al-Ma’mun, al-Mu’tasim, and al-Wathiq. Notably, the caliphate adopted the latter stance and traditional Islamic scholars who adopted the former viewpoint fell out of favor with the palace.\textsuperscript{43} This problem is indirectly addressed when al-Kindi asks: “what if our souls have become abstract, have been comparable to the world of eternity, and have started to see with the light of al-Barei!” The reference to eternity here seems casual and does not constitute the main topic of the treatise. However, a close examination of al-Kindi’s immediate context and some of his other treatises such as “Epistle on the Oneness of God and Finiteness of the Body of the Universe” shows that any mention of eternity is not a coincidence. It is a reference to the Inquisition and the division that took place religiously and intellectually in the Abbasid empire. Here, al-Kindi, by associating the world of eternity to al-Barei and by saying that the soul is only “comparable” (i.e. not identical) to it, is claiming that eternity is something that should only be attributed to God. This exclusiveness could be interpreted as a denial on al-Kindi’s part of the eternality of the Qur’an and the promotion of an ideological perspective he likely believed would be regarded favorably by his sponsors in the caliphate. Clearly the issue of eternity is not al-Kindi’s main concern in “A Statement on the Soul” but keeping in mind that the treatise was most probably addressed to Ahmad, al-Mu’tasim’s son whom al-Kindi tutored, it does make sense that al-Kindi would take the opportunity to casually show his support for his sponsors as a gesture of allegiance at a time of religious and political turmoil.
The Role of Genre in Serving Al-Kindi's Philosophical Project

Descriptions such as summary and commentary have contributed much prejudice against Arabic scholarship as purely imitative and have obscured al-Kindi’s evaluation of and contribution to the knowledge he was examining. Al-Kindi’s treatise is written in the epistolary tradition: al-Kindi addresses a person (Ahmad, the son of caliph al-Mu’tassim, whom al-Kindi tutored) and states that the treatise is a response to a request to review the philosophers’ views on the soul. The treatise follows the traditional format of an epistle with the greeting, prayer for the audience, and use of the second person singular. The epistle genre can be either taken at face value if we believe that Ahmad indeed commissioned the research on the soul, which is a possibility, or it can be viewed as a generic formality in which al-Kindi packaged his philosophical agenda and persuasive project. Within the epistolary genre two other genres are included: *sharh* (commentary) and *ikhtisar/mukhtasar* (summary). Al-Kindi himself, after a traditional Arabic greeting to his reader, indicates that his purpose is to fulfill his reader’s wish “by providing a sufficient summary and a clear commentary.”

In “Aspects of Literary Form and Genre in Arabic Logical Works,” Dimitri Gutas defines the genres of *tafsir* (interpretation), *sharh*, and *mukhtasar*, the last two being mentioned by al-Kindi as his goal for writing “A Statement on the Soul.”44 Gutas According to Gutas, *sharh* is the term proper to commentary, one that is to be contrasted to *mukhtasar* (“Aspects of Literary” 33). *Mukhtasar* is defined as an abridgment, or a condensation that follows the wording of the original (35). Al-Kindi’s goal to provide both a summary and a commentary in the same document does seem to be possible
according to Gutas’ classification who describes the genres as fluid and uncertain ("Aspects of Literary" 37), two descriptions to which I would like to add a third, ambivalent. The generic ambivalence of al-Kind’s “A Statement on the Soul” results from the lack of distinction on al-Kindi’s part between the views of the philosophers he claims to be. A fitting description of al-Kind’s treatise is Peter Adamson’s description of it as a doxography (“Two Early Arabic”). It is accurate in the way it reflects the generic ambivalence of the treatise, since the term encompasses both a description of a work and a commentary on it.

The organization of the treatise gives the illusion that it does follow a summary format. Al-Kindi mentions the name of a certain philosopher, covers his views, concludes the section by saying “these were the words of Pythagoras the wise,” for example, then moves on to summarizing the views of another philosopher. The unfaithfulness of the summaries, however, interferes with an unskeptical acceptance of the treatise as belonging to the summary genre in a traditional sense. It raises the question of whether the term was loosely used in al-Kindi’s time or whether it was a conscious decision on his part to promote philosophy and certain ideologies. In either case, readers of the treatise and of medieval Arabic philosophy in general should look beyond the generic labeling of these works for authentic contributions even when they are labeled as a summary of or a commentary on someone else’s work.

Conclusion

By substituting Greek concepts and terms with Islamic equivalents, and interspersing the paragraphs reporting the older Greek philosophers’ views with didactic
passages of an Islamic nature, al-Kindi makes his context—ninth century Islamic Baghdad—the locale in which Hellenistic views could be received and adapted. By doing this, he acknowledges and attempts to resolve the tension between some of the ancient philosophical views and the theological views of his audience. Such rhetorical assimilation makes his ideological stance quite clear: seemingly incommensurate philosophical views can be readily brought into alignment through lexical and stylistic adaptation as long as the resultant hybrid does not contradict the worldview mandated by Islam. Al-Kindi’s work foreshadows the more aggressive tension that later scholars were to engage in as a result of questioning the compatibility of philosophy and religion. One example of such an aggressive engagement is the one between al-Ghazali in *Tahafut al Falasifa (The Incoherence of the Philosophers)* and Ibn Rushd’s response to him in *Tahafut Al Tahafut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)*.

“A Statement on the Soul” should not be read in isolation but in conjunction with other extant works of al-Kindi and other medieval Arabic philosophers. These philosophers were highly conscious of their context, especially the religious and political controversies of their time. These factors influenced the way they approached the Greek and Neo-Platonic scholarship that they inherited; they were highly selective in what viewpoints they adopted and how they packaged these views. By doing so, they not only taught their own colleagues the content of the material that they translated and/or commented on, but more importantly, they teach scholars of our time about the complicated and delicately negotiated processes of knowledge-making—including the rhetoric therein.
CHAPTER 4, AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF AL-FARABI’S

BOOK ON RHETORIC

In the Name of Allah the Most Merciful and the Most Gracious.

Rhetoric is a syllogistic art which has as its purpose persuasion in all of the ten categories but which has as its ultimate goal the persuasion of the hearer’s soul.

Persuasion is a kind of conjecture. Conjecture in general is the belief that something is either one thing or its opposite. It is possible that what is believed about something is the opposite of its true essence.

Truth is required by humans in any two [opposing] things where it has not been determined which one of them is true. Anything whose truth is not determined is considered lacking in truth.

If it is said that conjecture is not the belief in the truth of that which may be false, but the belief in the truth of that which is never false, this is an error because this not conjecture, but certainty and calling it conjecture is an error.

It is necessary to believe that something is either true or false whether positively or negatively.

Belief is when nothing else is possible—this is knowledge. Persuasion in the art of rhetoric is similar to instruction in the demonstrative arts, and persuasion is the equivalent of the knowledge acquired by the learner (as a result of learning). Listening to the speaker as well as deliberating and speculating over what he says [in rhetoric] is the equivalent of knowledge.
The noun “persuasion” refers [as it is used in rhetoric] from satisfied with something—a feeling of satisfaction—combined with an economical perspective even when it is possible to have more of something. Indeed, people are satisfied when they encounter each other over dealings concerning their livelihood, [choosing] to believe each other in what they are talking about, and referring to what others say; this kind of satisfaction is experienced as knowledge. Conjecture and certainty are both opinion. Opinion is the belief that something is one thing or its opposite. Opinion is like a genus for both possibilities and they are like two species.

There are two types of propositions that include opinion and through which oral exchanges take place: necessary propositions and possible propositions.

Necessary propositions are either absolutely necessary or necessary at specific times; in this latter case, anything prior to the specific time established only that it was possible for the necessary-at-a-specific-time proposition to either exist or not exist. These are called existential propositions.

Certainty is only possible in necessary propositions. The types of certainty resemble the types of the necessary: there is absolute certainty, and certainty at a specific time. Specific-time certainties [eventually] come to an end.

Certainty is not possible in the first place. By this I do not mean that our knowledge of the possible does not constitute certainty, but that if it is possible for a thing to exist in the future, and it doesn’t, we have no certainty that it exists or does not exist. This means that our belief in the existence of what is possible does not constitute certainty.
Persuading and general conjecture could be in the kinds of necessary and possible.

The word “possible” denotes two meanings: one of them refers to the unknown whose meaning is necessary for accurate learning; the other refers to one of the aspects of the existence of many future matters.

We are ignorant of what is not yet necessary, or which of the two opposing aspects of the meaning we are seeking is correct or true. It is only possible according to us; it is not a meaning that exists in the issue outside of ourselves.

The possible that is a condition for conjecture is not the same as the possible that denotes a quality of a thing in itself that exists outside of the soul; rather it denotes what is possible from our perspective only. [Because there are these two kinds of the possible] we cannot know whether or not our belief [about a thing] is identical to what the thing is like in reality.

And because a thing is the result of something that approaches the soul from without, conjecture is [therefore] ignorance accompanied by knowledge. Our belief that something is such because of what is brought to the soul from outside is like knowledge. I believe that, when we cannot guarantee whether what is in our souls is identical to what the thing is like outside of the soul, this is ignorance of whether our belief is identical to the true nature of the thing.

This [phenomenon of ignorance and knowledge] concerns things whose existence is necessary and possible from our standpoint.
Some kinds of opinion include one aspect of possibility, such as saying, “Zaid is standing” as long as he is standing. Whereas at that specific time it is a necessity, before that time it was a possibility that could have existed or not.

The absolutely necessary, which is not tainted by any possibility, cannot have for one person both conjecture and certainty at the same time. As for the necessary which includes possibility, it is possible for one person to have both certainty regarding it at the present time and conjecture in the future.

Associating conjecture with the absolute necessary results in ignorance stemming from within us. In the case of the necessary which includes possibility, it is a possible necessary on our part in the present and on its part in the future because it is possible for what we think to exist in the future.

Conjecture grows stronger or weaker. A person might not sense any opposition to some thing; a person might also sense opposition to some of thing and might be able to bring this [opposition] up within his soul or address others about it. The stronger the conjecture, the less opposition it has, and the weaker the conjecture, the more opposition it has.

[The effectiveness of] persuasion is not diminished just because a person feels opposition toward it.

Every person confirms persuasion while interacting with others, or refutes it through investigation or forgiveness, depending on what seems more beneficial. If he benefits from its lowest levels, he does not proceed to a higher one. If he finds that this lowest level does not help him reach his goal, he investigates and confirms it. If it is more
beneficial to refute some of it [the argument], he opposes [the argument] despite knowing it is [essentially] strong. Even if persuasion reaches a level that is almost certain, there is always room for opposition in it, whether much or little, apparent or hidden.

Opposition to conjecture could be hidden from the standpoint of the thinker or observer, or it could be hidden from the standpoint of subject being observed. This is because opinion could have many oppositions that could lead a person and draw his attention to the inaccuracy of his opinion, either partially or completely, and toward the truth of what should be believed. A person might not sense [these oppositions] either because of slackening, a preference for a tranquil mind in an inactive state, [the distractions of] making a living, investigations of a different category of things than the one that should be investigated—or because of a mental deficiency due to youth (in which case it will disappear) or an innate cause (in which case it will be permanent). A person might have the ability to know things that are otherwise known though the syllogism. This ability concerns only one category. If the person overexerts himself [through an attempt to know] everything or [by trying to learn] another category, his ability [to know] weakens. This could result from exhaustion due to observing previous matters. If he examines [the question at hand], putting all his energy into it, he will be able to find opposition to it. This is similar to physical strength.

If the observer studies a subject and develops an opinion about it, and then follows up on this opinion to the best of his abilities and finds opposition to it, or cannot verify its opposition because the opposition is hidden, he has verified this opinion to the best of his knowledge if this opposition is hidden to him.
The opposition could also be a hidden aspect of the issue itself because of reasons and conditions within it. These include the fact that the oppositions for it are based on things that need to be observed and examined which prevent the observer from observing or examining them because they are removed in time or place or some other factor. [For example], in many cases of studying matters pertaining to animals, their internal organs need to be observed, a matter that is hindered either by lack of tools or because Shari’a does not permit him to [perform dissection]. Other reasons include the obscurity of the oppositions which, [in order] to be unveiled, require the person to acquire additional abilities in another art that he does not [currently] possess. Another reason [for undetecting opposition] is that lying in the major premise is so easy that oppositions to it are so few.

If a person does not sense the opposition to a certain opinion, and realizes that it is hidden only from his standpoint, he tends to question that opinion and does not trust it fully. It is difficult for a person to know what causes oppositions to be hidden: the person or the thing. It is unlikely that the person could doubt and accuse himself with regards to what he believes; he rather trusts his own opinion, especially if the oppositions remain hidden despite careful attention to what he believes.

The strongest opinion depends on the individual person, not on the thing in question itself. The strongest opinion for any person is the one that the person exerts all his effort in pursuing it and finds no oppositions to it; or the person refuted all oppositions to this opinion so his belief has no opposition, this person especially does not question his own mind in this regard.
This is how the ancients verified their opinions in theoretical matters. A person would attempt to create a syllogism for the sought after subject. If he found such a syllogism, he would adopt that subject for which he had found a syllogism as an opinion of his own. Next, he would follow up on that opinion and consider the oppositions to it comparing it [the original opinion] to its opposite. If he did not find oppositions to it, or if he found ones that he could resolve or refute, he would adopt the subject as his own opinion and would believe in its truth. This differed from one person to another.

Inquiry into the truth of opinion is arrived at via dialectical means more so than through rhetorical ones. Despite this, it [the opinion] could still be erroneous.

Belief could come to an end for certain reasons: the death of the believer; the corruption of his mind; his forgetfulness; forgetting his evidence; the end of the matter in which the belief existed due to damage to a tendency toward adopting one of its oppositions; the existence of a fallacy that the person is unaware of; or the existence of a true opposition that proves to him the falsity of his belief.

Certainty comes to an end by the death of the believer, the corruption of his mind, or his forgetfulness. It does not come to an end by the corruption of the matter or by the existence of opposition [since they do not exist] in the first place as he [Aristotle] has shown in the Posterior Analytics.

One of the characteristics of absolute certainty, once it exists, is that it does not come to an end as long as the believer and his mind healthy.

Temporary certainty comes to an end by the corruption of the subject, or its transformation to its opposite while the believer and his mind are in good condition.
Some of the characteristics of conjecture are that it could come to an end in the future while the believer, his mind, and the subject are all in good condition with no forgetfulness involved. Generally, conjecture is any belief that occurs at a particular time that could come to an end in the future through opposition. Moreover, any belief that is upheld up to a certain time and then comes to an end as a result of an opposition was conjecture that was not believed to be so by the person who believed it.

Some of the ancients inquired into opinions that differ from one person to another. They asked: Can you be sure that you will not replace what you believe in today with its opposite in the future? Did you in the past adopt an opinion that you believed to be true, but abandoned it for its opposite, so its opposite for you today is like what it was to you yesterday? How can you be sure that you will not abandon this new opinion for its initial opposition again? The purpose of all these inquiries is to show that these opinions constitute conjecture and are not satisfactory in theoretical matters in which opinions should be certain. Opinions that fall under conjecture should not be included under certainty.

Unsatisfactory answers were provided for these questions because they were ignorant of the ways of certainty. Some of them provided the following response: I do not change my mind regarding a certain opinion I hold as long as my state of mind is the same. Such a response does not make his opinions qualify as certainty because there is no difference between saying what he said and saying: I do not change my opinions as long as I do not know oppositions for them that negate them, or as long as the evidence through which they became true for me is not proven wrong. Such is the state of
conjecture: when it has no opposition, it is similar to certainty in the mind of the person who holds it.

Some of the ancients believed that such a question should not be answered, that it should be dropped as false. This was based on the claim that these questions and their like invalidate the opinion of the person who poses questions that intend to invalidate the opinion of another person; [these questions] invalidate all opinions and stop a person from holding any opinion. [They believed that] there was no way to stop this [antagonistic argumentation] since every person has an opinion, even the one who claims that he has no opinion—such a claim itself is an opinion.

The claim of [these ancients] that these questions should be dropped and not answered, as well as their claim that these questions are invalid because they are opinions that revolve around the opinions of the ones who pose the questions, is lying on their part. This is because if the all the opinions of the person posing the question constitute conjecture, and if the person feels and admits that they are so [i.e., their opinions are conjectural], they should not go back and invalidate his opinions Instead, the questioner has committed himself to what he is holding others to with his questions.

The purpose of the questioner is to show whoever does not sense or who does not admit that his opinions are conjecture, but thinks falsely that they are certainty, that they are conjecture. Moreover, the opinions of the questioner, if they were certain, or included some certainty, these do not go back to invalidate his opinions because certainty cannot be invalidated by opposition in the first place, neither is every opinion. Instead, they are invalid for whoever does not sense or acknowledge in this state that they are conjecture.
In the case of someone whose opinion is certainty or conjecture and who senses or admits that it [his opinion] is conjecture, these questions do not invalidate his opinion. Why wouldn’t he deserve an answer? This is similar to a case where common knowledge validates a certain proposition while a syllogistic statement validates its opposite. In this case common knowledge contradicts the syllogistic statement. This is also similar to two syllogistic statements where the truth of one requires the opposite of what makes the other one true. Do we disregard one of the two statements and not listen to its subject matter? Or does it suffice to say that there is another piece of evidence that opposes this saying? [In this latter case], invalidating it is sought, and its false elements are exposed, if such elements exist, through the testimony of a person [who argues] that a certain opinion is true because it is common knowledge and everybody believes it is true, while another person uses a syllogistic statement as evidence to the truth of an opposing statement. This is an instance of the opposition of two pieces of evidence where one of them requires the opposite of what the other requires.

Similarly there is the case of the person who asks: is it possible that what we believe about an issue is different from what is [truly the case]? The question means: is it possible that what we believe about a certain issue is the opposite of how it exists outside the soul, or not? Such questions seek to show that these opinions are conjecture and not certainty.

Some people correct their opinions concerning theoretical matters by following up on them until they cannot find any oppositions for them so they do not acknowledge that their opinions are conjecture. When they contemplate them, [they conclude that] that they
have no opposition, or they do not believe that they could be in opposition to what the matter is like in reality. As a result, they deceptively respond that their opinions are certainty. They only respond to the letter of what the questioner asked, and not to the meaning in the questioner’s mind.

If a questioner asks them: Is it possible for what they believe to be is in fact the opposite of this [belief]? They respond in a problematical way [saying] that they imagine [that they are] certain that it is not possible for what one believes to be the opposite of that belief. This is a problematical statement in more than one way; one of them is that what he says he means he cannot [mean], that it is not within his mental capacity to believe that the issue could be the opposite of what he believes because he has exhausted all his energy in trying to correct the opposite of his opinion and failed. Such a response does not qualify his opinion as certainty, even if he is being truthful. It is also possible that he means that it is not possible for a person to hold a belief that something is and is not [such and such]. This does not mean anything more than that two opposites cannot be one and the same thing. Moreover, this response does not make it possible for the opinion to be the opposite of what the essence of the matter is. The latter is what the questioner asked but did not get a response for by either of the two possible answers.46

The problematical statement could also be that it is not possible, [for example] when an issue is believed to be one thing and is believed to be the opposite of that at the same time. This only means that it is not possible for the same thing to be believed to be two different things at the same time. This is not a response for what has been asked.
There are two kinds of conjecture. [The first kind is] one for which a person has found no opposition because none had been sought in the first place, or because it had been diligently sought but not found, or because it was found and refuted.

The second kind has [known] opposition [to it]. Knowledge of this opposition varies from one person to another, one group to another, or [may be known to] everyone in a particular time period. It is not uncommon that a person could be unaware of an opposition for a certain opinion at a certain time that could become known to that person at another time. It is also possible that another person in one’s own time period or in another time period would know this opposition. The same applies to the group. It is also possible that no one would not find any opposition to a common opinion, but then at another time an opposition to it is discovered.

Strong conjecture for everybody is that [opinion] which has no opposition. This kind [of opinion] is given preference [over the other kinds].

The weakest [opinion] is the kind for which no opposition has been found for due to negligence, oversight, being preoccupied with other issues, or due to good faith [i.e., not doubting the existence of opposition].

The strongest [opinion] is the kind that has been diligently researched, and has been compared to its opposite, and whose opposite has been refuted.

A conjecture that has more support than its opposition is dominant. A conjecture that has support that is of a lower quantity and is less clear than its opposition’s is known as a doubtful and (lacking) [conjecture]. This is a discardable kind [of conjecture]. When [a conjecture] has an amount and clarity of support that is equal to its opposition, then
both the conjecture and its opposition could be used in conjectural arts. This is not to say that both can be used at the same time, but in different cases and at different times. It is because of these cases that doubt and confusion take place when they are used in the sciences and none of the lying inherent in them is felt. Doubt is when the soul is stuck between two opposing kinds of conjecture based on two things that are equal in clarity and trustworthiness.

Equality in trustworthiness means that both are equal in the necessity of what is based on them, that [is to say] they are equal in being either necessary or possible.

If a person has no conjecture concerning either of the two opposing propositions, this is considered a sought-after thing, not doubt.

The trustworthiness of a conjecture is [gained] by examining and pursuing it until one can feel no opposition to that particular opinion. This could be done using rhetorical and dialectical means. A person senses the rhetorical means before the dialectical means because the rhetorical means correspond to what a person has grown up with since childhood; a person examines such [familiar] things first. Dialectical means are felt last. Demonstrative means are more hidden than the dialectical means; a person can hardly feel them of his own accord.

Philosophers in ancient times used to implement rhetorical ways in examining theoretical matters for a long time because they did not sense [had no access to] other means until they finally sensed [acquired] dialectical means. This is when the rhetorical means were rejected in philosophy and dialectical means were employed. Many of them used sophistical means.
They remained like that until the time of Plato who was the first to sense the demonstrative way, distinguishing it from the dialectical, sophistical, rhetorical, and poetic arts. [For the thinker,] these ways were distinguished from each other by usage, subject matter, and by whatever spare time and superior instincts [the thinker] had, but no one created any universal laws for these ways until Aristotle created them for his book *Posterior Analytics*. He was the first person to acquire these means, so he set artistic universal laws for them, and proved them in logic. As a result, from this time forward, philosophers rejected the old means that the ancients used in theoretical matters that sought after certainty. They used dialectical means in mathematics and in teaching the public in many theoretical matters. They used sophistical means in [times of] distress and for warning. They used rhetorical means in matters shared among all arts where it was not possible to use a means specific to a particular art but not another. Rhetorical means are also used to teach the public many theoretical matters, and in teaching individuals who do not belong to a particular art the things specific to this art when this is needed at a particular time. Rhetorical means are also used in the speeches that are used in civil interaction.

Arts of conjecture are the arts where conjecture is obtained through prepared topics. These are rhetoric and rationality. Practical arts include medicine, agriculture, navigation, and the like. Each one of these, with the exception of rhetoric, diligently pursues the truth in everything that is done in or by it.

A correct opinion is a true conjecture.
Each of these arts has a special topic; it only deducts the truth or persuades in this specific topic only. Rhetoric is an exception; it is designed only to persuade, not to be used in deliberation or in deduction in the matter in which it is used for persuasion.

The remaining conjectural arts use deliberation in deducing the specific subject matter to it that it persuades in.

Rhetoric does not persuade in one particular subject rather than another. Instead, it persuades in all categories of topics. Moreover, rhetoric uses conjecture in matters where conjecture exists, that is with things that are possible, as well as in matters where certainty exists, that is necessary things.

As for the other arts, they use conjecture in matters where conjecture exists, but not certainty; this is because their subject is things that are possible. Each of [these arts] uses only the laws pertaining to it in deliberation when it seeks to deduce the correct opinion concerning what needs to be done in every single aspect of its subject. If one seeks to persuade another in the same field and at the same level [of knowledge of] the laws of the art, this person uses the laws that he used to deduce the correct opinion. This is both persuasion and teaching. If the person [to be persuaded] belongs to a different art, one needs to use the means that is common to everyone, namely rhetoric; the means particular to that specific art is not used unless it is agreed that it is a common means. If the person cannot use the common means, then a rhetor should take charge [of the persuasion].

Rhetoric is used in persuasion in the means common to all [arts] since it seeks to persuade in all categories of topics, and it does not use specialized means unless they too
are common. Thus, rhetoric can persuade in medical matters, not by the means specific to a physician, but through the means common between the physician and the non-physician. The same applies to every single art. This is why rhetoric has the capacity to persuade the entire public in everything. Therefore, if the practitioner of a certain art, whether theoretical or practical, seeks to correct an opinion that he had deduced in the mind of someone who does not belong to this art, and who does not have the time or is not qualified to learn this art, this person has to be a rhetor or a rhetor has to step in for him in this matter.

The prior common opinion is one which, if one is faced by it suddenly, one believes it before pursuing that it is so.

Pursuing an opinion means that a person would seek, to the best of his ability, things that would support and strengthen this opinion. If these things are encountered, the opinion becomes strong in his soul and he becomes comfortable with it. If one encounters things that oppose this opinion, he attempts to refute them. If he does refute them, the initial opinion is confirmed for the person. If they are not refuted, the initial opinion is either rejected completely, or the oppositions bring to the person’s attention one or more conditions that were overlooked at the beginning of the inquiry. This is what pursuing a prior opinion means.

Rhetoric shares with dialectic and sophistry the fact that pursuing [an opinion] takes place in all of them as a way to expose false opinions.

The enthymeme, *damir*, is a statement made up of two joined premises, one of which is omitted. It is called *damir* because some of the premises are omitted, and not
declared. Also at work is what is in the hearer’s conscience, *damir*, of knowledge of the omitted premises.\(^4^7\)

It becomes persuasive in the clear common opinion because of the omission; without that omission, it is not persuasive.

An example is seeking to verify the existence of the thing in a certain matter with the purpose of clarifying the existence of the same thing in a similar matter.

The public refers to an example as a syllogism.

The premises of each of these two should be in themselves, their quantity, and their invention persuasive in the prior common opinion whether they are truly syllogistic or only in appearance.

In the case of the remaining conjectural arts, the premises of the statements by which the true opinion is deduced, and through which persuasion is effected, have to be syllogistic in quantity and invention both in reality and when being evaluated.

This is how rhetoric is different from the rest of the conjectural arts. This is why if a rhetor wants to persuade in an issue related to one of the rest of the arts, he has to avoid while persuading the means specific to this art. Instead, he should use the means typical of the prior common opinion. This opinion could also be prior to every single one [of these arts]. A rhetor does not use such an opinion in his art. It could also be a common opinion in an entire nation, common amongst all its people, particular to them only.

There are three kinds of audience: the person one aims to persuade, the opponent, and the judge.
The person one aims to persuade sometimes takes the initiative and requests persuasion from the speaker in a certain thing. Or the speaker initiates the conversation requesting the listener to accept a certain statement and listen to what the speaker has to say. The person who requires persuasion either listens to the statements with the purpose of finding a statement that brings up something he likes, or accepts the more complete of two statements.

The opponent can be an enemy who stands against the speaker [refuting] the statement that the speaker uses to persuade the hearer, hence preventing the speaker from persuading the hearer. Or he can pretend to be an enemy who follows what the speaker says and examines what he says while his hidden purpose is ensuring the persuasiveness of what the speaker is saying.

A judge has to possess the ability to distinguish well between which of the statements of the two opponents is more persuasive. Clearly the way a judge addresses either opponent is different from the way the opponents address each other. As a result of not adhering to the ways of judges, it is possible that a judge could become an opponent. This happens if the judge uses the statements that the opponents use against each other in his judgment on one of the two opponents. This is why it is important that the position of judge not be awarded to someone who is incapable of following the conditions of this position. If the statement of one of the two opponents is less persuasive due to the weakness of this opponent, and the judge has access to [knowledge] that can be used to strengthen the statement of this opponent to make it more persuasive, and decides to rule based on this knowledge, not what is apparent of the opponent’s statement, then this is a
doubtful situation. Does he judge based on what is apparent of the opponent’s statement or based on his own knowledge of the strength of persuasion in this matter? If he judges in the matter only on the basis of what he added to the statements of the two opponents, he is not supposed to judge based on what he knows about the matter independently of the [statements of] the opponents. If he judges in the matter based on the matter itself, what is better for the city, or what is best for the opponents and the city, and if his knowledge promotes that well being, then he should judge based on his knowledge of that matter. This should be known from the rank of the appointed judge, how close it is to ruling in judgment. In this case, what is delegated to the judge for judgment is according to the rank of the judge.

The topic of what strength, talent, and art qualify a person to be a judge between opponents using rhetoric should be summarized later.

The things used in persuasion include enthymemes and examples. The status of the enthymeme in rhetoric is similar to the status of demonstration in science and the syllogism in dialectic. The enthymeme is like a rhetorical syllogism. The example is like a rhetorical induction. An enthymeme is a statement made up of two joined premises; it provides us with persuasion initially according to prior opinion in the conclusion that results from them. It becomes persuasive when the speaker omits one of the premises and does not reveal it. This is why it is called damir and modmar since omitting one of its premises is the reason for its being persuasive. If one premise of a demonstration or a dialectical syllogism used in speeches and books is omitted with the purpose of brevity or because it is obvious to the listener, it is not considered an enthymeme.
Among [the things used in persuasion] are the virtue of the speaker and the flaws of his opponent. This results in believing what the speaker says and improves persuasion even if neither enthymeme, nor example, nor anything else is used except a statement on a trivial matter after the speaker had been known for virtue and his opponent for the depravity for them. The additional use of the enthymeme and example makes the statement more persuasive and acceptable to the listeners. If the speaker’s virtue is not well known, he needs to use statements to show his virtue and the depravity of his opponent, then he informs of the thing that he aims to persuade [his audience] about.

Quite often, people err and use this [latter point] in the sciences especially while contradicting those who oppose their opinions. For example, Galen does this: when he wishes to contradict his opponents, he gives himself preference and belittles his opponents in the matter on which he disagrees with them.

An orator could give himself preference and belittle his opponent not in the matter that his speech addresses, but in matters outside the issue which they are discussing. For example, Galen gives himself preference by mentioning the virtue of his father and his city and belittles his opponents by mentioning the depravity of their fathers and cities. In his book The Art of Recovery, when he contradicts Thasles the physician, he mentions the baseness of his father’s profession. He did the same thing in the last chapter of his book On the Opinions of Hippocrates and Plato where he contradicts Mendeberus who had disagreed with something in his book. He did this by showing that [Mendeberus] grew up in a town far away from the big cities while he lived in Great Rome which many poets have referred to as “the miniature world.
Among [the things used in persuasion] is attracting listeners by appealing to their emotions which sways their hearts into believing the speaker and discrediting his opponent. This includes attracting the judge and all present to the side of the speaker and moving them against the opponents.

This also includes provoking an emotion in the soul of the opponent that weakens his opposition to the speaker such as anger, which overwhelms him.

This also includes provoking certain emotions in the soul of the person the speaker aims to persuade to make him accept what the speaker says either by flattering him, or by provoking anger, mercy, cruelty, or any other [emotion] that the speaker sees fit [to produce] at that particular time.

This category of persuasive appeals has a great strength in making the opinions and statements [of the speaker] deeply seated in the souls [of the listeners] and in provoking zeal and tribalism and [establishing] the grandeur of the speaker and his opinion so that the opinions that he promotes are well-established and become like certainty [for the listeners]. This is a rhetorical category but it could be used in sophistical speeches. It could also be used by dialecticians either as an error or a fallacy on their part.

Among [the things used in persuasion] is instigating the listeners and provoking their opinions into making them believe the speaker’s statement using moral statements. These are statements that make them adopt certain morals even if these are not inherent in them; their souls adopt the ways of knowledgeable people and they perform the actions of those who have these moral values and these sciences even if they do not possess any
of these. This is a rhetorical way that could be used in sophistry and is only used in dialectic as an error or a fallacy.

Galen used this when he said: the one who understands or appreciates my statement is someone who is smart concerning events, prefers the truth, follows his instincts, is not swayed by emotion, and his mind is not corrupted by false opinions and similar statements.

We find this [technique used] in the public’s speeches and in many of the books of past and present day scientists.

Among [the things used in persuasion] is the glorification or belittling of the issue that the statement is about, ornamenting or diminishing it and making it appear ugly. If the speaker glorifies the good and virtue in his speech, belittles the bad and evil in it, exaggerates the evil and lying of his opponents, his statement will be accepted and that of his opponent will be rejected. This is used in sophistry and is only used in dialectic as an error or a fallacy.

Among [the things used in persuasion] is falsifying the statement of the opponent and representing it as hideous, which makes refuting it easy. Examples of this include refuting many of the opponent’s statements, rewording them, and refuting what the opponent had omitted in the places where they had license to omit.

This category also has great power in reinforcing opinions in the souls, especially if it includes emotions such as zeal, tribalism, familiarity, and love.
Another technique used to persuade people is referring to written customs. The person whom they support needs to strengthen them, and the opponent needs to either falsify them if he can, or interpret them in favor of his statement.

Citing these methods is found in the books of those who lean erroneously toward the sciences or to increase their proof such as when Galen attempts to prove that the sensual desires are located in the liver based on the custom that an adulterer’s punishment is the removal of the liver in his country. Moreover, some of the ancients attempted to show that the soul does not die and that it survives the death of the body based on the custom of visiting gravesites.

Among [the things used in persuasion] are witness testimonials. In order to support his opinion, a person uses another person who leans toward his statement, or people who lean toward his statement. These people bear testimony to what he says. Their statements strengthen his statement or falsify the statement of his opponent. For example, in order to support the claim that the mind is located the brain in *Morals of the Soul*, Galen refers to people’s statement about whoever they deem foolish that he has no head. Similarly, he supports the claim that courage is in the heart by citing people’s statement about whom they describe as a coward by saying that he has no heart.

Among [the things used in persuasion] are the feelings of hope and fear of the speaker. The former is for the good that will come if he is saying the truth, and the latter is of the evil that will result if he is lying. If he fears bad consequences if caught lying, he tells the truth. For example, if he fears torture, he tells the truth out of fear that if he lies, the torture will be repeated. Moreover, if he anticipates good as a result of his statement,
he says the truth. And if he expects to gain something good by taking back his statement, or to intimidate someone by sticking to his statement and not changing it (and we find that indeed he does not change his statement), the soul [of the listener] believes that what he is saying is true. And if the person fears a great evil if he says a certain statement and he accepts the negative consequences and says it anyway, it is established in the soul that he is being truthful. Moreover, if a person expects a great good as a result of saying something or being quiet about something, and the person ignores this good and is not silent about that thing or says the opposite of the former, his statement is more acceptable for the listeners. Also, if he says something that does not bring him any benefit and prefers it to an opposite statement that is beneficial to him, he is more persuasive for his listeners.

Also among [the means used in persuasion] are challenges such as betting and pledges. Galen mentioned that he had bet ten thousand dinars to anyone who could show him anatomically that nerves start at the heart.

Another [the means used in persuasion] is when a speaker takes an oath that what he is saying is true.

Other persuasive attributes include a person’s facial expression, his appearance, the shape and appearance of his organs, or his action while he is speaking. [This can be seen,] for example, if when [a speaker] reports on the onset of a fearsome issue, his face looks like that of a scared or escaping person. Or when he advises others to do something, and does that thing himself. If he did not do what he advised, he would be less persuasive or not persuasive at all. This category could be used with statements on virtue or
depravity. The expression, form, appearance, and action [of the speaker] give the impression of a state that makes his statement acceptable, and the impression of a state that makes his opponent’s statement unbelievable.

Also among [the means used in persuasion] is the manner in which a statement is made as well as the voice and tone used to create the image of the issue being discussed. This happens if a person reports about misfortune that afflicted him, and his voice sounds sincere, or if he threatens someone and his voice sounds audacious and angry.

Enthymemes and examples are primary rhetorical statements; they are primary persuasive [means]. They are more advanced that the other means of persuasion, namely the rhetorical ones. Nichomachus’ son (Aristotle) calls the other means of persuasion external (to the statements). Enthymemes and examples are the most advanced means by nature and by virtue because if only enthymemes and examples are used with none of the other means, the art of rhetoric will remain intact. But this would not happen if any of the other means are used alone because these means are used to assist enthymemes and examples and [are used] for superficial purposes. [For example,] some emotions interrupt the opponent and assist the enthymeme and example, such as timidity, feeling flustered, and fear.

In the case of the judge, [emotions such as] incitement, fear, zeal, love, or other make him lean toward one of the two opponents. This is why enthymemes and examples are strengthened by these emotions if the opponent is not persuaded by them alone.
Nichomachus’ son (Aristotle) mentioned that a group of orators prohibited these external means be used in speeches. They saw that only enthymemes and examples should be used. [But] he advocates using [these other means].

The means outside of enthymemes and examples are not essential for persuasion of the intended conclusion. Instead, if they are used it is by chance and as a secondary intention.

By contrast, enthymemes and examples are syllogistic statements whose conclusions are necessary in the same way that the conclusions of syllogisms are certain. But enthymemes are based on the prior common opinion since all people believe that external things are persuasive.

Some people sought to invalidate the use of examples in enthymemes. As for enthymemes, they cannot be invalidated in the first place because if they are, they need to be invalidated using enthymemes. It is not possible for an enthymeme to be invalidated by itself. This is therefore not possible.

We must explain enthymemes and analogies and report what each of them is, how it is, of what each of them is wholly made up, how each is made up, how many kinds each of them has, of what they are made up of, and how they are used.

Enthymemes are older than examples because they are used to prove examples. Enthymemes are also closer to syllogisms and more necessary in proving what is to be concluded from them. This is clear from the Prior Analytics. Some people viewed examples as weak and others prohibited their use in ancient times and in our time. Those who invalidate the syllogism, namely the theologians and jurists, also invalidate
examples. They call examples syllogism, and they mean examples when they refer to the syllogism as a result of a similarity in meaning. This is because for the public, the term syllogism indicates comparison between two quantities to find out if they are equal, if one of them is better, and which of them is greater. Then [the term was used to indicate] comparison between two things to find out which of them is greater, better, stronger, or larger in quantity. Or [the term is used] in any other thing where comparison between two things is possible. This is why when an example between them is close to comparing the two quantities, it is called a syllogism. However, logicians use [the term syllogism] to indicate necessary joined premises whether they are predicative, conditional, or involving a contradiction. They do not call them induction or example.

For them, enthymemes are more deserving of the name syllogism than examples, which is the opposite of what the case is with the public or the theologians. Similarly, sophistical statements could be called syllogisms, but not absolutely; instead, sophistical statements are called sophistical syllogisms, and enthymemes are called rhetorical syllogisms. As for the absolute syllogism, they use it to refer to a statement from which a necessary conclusion results. Enthymemes include real syllogisms as well as statements that appear to be syllogisms. An enthymeme in prior common opinion is the opinion that is not followed up on. However, if it is a condition in rhetoric that common opinions be used, it does not matter if the enthymemes are real syllogisms or non-syllogisms, as long as they are joined statements, either by force or by action, that are persuasive for everyone. The primary kinds of enthymemes are the same as the primary kinds of syllogisms, namely predicative and conditional enthymemes. It is necessary that they
persuade from the point of view of matter, form, the quantity of each one of them, its arrangement, and the way it functions in the same manner as the syllogisms mentioned in the *Prior Analytics*.

Each syllogism is made up of only two premises. Being joined means that they share one part. Their arrangement is that one of them is minor and the other major. One of them provides the syllogism with the necessity that a conclusion be derived from it while the other connects the conclusion to the premise that includes its necessity. The quantity of each one of them is that it is either universal or particular. The quality of each one of them is that it is either positive or negative. Their material is made up of the existing matters about and in which the propositions are; if these are joined they become premises. Necessary premises ultimately exist by themselves. Possible premises are ultimately weak. Absolute premises are intermediate between the two. This is why some of them are known with certainty, some are conjectural, and some are sensed. Those that are known provide reliable knowledge. The conjectural ones provide weak knowledge. The sensed ones provide intermediate knowledge [between the two]. This is also clear from what has been mentioned earlier that our confidence in the sensed lasts as long as we sense it. If is absent from [the realm of] our senses, we do not know whether it is in the same state or not. Some of them are completely true, some are completely false, and some are partially false and partially true. Of these (latter ones) particularly, there are some whose most parts are false, and some whose most parts are true, and some whose true parts are equal to its other parts.
After that, the premises differ according to the ten categories in which and from which premises take place, and according to the different kinds of each of these categories. Some of the premises are made up of two halves that are essence, like when we say “man is an animal.” Some of them are made up of two halves that are quantity, like when we say: “these are ten surfaces.” Some of them are made up of two halves that are quality, like when we say: “each square is a shape.” The same applies to the rest of the categories. Sometimes a premise is made up of one half that belongs to one category and another half that belongs to another category, like when we say: “The person is white.” The premises differ after that according to the different arts that include each kind of existing object.

These are the types of materials that make up enthymemes and syllogisms in general.

Enthymemes persuade by their forms and their substance. They become persuasive when they have room for opposition. When there is no room for opposition, they move outside the domain and rank of the persuasive to the rank of the certain alone. Predicative enthymemes become persuasive only when we first examine the predicative syllogisms (that are real syllogisms) and the premises that provide necessity to their conclusions are known. Those which have clearly produced the necessity, like the first form of the predicative forms, are omitted and only the ones that join them and the conclusion are declared. For example, the major universal premises of the first form clearly provide the necessity of the conclusions that derive from them. It is therefore necessary in the case of the syllogisms of the first form, if we want to make them
enthymemes, that we omit the major [premise] and only declare the minor one. If we consider declaring them sometimes, we consider them indeterminate. This is one way that syllogisms become persuasive from the point of view of form; first, the statement either remains open to opposition from the point of view of necessity, or the necessary premises are omitted. If the premises are mentioned, they are not mentioned in a manner that reflects that they are necessary. Secondly, it is possible that they are clearly false and the hearer senses that so the persuasion fails. If the speaker does not mention them, his silence gives the impression that he is silent because they are apparently true. And if they were true, there is no guarantee that they are only partly true. If the speaker has to declare them, and they are mentioned as indeterminate, the indeterminate is considered in the public’s prior opinion as universal; its falsity becomes unapparent, and it becomes persuasive, since there is still room for opposition in it. However, in the syllogisms of the other forms, the location of the necessary premises is hidden. There is no agreement that the necessary major premises among them are the absolute necessary ones. [Instead,] it is possible that the minor ones are necessary for the conclusion that follows. It is not an enthymeme if both premises are declared after they are made indeterminate so there is room for opposition in the composition. If the necessary is omitted, and the indeterminate is mentioned, it becomes less apparent and more open to opposition. If all the premises are mentioned, and the necessary ones are made universal and the conditions of the syllogism are met in all of them, it is raised from the rank of persuasion to the rank of certainty, and there is no room for opposition in its form. But persuasion could be removed from another angle, namely that the person using it believes that he won, not
through persuasion, but through a logical art pursued in the statement, or through another art, not his ability to use the means common among him and all his audience and opponents. When a person believes that he has won [an argument] because of his expertise in an art other than the one he shares with his opponents, his statement is not [considered] persuasive. This is because he thinks that what is used in persuasion is not the strength of the matter or the propositions used in his speech, but strength that was acquired from another art. This is similar to wrestling if a fighter uses a weapon or anything else against his opponent that his opponent does not have equal access to. This proves his weakness in the art [of wrestling] and he is removed from the class of wrestlers. The same applies to opponents who use common means. After this, we examine the non-syllogistic joined means distinguishing between what is thought by appearance to be a syllogism and use them. These include the means whose joined premises are both positive and in the second from. In prior opinion this is considered a syllogism whose premises have all been declared whether they have been regarded as universal or are made indeterminate. If one [premise] is omitted and the other one is mentioned as indeterminate, vagueness becomes more hidden and there will be more room for opposition.

There are also the universal syllogistic means that are in the third form. Their conclusions should be taken as universal. Even though they are syllogistic, they do not produce universal conclusions, but particular ones. This is why these are not syllogistic with regard to the conclusions that are drawn from them in this art, namely universal
conclusions. Their propositions need to be considered indeterminate to conceal the locations of opposition in it to some degree.

These also include the non-syllogistic means which include one positive premise and one negative premise with one of them being universal. For example A includes all of B and B includes none of C. The conclusion is not necessarily that A is not in C; it is [only] possible that this is the case. But if the premises are reversed, the conclusion is that C is not in part of A. This is why it is possible that it be fallaciously concluded that A is not in C. But the persuasion here is concealed and is rarely used.

How are conditional enthymemes composed? And, from how many angles can they be persuasive with regard to the fact that their forms can be conjunctive or disjunctive. The conjunctive ones become persuasive when the conditional is exposed while the exceptional is omitted, then the conclusion is provided. The conclusion of the conjunctive conditional in this art could be the opposite of what came after it or what came before it depending on what the speaker believes is best for him. By being silent about the exceptional, the location of opposition in all these conclusions is hidden. This is because making an exception, or knowing which exception produces which conclusion, is not known in the prior opinion or the [opinion of] the public. All of this is hidden from the public.

If the result is the opposite of what follows, the exceptional is considered opposite of what preceded. Such a composition is not productive only apparently, not in reality. If the exceptional is exposed, it is not guaranteed that the listener will not sense it and persuasion will fail. This is why [the speaker] should be silent about it and omit it.
If the conclusion is identical to the antecedent itself, it will be thought that this has resulted from the exception of the subsequent. In reality, this is not productive either. This composition is used rarely. However, if it is used and the speaker prefers to make it persuasive, the exceptional should be omitted; otherwise the corruption of its composition will be sensed and the persuasion will fail.

If the conclusion is the opposite of the antecedent, it is clear the exceptional is the opposite of the subsequent. This composition is accurate, but it becomes persuasive by omitting the exceptional. If it is declared here, the conditional should be omitted so that there is room for opposition or questioning.

If the conclusion is what is subsequent, the exceptional is the antecedent. This composition is also accurate. However, the exceptional in this case is unclear and needs clarification. If it is declared, there is no guarantee that its hiding will be sensed and the persuasion of the syllogism is removed. So it has to be omitted.

The exceptional could be placed in an unclear manner, and it is required to declare it for the conclusion to be accurate. Otherwise, the conclusion is inaccurate. Nichomachus’ son clarified this in the *Prior Analytics*. Generally, we should omit the things that if are declared, require a logical art to correct them in order to make the composition accurate. An exception to this case is the omission that takes place for summary or to avoid prolonging the statement. This is why the reason is the same that the major in the predicative form and the minor in the joined conditional form are omitted. The joined conditional in this art is used mostly in opposition to refute the statement of the opponent. The separate conditional is used for classification. It has been the habit that
none of it is omitted, neither the joined conditional nor the exceptional. But if it is agreed that the oppositions in it are more than two, it may be that the speaker did not include all the parts in the classification leaving an opportunity for the opponent [to oppose the speaker’s statement]. Or he may not have dealt with all the exceptions, but only made some exceptions rather than others. Here too there is opportunity for the opponent [to oppose the speaker’s statement]. If the speaker only sticks to the conditional, the statement is not persuasive. It sounds like a statement under questioning or full of doubt with not stable opinion. If the opposition is dealt within the conditional, and the exceptions are dealt with in whatever requires exception in reality, then there is no room for opposition from the composition standpoint. Opposition is then looked for in the content. In this case, the conditional premise might suffice and the other is omitted. If the conclusion is very clear, or if there are things that are clear to reason or the senses, the exceptional is understood. An example of a conclusion is saying: “One of us” with the purpose of misleading his opponent. The strength of the statement lies in saying: “The person who made the mistake is either me or that person. The person who made the mistake is not me. Therefore the person who made the mistake is that person.” Similar statements are used while making allusions. The issue might become complicated unless issue in the exceptional is very clear. If one has to resort to doing this sometimes, the exceptional or the conclusion need to be declared so that the exception is known.

The type where the separate conditional is used negatively, like when we say: “Zayd cannot be in Iraq when he is in el-Sham,” is similar to case of the joined conditional type. In most of these, only the conditional premise is mentioned and the
exceptional is omitted because the exception might invalidate the necessity, which in prior opinion is necessary in the conclusion. This is why [the speaker] is silent about it so that the listener does not sense it. If the exceptional is the opposite of any of the two, the conclusion that results is not necessary and is not [in accordance with] prior opinion. In this case especially the exceptional should be omitted if the speaker intends the antecedent or subsequent to be drawn from it. This takes place if the opposite of the other is made exceptional. If this is the intention, we should not be limited to the conditional, but it should be declared while the exceptional is omitted. Otherwise, the persuasion fails since the listener has the option of making an exception of what you say that can be used to invalidate your conclusion. Or the listener might not know what you are planning to conclude, since it is possible that he would wrongly imagine that you omitted an exception that would conclude something other than what you intended. You statement becomes problematic as a result and its persuasion fails. If someone wants to conclude the opposite of either, he does that by making one of them exceptional. If declares it, the opponent has no room for opposition in the composition. This is why it is better to omit the exceptional and declare the conclusion because the statement becomes more concise, and its strength is equivalent to that of a syllogism since it is allowed to require a kind of necessity. Whatever persuades while still having room for opposition, questioning, or elaboration belongs more to the domain of rhetoric.

The same applies to the conjunctive conditional if it is reworded into the negative. For example, we say “there is no day unless the sun rises;” “there is no shoe unless there is leather;” “this cannot be human unless [he/she] is also animal;” and “Zayd cannot go
until Amr talks.” These statements and their like refer back to the conjunctive conditional. Error is usually committed in what is made exceptional in the like of these and in what the conclusions should be in reality. The conclusions drawn from these in the prior opinion could be one thing and its opposite either as an antecedent or subsequent. In such cases, the speaker should make the conclusion be what he has not acknowledged, and avoid declaring the exceptional ones, especially if declaring the exceptional ones exposes the weaknesses of the composition and drops its necessity. Some of these conditional [enthymmes] are used in the predicative while others are used in the imperative such as saying: “Zayd, do not leave until Amr speaks.”

In the case of the disjunctive conditional [enthymemes], not all kinds of its opposition should be taken into account, but only the most obvious of them while setting aside the more hidden ones. Then, one should examine which if its parts bring to the attention of the listener the place of opposition in the conclusion, or the composition. Declaring these should be avoided.

In the case of the syllogism involving a contradiction, it is mostly used to invalidate statements and oppositions. An example of this is when we say: “If not every man is sensitive, then not every animal is sensitive.” This is impossible. In the case of the syllogism involving a contradiction, the thesis should be declared, and this is where doubt lies, as well as the necessary impossible while omitting the true premise which is added to the doubted one. The speaker may have to declare the true one if the necessity is not clear. This declaration should be carried over to the end of the statement. An example of
this is saying: “If not every human is sensitive, then not every animal is sensitive, since man is an animal.” This is impossible.

Then we will show how persuasion takes place from the content standpoint. Since the premises that provide the statements with the truth of their conclusions are stronger than the rest of the premises, they should be accorded more attention; and [since] the rest of the premises should be considered below what should be agreed upon as tangible, completely certain, or persuasive, the enthymeme that accomplishes persuasion from its content should premises that provide it with primary necessity. If this is the case, the premises of the enthymemes that provide them with true necessary conclusions should be well known in the prior opinion shared by everyone.

The meaning of prior opinion has been explained before.

These premises include what is well known in reality and what is well known only in appearance, without being so in reality. The well known [premises] include ones that are true and others that are not. However, if they are used by rhetoric, they are not used on the basis that they are true. If this were the case, if rhetoric encountered true premises that are not well known, it would have used them. But this does not happen. Instead, it sets aside certain premises if they are not well known. Moreover, if rhetoric used well known statements that are truly well known, it does not use them because they are truly well known, which is what is done in dialectic. Instead, rhetoric uses them because they are well known to everybody in prior opinion, and it is agreed that they are truly well known. And if [rhetoric] uses what is only apparently well known, it does not use it only because it is so like sophistry does, but because they are well known for
everybody in prior opinion and it is agreed that they are well known. It could be agreed that these premises can include many true and certain ones as well as ones that are wholly or partly true, conjectural, known, necessary, absolute, and possible. They include ones that deal with instruction, natural sciences, or any other theoretical or practical art. But [rhetoric] does not use any kind of these premises because it is specific [to a particular art] but because they are well known in the prior common opinion, and because it has been agreed despite [the specific qualities] that it has other qualities that are known for everyone in the prior common opinion.

Some of the premises are places and others are species. The places are the premises whose powers, i.e. their parts, are used as major premises in individual syllogisms. They themselves are not used. The species are themselves used, as they are, as major premises in individual syllogisms.

The places include nothing that a being has that another being does not, that a category has that another category does not, or that a science has that another science does not. Instead, each one of them is general to many sciences and many categories, and they include kinds of partial premises, each one of them could be particular to a specific category or science rather than another.

As for the species, each one of them is particular to a specific syllogism or enthymeme. Each kind of them is particular to one category or one science rather than another.

[There are two kinds] of particular premises of places. In one kind, its predicate is particular to the place predicate and its topic is particular to the place predicate. In the
other kind, its predicate constitutes the two parts of the place predicate and its topic is itself the topic of the predicate.

As for the latter kind, it is not considered a strength of the place or its parts. Instead, it is a necessary conclusion of a syllogism whose major premise is the place itself, and whose minor premise is made up of the topic of the premise which is part of the topic of the place and from the topic of the place, so the topic of the place is the middle limit.

As for the species, some of them are preferred, some are commended in prior common opinion, and some are necessities and signs in the prior opinion for everyone. Their topics are universal meanings that include something that exists in place of something else or does not exist for it without a condition. They are also considered indeterminate. The ones that include something that either exists or does not exist, take place mostly in the future, it is clear from their nature that they produce conjectural conclusions when used as major premises. As for the commended [species], from which is taken one thing that does or does not exist for something else absolutely and without any conditions, are indeterminate and universal; some of their subjects are tangible and natural and others are intentional. In the former, whatever is confirmed by the senses is considered true, but if a well known proposition only attracts on the basis of its fame, it is conjectural and the syllogisms based on it produce conjectural conclusions. If it is agreed that they are certain and they are not sensed, their certainty is an accident. This is why Nichomachus’ son (Aristotle) has stipulated in The Posterior Analytics that a certainty has to be certain, not an accident.
Proof and sign share the fact that the existence of each of them necessitates the existence of something else. A sign is a thing whose existence produces a predicate that is more general or specific than the issue or the predicate. Proof is more general than the issue and more specific than or equal to the predicate. Proof is composed in the first kind only.

There are two types of signs. In one of them the common term is more general than the predicate and the subject together. In the second type, the common term is more specific than the predicate and the subject together. The one that has a common term that is more general than the two ends is composed in the second form and cannot be referred to the first form. This is because if it is reversed, the predicate and subject of what is reversed are equal and will not be more general than the two ends. It can be reversed only if it is in one of two states: if one or both premises are positive, universal and where the subject equals the predicate; or if it is negative and universal. If we made the middle term more general than the two ends, neither one of them (negative universal or positive) has a predicate that equals its subject.

The second type of sign, where the common term is more specific than the two ends; has to be composed in the third form. The more general and the more particular give the false impression by their existence that the predicate is part of the subject without this being the case, since composing the more general is not syllogistic in the first place neither in this [kind of] conclusion or any other. Even if the composition of the more particular is syllogistic, it is not a syllogism for the thing it has become a sign for even if it were a syllogism that produces something else. This is because it is made as a
sign for the existence of something in a certain issue. Moreover, none of the types of the third from produce a universal conclusion in the first place. True proof is more general than the subject and more particular than or equal to the predicate because its composition is syllogistic. It is also a syllogism of the thing on which it has been made proof.

There are two types of accurately composed proofs: the one whose existence makes something else exist and whose removal results in the removal of the thing, and one by whose existence the subject exists as a predicate in a topic and by its removal the subject is removed from the topic. This is known as the proof of equality. The second type is the thing by whose existence the topic exists but whose removal does not result in the removal of the topic, and the thing by whose existence a predicate exists in a subject and it [the predicate] is not removed by its removal from the topic. This is known as the more particular proof. Both types are accurate.

The most accurate proof is the proof whose existence necessitates the existence of the thing in whichever place, topic, or time. It is the proof whose existence produces more of the thing, whether in the number of things the proof is about or the number of times.

In addition to these two, the proof is the thing whose existence necessitates the existence of something as well as its opposite so that this one thing is proof of one thing and its opposite. It is possible that this proof could be stronger in supporting one of the two opposites than in supporting the other. Or the proof can be equal for both of them.
These are all composed syllogistically in the first form. Any weakness is a result of its content, not its composition.

The [terms] proof and sign are used to refer to the one thing that is used as a middle term. The thing that exists as a result of the proof, either absolutely or in one topic, is known as the proven, and constitutes the major part in whichever form it is composed. The same applies to the sign. In the thing that is signified by the sign, the sign is the middle term. And the signified is the major part in any type or form.

Proof is interpreted in different ways. One of these is that proof can be taken as something that comes after the thing it proves in the way the things that result from causes lead to their causes. Things that are caused by causes could be proof of these causes.

There are three well known [kinds of] causes: agent, matter, and purpose. Shape is also a kind of cause but it is not well known. Whatever exists [as a result of the work] of the agent is proof; for example, craftsmanship is proof of the craftsman. The state of the products is proof of the state of the agent. Similarly, products are proof of their material. What is seen from the state of a garment is proof of the material of its textile: what kind of textile it is, what kind of material, as well as the state of the craftsman. The products indicate their agents and their material. Moreover, many things provide proof of their purposes and consequences. The types of these are the same as the causes, such as the fact that rain is proof that there were clouds, and smoke is proof that burning and fire existed even if we do not see it.
Proof may precede the proven subject in the same way that causes precede the caused subjects. Causes of things may also be proof of these things, such as the fact that fire is proof that something burned in a certain location is proof where the fire is seen, even if the burning is not seen.

Proof could precede what is proven in the way causes precede [their effects]. Causes could also prove things, such as fire which proves the burning of something in the location of the fire, [even if] it is not seen.

And [proof] could be accompany what is proven, neither follow it, precede it, be a cause for, or be a result of it. For example, the heavy cloud is proof of rain. The blackness is not the cause of the rain, but is only an accident of rain- producing clouds, either all or most of the time.

The premise that is made up of the proof and the proven is also called proof, such as saying, “where there is smoke there is fire,” or “where there is fire there is burning.” Moreover, the syllogism whose major premise is made up of this premise and whose minor premise is made from the other is called proof also. And the conclusion resulting from this is called the proven.

The same applies to the sign; the term is used to describe the middle term which is more general and more specific than the two ends. The one of the two ends that makes the middle term a sign for it is known as a sign. Moreover, the premise that includes the middle term and the thing that is known by this sign is also known as a sign.

The syllogism whose middle term is a sign is also a sign.
It is clear that all of these are proofs in the prior common opinion. In this case, it is possible that it is not proof in reality, but this is not sensed if it is only viewed as well known. What is proven is also conjecture, [therefore].

In these [cases] the enthymemes become persuasive.

Example is persuading a person that something exists because of its existence in a similar thing when its existence in the similar thing is better known than its existence in the thing [being discussed]. Based on the previous condition, it is clear that the similar thing is such in the common opinion shared by everybody. The similar thing should be declared and the thing that includes the similarity should be omitted, unless one has to declare it either because it is unclear or because the opponent opposes the similarity between the two things. Similarity is in the letter and the form of the utterance only. It can also be in the meaning only.

Similarity in the meaning takes place if two things share the same meaning by accident, or it could be that both things belong in the same way or in similar ways to what they belong to. This happens if they both belong to the same thing, or if one of them belongs to one thing in a way similar to the way the other thing belongs to something else. Each of these [similarities] is either a close or a remote similarity. For example, Zayd and Amr are similar in being human, animal, and having a body. If one of the two [similar] things has something, it is necessary that the other thing has the same thing. Similarity is stronger when one thing is similar to another in meaning. This is considered the case when the thing exists in the meaning either completely or mostly. If this is the
case, the example is almost an enthymeme or a syllogism, and is outside the realm of example.

If the second topic is similar to the first topic in anything that is agreed on in meanings that can make two things similar, even if the thing is not present in the meaning of the first thing, unless this is very hidden in the example, there will be many places for opposition. In the case of the similarity of words, the speaker has to select from these what is hidden from the audience.

All of these are persuasive and are used in rhetoric.

The composition of the example is first made predicative if its strength is that of a predicative syllogism, as has been shown in *The Prior Analytics*.

The person composing it could also do that using the conditional conjunctive. However, the conditional conjunctive composition is mostly used for opposition, refutation, and rebuking. In proving something, most of the time the composition is predicative. If the example is predicative, its premises should declare the thing including the similarity; the example needs to be declared, followed by the conclusion, and the similarity should be omitted. If the similarity is not apparent, it should be declared.

Declaring the similarity results in three [kinds of] premises: one whose subject is identical to the subject of the second, and whose predicate is the predicate of the conclusion; one where the predicate of the second is the similar thing that both things have in common; and one where the predicate of the third is this thing itself and its subject is the second thing.
CHAPTER 5, THE ARABS DID NOT ‘JUST’ TRANSLATE ARISTOTLE: AL-FARABI’S LOGICO-RHETORICAL THEORY

Many of the matters that Aristotle aims to teach in his books become difficult for us to understand at these times. The reason is that many of the expressions he used and which signify well and are generally known matters to people of his language do not signify in our language the same meanings. . . . Moreover, many of the examples he used were well known to the people of his time. But these same examples changed in his country as well as in ours. . . . Furthermore, many of the topics that were investigated in the past are considered strange at the present time. That is why those who want to teach these matters from Aristotle’s books, be they individuals or nations, must substitute the awkward or strange or unknown things with things that are known and acceptable to people at the present time.

—Al-Farabi

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to sit in on a graduate seminar in feminist rhetoric at one of the top programs in our field. In the two-and-a-half-hour meeting, the professor spent about 35 minutes lecturing on the history of rhetoric, summarizing the standard range of historical epochs from the “Dark Ages” to the “Enlightenment” and emphasizing the role rhetoric played in religious discourse along the way. The Muslim Arabs were mentioned a few times in that lecture, noting for instance that the period
between 600 and 700 CE saw the rise of Muslim Arabs, that Asians, Arabs, and Vikings were forces that made Europe unstable in the 900s, and that in 962 the pope made peace with the emperor of Germany and united Italy and Germany against forces in Asia and the Muslim Arabs.

Overlooking the intellectual contributions of the Arabs during this time period while only highlighting their role as a military nuisance is problematic, and is, unfortunately, an example of what history of rhetoric classes generally have to offer about the medieval period. Studying the work of philosophers such as al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (known in the West as Avicenna), and Ibn Rushd (known in the West as Averroes) will provide rhetoricians with a more comprehensive understanding of the history of Western rhetoric by tracing its development in different centers such as Baghdad and Cordoba. This knowledge will not only fill a huge gap in the history of rhetoric as currently studied, but will also provide an invaluable example of the dialogic nature of knowledge and the roles of context, audience, and purpose in the reshaping of a received body of knowledge, the phenomenon of creating a new product out of an old one.

This chapter calls attention to an all-too-easily accepted attitude in current scholarship and advanced rhetorical history pedagogy that proffers an Orientalist view of Arabic philosophy as essentially imitative—except when it is arcane and mystical. Building on the previous chapter, the translation of al-Farabi’s treatise on rhetoric, I challenge this attitude by showing that al-Farabi’s book on rhetoric is more than a mere summary of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, as the introduction by Salim to the Arabic edition states
In this chapter, I provide a brief introduction to al-Farabi’s life and main influences on his thought before moving on to my three main points about al-Farabi’s contributions to rhetorical theory: his understanding of rhetoric as a logical art, how logical and rhetorical terms acquired new meanings when translated from Greek to Arabic, and the rhetorical nature of al-Farabi’s own work in adapting Platonic and Aristotelian models to suit a monotheistic audience. Emphasizing a dialogic approach to rhetorical study, I wish to show how al-Farabi used different parts of Aristotle’s *Organon* to create a unique theory of rhetoric that was appropriate to his context in tenth century monotheistic Baghdad.

Al-Farabi’s Life and Philosophy

Abu-Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi was born around 870 CE. Though his family was from Farab in Turkestan, al-Farabi studied Arabic grammar and logic in Baghdad, the capital of the Islamic empire at the time. In his introduction to al-Farabi’s *Kitab Ara’ Ahl al-Madina al-Fadila* (*The Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City*), Albert Nader cites thirteenth century biographer Ibn-Khallikan, who tells us that al-Farabi was known in philosophical circles as the second master after Aristotle, the first master (12). According to Ibn-Khallikan, al-Farabi mastered several languages in addition to Turkish and Arabic. He studied logic under Abu Bishr Matta Yunus in Baghdad and Yuhanna ibn-Haylan in Harran (13). His instructors also included Isra’il Quwayri and Ibrahim al-Marwazi (Fakhry, *Al-Farabi* 2). Netton describes al-Farabi’s life as “the product of a highly eclectic milieu where al-Farabi, the student of a Nestorian Christian, Yuhanna ibn
Haylan, among others, inhabited the court of the Shi’ite Sayf al-Dawla [in Damascus]” (7).

By the time Aristotle’s works reached al-Farabi in Baghdad, they had undergone several centuries of studying and reinterpretation. Following the Alexandrian tradition, the *Organon* included the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, as well as Porphyry’s *Isagoge*, a factor that has major implications for the repurposing of rhetoric in the Arabic tradition. As a member of the Baghdad Peripatetic school, which followed in the tradition of the Alexandrian school and focused on studying logic, al-Farabi was familiar with the *Organon* and had access to works, such as the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*, that had been newly translated into Arabic. Moreover, unlike earlier Syro-Christian members of the Alexandrian school who were not allowed to study the second half of the *Prior Analytics* or any of the *Posterior Analytics*, the Baghdad Peripatetics had no such restrictions. Scholars suggest that al-Farabi’s corpus can be divided into three categories: introductory works to the study of philosophy, commentaries and paraphrases (where his logical curriculum resides), and original works that adopt a syncretic approach to all aspects of philosophy (Reisman 54–55).

In addition to its grounding in Aristotelianism, al-Farabi’s curriculum was also rooted in Neo-Platonism, and he relied heavily on the works of Plotinus and Proclus in creating his theory of emanation. In this system, laid out in detail in *The Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City*, there is a hierarchy of ten intellects, each imparting being on the other in a descending order. The last of these, the Active Intellect, is the link between the divine world and the sublunar world, known in al-Farabi’s view as the world
of generation and corruption. This hierarchy of celestial intellects finds its parallel in al-Farabi’s classification of human intellect and directly informs his theory of logic and the central role of rhetoric therein (al-Farabi, *Kitab Ara’ Ahl*).

Though the role of monotheistic religions is usually downplayed in the literature describing influences on al-Farabi’s work, there is evidence to suggest that his background in Islam and Christianity (he studied logic under Christian scholars) influenced the way he reinterpreted many of the Aristotelian and neoplatonic concepts that came down to him, a factor that contributes considerable originality to his philosophical thinking. For example, he describes the Aristotelian First Cause in terms of God, the Active Intellect in terms of the angel of revelation in Islam, and the philosopher in terms of a prophet in the first chapter of *Kitab Ara’ Ahl al-Madinah al-Fadialah*:

> Then it is this man [the philosopher] who receives Divine Revelation, and God Almighty grants him Revelation through the mediation of the Active Intellect. . . . Thus he is, through the emanation from the Active Intellect to his Passive Intellect, a wise man and a philosopher and an accomplished thinker who employs an intellect of divine quality, and through the emanation of the Active Intellect to his faculty of representation a visionary prophet: who warns of things to come and tells of particular things which exist at present. (245)

It is open to interpretation here whether al-Farabi was trying to reinterpret religion in terms of Greek philosophy or the opposite, reinterpreting philosophy in terms of religion.
Rhetoric for al-Farabi: A Logical Art in the Arabic Tongue

Not all of al-Farabi’s works have been edited in the original Arabic, let alone translated into other languages. Moreover, there is a state of confusion in the literature about which of his works are extant and which are not. Al-Farabi’s book on rhetoric is a case in point. The book is labeled as “not extant” in Rescher’s Al-Farabi: An Annotated Bibliography published in 1962 (43) even though the manuscript was discovered in 1960 (Langhade and Grignashi 4). The book was edited by Mohamed Salim in the original Arabic in 1976 and was translated into French in 1971 by Langhade and Grignashi. No English translation of the book has yet been attempted.

This section is an overview of al-Farabi’s book on rhetoric. It highlights how al-Farabi’s rhetorical theory is not an imitation of Aristotle’s. Instead, it shows how the presence of rhetoric in the Organon redefined rhetoric and its purposes for al-Farabi and his school.

A close look at the title of al-Farabi’s book on rhetoric, Kitab fi al-Mantiq: Al-Khataba (A Book on Logic: Rhetoric), shows a clear deviation from Aristotle and illustrates the repurposing of rhetoric as a logical art. Moreover, the definition of rhetoric in the opening sentence of the treatise is one suited to its presence in the Organon: “Rhetoric: a syllogistic art whose purpose is persuasion in all of the ten categories. The persuasion that takes place in the hearer’s soul is the ultimate goal of the actions of rhetoric” (7). The references to the syllogism and the categories both reflect the repurposing of rhetoric as a logical art in al-Farabi’s curriculum. This repurposing
includes the transformation of rhetoric from a practical art with the three uses that Aristotle assigns it to a theoretical epistemological one: it has a place in a hierarchy of logical arts that, in their turn, correspond to a hierarchy of human intellects. As such, it is not only a means of conveying knowledge (acquired through other means, as Aristotle would have it), but also a tool for acquiring knowledge, albeit not the most sophisticated one.

Being the fourth in a hierarchy of five syllogistic arts, al-Farabi transforms rhetoric beyond the Aristotelian model into a component of an epistemological structure whose aim is acquiring and communicating knowledge in a manner that accommodates the different capacities of the human intellect (demonstration, dialectic, sophistic, rhetoric, and poetics). For example, philosophers, by virtue of their superior intellectual abilities, are able to arrive at knowledge (which in al-Farabi’s scholarship means learning the causes of things both in the sublunar and divine worlds) through demonstration, the highest of the logical arts. According to al-Farabi, the ability to arrive at such knowledge is a gradual one that necessitates going through the other, less sophisticated means—including rhetoric. Rhetoric has an additional role, as well: it is used by philosophers to instruct the masses. In al-Farabi’s own words, in *Didascalia in Rhetoricum*:

And the proverb of Plato, which he posited in his book, the *Republic*, about the cave and how man leaves and then returns to it, is especially suited to the order which Aristotle posited for the parts of logic. For he begins with the lowest opinions, namely those that pertain to many things (pluribus), and then does not
cease to proceed gradually, step by step, until he ascends to the most perfect of the sciences. Then he begins to descend through those gradually, until he arrives finally at the lowest, least, and more vile of [the sciences]. (qtd. in Black 117)

The ascent in this passage indicates that rhetoric, the art whose subject matter is opinion, is a component of the hierarchy of syllogistic arts required to arrive at true knowledge via demonstration. The second role of rhetoric is as part of the descent process: the philosopher’s task of communicating the knowledge that he acquired through demonstration to the masses in a manner that is suited to their inferior intellect. For al-Farabi, then, rhetoric is a logical art in its own right as well as a general method of instruction used in other arts, and this view is a clear transformation from the Aristotelian focus on the practical uses of rhetoric for ceremonial, forensic, and legislative purposes, and as only a means of instruction of the knowledge arrived at through dialectic. Moreover, while Aristotle pairs rhetoric and dialectic (probably because both of them deal with opinion), al-Farabi does not shy away from pairing rhetoric and demonstration, now that rhetoric is a member of the same hierarchy. Al-Farabi’s rhetorical theory cannot, therefore, be studied in isolation from his larger logical curriculum that, in its turn, is directly related to his theory of how knowledge is acquired and the different kinds of intellect.

Because of the role that rhetoric plays in this highly complex epistemological structure, both as a logical art in its own right and as a method of instruction to the
masses, a close look at al-Farabi’s definition of persuasion, a definition that Aristotle
never offers (Black 104), is relevant here:

Assent takes place when nothing else is possible—this is
knowledge. Persuading in the art of rhetoric is similar to
instruction in the demonstrative arts, and persuasion is the
equivalent of the knowledge acquired by the learner (as a result of
learning). Listening to the speaker, and deliberating and
speculating over what he says is the equivalent of knowledge. The
noun “persuasion” is derived from being satisfied with something
(as in satisfaction and economy), even when it is possible to have
more. People are inclined when they encounter each other over
dealings concerning their livelihood to believe each other in what
they are talking about, and they refer to what others say calling this
meaning knowledge. (9)

In this passage, the parallel relation created by al-Farabi between assent in demonstration
and persuasion in rhetoric is evidence of the cognitive dimension that rhetoric acquires in
the Farabian curriculum as a result of its presence in the Organon. The reference to
“people” and “livelihood” here is a reference to the subject matter of rhetoric, namely,
opinion that has, by virtue of its being widely circulated, been elevated to the status of
knowledge.

Al-Farabi offers a similar definition of persuasion as based on opinion in

Didascalia in Rhetoricum:
But the persuasive is that to which the soul acquiesces in such a way that the assent of the soul \((\textit{assenus anime})\) is given that something is thus, without its contradictory; but its contradictory exists along with it, and the soul easily admits it, except that the mind inclines to the one contradictory rather than the other. (qtd. in Black 111)

In this passage, al-Farabi adds another quality to the understanding of persuasion: the hearer knows of the existence of opposition and decides to believe what the rhetor is saying anyway. This state of consciousness is another quality of rhetoric as an epistemological art and will be discussed further in the following section on the Arabic translation of the enthymeme.

The epistemological quality of rhetoric in al-Farabi’s scholarship is also clear from his lengthy discussion of the different types of human knowledge in \textit{Kitab al-Khataba}. In addition to mentioning opinion as the subject matter of rhetoric, he proceeds to compare opinion to certainty (9); describes the propositions that are based on opinion as either necessary or possible (10); contrasts the syllogism to innate knowledge (13–15); discusses the properties of certainty (16) and opinion (16–20); proceeds to a discussion of doubt (21); and defines rhetoric and dialectic as methods to verify opinion by examining the existence of opposition to it (21). All of these are points related to the nature of knowledge and the degrees of certainty associated with each kind.

The role of the rhetor undergoes major transformation in the Farabian curriculum. Al-Farabi’s ruler in \textit{Kitab Ara’ Ahl} is a philosopher-prophet who should have a long list
of qualities, including eloquence: “[The ruler] should have a fine diction, his tongue enabling him to explain to perfection all that is in the recess of the mind” (Walzer 247–49). Al-Farabi’s representative of the highest intelligence in the intellect hierarchy must be eloquent; eloquence isn’t just a techne, a practical skill that a rhetor is trained in to resolve matters at the senate or the courthouse. The connection between the perfect representation of a sound mind in the character of the philosopher-prophet and eloquence is a direct reference for the role rhetoric plays as a cognitive art, and is related directly to the connections that al-Farabi makes in the Ihsa’ al-‘Ulum (Enumeration of the Sciences) between articulate speech and the ability to make sound decisions as characteristics of logic.

The inclusion of the Rhetoric and the Poetics in the Organon that the Baghdad Peripatetics inherited from the Alexandrian school has serious implications for the way rhetoric was repurposed as well as the way logic itself was redefined by the Arabic philosophers. Deborah Black reminds us that the

suggestion that the Rhetoric and the Poetics embody a logical teaching,

which [their inclusion in the Organon] clearly implies, necessitates a radical rethinking of the character and aims of these two Aristotelian texts.

Perhaps more importantly, an expansion of the scope and contents of the Organon implies an expansion of the realm of logic itself. (1)

The epistemological qualities that rhetoric acquires as a logical art, the redefinition of persuasion, and the transformation in the subjectivity of the rhetor are some examples of how al-Farabi’s work on rhetoric illustrates Black’s statement. The fact that al-Farabi’s
scholarship was conducted in Arabic and that he wrote for an Arabic audience are additional factors that contributed to the uniqueness of his theory of rhetoric.

Greek Terms, Arabic Translation

Because of the fact that al-Farabi was writing in Arabic, he not only uses translations of Greek terms, but also examines the different meanings that these terms have in the Arabic language, meanings that these terms did not necessarily have in the original Greek. As a result, key terms such as logic, persuasion, and enthymeme acquire new connotations in not only al-Farabi’s logical curriculum, but also the entire Arabic tradition that built upon his work.

In *Ihsa’ al-’Ulum*, al-Farabi lists three meanings of the Arabic word for logic: *mantiq*, as derived from the root *nutq*. The first meaning is the “voiced utterance by which the tongue expresses what is in the consciousness” (78). The second is “the utterance that is in the soul, or the intelligibles that are expressed by words” (78). The third meaning reflects the traditional meaning of logic: “an innate psychological power which distinguishes humans from animals. Through this power, humans acquire the intelligibles, sciences, and arts . . . and distinguish between good and bad actions” (78). According to al-Farabi, logic provides rules for external and internal utterances, as well as rules for “the third utterance,” which enables humans to make sound choices (78–79). The emphasis on utterances in al-Farabi’s logical curriculum adds a communicative dimension in an otherwise purely intellectual field.

Another term whose Arabic translation al-Farabi examines is persuasion (see definition of persuasion in previous section). He combines two synonyms of the Arabic
word, *qana’a*, in it: persuasion and being satisfied with something with the possibility of having more. This is a curious decision that is complicated by the fact that the second meaning is culturally based. The decision reflects an attempt on al-Farabi’s part to create a philosophical lexicon rooted in the Arabic language, and, because he does so, new connotations are added to the philosophical concepts that they did not possess in the original Greek.

Like his reworking of the concepts of logic and persuasion discussed above, al-Farabi’s discussion of the enthymeme is another case of a Greek term acquiring new connotations when translated into Arabic. Al-Farabi uses the Arabic word *damir* to refer to the enthymeme. He explains his choice by noting that the use of the enthymeme (*damir* ضمير) contracts (*yadmor* يستمر) one of its propositions (*Kitab al-Khataba* 26). While the translation seems successful based on the meaning of the enthymeme as a truncated syllogism in Aristotle, al-Farabi doesn’t stop there. He uses another synonym of the Arabic word *damir*, conscience, to add another dimension to the meaning of enthymeme that it did not have in Greek. Al-Farabi adds this meaning to the enthymeme, explaining that the omission takes place because of the previous knowledge of the omitted proposition in the conscience of the hearer (26). For al-Farabi, therefore, an enthymeme is not simply a truncated syllogism, because a syllogism can lose one of its premises and still be called a syllogism:

> When one uses demonstrations dialectical syllogisms in addressing [others] and in writing, most of the time each of these suppresses one of its premises, for the sake of brevity, or because what is
suppressed is extremely obvious to the audience. But these are not

called enthymemes. (qtd. in Black 160)

Instead, what distinguishes an enthymeme from a syllogism is the fact that the omission
is key to its persuasiveness (Kitab al-Khataba 31). Al-Farabi clarifies this rather vague
claim in a later section: it is the reason behind the omission that makes an enthymeme an
enthymeme. Al-Farabi provides two technical reasons that would make the omission of
the major proposition an enthymeme: either there is opposition for this proposition or the
proposition is a lie and its omission will contribute to give the enthymeme the appearance
of truth (44–45). This definition illustrates not only the rather low position that rhetoric
holds in the logical hierarchy, but also the lower status of the masses in the intellectual
hierarchy.

The meaning of the enthymeme as a reflection of the conscience of the masses has
another implication for al-Farabi: that a rhetor must appeal to her audience in terms that
they can comprehend. He explains that including both propositions would not be
persuasion but certitude, a domain that the masses do not have access to. He emphasizes
the importance of communicating with one’s audience by using methods that both the
speaker and the audience (and opponents) share. He compares the strategy of utilizing
methods that are inaccessible to the audience to using a weapon in wrestling in an attempt
to show that using the syllogism with an audience that cannot process it is cheating
(Black 162).

The Rhetorical Nature of al-Farabi’s Ouevre
Audience awareness and *kairos* are issues that arise not only in al-Farabi’s theory of rhetoric, but also in the way he practices rhetoric to appeal to an Arabic readership located in a different time and place than the Greek audience of the material he was reworking. As I have shown so far, al-Farabi Arabicizes the terminology he uses to appeal to an Arabic readership in the case of logic, persuasion, and the enthymeme. Moreover, throughout his corpus, al-Farabi replaces Greek examples with Arabic ones. When he does use foreign examples, he uses those that he knows his audience can grasp. The epigraph of this article explains in al-Farabi’s own words his views on accommodating one’s audience and his awareness of the inaccessibility of knowledge once it has been moved in time and place.

Al-Farabi practices what he preaches. For example, in explaining the Aristotelian concept of accidents in *The Opinions*, he uses the Arabic name Zayd in sentences such as “Zayd walks” (qtd. in Haddad 51). When he uses foreign names, he uses ones with which he knows his audience is familiar. In his treatise on rhetoric, *Kitab al-Khataba*, al-Farabi makes several references to Galen. At first glance, this might seem strange: Aristotle could not have used Galen in his own treatise, and al-Farabi prefers using Arabic examples. However, an understanding of the cultural context of Baghdad at the time explains that Galen would have been a familiar name. Al-Farabi’s lifetime marks the end of a two-century translation movement where medicine (and the work of Galen especially) was heavily translated and commented on. Galen’s name, therefore, would have been familiar to al-Farabi’s circle and among his readers (for an account of the translation movement, see Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*).
In addition to his conscious use of familiar names, the way al-Farabi defines the role of logic, perhaps the most important term in his scholarship, is heavily context based. Al-Farabi’s immediate context included the major debate between logicians and grammarians about the importance of studying the imported, foreign discipline of logic. Al-Farabi’s theory of Arabic grammar is rooted in a contemporary debate between the logician Abu Bishr Matta b. Yunus and the grammarian al-Sirafi. The former argued for the universal use of logic as a meta-language, while the latter refused this view, claiming that the Arabs did not need a foreign science because they had Arabic grammar to aid them in avoiding methodological errors (Reisman 66). Being a student of the former, al-Farabi predictably viewed logic as a universal tool that aids the human intellect, regardless of the language used, in acquiring truth and avoiding error. Grammar, on the other hand, is language specific:

Our purpose is the investigation of the art of logic, the art which includes the things which lead the rational faculty towards right thinking, wherever there is the possibility of error, and which indicates all the safeguards against error, wherever a conclusion is to be drawn by the intellect (al-‘aql). Its status to the intellect (al-‘aql) is the status of the art of grammar in relation to language, and just as the science of grammar rectifies the language among the people for whose language the grammar has been made, so the science of logic rectifies the intellect (al-‘aql), so that it intellects only what is right where there is the possibility of error. (qtd. in
The close parallel between grammar and logic reflects his consciousness of the debate and his attempt to resolve it in light of his expertise in both fields.

Conclusion

Al-Farabi’s treatise, *Kitab al-Khataba*, is based on Aristotle’s work, and it covers concepts that come up in Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric*, such as analogy, examples, emotional and ethical appeals, and types of audience. In a dialogic fashion (cf. Bakhtin), however, al-Farabi expands the Aristotelian theory of rhetoric to not only include subjects that Aristotle covers in other “logical” works, but also redefine some of the Greek terms for an Arabic audience, providing rhetoric with newer epistemological and communicative attributes.

Al-Farabi’s scholarship reflects the complex rhetorical nature of his work. Knowledge and logic are directly related to communication. His classification of the arts of discourse is rooted in an awareness of the importance of context and audience in the transferring of knowledge. Moreover, al-Farabi’s adaptation of Greek thought and terminology are signs of a rhetorically savvy philosopher who is aware of how changes in geographical, historical, religious, and cultural contexts can affect the reception and assimilation of imported knowledge.

Rhetoric is not only covered in al-Farabi’s treatises explicitly on the subject, but also comes up throughout his corpus: he mentions it in the *Ihsa’ al-’Ulm*, *Kitab al-Huruf* (*Book of Letters*), and the *Kitab Ara’ Ahl al-Madina al-Fadila*. As one of the earlier and most influential medieval Arabic philosophers, al-Farabi’s work influenced
many Arabic philosophers who came after him. Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd’s treatises on rhetoric are based on al-Farabi’s scholarship, for example.

This paper is a humble attempt to start a conversation in comparative rhetoric that focuses on medieval Arabic scholarship. Extensive medieval Arabic scholarship is already taking place in fields such as philosophy, history, and near eastern studies. This scholarship hints at the important role that rhetoric played in this scholarship, but does not delve deeply into studying rhetoric. It is our responsibility as rhetoricians to take the initiative and examine these treatises, as well as examine the larger role that rhetoric played in the philosophical scholarship of Arabic philosophers. It is also imperative that serious translation projects of rhetorical treatises be commissioned and supported by our field.
CONCLUSION

I attempted in this dissertation project to bring to the attention of historians of rhetoric, as well as scholars interested in cultural studies, postcolonial studies, and the connection between ideology and knowledge making, the availability of a rich medieval Arabic rhetorical tradition. I did so by offering an overview of the Translation Movement and an analysis of two exemplary works by two medieval Arabic thinkers: al-Kindi and al-Farabi.

For the historian of rhetoric, medieval Arabic scholarship provides a rich field that is mostly untouched in Western rhetorical studies, even though it builds on and responds to the Greek and Neo-Platonic traditions. Each of the fields of knowledge covered in Chapter One could have had an entire project dedicated to it, and both al-Kindi and al-Farabi produced many more significant works that are also worthy of our attention. For example, al-Farabi’s book on rhetoric that I translated and commented on in this dissertation is not his only work on rhetoric. There is another work extant only in a Latin translation from Arabic that could provide deeper insights into al-Farabi’s theory of rhetoric. Moreover, al-Farabi speculates on the role of eloquence and rhetoric as well as the connection between the intellect and language throughout his œuvre, in works such as The Book of Letters, The Enumeration of the Sciences, and his socio-political works such as The Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City. Some of these works are available in English translations either wholly or partially, and others, such as The Book of Letters, a rich resource for the scholar interested in the role of discourse in shaping thought, is only available in Arabic.
Other significant medieval Arabic thinkers have written works on rhetoric. Ibn Sina has a lengthy work on rhetoric in his encyclopedic work *al-Shifa* that is not available in English. Similarly, of Ibn Rushd three commentaries on rhetoric, the short, middle, and long, only the short commentary has been translated into English by Charles Butterworth. I take this opportunity, therefore, to invite Arabic speaking scholars of rhetoric to consider making some of these works available for an English readership though translation and therefore contribute to enriching the study of medieval rhetoric.

Medieval Arabic scholarship has more to offer the field of rhetorical studies in the form of works that show how ideologies have been formed across the ages and by illustrating the process of knowledge making and the different cultural, ideological, and material factors involved in this process. An example of this would be Imam al-Ghazali’s criticism of Islamic philosophy that is based on the Greek tradition and his refutation of it using its own tenets. In the global era in which we are now living, it might also be enlightening to learn how peoples from different linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds co-existed in Abbasid Baghdad and Islamic Spain and produced world renowned works in fields that ranged from medicine to mysticism.

Hybridity played a major role in knowledge making in the medieval Arab world not only to the extent that the Islamic civilization borrowed from pre-Islamic cultures. Hybridity also played a role in creating knowledge that is based on interreligious contact within the Islamic society, such as the clear connections between Islamic and Jewish mysticism which resulted from the close contact between the thinkers of these religions
in Islamic learning centers and from the sponsorship and encouragement of Islamic
governments for such interaction.

Another intellectual movement that is worthy of our study as rhetoricians is the
Translation Movement from Arabic into Latin that took place in Islamic Spain and that
was crucial for bringing about the Renaissance. Islamic Spain has produced many
thinkers such as Ibn Rushd, Maimonedes, Ibn Bajja, and others who have made major
contributions to human thought.

Last but not least, there is a rich indigenous Arabic rhetorical tradition, *ilm al-
balagha*, that offers a rich research opportunity for scholars interested in comparative
rhetoric. Unlike the work covered in this dissertation project, which is based on imported
knowledge, this is an indigenous, pre-Islamic and Islamic rhetoric rooted in the Arabic
language and the experience of nomadic Arabs and the significant role that eloquence
played in their society.

A consideration of medieval Arabic scholarship will indeed enrich the field of
rhetorical studies in more ways than one. First, much of the scholarship that took place in
the medieval Arab world is a natural development of the classical tradition that is
intensively studies in our field. Introducing the Arabic adaptations to the classical
tradition can only enrich such a study. Moreover, studying the indigenous Arabic
rhetorical tradition as well as the connection between discourse on the one hand and the
formation of schools of thought and intellectual trends in the medieval Arab world is sure
to interest many current and future scholars of rhetoric.
ENDNOTES

1 In *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, Gutas challenges the existence of Bayt al-Hikma, calling the existence of such a library a myth. The accounts of medieval historians and scholars who witnessed and contributed to the Translation Movement (cf. Ibn an-Nadim’s *al-Fihrist* and Hunayn’s *Risala* and *Adab al-Falasifah*) indicate the presence of more than one such library and center of learning. It is not, however, the goal of this chapter to expand such an argument.

2 In fact, this period is referred to as the Renaissance of Islam, a term coined by Adam Merz (Watt 99). The reference here is not to a rebirth of Islamic teachings but to the revival of ancient knowledge in the Islamic capital (99).


4 The translation of the title of Hunayn’s document is “Missive from Hunayn Ibn Ishaq to Ali Ibn Yahya on all the books of Galen which, as far as he (Hunayn) knows, have been translated, and on some of them which have not been translated” (Meyerhof 686). I will refer to this document as *Risala*, the Arabic translation for “missive.”

5 In fact the earliest translations of Greek works into Arabic came via Pahlavi. The pre-Islamic Greco-Persian translation movement of the Greek sciences that were believed by the Persian rulers (Chosroes I Anusirwan) to be originally Persian and transferred to
Greece after Alexander’s conquest, not only provided an intermediary for the translation of Greek texts into Arabic, but also provided a culture of translation that was conducive to the rise of the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement (Gutas *Greek Thought* 27).

6 For a detailed account see Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* 37-52.

7 There were doctrinal differences between the Nestorians, Melkites, and Jacobites. There were also disagreements between the Nestorians and the Coptic church in Egypt.

8 For an account of one such encounter see Gerrit Reinink, “Bible and Qur’an in Early Syriac Christian-Islamic Disputation.”

9 See Mark N. Swanson, “Apologetics, Catechesis, and the Question of Audience in “On the Triune Nature of God” (Sinai Arabic 154) and the Three Treatises of Theodore Abu Qurrah.”

10 For a detailed account of Timothy I’s letters see Sidney Griffith, “Theology in Dialogue with Islam.” 75-79.

11 For a complete account of these letters see Brock, “Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy from the Late Eighth Century on Translations from Greek.”

12 Such views were not adopted by all members of the Christian and Muslim faiths, and these philosophers had harsh critics, the most well-known of whom is al-Ghazali who brutally attacked al-Farabi and Ibn Sina in his *Incoherence of the Philosophers*.

13 Fakhry defines Neo-Platonism as the “attempt to bring together the currents in classical Greek thought, Platonic, Aristotelian, Pythagorean and Stoic, interpreted or recast in oriental religious or mystical idiom” (*A Short Introduction* 6-7).
A dinar is worth 4.25 grams of gold (Gutas *Greek Thought* 138). This makes 2000 dinars the equivalent of $323, 100.

These are clearly not the only categories. One group of sponsors that does not fall under any of Hunayn’s categories but were nonetheless significant contributors to the Translation Movement are Banu Musa, who, according to Hunayn himself, were the sons of a famous astronomer, Musa Ibn Shaikh. They were also patrons of philosophy and science and applied the main part of their fortune to the collection of Greek manuscripts and sponsoring their translation into Arabic (Hunayn 715). According to Ibn an-Nadim, the three sons sent people to the Roman lands to pursue original manuscripts and summoned translators from far away places through generous pay. Fifteen books were authored by them (547).

There was a Western subconscious fascination and identification with the East, but this constitutes another kind of hybridity and is beyond the scope of this dissertation (see the work of Homi Bhabha).

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See also al-Kindi’s “Fi Hudud al-Asyaa’ wa Rusumiha,” for a list of terms and their definitions, which constitutes the Arabic philosophical lexicon in *Rasa’il al-Kindi al-Falsafiyyah* 164-80.

The reference here, according to Abu Rida, is probably to Aristotle. I agree with Adamson who states that the reference is not clear, but that the argument that follows seems to derive from Plato. Adamson, Al-Kindi, 114.

Punctuation in the original.

The meaning is awkward in the original. Something might be missing in the copying process, or perhaps al-Kindi counted on his reader to fill in the gaps.

The adjective, the beautiful, is used in the original when a noun, beauty, is expected.

The sixth letter of the Arabic alphabet, ح, is inserted here and in several other locations throughout the treatise. Its meaning is not clear but it is probably an expression of exclamation.

It is common in Arabic to combine opposites to metaphorically mean “everything.”

The name is Aphsokoros. Abu Rida and other scholars agree that the reference is most probably to Pythagoras.

The original Arabic term used that I translated as metaphor is the Arabic term for syllogism. The editor indicates that al-Kindi means example, and Adamson translates the term as analogy. Based on the general meaning of the paragraph, I opted for metaphor.

Al-Kindi provides an extensive discussion of the role of another faculty of the soul, imagination, and the knowledge acquired during sleep in another treatise, “On Sleep and Dreams.” See Rasa’il al-Kindi al-Falsafiyyah, 283-311.

Al-Kindi here gives knowledge acquired through imagination and dreams a higher status than knowledge acquired through the senses. For a detailed discussion on the
hierarchy of knowledge in al-Kindi’s scholarship see “On Sleep and Dreams” in Rasa’il al-Kindi al-Falsafiyyah, 283-311.

30 The reference to the celestial spheres in this particular order comes from Ptolemy, not Plato. Adamson reminds us, however, that the general association between the souls and the celestial spheres comes from The Republic (Al-Kindi 228). Al-Kindi distinguishes celestial and human bodies in another, much shorter statement on the soul: “A Short and Abridged Statement on the Soul” in Rasa’il al-Kindi al-Falsafiyyah, 281-82. It may also be an alchemical reference; alchemy was a popular scholarly endeavor and practice among the scholars and ruling elite in Baghdad.

31 “By my life” is an expression of exclamation.

32 Exclamation in the original.

33 In the original the king is described as “sick of himself,” which sounds like a mental illness, but the rest of the description makes it sound more like a state of coma. There is no reference in Aristotle’s extant works to this king, but, according to Walzer, the reference to Aristotle is accurate and comes from his lost dialogue, Eudemus (Adamson, Al-Kindi 228 10n)

34 Abu Rida, the editor of the collection of al-Kindi’s treatises, mentions that Aws is in Greece (279 3n)

35 The reference to bakmah is a vague reference in Arabic. Based on the following statement, it probably refers to something bad-smelling.

36 The use of ignorant here is not necessarily a derogatory term but is perhaps a reference to involuntary lack of knowledge.
This sentence is vague in the original. My understanding of it might be faulty. “We” here refers to Al-Kindi and is a traditional Arabic way of speaking in the first person in a formal setting.

See definition of dialogism in Chapter Two.

According to Adamson, the modification comes from Galen.

Such openings and endings have been omitted from medieval Latin translations of al-Kindi’s treatises, removing a major rhetorical component that contributed to reinterpreting foreign material from an Islamic lens and presenting it in an Islamic tone and style.

I cover this in more detail in Chapter One where I discuss the importance of translating philosophical works for social and political well being.

Al-Kindi is the first Islamic philosopher and his work represents only a starting point in this line of thinking which reaches a highly sophisticated level in al-Farabi’s scholarship where theories of social and political philosophy rooted in knowledge and virtue are developed.

For a detailed discussion of the concept of eternity in al-Kindi’s scholarship and its connection to ideology see Peter Adamson, Al-Kindi 101.

Al-Kindi’s work is not covered in Gutas’ article, except when he briefly covers the definition genre, because his article deals predominantly with Arabic commentaries on Aristotle’s Organon.

Shari’a is Islamic law.

I omitted the rest of this sentence because it is vague.
Damir in Arabic is something that has been reduced. It also means conscience. Al-Farabi seems to be using the latter to also refer to consciousness.

The reference could be to Thales, but the Arabic says Thasles.

I borrowed the term indeterminate here and in all other places in this translation from Ezzaher’s translation of the same document.

The term “subsequent” is borrowed for Ezzaher’s translation.

The term equality is borrowed from Ezzaher.

MS 812 in Hamidiyyeh, qtd. in Haddad 19

Kitab al-Khataba is an abbreviated version of al-Farabi’s Kitab fi al-Mantiq: Al-Khataba, which I will use throughout this paper.

This heading was inspired by Gutas’ Greek Thought, Arabic Culture.

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Dictionaries


