

REASON AND REVELATION  
OR A PHILOSOPHER'S SQUIB  
(THE SIXTH MAQĀMA OF IBN NĀQIYĀ)\*

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Ibn Nāqiyā (d. 1092) is far less well-known than Badī° al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (d. 1008), creator of the *maqāma* genre and luminary of the Arabic literary canon. After al-Hamadhānī our attention turns normally to al-Ḥarīrī (d. 1122), who refined certain (mainly linguistic) features of the genre and who has subsequently eclipsed the fame of other authors. Ibn Nāqiyā comes chronologically midway between al-Hamadhānī and al-Ḥarīrī; he amplifies more the irreverent tone than the linguistic register of al-Hamadhānī. The sixth *maqāma* of Ibn Nāqiyā (one of ten surviving pieces) shows in the author a quite detailed knowledge of *falsafa*, and from it we sense the growing tension between *falsafa* and orthodox Sunni theology in the eleventh century C.E. This constitutes more than just the social and discursive backdrop to the text: the dichotomy structures the text whose statement of fatalism is as erudite (in an Aristotelian scheme) as it is facetious—and therefore ultimately incoherent. This article lays bare in a close reading the nature and tone of the parody in this burlesque piece.

*Preamble*

The question of the genesis of the *maqāma* genre has provided a focus of attention for scholars of medieval Arabic literature. Despite their reiterative nature, discussions have been and remain fruitful, for they have forced consideration of a more pertinent issue—and one that is coming incrementally to be better understood—namely, the overlapping and manipulation of literary categories in classical Arabic literature in general, and especially anecdotal<sup>1</sup> prose literature. Recent studies (too numerous to adduce in detail here) speak

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\* I am grateful to Dr Fritz Zimmermann for insights into *kalām* and *falsafa* without which this paper would not cohere at all.

<sup>1</sup> Fictional would be too loaded a term to use here; however, it is the conscious gloss of fiction which seems to set the *maqāma* apart from the literary stock of which it is constituted. See Rina Drory, “Three Attempts to Legitimize Fiction in Classical Arabic Literature,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic Literature* 18 (1994): 146–64. Kilito’s very perceptive theoretical constructs about the shared mechanisms of fiction and reality (i.e., the question of transmission and the relatively blurred question of authorship) are crucial here (see *L’Auteur et ses doubles*, Paris, 1985).

variously of: literary “palimpsests”; literary “codes”; “parody”; “models” and “analogues”; and “allusion.”<sup>2</sup> These terms express important nuances of the same fundamental, and of course broadly operative, literary design: for the *maqāma* in its classic form (the collections of al-Hamadhānī [d. 1008] and al-Ḥarīrī [d. 1122]) would seem to constitute, in large measure, an arch manipulation of pre-existing material. And no answer about the genesis, and more significantly, about the impulse behind the genre can be arrived at without consideration of this somewhat “rainbow” classification of influence.<sup>3</sup>

The nature of the *maqāma*'s audience is in certain respects a related issue; for the very self-fashioning bridge which the genre effects between popular and high literature goes some way to answering one of the questions left hanging from the above synthetic account (the question being: Why did the author(s) feel the need to redress pre-existing material in his/their own highly embellished style?).

All this would suggest that the *content* of the *maqāma* does not defer its significance to *form*. The largely aureate diction of the *maqāmāt* to which I allude is well-known. One recent account of the *maqāma* in al-Andalus<sup>4</sup> attempts to correct the definition of the genre provided implicitly by the Andalusian authors in their apparent aping of the Ḥarīrian epideictic style (where *sajʿ* and other embellishments such as internal rhyme, lipograms, etc.,<sup>5</sup> eclipse the narrative content of these idiosyncratic picaresque

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<sup>2</sup> Consult the following works: Abdelfattah Kilito, *Les Séances* (Paris, 1983); id., *L'Auteur et ses doubles* (Paris, 1985); Daniel Beaumont, “The Trickster and Rhetoric in the *Maqāmāt*,” *Edebiyât* 5, no. 1 (1994); J. T. Monroe, *The Art of Badīʿ az-Zamān al-Hamadhānī as Picaresque Narrative* (Beirut, 1983); Julia Ashtiany Bray, “*Isnāds* and Models of Heroes,” *Arabic and Middle Eastern Literatures* 1, no. 1 (1998); Philip F. Kennedy, “Some Demon Muse: Structure and Allusion in al-Hamadhānī's *Maqāma Iblīsiyya*,” *Arabic and Middle Eastern Literatures*, 2, no. 1 (1999).

<sup>3</sup> To evoke Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* is not entirely inappropriate.

<sup>4</sup> See Ismāʿīl El-Outmani's “La *Maqāma* en al-Andalus” in *La Sociedad Andalusí y sus Tradiciones Literarias* (special issue of *Foro Hispánico*), ed. Otto Zwartjes (Amsterdam, Atlanta, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> For a handy recent definition of the genre and its characteristics see Robert Irwin's review of Shirley Guthrie's *Arab Social Life in the Middle Ages: An Illustrated Study* (London, 1995) in *The Times Literary Supplement*, no. 4844 (February 2, 1996), pp. 9–10.

vignettes). El-Outmani's analysis of the *Maqāma* of Cordoba shows convincingly that al-Hamadhānī's less ornate—and correspondingly more broadly satirical—model did nevertheless survive the diffusion of al-Ḥarīrī's work. The study is valuable in its nuanced approach to the Andalusian material, and counters the overriding association of the genre in general with al-Ḥarīrī's obtrusive filigree craftsmanship. The point of this brief digression is that the model of the genre provided by al-Ḥarīrī has eclipsed the reception it may have enjoyed amongst other authors:<sup>6</sup>

Ibn Nāqiyā (1020–92 C.E.)—the author of the *maqāma* interpreted below—provides a very useful insight into how al-Hamadhānī's model was received and perceived by his contemporaries.<sup>7</sup> He was a neophyte and provides a significant personal view of the lines of demarcation for the new genre: al-Hamadhānī had clearly established a model whose main stylistic ingredients were *not* the creation of an original story (Ibn Nāqiyā's tenth *maqāma* shows that he manipulated pre-existing material in the manner of al-Hamadhānī),<sup>8</sup> but the [re-]telling of picaresque or burlesque (Wild's term) anecdotes: a) in sustained yet not over-obtrusive *saj'*; b) in which there features the *anagnorisis* of a single and named anti-hero (in Ibn Nāqiyā's case, one al-Yashkurī). But significantly—and perhaps by way of authorial signature—Ibn Nāqiyā's narrator is anonymous and each narrative is not so conspicuously identified with a different location: Baghdad appears to dominate this collection.

Stefan Wild has provided an engaging and clear summary of the content and tone of the author's ten surviving *maqāmāt*.<sup>9</sup> This supersedes the article

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<sup>6</sup> The fault here lies not with al-Ḥarīrī but scholars who are duped by the overt form into ignoring his engaging narrative techniques.

<sup>7</sup> There are now two editions of Ibn Nāqiyā's ten extant *maqāmāt*: 1) Oskar Rescher's *Beiträge zur Maqamen-Literatur* (Istanbul, 1914), part iv, pp. 123–52; and 2) *Maqāmāt Ibn Nāqiyā*, ed. Ḥasan °Abbās (Alexandria, 1988). The latter is a good critical edition (see n. 9 below) and fills in many of the lacunae in Rescher's earlier work. I am grateful to Prof. Stefan Wild for making available to me a copy of °Abbās's edition.

<sup>8</sup> See Stefan Wild's "Die zehnte Maqāma des Ibn Nāqiyā: eine Burleske aus Bagdad," in *Festschrift Ewald Wagner zum 65. Geburtstag, Band 2: Studien zur Arabischen Dichtung*, ed. W. Heinrichs and G. Schoeler (Beirut, 1994), pp. 427–38. See esp. p. 432, where Wild writes: "Dabei gehört das Thema teilweise zum alten Adab-Inventar."

<sup>9</sup> "Die zehnte Maqāma des Ibn Nāqiyā" together with Wild's earlier review of Ḥasan °Abbās's edition of these *maqāmāt* (*Journal of Arabic Literature* 23 [1992]: 76–78) provides the best existing introduction and analysis of Ibn Nāqiyā's work.

in *ET*<sup>2</sup> (with its somewhat misleading second paragraph<sup>10</sup>), and complements the cursory accounts of the author in Blachère<sup>11</sup> and Kilito.<sup>12</sup> Wild's account clarifies what ʿAbbās (the editor of the *maqāmāt*) obfuscates by naïve misrepresentation:<sup>13</sup> the fact that Ibn Nāqiyā develops his model by pushing the moral antagonism and ambivalence of al-Hamadhānī to the limits of what could be tolerated under the label of *adab*—and hence by that class of society (both religious and secular) which *adab* represented and catered to. This has to be the case, in some measure, since elements of the ten narratives could not be understood or appreciated fully by anything other than a reasonably erudite audience (the challenging vulgarity of a work such as Abū Dulaf's *Qaṣīda Sāsāniyya* stems from a specific, marginal and to some degree, therefore, solipsistic subculture—the *maqāmāt* tap into something shared more generally by society at large). Nowhere is this more clear in its dual aspects than in the sixth *maqāma* in which the indelicacy of a shockingly amoral posture is offset by the erudite sophistication of its allusions and the overall quality of its structure.

It is an articulated narrative (i.e., a narrative in two parts), and shares in this respect a feature of the second *maqāma*. In the latter the author develops the moral duplicity of the Hamadhānian model<sup>14</sup> by evoking a perverse anti-thesis: a grave robber—whose macabre vocation has been vividly depicted—eludes his pursuers by assuming the role of preacher in an adjacent mosque. There is, of course, a nicely conceived logic connecting the narrative's high

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<sup>10</sup> See "Ibn Nāqiyā" by J.-C. Vadet. The narratives described in this paragraph are not those of Ibn Nāqiyā, a fact which is not made entirely clear.

<sup>11</sup> See Régis Blachère and Pierre Masnou, *Choix de maqāmāt, traduites de l'arabe avec une étude sur le genre* (Paris, 1957). They make the following succinct comment about Ibn Nāqiyā (pp. 39–40): "Il est permis de croire que les continuateurs de Hamadhānī ont suivi leur modèle jusque dans la diversité du conte et des procédés de narration. Les Séances dues à la plume du poète-epistolier de Bagdad Ibn Nāqiyā (mort en 485/1092) apportent sur ce point un témoignage décisif: chez cet auteur la pluralité des «récitants» et des héros [*sic*], considérée comme une liberté dans l'imitation, pourrait fort bien n'être, en dernière analyse, qu'une marque de respect vis-à-vis du modèle. Chez Ibn Nāqiyā d'ailleurs . . . les rapports du genre nouveau et de l'*adab* restent très apparents. . . ."

<sup>12</sup> *Les Séances*, pp. 156–69.

<sup>13</sup> Or the desire to render the author acceptable to a conservative audience.

<sup>14</sup> We should note that the bi-partite narrative also exists in al-Hamadhānī; i.e., in the *Maqāma* of Ḥulwān, the *Khamriyya*, the *Mawṣiliyya* and, of course, the more problematic *Asadiyya*.

relief points (grave robbing and preaching), since few people are more qualified to preach homilies based in notions of mortality than a man who spends his nights despoiling tombs. The author has stretched his model to a breaking point of moral tension; conversely, however, the whole is yet more tightly held together. This manner of structural symmetry will emerge as a feature of the sixth *maqāma*.

The impetus to analyse the sixth *maqāma* has been provided finally by an unsatisfactory view of the text articulated expansively by Ḥasan ʿAbbās. Though his edition is an admirable work of scholarship, I cannot accept the filter through which he presents this particular narrative. Wild has already observed in his review (p. 78) that the editor “tries too hard in his long and thoughtful *muqaddima* to ‘defend’ Ibn Nāqiyā from his detractors and does not always seem to be aware of Ibn Nāqiyā’s irony.” This is entirely consonant with what we find on pages 33–35 of the introduction, in which ʿAbbās reiterates the view—already expressed on pp. 12 and 18—that it was with reference to the sixth *maqāma* that the medieval sources ascribed to him a non-extant pamphlet (*maqāla*) on Greek Philosophy.<sup>15</sup> ʿAbbās thus solves the contradiction which otherwise obtains if Ibn Nāqiyā is to have denigrated *falsafa* in one text (the 6th M.) yet have championed it in another (the lost *Maqāla* mentioned by Ibn Khallikān). In this way ʿAbbās can view the sixth *maqāma* as a critique of materialist heterodoxy and a pious championing of orthodox Islam.<sup>16</sup> A close analysis of the text does not lead me to share this opinion. Its literary craftsmanship—the well-measured balancing of two antithetical dialogues—seems to bespeak the author’s design more than any earnest supposition.

#### Translation<sup>17</sup>

A *mutakallim* told me of the following [encounter which he had had]: I once entered a garden towards the middle of the day (*ʿinda qāʾimi l-nahār*), leaving behind me the quarters [of my tribe] (*khārijun[i] l-diyāra*).<sup>18</sup> It was

<sup>15</sup> This is a reference to the entry on Ibn Nāqiyā in Ibn Khallikān’s *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, which contains the following statement (ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās [Beirut, 1977], 3: 98–99): *wa-kāna yunsabu ilā l-taʿfīli wa-madhhabī l-awāʾili wa-ṣannaḥa fī dhālika maqālatan wa-kāna kathīra l-mujūn.*

<sup>16</sup> See p. 35: *yūqālu inna bna nāqiyā abāḥa l-khamra wa-ankara l-baʿtha fī hādhihi l-maqāmati; inna-hu taḥāmulun wa-ẓulmun kabīrun li-bni nāqiyā lladhī addā ilay-nā maqāmatan fī-hā l-kathīru mina l-difāʿi ʿani l-dīni wa-ʿan āyi l-kitābi l-ʿazīzi wa-wājaha fī-hā man yunkirūna l-baʿtha fī basāʾatin wa-iqnāʿin. . . .*

<sup>17</sup> I have in the main translated the Arabic text of Ḥasan ʿAbbās’s edition (op. cit., pp. 93–98).

<sup>18</sup> The MS has *al-dīnāra*, which does not appear in this exact form in Yāqūt’s

just such a time as keeps the stranger away from the outlying land [because of the inclement heat] (*wa-qad muni<sup>c</sup>a l-barra jānibu-hu*). The crickets produced their [shrill] cacophony and shadows were short, whilst the mirage shone deceptively. Suddenly there was [before me] a man<sup>19</sup> in the shade of a grape-vine who had before him a pitcher. He was incoherently drunk and muttered verses of poetry to himself. Yet I stifled my rage for fear of the effects of the terrible midday heat. I greeted him and sat down. He was most welcoming and I began to enjoy the intimacy of his company.<sup>20</sup> He ladled some wine for me which was like a firebrand.<sup>21</sup> He then spoke the words of al-Akḥṭal: “How wonderful is this wine once it has been slain” (*fa-aḥbib bi-hā maqtūlatan ḥīna tuqtalu*)<sup>22</sup> [i.e., once it has been mixed with water]; he mixed [the wine] and filled [the cup], then said: “Do have some!” (*dūna-ka-hā*).<sup>23</sup> So I said to him, “I am a speculative theologian (*anā rajulun min aṣḥābi l-kalām*)—one of those men involved in religious debate (*wa-mimman la-hu naẓarun*<sup>24</sup> *fī l-dīn*); and this is a drink that has been proscribed.”<sup>25</sup>

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*Mu<sup>c</sup>jam al-buldān*. It may, however, be a reference to the Sikkatu l-Dīnār in Baghdad. Ibn Nāqiyā sets most of his narratives in Baghdad, in contrast to the habit of al-Hamadhānī of setting each episode in a different location—one, as Kilito has pointed out, which is always in the *Dār al-Islām*.

<sup>19</sup> *Idhā bi-rajulin* (or any similar formulation) must be viewed as a topos of encounter anecdotes.

<sup>20</sup> This would appear to be another topos of narratives of encounter.

<sup>21</sup> <sup>c</sup>Abbās reads *miqbās* for *miqyās*; the latter, if correct, would perhaps mean “he scooped up for me a whole measure (i.e., a large measure) of wine”: lit., the cup is so large as to be a measuring cup.

<sup>22</sup> This is the first hemistich of a verse which begins *fa-qultu qtulū-hā<sup>c</sup> an-kum bi-mizāji-hā*.

<sup>23</sup> Ironically this can also have the meaning of “beware!”

<sup>24</sup> A gloss on the significance of this word is desirable here. F. E. Peters observes in *Aristotle and the Arabs: The Aristotelian Tradition in Islam* (p. 151): “The third source of knowledge, speculation (*naẓar* or *fīkr* = *dianoia*), is the sticking point of the entire *falsafa-kalām* controversy. Is the reasoning process a source of new and necessary knowledge? The *falāsifa*, grounded in the Aristotelian doctrine of syllogistic *ananke*, maintained that it was; the *mutakallimūn*, starting from an affirmation of divine omnipotence, denied the causal principle implicit in *naẓar* and hence the autonomy of the *naẓar*.” It is clearly a very loaded term; in some measure—subliminally—it provokes the controversy that ensues. For *naẓar* in the system of the arch-*faylasūf* Ibn Rushd, see *EF*<sup>2</sup> (R. Arnaldez, p. 912): “The Law establishes the legitimacy of rational speculation, whose method reaches perfection with demonstrative syllogism (*burhān*). . . . It is contrary to the Law to forbid such an examina-

At which he asked, “What do you opine about this cup, more specifically the state of the water and wine it contains? Are they both stable together (*a-thābitāni ma<sup>c</sup>an*) or does one of them cease to be (*baṭala aḥadu-humā*)? Or is it that the one enters the other (this is expressed more elliptically in the Arabic: *am dakhala fī l-ākhari*)? Yet it is not possible for either one to cease from being, for there is both water and wine before us (*li-anna hā hunā khamran wa-mā<sup>3</sup>an*); and neither one of the two enters wholly into the other so as to become part of it. Rather they both remain stable. And it is by means of mixing that change and mutation occurs (*wa-bi-l-ikhṭilāṭi waqa<sup>c</sup>a l-taghayyuru wa-l-istiḥāla*). Neither being (‘coming to be’ in the Aristotelian sense) nor perishing can exist without change.<sup>26</sup> Nature is of two kinds (*wa-l-ṭabī<sup>c</sup>atu thnatāni*):<sup>27</sup> one which transcends ‘coming to be’ and ‘perishing’ and the other whose parts<sup>28</sup> are exposed to it (i.e., *fasād*). Man is made up of both (*wa-l-insānu murakkabun min-humā*): he lives by virtue of the growing soul (*al-naḥsu l-nāmiya*), and moves (*yantaqilu*) by virtue of the moving soul (*al-naḥsu l-mutaḥarrika*) and knows by virtue of the dis-

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tion, provided that the person carrying it out possesses *dhakā<sup>3</sup> al-ḥiṭra* and *al-<sup>c</sup>adāla al-shar<sup>c</sup>iyya* accompanied by ethical virtue, that is, a religious and moral qualification defined by the Law.”

There is speculation in this *maqāma*. There is also, in the second half, *ta<sup>3</sup>wīl*; it is clearly an exegetical posture that the *mutakallim* adopts with respect to the Koranic verses that are cited. In this regard we should note the following remark made by Arnaldez (in *EF<sup>2</sup>*) about Ibn Rushd (p. 912): “He attacks the *takfīr* that al-Ghazālī launched against the *falāsifa*. Then he reverses the positions and shows that it is often the *mutakallimūn*—the theologians—who make undue use of *ta<sup>3</sup>wīl*.”

<sup>25</sup> It does not require one to be a theologian to know this: there is perhaps some irony here. In a sense only the contrary would be worthy of comment: it would require the sophistry of a religious scholar to find an excuse for wine.

<sup>26</sup> In the context of Aristotelian ontology this phrase is highly tautologous: the *De generatione et corruptione* seeks to analyse and explain change; of course, interest in the latter has its roots in—indeed is one of the major concerns of—pre-Socratic naturalist philosophy.

<sup>27</sup> The word *ṭabī<sup>c</sup>a* is used here loosely, that is, it does not appear to correspond exactly or specifically to any Greek philosophical term; the sense which the author has given to the term is clear only after the brief but very technical discussion of the soul. With the sense of “that which exists,” or “the natural world,” *ṭabī<sup>c</sup>a* is used frequently in *kalām*. See Marie Bernand’s “La critique de la notion de nature (*ṭab<sup>c</sup>*) par le Kalām,” *Studia Islamica* 51 (1980): 59–109.

<sup>28</sup> This probably has the sense of “faculties,” given the nature of the discussion that follows. It appears not to be a reference to *juz<sup>3</sup>*, which is used in a technical sense in both *falsafa* and *kalām* to mean “atom.”

tinguishing soul (*al-nafsu l-mumayyiza*).<sup>29</sup> The soul in the body is equivalent to ‘form’ in ‘matter’ (*wa-l-nafsu fī l-ajsāmi bi-manzilati l-šūrati fī l-hayūlā*)<sup>30</sup> and imparts motion to bodies.<sup>31</sup> [In the same way] this wine imparts motion to the soul; she (the wine) is indeed an archetype (*wa-hiya qibsun li-kulli qansin*)<sup>32</sup>: [He then quoted Abū Tammām:] “In quality [the wine] is like a follower of Jahm b. Šafwān, though they have [contrarily] given her as a sobriquet ‘the essence of all things (*jawharu l-ashyā’i*). . . .” He [paused to] take a sip from his cup then continued his demon mutterings (*wa-‘āwada wasāwisa-hu*)<sup>33</sup>: “Movement is at the root of natural existence (i.e., of living organisms) and is of two types (*wa-la-hā ma‘nayāni*; i.e., it

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<sup>29</sup> In the light of the author’s discussion of two natures—i.e., the suggestion that the soul’s nature is essentially dichotomous—the fact that three souls are mentioned here is at a first reading confusing. What the author is apparently alluding to, however, are the faculties of the soul as set out in some detail in Aristotle’s *De anima* and known to the *falāsifa*. These, then, are the faculties of the soul that function essentially in conjunction with the body and that are, therefore, aspects of the *tabī‘a* (in the terminology of this particular text) that are subject to “corruption” or extinction when the living person dies.

<sup>30</sup> This corresponds exactly to the Aristotelian view set out in the *De anima*: “Soul and body are aspects of a single substance, standing to one another in the relation of form to matter.” Cited in D. J. Allan, *The Philosophy of Aristotle* (London, 1952), p. 66. *Hayūlā* is, of course, a loan-word from Greek ὑλή.

<sup>31</sup> This element of Aristotelian psychology is essentially repeating the idea expressed with less rigour in the preceding phrase, *yantaqilu bi-l-nafsi l-mutaharrika*; this point is not explicitly set out but it is the only obvious way to make sense of the inconsistencies in the text; it is, in fact, not the system of thought that is loose here—Aristotle is fairly well represented in and by this text—but the terminology where the author glosses common philosophical notions in his own words. In any case, this sort of loose but intelligible unfolding would be typical of oral disputation and demonstration.

<sup>32</sup> Lit. “the origin of every root”; this whole phrase perhaps expresses the same notion as the Greek ἀρχή; I have been unable to find this terminology used in Arabic in a technical sense elsewhere; however, the notions alluded to here are reminiscent of aspects of Aristotle’s discussion in *De anima*, esp. the following phrase ἔστι δὲ ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ ζωντος σώματος αἰτία καὶ ἀρχή (“The soul is the cause and first principal of the living body”). Aristotle, *De anima* (The Loeb Classical Library), trans. W. S. Hett, Cambridge Mass. (1986), pp. 86–87. We should note, of course, that the usual rendering of αἰτία in Arabic is ‘illa.

<sup>33</sup> The sinister sense of *waswasa* is, of course, Koranic and unequivocal.

manifests itself in two ways): desire/appetite<sup>34</sup> and action.”<sup>35</sup> He then proceeded to expand on the matter (*akhadha fī baṣṭi dhālika wa-nashri-hi*) and to provide a detailed exegesis of what he meant (*wa-sharḥi-hi wa-fasri-hi*); he went on to speak of the [ontological] qualities (*al-maʿānī l-kayfiyya*), [that is, those ontological qualities set out in Aristotle’s] *Categories*,<sup>36</sup> then added: “How well the great Aristotle spoke when he said: ‘Since Man cannot survive individually (*lammā lam yakun li-l-insāni an yabqā bi-shakhṣi-hi*), he strives at least to survive in Form [here in the sense of “species”] (*ishtāqa ilā an yabqā bi-ṣūrati-hi*).’” And he was led inevitably from this to say other things—not content in all with allusion and dissimulation—until he recited [in the manner of a conclusion] the following two verses of Abū Nuwās:

My tongue pronounced the most closely held secret,  
namely that I believe in Fate;  
There is no Resurrection after death,  
rather death is like an infertile egg.

*bāḥa lisānī bi-muḍmari l-sirrī*  
*wa-dhāka annī aqūlu bi-l-dahrī*  
*wa-laysa baʿda l-mamāti munbaʿathun*  
*wa-inna-mā l-mawtu bayḍatu l-ʿuqrī*

<sup>34</sup> A gloss drawn from Aristotle’s *Psychology* explains what appears to be referred to here (even though the discussion is, at this stage, moving towards treatment of the *Categories*); see, for example, D. J. Allan, *The Philosophy of Aristotle*, p. 76 (from a chapter on Soul and Mind): “The general name for the motive force to which animals are subject is desire (*orexis*), and this presents itself in three forms—wish, or desire [i.e., *shawq*] for something conceived as good, anger, and desire for pleasure.”

<sup>35</sup> The discussion at this point resumes treatment of the faculties of the soul already outlined above, for the appetitive faculty (the notion clearly behind use of the word *shawq* as it occurs here) is an aspect essential to the functioning of a living organism; it is an aspect of the soul shared by all animals but which distinguishes the latter from plants (which live only in accordance with the function of the vegetative faculty, the *nafs nabāṭiyya*).

<sup>36</sup> Rescher appears not to have noticed an improper word division (op. cit., p. 140), since in his printed edition *al-qāṭā* is written at the end of one line whilst *ghūriyāsīyyah* begins the next line. He certainly does not help his reader to make sense of an unfamiliar term—one which was kindly established for me by Dr Fritz Zimmermann. Oddly, ʿAbbās gives, in his far better critical edition, *al-fāṭāghūriyāsīyyatu—qāf* is wrongly replaced by *fā*ʿ. Since he does not provide an explanatory note to make sense of the resulting term, it is impossible to determine whether this is a simple misprint, or an attempt to produce a form that approximates to the name Pythagoras (?).

I was, of course, horrified by the notions of his sect which he was led inevitably to articulate (*fa-rā<sup>c</sup>a-nī mā ntahā ilay-hi min madhhabi-hi*) and aggrieved by the evil turn he had taken (*wa-sā<sup>3</sup>a-nī mā ra<sup>3</sup>aytu min munqalabi-hi*) as the wine took over his reason (*wa-qadi stawlati l-khamru<sup>c</sup> alā l-<sup>c</sup>aqli*). . . .<sup>37</sup> So I said to him: “Whoever you are (*yā hādhā*), beware of straying into error and adopting the embellished doctrines of the absurd (*wa-l-akhdhi fī zakhāriḫi l-muḥāl*). And, besides, for what is it that you deny the Resurrection (*wa-mā lladhī tunkiru la-hu amra l-ma<sup>c</sup>ādi*)—[this thing] which leads you to a corrupt and heathen creed? Is it for the sake of<sup>38</sup> an inexorable procession towards perdition and a scattering of your parts over the ground (*wa-tafarruqi l-ajzā<sup>3</sup>i fī l-tharā*)? Yet is it not so that a grain only sprouts once it has become mouldy and diminished (*a-wa-laysa l-ḥabbatu lā tanbutu illā ba<sup>c</sup>da l-<sup>c</sup>aḫani wa-l-iḏmiḥlāl*);<sup>39</sup> further, an egg will only hatch after it has been destroyed (or ceases to exist) and has altered its humour (*wa-l-bayḍatu lā tufrikhu illā ba<sup>c</sup>da l-fasādi<sup>40</sup> wa-l-inḫi<sup>c</sup>āl*)!”<sup>41</sup> I made other clear and instructive analogies then recited from the Koran (*thumma talawtu<sup>c</sup> alay-hi*) [36:33]: “The dead land is a sign for them, for we have given life to it and caused to grow therefrom [each] grain such that you can eat from it” (*wa-āyatun la-humu l-arḍu l-maytatu aḥyaynā-hā wa-akhrajnā min-hā ḥabban fa-min-hu ta<sup>3</sup>kulūna*). And I continued [until I reached] the follow-

<sup>37</sup> Here <sup>c</sup>Abbās emends an uncertain phrase in the MS (and thus also in Rescher’s edition) to *wa-khatarat bayna l-dhu<sup>3</sup>ābati wa-l-na<sup>c</sup>li*, that is (?), “It [scil. The wine] befuddled (him) from top to toe.”

<sup>38</sup> For this phrase Rescher has the Arabic *am*; <sup>c</sup>Abbās emends this to *a-mā*; both, in my view, make little sense, thus my tentative reading: *a-min ajli*. One cannot be certain about this reading: Rescher’s edition has a *shadda* over the *jīm*, hence the whole phrase might be *am ujjila l-maḥīru ilā l-bilā* (Has our destiny in death and destruction been postponed?).

<sup>39</sup> This observation does not at face value correspond to plant science—fungus has no part to play in the sprouting of a seed except in rare cases (i.e., in the case of Orchids); however, seeds which have particularly thick shells require some help in the form of naturally occurring abrasion (which may include the effect of fungus) in order to sprout. In any case, the image evoked is simply that the seed must effectively be destroyed or decomposed in order for it to produce a seedling.

<sup>40</sup> The reappearance of the term *fasād* is arresting: is the *mutakallim* only clumsily aping the jargon and concepts of the *faylasūf*? Or is this a deliberate, well-conceived and mildly wounding squib?

<sup>41</sup> There may be a measure of deliberate bathos here in the awkward use of *inḫi<sup>c</sup>āl*.

ing verse of Holy Writ [36:39]: “We have set out the progress of the moon in stages until it returns to the state of an old and arched palm-bough” (*wa-l-qamaru qaddarnā-hu manāzila ḥattā ʿāda ka-l-ʿurjūni l-qadīmi*). He was quick to object (*iʿtaraḍa mubādiran*), enquiring as to the meaning [of *āya* 36:39]: “‘It is not proper for the sun to overtake the moon’ (*lā l-shamsu yanbaghī la-hā an tudrika l-qamara*), and yet, [he observed], during ‘the absence of the moon in the last three nights of a lunar month (*fī awāni kulli miḥāqi*)’ overtaking or overlap occurs (*yaqaʿu l-idrāku wa-l-liḥāqu*); further, during a solar eclipse [this kind of] overlap is [undeniably] real (*thumma fī l-kusūfī l-shamsiyyi yakūnu l-idrāku l-ḥaqīqiyyu*).” I answered, “God forbid! (*hayhāta*) [reciting Koran 34:52] ‘How can they return from such a distant spot?’” (*wa-annā la-humu l-tanāwushu min makānin baʿīdin*).<sup>42</sup> And [then I quoted the hemistich of Abū Nuwās], “You have grasped something but things more essential escape you!”<sup>43</sup> [I explained:] “The sun does not over-

<sup>42</sup> *Tanāwush* is glossed by the exegetes in two different ways (see Suyūt, I, *al-Durr al-manthūr* (Beirut, 1990) 5:454): it means either “to reach (easily)” (*tanāwul*) or “to return” (*radd*), thus the sense given is either: “How can those who have disbelieved attain/reach salvation?” or “How can they return to life or faith once they are in a distant place after death?” The verse (certainly in the context of this disputation) must be understood with an eye to the verse which follows (34:53): “Yet before [this] they had refused to believe in Him and spurned notions of the Afterlife from a distant place (*wa-qad kafarū bi-hi min qablu wa-yaqdhifūna bi-l-ghaybi min makānin baʿīdin*)”: Suyūt, I, *loc. cit.*, > Qatāda (R): *inna-hum kānū fī l-dunyā yukadhdhibūna bi-l-ākhirati wa-yaqūlūna lā baʿtha wa-lā jannata wa-lā nāra*. The relevance of the scriptural context of 34:52 to the dispute between the *ḥaylasūf* and the *mutakallim* is clear; it is not clear whether or not the *mutakallim* intended this allusion; however, if *he* did not, then Ibn Nāqiyā certainly did—as evinced by the juxtaposed hemistich of Abū Nuwās’s famous *Hamziyya* (“*Daʿ ʿan-ka lawmī*”): *ḥafīẓta shayʿan wa-ghābat ʿan-ka ashyaʿū*; this is, of course, the second hemistich of a verse beginning *fa-qul li-man yaddaʿī fī l-ʿilmi falsafatan* (see the commentary below).

<sup>43</sup> The double irony of this verse—the exact value of which is impossible to establish—is that it is culled from one of the most eloquent defences of wine in Arabic literature (it is certainly the most celebrated poem with this rhetorical design); further, there is irony in the pleasing symmetry of the unfolding dispute: the atheistic couplet of Abū Nuwās incites the well-judged and manipulated quotation of a verse by the same poet; also ironic, though perhaps only to the modern—essentially retrospective—reader is the fact that Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām (Abū Nuwās’s original interlocutor), though accused of—at the very least associated with—*falsafa* in the first hemistich, was a Muʿtazilite *mutakallim*. This brings home to us the fact that by the eleventh century C.E. *falsafa* and *kalām* had come to exist on either side of a largely antagonistic and polemical divide; this is part of the very relevant socio-historical

take the moon in the [same] heavenly sphere, but rather in the sense that it travels much faster (*wa-inna-mā huwa bi-sur<sup>c</sup>ati sayri-hi yudriku-hā*);<sup>44</sup> this is testified by those who witness [an eclipse].” And then I recited [by way of interjection, Koran 6:45]: “So the last remnant of those who did evil was cut off. Praise belongs to God the Lord of all Being” (*wa-quṭi<sup>c</sup>a dābiru l-qawmi lladhīna ḡalamū wa-l-ḡamdu li-llāhi rabbi l-<sup>c</sup>ālamīn*).

He replied: “Go gently (*<sup>c</sup>alā risli-ka*)! For what then is the meaning of [Koran 36:40]: ‘And the Night cannot precede the Day’ (*wa-lā l-laylu sābiqū l-nahār*): what is the evidence for the Day having precedence (*wa-mā l-dalīlu <sup>c</sup>alā khtišāsi l-nahāri bi-l-sabq*)?” So I explained: “The meaning is that neither one of the two moves in the [manner] of its counterpart (*lā yadhhabu aḡadu-hum bi-ma<sup>c</sup>nā ṡāḡibi-hi*), that is, the one who ‘rides by turns’ with the other (or the one who alternates with the other) behaves consistently with respect to the other. . . .<sup>45</sup> One [Koranic] phrase performs the equivalent function of the other (*wa-nābat iḡdā l-jumlatayni <sup>c</sup>ani l-ukhrā*);<sup>46</sup> this is one of the [figures of speech] in the language of the Arabs (*hādhā madhhabun min madhāhibi l-<sup>c</sup>arabi fī l-kalām*) in which the Koran was revealed (*alladhī nazala bi-hi l-qur<sup>o</sup>ān*): ‘Falsehood comes not to it from before it nor from behind it; a sending down from One All-wise, All-laudable’;<sup>47</sup> equally Day has precedence (*ka-mā anna l-sabqa mina l-nahāri*

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background of the *maqāma* (see below).

<sup>44</sup> In another sphere, this exegesis prefigures the citation of Koran 36:40 three lines further on.

<sup>45</sup> The phrase here is awkwardly tautologous—thus my ellipsis; the sense conveyed is that the two never cease from alternating or acting by turns: they are consistently at one remove from each other; as the Koran states: *wa-kullun fī falakin yasbahūna* (this particular element of 36:40 is only evoked by the discussion).

<sup>46</sup> That is, the Koranic *wa-lā l-laylu sābiqū l-nahār* reiterates the sense of the preceding phrase, *wa-lā l-shamsu yanbaghī la-hā an tudrika l-qamar*. The *mutakallim* explains here the metonymic or synecdochic relationship between the two phrases; and in the following comment he hints at the cultural provenance of this figure of speech. The dialogue as a whole is developed by association.

<sup>47</sup> This is Koran 41:42 and evokes *āyas* 40–41: “Those who blaspheme Our signs are not hidden from Us. What, is he who shall be cast into the Fire better, or he who comes on the Day of Resurrection in security? . . .” Thus the argument of the *mutakallim* works subliminally; indeed, in some respects, it is more coherent on the subliminal level than on the surface level of meaning; for the discussion about the sun and moon does not coagulate in any particular way to support the *mutakallim*’s view (i.e., it does not refute the philosopher’s professed materialism), though it does, as we shall observe, echo quite conversely and uncannily the Aristotelian mutterings

*wāqīʿun*) since when God Almighty created the sun He created the day by virtue of its existence (*lammā khalaqa l-shamsa awjada l-nahāra bi-wujūdi-hā*), and yet the time before [this] was not called the night (*wa-lam yakuni l-zamānu qabla-hā yusammā laylan*); so when the distinction between and separation of [the two]<sup>48</sup> occurred, day and night came into being. Day deserved precedence since from it comes the [ability] to distinguish (*wa-staḥaqqā l-nahāru l-sabqa li-anna l-dalīla min-hu*). As God Almighty has said (Koran 25:45): ‘Do you not see how your Lord stretched out the shadow? [and, scilicet, caused it to be extended gradually following the movement of the sun]? Had He willed He would have made it still. Then We appointed the sun, to be a guide to it’” (*a-lam tara ilā rabbi-ka kayfa madda l-ẓilla wa-law shāʿa la-jaʿala-hu sākinan thumma jaʿalnā l-shamsa ʿalay-hi dalīlan*).<sup>49</sup> He replied: “Spare me the superstitions of the *mutakallimūn* and the utterances of religious jurists (*al-musharriʿūn*)!” And he continued to trouble me with his unbelief until drunkenness made him keel over (*ḥattā māla bi-hi sukru-hu*). He slumbered on his side, cushioned by the rough ground, until dusk, at which time he suffered a severe bout of flatulence, emitting the likes of arrows from a bow targeted at game (*wa-yursilu-hunna ka-sihāmi l-ḥanāyā ilā l-ramāyā*).<sup>50</sup> Then the keeper of the garden (*nāṭūr*) approached us, asking: “What has al-Yashkurī been up to (*mā faʿala l-yashkurī*)? I replied [having discovered the man’s identity]: “I rather thought that this oaf belonged to the tribe of ʿAbd al-Qays.”<sup>51</sup>

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of the *ḥaylasūf* to enhance the overall symmetry of the text.

<sup>48</sup> That is, night and day. N.B. The Koran in 36:37 states “And a sign for them is the night; We strip it of the day and lo, they are in darkness,” i.e., the one was separated from the other.

<sup>49</sup> The argumentation in this final section is very loose, a point which can be appreciated by considering the weak contextual link between *wa-staḥaqqā l-nahāru l-sabqa li-anna l-dalīlu min-hu* and *thumma jaʿalnā l-shamsa ʿalay-hi dalīlan*.

<sup>50</sup> The ungainliness of rounding off the narrative in this way is mitigated by a literary allusion: ʿAbbās has found a possible source for the image produced here in three lines from the *Muḥād, arāt al-udabāʿ* (see p. 98, n. 3).

<sup>51</sup> The tribe of ʿAbd al-Qays are mentioned because they were notorious for their flatulence. There are many references; suffice it to mention the idiom in Maydānī’s *Majmaʿ al-amthāl* (ed. Naʿīm Ḥusayn Zarzūr [Beirut, 1998], 2, p. 108): *afsā min ʿabdiyyin*. In *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1: 72) we find: “‘Servant of (the god) Qays,’ [an] old Arabian tribe in East Arabia”; it may be the obvious evocation of paganism contained in the name that is intended here. The only significant role attested for them in the eleventh century is in connection with the East Arabian Karmathian state, the capital of which, al-Aḥsāʿ, was overthrown in 467/1076 C.E. by the ʿUyūnids, reported to be a sub-group of the ʿAbd al-Qays (*EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1: 73; 10: 960).

*Commentary*

If, as is claimed by Ibn Khallikān in *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, Ibn Nāqiyā did indeed write a work on the philosophy of the Ancients (Greeks), then his knowledge of their jargon and concepts—in their Arabic versions—would have been relatively profound. This is borne out by the text (as we shall attempt to highlight below). It does not mean, however, that he would necessarily have been induced to purvey a clear picture: in the first half of the *maqāma* he evokes the field, and confuses the lay reader—for this is a subject, with its hair-splitting arcana, that is eminently capable of confusing. Yet though the author is both ambivalent, ambiguous and at times unclear in his evocations, one distinction must not be missed: this (the first half of the narrative) is *falsafa* and not *kalām*; the point that must be stressed is that the distinction between the two at this juncture in Islamic history (eleventh century) is essential.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, it is principally in the minds of those modern

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<sup>52</sup> By the eleventh century the hostility—notably even within the Muʿtazilite community—that had developed with regard to *falsafa* is perhaps best illustrated by the plight of Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 1044); indeed it may not be absurd to suggest that this satire is a conscious refraction of the controversy in which Abū l-Ḥusayn was involved. See Wilferd Madelung’s article in *EF*<sup>2</sup> (Supplement 1–2, p. 25): “In his doctrine, Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī was deeply influenced by the concepts of the philosophers and diverged from the Bahāshima, the school of Abū Hāshim al-Djubbāʿī represented by his teacher ʿAbd al-Djabbār. He was therefore shunned by the Bahāshima, who accused him of refuting his Muʿtazilī *shaykhs* in an unfair and injurious manner. This charge is repeated by al-Shahrastānī, who maintains that he was really a philosopher in his views (*falsafī al-madhhab*), but the Muʿtazilī *mutakallimūn* were not aware of this fact. Ibn al-Ḳifṭī, too, suggests that he concealed his philosophical views under the forms of expression of the *kalām* theologians in order to guard himself from his contemporaries.”

Of course, the major players in the *falsafa-kalām* controversy (as it was played out between the tenth and twelfth centuries) are al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), who attacked the views of Ibn Sīnā and other philosophers, and Ibn Rushd (d. 1198), who responded to al-Ghazālī’s *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* with his equally strident *Tahāfut al-tahāfut*. The dominant perception that the *falāsifa* necessarily espoused a rejection of the soul’s immortality is the aspect of this controversy relevant to Ibn Nāqiyā’s *maqāma* and is discussed below.

F. E. Peters provides a useful summary of the antagonism (in *Aristotle and the Arabs*, p. 189–90): “Al-Ghazālī realised that *kalām* is in its essence philosophical and differs from *falsafa* only in that it will not blindly follow reason into areas where revelation and tradition have spoken. And this is his quarrel with the *falāsifa*: he wants these to retreat from the infidel theses: 1) there is no resurrection of the body; 2) God knows the universals but not the singulars; and 3) the universe is eter-

scholars who pay only cursory attention to this aspect of Islamic thought that the two disciplines are loosely viewed, somewhat over-generally, as aspects of the same intellectual phenomenon. Some of those who have glossed this *maqāma* have described it solely as a parody of the discourse of a *mutakallim*.<sup>53</sup> This is only half the truth; indeed, it is somewhat misleading, for the first part of the narrative is—certainly by design—anathema to *kalām* as it had come to be defined in the wake of al-Ash‘arī (d. 935–36) and on the eve of al-Ghazālī’s weighty attack on Greek materialist philosophy. The two sides of the dialogue are radically different and consciously distinct. It is the extent to which either of the two forms a coherent localised discourse that may help one gain access to the sentiments and sympathies of the author—or may help one to gauge the ultimate rhetorical design and temperament of the piece.

*The Presence of Aristotle*

(a) *Mixis*. The inebriated philosopher’s interest in the mixing of water and wine is not fortuitous; it would seem rather to be based in a very detailed knowledge of *falsafa*, and in particular, in the discussion about mixing (μίχτις) which forms chapter 10 of Aristotle’s *De generatione et corruptione*;<sup>54</sup> i.e., the influence of Aristotle in the *ḥaylasūf*’s effusions is detectable long before his actual name is mentioned.

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nal *a parte ante* and *a parte post*. In all else the *ḥaylasūfa* are no worse than the Mu‘tazilites: temerarious innovators but still orthodox.”

<sup>53</sup> For example, Stefan Wild, in his engaging and informative essay on Ibn Nāqiyā—“Die zehnte Maqame des Ibn Nāqiyā”—glosses this piece (p. 433): “Die Parodie auf die dialektischen Theologen (*mutakallimūn*) und ihre gelehrten Dispute und haarspalterischen Koranauslegungen in der sechsten Maqame ist gespickt mit Koranversen.” One does not get the sense here of the *maqāma*’s dichotomy, *falsafa* against *kalām*; both halves of the narrative would appear to be understood as part of the theologian’s *gelehrte Dispute*. I would argue that the same lack of distinction obtains in the following observation (ibid., p. 437): “In der Sechsten Maqame spielt al-Yaškurī einen dialektischen Theologen (*mutakallim*), der so lange weintrinkend über Substanz und Akzidenz von Wein und Wasser philosophiert, bis er seinen Gesprächspartner, einen echten *mutakallim*, an die Wand argumentiert hat.”

<sup>54</sup> For a history of this text in the Arab tradition see F. E. Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus* (Leiden, 1968), pp. 37–38, esp. p. 37: “The philosopher and author of a doxography [*Kitāb al-ārā’ wa al-diyānāt*], al-Ḥasan ibn Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī (fl. ca. A.D. 913), made an abridgment of the *De generatione* and the Mu‘tazilite Abū Ḥāshim al-Jubbā‘ī (m. A.D. 933) wrote an attack upon it. A commentary by al-Fārābī (m. A.D. 950) is known only from its citation by Ibn Rushd, but Ibn Sīna’s (m. A.D. 1037) résumé is extant.”

Mixing, as a philosophical issue, is predicated on concern with change; in the preamble to his own ideas Aristotle distinguishes between generation and alteration, outlining the views of the pre-Socratics, with emphasis on the Empedoclean view: “There is no such thing as the birth of anything, . . . only mixing and the separation of what has been mixed.” Though Aristotle’s view is somewhat more nuanced, this quotation illustrates the basic relevance and importance of mixing to a developed ontology. In his own words (that is, when he is not explaining the ideas of his predecessors) Aristotle is even more pertinent to this text, which on a purely rational level asks a very apposite question. The relevant train of thought can be represented thus: wine is proscribed by Islam (in the words of the *mutakallim*: *wa-qad ḥuḏira ‘alay-nā hādihā l-sharābu*); this proscription in general terms must be acceded to; however, when wine is mixed with water (as is always the case in Islamic society when it is imbibed<sup>55</sup>) is the resultant mixture still wine? In Aristotelian terms, since mixing involves the alteration or change of entities (substances?), it is not unreasonable to pursue the question on the lines of a well-established philosophical model.<sup>56</sup> And, furthermore, in Aristotle’s own account of *mixis* it is quite striking that the mixing of water and wine is adduced to illustrate an aspect of his argument:

We have to enquire what mixing is, what a mixture is, to which of the things that are it belongs, and how; and furthermore, whether there is such a thing as mixing or whether this is false. For it is impossible for one thing to be mixed with another, according to what some people say; for supposing that the things after being mixed still are and have not been altered, they say that now they are no more mixed than they were before, but are just the same; and that if one of the two things is destroyed, they have not been mixed, but one exists and the other does not, whereas mixing is of things in the same condition; and that it is no different if, when the two things have come together, each of the things being mixed is destroyed, because

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<sup>55</sup> See J. Bencheikh’s “Poésies bachiques d’Abū Nuwās: Thèmes et personnages” in *Bulletin d’Etudes Orientales* 18 (1963–64); pp. 41–47 are devoted to various aspects of “Le Mélange”: “Rapports de l’eau et du vin,” “Le contact,” “Les effets du mélange,” “Les bulles,” “L’écume,” “L’éclat.” We should note, therefore, that in the treatment of mixing the philosopher is engaging in and developing a topos; the question “What happens when you mix water and wine?” was addressed in a very different and far less dispassionate way by Abū Nuwās, who produced vivid verses such as the following: *bayna l-mudāmi wa-bayna l-mā’i shaḥnā’ū / tanqaddu ghayḏan idhā mā massa-hā l-mā’ū*.

<sup>56</sup> That the author could do so in a sustained manner is testimony to the fact that he was capable of having written a (non-extant) book/*maqāla* on the “*madhhab al-awā’il*.”

they cannot be things that have been mixed if they cannot be said to be at all. Now what this argument is after seems to be to clarify the difference between a mixture and a thing that ‘comes to be’ or ‘ceases to be’. . . .<sup>57</sup>

A drop of wine is not mixed with ten thousand pitchersful of water, for its form (?) dissolves and it changes into the totality of the water [!]. But when the two are more or less equal in strength, then each changes from its own nature in the direction of the dominant one, though it does not become the other but something in between and common to both. So it is clear that of agents, those are capable of being mixed which have a contrariety (for it is these which are capable of being acted upon by one another).<sup>58</sup>

Williams’ explanatory notes highlight the essential change (*istihāla* or *taghayyur*; Greek ἀλλοίωσις) that takes place in the Aristotelian view:

Mixing is what gives rise to homoeomers, and the nature of a homoeomer, as the word itself indicates, is to be such that every smallest part of it is the same character as every other, and as the whole. Wine mixed with water produces a liquid every smallest part of which is the same mixture as before.<sup>59</sup> A level is never reached at which a minute drop of ‘pure’ wine is found next door to a minute drop of pure water.<sup>60</sup>

Aristotle’s view of mixing depends on the distinction between actuality and potentiality. This makes it hard to see how the difference between mixing and corruptibility is to be maintained. His doctrine of mixing is that the

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<sup>57</sup> Aristotle’s *De Generatione et corruptione*, trans. with notes by C. J. F. Williams (Oxford, 1982), pp. 32–33.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35. This is one of two references to the mixing of water and wine in the *De generatione*; the other less relevant example is in a section on Growth (p. 18): “The thing added and the thing to which it is added are both larger, just as when you mix wine with water—each increases in the same way. Is it because the substance of the one persists but not that of the other, namely the nourishment? For in the other example too it is the ingredient which prevails in the mixing which the result is said to be, that is, wine, since *the mixture as a whole does the work of the wine, not that of the water.*” The italicised phrase would suggest that al-Yashkurī was somewhat rash to have brought up the subject.

<sup>59</sup> This is perhaps better explained by G. E. R. Lloyd in *Aristotle: The Growth and Structure of His Thought* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 172: “In *mixis* a change of quality (*alloiosis*) takes place. The constituent substances interact with one another to produce a substance with properties that may be quite different from those of the constituents taken individually.” This type of mixing is distinct from *synthesis* (simple agglomeration) which takes place when a pile of seeds is made up of, say, barley and wheat.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

things survive the mixing, only as potential existents. *Wine mixed with equal parts of water ceases actually to be wine, but now is potentially wine.*<sup>61</sup>

Ibn Nāqiyā's own view, or gloss, on the original, is clearly that with mixing (*ikhtilāf*)<sup>62</sup> a change (*istiḥāla/taghayyur*) takes place. Instead, however, of explaining the precise way in which he understands this bewildering topic, he elects to change the subject by association: he progresses neatly from wine to the soul—only later, by clever literary allusion, to hint at their analogous properties.<sup>63</sup>

The topic of mixing has not been exhausted with the above transition; indeed, this narrative operates rhetorically through literary (and scriptural) allusion.<sup>64</sup> One of the most pertinent allusions is contained in the verse of poetry cited from a *qaṣīda* by Abū Tammām:<sup>65</sup> *jahmiyyatu l-awṣāfi illā anna-hum / qad laqqabū-hā jawhara l-ashyā'i*. This is from a poem which we should examine in some detail; it exhibits a fine synaesthetic linking of the *nasīb* with *khamr* (the vinous theme). For lines 8 ff. (*khamr*) echo faintly

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>62</sup> *Mizāj* and *imtizāj* are also terms used in the Arabic philosophical texts; see the indexes in Amélie Goichon *Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sīnā* (Paris, 1939) and Maurice Bouyges (ed.) *Averroès: Tahafot al-tahafot* (Beirut, 1930).

In passing we should note that Ibn Nāqiyā's refutation of the notion (as an explanation of change) of one substance entering into the other (whereby one substance effectively cancels the other out) is reminiscent of a Stoic doctrine, *krasis*, which, in the words of L. E. Goodman (*Avicenna* [London, 1994] p. 154) "had allowed one body to pervade or perfuse another, putting one body in the same as another". The similarity between the two doctrines is perhaps only fortuitous.

<sup>63</sup> The transition is deftly effected: *wa-bi-l-ikhtilāfi waqa'a l-taghayyuru wa-l-istiḥālatu wa-lā kawna wa-lā fasāda illā bi-l-istiḥālati wa-l-ṭabī'atu thnatāni ihdā-humā musta'liyātun 'alā l-kawni wa-l-fasādi wa-l-ukhrā mu'arradatu l-ajzā'i li-dhālika wa-l-insānu murakkabun min-humā wa-huwa yaḥyā bi-l-nafsi l-nāmiya*. There is an associative link between the words or phrases rendered in roman type: mixture leads to change, which is an aspect of "coming to be" and "perishing," to which Man is subjected; this leads to the subject of the twin aspects of the soul: that which is perishable and that which is immortal. Where the author does in fact manipulate the text to "force" the transition is in the phrase *wa-l-ṭabī'atu thnatān*. For *ṭabī'a* does not, strictly, pick up on anything that precedes it; indeed, it is used somewhat loosely in that it is hard here to identify it with a technical term in Aristotle's system.

<sup>64</sup> N.B. It is with a hemistich of al-Akḥṭal that the subject is first introduced.

<sup>65</sup> *Dīwān Abī Tammām (bi-sharḥ al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrīzī)*, vol. 1 (of 4), ed. Muḥammad 'Abduh 'Azzām (Cairo, 1951), p. 34.

line 2 (wherein a familiar request for the anonymous censurer's clemency): *lā tasqi-nī mā'a l-malāmi fa-inna-nī*. . . . Water—used here to produce an image which is quite independent of any established convention—has an unusually high profile in the *nasīb*. Further, a common posture of this poetry is couched in the following manner of formulation “Do not give me [this] to drink, give me rather wine!” (or vice-versa in Antaresque effusions which would certainly be inappropriate here); *lā tasqi-nī*, in short, evokes bacchism and therefore prefigures, as a purely linguistic evocation, the *khamriyya* proper; this in itself forges a connection—which already exists by convention—between water and wine. This manner of viewing the poem's parts may be too mechanistic. What is clear is that the opening passage (2–6) celebrates water; lines 12–17 celebrate wine as a mixing of water and wine.

The latter passage deserves some analysis: the extremely original line 12 contradicts the force of Ibn Nāqiyā's philosophical discussion of μίχτις (where by artful sophistry wine is rendered analogous to the soul). Yet in the antithetical symmetry which obtains between the verse and the erudite discussion there is—perhaps—a *clin d'oeil*: *ša'ubat wa-rāda l-mazju sayyi'a khulqi-hā / fa-ta'allamat min ḥusni khulqi l-mā'i* (She was a recalcitrant [wine] but the mixing tamed her bad temperament, and she learnt from the good qualities of the water). The conceit of line 13 (a typically cerebral conceit of *badī'* poetry) also sits well with the abstract formulations into which the verse is implicitly and obliquely contextualized (by allusion): *kharqā'u yal'abu bi-l-ūqūli ḥabābu-hā / ka-tala'ubi l-af'āli bi-l-asmā'i* (She was a coarse and ignorant wine whose bubbles befuddled the mind, in the way that verbs manipulate nouns). With this eschewal of the more normal idealisation of wine, line 13 also extends the intertextual antithesis begun in line 12: this striking dissonance requires no comment when we remind ourselves that the *faylasūf's* wine acquires (as we shall discuss below) the very elevated status of the Active Intellect.<sup>66</sup>

In al-Tibrīzī's commentary of Abū Tammām's *Dīwān* an extended note is attached to verse 15—the verse quoted by Ibn Nāqiyā:<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> The evidence of a negative attitude to wine in Abū Tammām's poem is even more pronounced in the following verse (14): *wa-ḍa'ifātun fa-idhā aṣābat furṣatan / qatalat ka-dhālika qudratu l-ḍu'afā'i* (She is weak, and so strikes a fatal blow whenever the chance presents itself—such is the strength of the weak). That the wine should “slay” the imbiber is a topos; to depict it as “weak” goes against the norms of bacchic description. N.B. Abū Tammām's wine “slays”: Ibn Nāqiyā has said (borrowing the words of al-Akḥṭal) that he has “slain” the wine.

<sup>67</sup> *Dīwān Abī Tammām*, p. 35.

The Jahmiyya are a group of *mutakallimūn* who take their name from Jahm [b. Ṣafwān] and who believe that Man is incapable of acting yet is responsible—i.e., is liable to punishment—for his deeds;<sup>68</sup> herein is a contradiction (*bi-dhālika l-munāqaḍatu*). . . . Al-Ṭāʿī (i.e., Abū Tammām) appears to follow the creed of Jahm, for he attributes no action to the wine (*yajʿalu l-khamra lā fiʿla la-hā*; i.e., line 13); yet he claims that it intoxicated him and instilled desire (*shawwaqat-hu*). . . . The phrase *jawharu l-ashyāʿi* is a figure of speech known as *tawriya* (*double-entendre*) by the literary critics, for by mentioning a group of *mutakallims*—whose business it is to speak of *jawhar* (substance) and *ʿaraḍ* (attribute/accident)—he evokes for the reader the sense of *jawhar* understood by [these] theologians, whilst in fact he means *jawhar* where it is the purest, most essential part of something (*rawnaqu l-shayʿi wa-ṣafāʿu-hu*).

From al-Tibrīzī’s remarks it remains unclear exactly how one should translate the verse;<sup>69</sup> however, in its adapted role—relocated in the philosopher’s discourse—it gives an added twist to the figure of speech (*tawriya*); for the meaning that Ibn Nāqiyā evokes must be the one that fits the agenda of *falsafa*—substance. The latter is the first of the Aristotelian Categories, and insofar as the duality of form-matter may have its analogue in substance-attribute, substance must be deemed analogous to form not matter. If wine is, effectively, the form of the body, it is implicitly (then expressly in the text) the substance instantiated through the mixing of body and soul.<sup>70</sup> In all, Abū

<sup>68</sup> This sentence evokes for me (by inverse association) the intriguing observation made by J.-C. Vadet about Ibn Nāqiyā in *EF*: “It may be that in the licence and disorder of Ibn Nāqiyā is to be seen the influence of the *malāmātiyya*, a sort of Muslim Jansenism which places no value on deeds and attaches importance only to sincere faith. Thus Ibn Nāqiyā’s work would seem to be . . . the paradoxical expression of a type of doctrine of ‘justification by faith.’”

<sup>69</sup> Al-Marzūqī’s commentary is possibly the one which best suits the verse as a commentary of the passage which precedes it in the *maqāma* (*Dīwān Abī Tammām*, p. 35): *kāna jahmu bnu ṣafwāna yamtaniʿu min an nusammīya llāha taʿālā shayʿan wa-yaʿtaqīdu anna hādhihi l-laḥẓata inna-mā tuṭlaqu ʿalā l-muḥdathāti: al-jawāhiri wa-l-ʿarāḍi fa-yaqūlu raqqat hādhihi l-khamratu ḥattā kādat takhruju min an takūna ʿaraḍan wa-jawharan wa-an tusammā shayʿan illā anna-hā li-fakhāmāti shaʿni-hā luqqibat jawhara l-ashyāʿi*.

<sup>70</sup> The awkward relationship between Substance and Form-Matter (as it is arguably hinted at in the text of the *maqāma*) is explained in the following passage by Jonathan Barnes (p. 48): “Aristotle observes that substances—material bodies—are in a sense *composite*. A house, for example, consists of bricks and timbers arranged in a certain structure; a statue consists of marble or bronze carved or cast into a certain shape; an animal consists of tissues (flesh, blood and the rest) organised on certain principles. All substances thus consist of two ‘parts’, stuff and structure,

which Aristotle habitually calls ‘matter’ and ‘form’. Matter and form are not physical components of substances: you cannot cut up a bronze statue into two separate bits, its bronze and its shape. Rather, matter and form are *logical* parts of substances: an account of what substances are requires mention of both their stuff and their structure.”

Whether substance could be associated in particular with either matter or form was addressed by Aristotle himself. See D. J. Allan (op. cit., p. 110): “There are, [Aristotle] says, good grounds for treating the matter of a thing as the substantial element within it; yet, if we mean by substance something definite, the notions of matter and substance are opposed. He nowhere properly explains this paradox, but seems to hold that it is only when invested with some degree of form that matter begins to appear substantial.” As G. E. R. Lloyd (see *Aristotle: the Growth and Structure of His Thought* [Cambridge, 1968]) has implied, substance (Greek *ousia*) is hopelessly ambivalent; however (p. 131): “The root idea of substance is ‘the what it is to be’ or the form.”

The close association between soul and substance—in some instances—is illustrated by Avicenna (I quote from Amélie Goichon, *Lexique de la langue philosophique d’Ibn Sīnā* (Paris, 1938), p. 398: “La définition de l’âme au second sens est: une substance (*jawhar*) non corporelle qui est perfection d’un corps qu’elle meut à son choix d’après un principe rationnel, c’est-à-dire intellectuel.”

Ibn Nāqiyā’s treatment of the soul may well be deliberately chiasmic in the arrangement of material. This influences the meaning to be inferred from *jawhar* and the implicitly ethereal value given to wine: the first type of soul mentioned is that aspect (or “nature”) of it which transcends *kawn* and *fasād*; the faculties of the soul are then described in relative detail and the discussion is rounded off with a clear suggestion that wine is superior to these faculties (for whilst the soul imparts motion to the body, wine imparts motion to the soul—this is reminiscent of the hierarchy of the faculties in al-Fārābī’s *Perfect State*; see pp. 106-107 below and n. 76); there is a sense of transcendence re-emerging here and this leads to the verse that gives wine the equivalence of *jawhar*; we have thus the following schema: transcendent soul → bodily soul → bodily wine → transcendent wine. This is admittedly all very fanciful; however, we should pursue the notion to its logical conclusion and therefore make a note, in this context, of the most ethereal possible aspect of substance in the Aristotelian system as understood by the Arabs: (see *Djawhar* in *EP*<sup>2</sup>, 2: 493) “It is one of the characteristics of Aristotle’s system that reality is regarded as having degrees . . . ; first there is the sublunar world of transitory things, then beyond it is the heavenly eternal world of the incorruptible in which there is this mysterious substance, the active intellect, . . . *al-‘aql al-fa‘cāl*, ungenerated and immortal, the immaterial form which in combination with the passive reason activates the thoughts in human beings. *Still higher are the intellects, pure immaterial forms or substances, which are the movers of the celestial spheres, and at the pinnacle is God, the most real, substance in the truest sense*” (emphasis mine). Abū Tammām was denigrating about wine in the original poem; however, by sensitive contrivance

Tammām's verse provides a well-judged and very wry quotation; it both manipulates and is manipulated by its prose context.

Ibn Nāqiyā's adduction of poetry lends a chiasmic structure to the narrative: the philosopher cites a verse which evokes *kalām* (in the person of Jahm b. Ṣafwān); contrariwise, the *mutakallim* cites a verse which evokes philosophy (in the phrase *qul li-man yadda<sup>ʿ</sup>ī fī l-<sup>ʿ</sup>ilmi falsafatan*). The theologian's recourse to poetry thus establishes the symmetry of the two halves of the narrative, and confirms the very nature of the players' roles in this piece (the *mutakallim* pitted against the *faylasūf*).

(b) *Materialism and the Immortality of the Soul*. For those familiar with the *falsafa-kalām* antagonism in the eleventh century the two verses attributed to Abū Nuwās voice the received view of an essentially materialist Greek philosophy. “*Al-qawl bi-l-dahr*” is ascribed to the *falāsifa* by al-Ghazālī; his view is well summarised—for example's sake—in a brief passage of the *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (which is itself quoted in Ibn Rushd's counterpoint text, the *Tahāfut al-tahāfut*) that bears the title:<sup>71</sup> *fī bayāni ʿajzi-him ʿan iqāmati l-dalīli ʿalā anna li-l-ʿālamī ṣāniʿan wa-ʿillatan wa-anna l-qawla bi-l-dahri lāzimun la-hum*.

But in setting out or tapping into this received view Ibn Nāqiyā has teased his audience; for the issue stems essentially from the debate about the immortality of the soul. Indeed, it is through his treatment (or evocation) of this subject that the author paved the way for the rhetorical crescendo in his impish metaphysical tract. The immortality of the soul was one of three important issues in the *kalām-falsafa* controversy,<sup>72</sup> and it is *the* key issue here. In his earlier statements Ibn Nāqiyā sets out the Aristotelian view—one which is abrogated not through careless self-contradiction but due to the heterodox momentum in his dialogue. We sense here the well-conceived literary blue-print and design of the author's *maqāma*.

As we can read in the *EF*<sup>2</sup>: “The Aristotelian analysis of the human soul as given in *De Anima*, and handed on by Alexander of Aphrodisias and Porphyry, had been adopted with little modification by the Muslim philosophers, such as al-Kindī, al-Fārābī . . . , and Miskawayh.”<sup>73</sup> Jonathan Barnes

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Ibn Nāqiyā comes as close as any ʿAbbāsīd ever came to articulating the divinity of wine in the period before the somewhat overwrought imagery of the later mystic poets gave voice to a similar reverence.

<sup>71</sup> Bouyges, op. cit., 415:4.

<sup>72</sup> See above, n. 52.

<sup>73</sup> From the article “Nafs” by E. E. Caverley (2: 881).

provides a clear summary of this Aristotelian view:<sup>74</sup>

That the soul—or certain parts of it, if it is divisible into parts—is not separable from the body is not unclear. Fulfilments cannot exist apart from the things that are fulfilled. Souls are fulfilments of bodies. Hence souls cannot exist apart from bodies, any more than skills can exist apart from skilled men. Plato had held that souls pre-existed the birth and survived the death of those bodies they animated. Aristotle thought that that was impossible. A soul is simply not the *sort* of thing that could survive.<sup>75</sup> How could my skills, my temper or my character survive me? Aristotle's general view of the nature of souls is elaborated in his detailed accounts of the different life-functions: nutrition, reproduction, perception, movement, thought.

The latter are the “faculties” of the soul and are the same as those set out in al-Fārābī's outline of the Perfect State;<sup>76</sup> they are evoked—in a much

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<sup>74</sup> Jonathan Barnes, *Aristotle* (Oxford, 1982), p. 67.

<sup>75</sup> Simon van den Bergh highlights the ambiguity of the word “soul” (see Averroës' *Tahāfut al-tahāfut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)* (London, 1969), vol. 1, p. xxxi): “Soul [in the way we understand it] is . . . used for the rational part, the thinking part of our consciousness. It is only this thinking part, according to Aristotle, that is not related to or bound up with matter; sensation and imagination are localized in the body; and it is only part of our thinking soul that seems to possess eternity or to be mortal.” Immortality is restricted (*ibid.*, p. xxxiv): “What [Averroës] rejects, and what the philosophers generally reject, is the resurrection of the *flesh*.”

<sup>76</sup> See chapter 10 of *Mabādi' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, revised text with intro., trans., and commentary by Richard Walzer (Oxford, 1985), pp. 164–75. The word for faculty used in this text is *quwwa*; they are summarised in their hierarchical order in the last paragraph (§ 9) of this chapter (p. 175): “The ruling faculty of nutrition (*al-quwwa al-ghādhiya*) is like matter for the ruling faculty of sense (*al-quwwa al-hāssa*), whereas the sensing faculty is the form of the faculty of nutrition; the ruling faculty of sense is matter for the faculty of representation (*al-quwwa al-mutakhayyila*), whereas the faculty of representation is the form of the faculty of reason (*al-quwwa al-nāṭiqa*), whereas the faculty of reason is the form of the faculty of representation without being matter for another faculty: it is the final form of all the forms which precede it. The appetitive faculty (*al-quwwa al-nuzū'iyya*) is dependent on the ruling faculty of sense and the faculties of representation and reason, as heat exists in fire and is dependent on the substantiality of fire.” One convenient source which illustrates that *nafs* is interchangeable with *quwwa* is Salvador Gomez Nogales' *Psicología de Averroes: Comentario al libro sobre el alma de Aristóteles* (Madrid, 1987); in a list of the faculties of the soul in his glossary he gives *al-nafs al-munmiya* (el alma del crecimiento) which must be equivalent to Ibn Nāḳiyā's *al-nafs al-nāmiya*.

The purely Aristotelian hierarchy of faculties is provided by Lloyd (*op. cit.*,

reduced and almost unrecognisable form—when Ibn Nāqiyā speaks of *al-nafs al-nāmiya*, *al-nafs al-mumayyiza* and *al-nafs al-mutaḥarrika*.

There is a faint echo of a Platonic notion in Ibn Nāqiyā's phrase *lammā lam yakun li-l-insāni an yabqā bi-shakḥi-hi ishtāqa ilā an yabqā bi-sūrati-hi*. Barnes' explanation of an aspect of Platonic thought makes this clear: "Plato's ontology was contained in his theory of Ideas or Forms. According to that theory, the ultimate realities—the things on which the reality of everything else is dependent—are abstract universals. It is not individual men and individual horses . . . but the abstract forms of Man or manhood or of Horse or horseness which constitute the basic furniture of the real world." However, the nuances of the soul, which make possible a vision of both immutable death and resurrection (of some kind), are elements of an essentially and consciously distinct Aristotelian system.<sup>77</sup>

#### *The Individuality of the Soul*

The basic Aristotelian view is that the "immaterial nature of souls means that they cannot be individual at all"; the problem rears its head in Averroës' commentaries:<sup>78</sup> "As an Aristotelian he would regard the possibility of personal immortality as being a difficult notion to comprehend. Matter, the principle of individuation, is precisely the substance which is corruptible and perishes when we die. . . ." Immortality is a collective phenomenon (this is

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p. 188); the six main faculties are: nutrition and reproduction (*threptikon*); sensation (*aisthetikon*); desire (*orektikon*); locomotion (*kinetikon*); imagination (*phantasia*) and reason (*nous*).

<sup>77</sup> The clearest summary account of the problem of the soul and immortality in *falsafa*, as it developed between the tenth and twelfth centuries, is to set out in Oliver Leaman's *An Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 87–107; see esp. p. 88: "Aristotle actually expressed himself in this sort of way: Just as in the whole physical world there is, in each class, on the one hand matter (i.e. what is potentially all those things) and, on the other, something else which is the efficient cause, in that it makes them all (e.g. a craft in relation to its material), so in the sphere of the soul there must exist this distinction. One intellect is such as to become all things, the other such as to make them all, a kind of positive state, like light; for in a sort of way light makes potential colours actual colours (*De anima* 430 a 10)." This allows Aristotle to distinguish himself from the Platonic view: "[For Plato] knowledge is dependent upon self-subsistent forms or abstract entities, [whereas Aristotle refers] to something like an agent intellect that 'illuminates' the potential intelligibles concealed in sense objects rather as light reveals the colours of objects which are also 'hidden' in the dark; this] suggests that in a sense the concepts are already 'there' in the things, and all they need is lighting up."

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

not expressed in Ibn Nāqiyā's Arabic phrase *ishtāqa an yabqā bi-ṣūrati-hi*, but it is implied in its protasis *lammā lam yakun li-l-insāni an yabqā bi-shakḥsihi*:<sup>79</sup> "For Averroës every form in matter is material, and so an immortal soul cannot possibly be in the body, with the implication that there is no sense in talking about personal immortality."<sup>80</sup> The materialist fatalism which concludes the philosopher's *apparently*—and deliberately challenging—atheistic discourse (one which in fact contradicts his earlier assurance that one of the two "natures" of the soul transcends "coming to be" and "perishing" [*musta'liyatu 'alā l-kawni wa-l-fasād*]) is simply a rhetorical allusion to this philosophical conundrum—one which was certainly misunderstood and disliked by orthodox theologians (as indeed it posed problems for Christian scholastics in the Middle Ages). The latter could not brook the shades of distinction with regard to resurrection and immortality imposed by a composite psychology.<sup>81</sup> The quotation of Abū Nuwās to articulate these blasphemous notions shows no desire on the part of the author to hush up the problems posed; rather he has tarried in an opaque ontology, allowing these notions to emerge by increments of association; these are exploited—not felt as embarrassing—and in the crescendo towards a blasphemy which this half of the *maqāma* displays we must sense, in effect, a well-chiselled rhetorical and literary artifice.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Ibn Rushd, *Tahāfut al-tahāfut*, trans. Van den Bergh (London, 1969), p. 16: "The soul is closely similar to light: light is divided by the division of illuminated bodies, and is unified when the bodies are annihilated, and this same relation holds between soul and bodies."

G. E. R. Lloyd (op. cit.) provides what may be the clearest succinct account of the soul, body and immortality problem (pp. 186–87): "[Aristotle's] general theory excludes the possibility of the soul as a whole being separable and immortal, for if it is the actuality of the body, it clearly cannot exist except in conjunction with the body of which it is the actuality. Yet [he] qualifies this theory in one very important respect: he makes an exception to his general rule that the soul cannot have separate existence in the case of one of its faculties, namely reason. Already in *De anima* (II, ch. 2, 413 b 24 ff) he says: 'Concerning reason and the faculty of contemplation nothing is clear as yet. But it seems that this is another kind of soul, and that this alone is separable as that which is eternal from that which is perishable. But as far as the other parts of the soul are concerned it is evident from what we have said that they are not, as some hold, separable, although it is clear that they are distinguishable in definition.'"

<sup>81</sup> The Koranic enunciation of bodily resurrection and individual immortality is set out conveniently in Chapter 1 of Ovey N. Mohammed's *Averroës' Doctrine of Immortality*; see pp. 29–40, which outline "The Qur'anic Anthropology."

*The Exegetical Counter-Argument*

The theologian, shocked by the materialist's trenchant views, begins his own discourse with some conspicuous lexical echoes: *fasād*, which is used in the philosophical sense in the phrase *al-kawn wa-l-fasād*, is countered by the *mutakallim*'s straightforwardly homiletic notion of *fasād al-i<sup>c</sup>tiqādi wa-l-ilhād* (in another instance of purely lexical echoes, the *faylasūf*'s *mu<sup>c</sup>arraḍatu l-ajzā<sup>3</sup>* is resumed in the phrase: *tafarruq al-ajzā<sup>3</sup> fī l-tharā*). More significant is the irony of the *mutakallim*'s aside to the audience: *wa-qadi stawlat min-hu l-khamru <sup>c</sup>alā l-<sup>c</sup>aql*. For if in the philosopher's utterances wine has been rendered an analogue of "form" and "soul" (more specifically that part of the soul that is immortal, or transcends "corruption"), then it has been given a role analogous with reason (which is that faculty of the soul that is immortal): wine *is* reason, effectively. The *mutakallim* ignores the implicit irony and contradiction of his more mundane accusation.

Beyond these exiguous, and at most only mildly rhetorical echoes, the two halves of the narrative exhibit an antithetical symmetry. The weight of the *mutakallim*'s riposte lies in the force of Koranic quotation. Indeed, the first verse to be quoted is aptly chosen. The theologian makes the mistake of quoting 34:39, which incites the drunkard's quasi-demonstrative refutation of the Koranic "proposition." In this dangerous posture he both enacts and utters blasphemy; what is essential, if there is rhetorical design in all this, is that he has drawn the theologian off course, for this exchange does nothing to refute the materialist notions that have triggered the theologian's defence. In most instances I have already suggested that the quotation of an *āya* may evoke its immediate scriptural context (see the footnotes to the individual *āyas* in the translation). That the author manipulates these evocations in any particular way can only be tentatively put forward. Two separate Koranic passages require some analysis:

(i) The theologian quotes first of all 36/Yā Sīn:33–39 (the actual text of verses 34 to 38 and then 40 is adduced only in the subsequent exchange); the first of these *āyas* (33) is aptly chosen: it reminds the materialist that God revives the dead land; that is: He gives life to inanimate physical matter. *Āyas* 34 to 36 expand on the subject of 33 and are not irrelevant to the thrust of the theologian's pious argument. However, there may be a very oblique irony in 34 (a glimpse of the author lurking): *ja<sup>c</sup>alnā fī-hā [al-ard] jannātin min nakhīlin wa-a<sup>c</sup>nābin wa-fajjarnā fī-hā mina l-<sup>c</sup>uyūn* (And We made therein gardens of palms and vines, and therein We caused fountains to gush forth); for it is a Koranic verse similar to this that provides an early and positive evocation of wine (16:67): *wa-min thamarāti l-nakhīli wa-l-a<sup>c</sup>nābi*

*tattakhidhūna min-hu sukran wa-rizqan ḥasanan in fī dhālika la-āyatun li-qawmin yaʿqilūna* (And [We give you] the fruits of the palms and the vines from which you obtain an intoxicant as well as wholesome food; surely in this is a sign for people who understand). A *ʿnāb* occurs only nine times in this formulaic manner, thus verse 16:67 would not be far from the mind.

Sūra 36 is well chosen on an even broader level: verses 33 to 83 are dominated by the subject of eschatology and resurrection. Further, the early part of the Sūra (*āya* 12) contains the divine statement: *innā naḥnu nuḥyī l-mawtā*. However we shall not labour this point since these notions are, of course, pervasive in the Koran.

*Āyas* 36–40 which treat the separation of Night and Day are irrelevant to the refutation of the *dahrī* stance and thus must be understood to exercise the two interlocutors disproportionately. The point can be illustrated through analysis of another relevant cluster of verses:

(ii) Koran 25:45 (the last of the *āyas* quoted in the narrative) is set into a Sūra that gives warning to those who have rejected the signs of God; important here is the recurrence of the theme of night and day; further, the paired themes again evoke their virtual metonyms, the sun and the moon; also mentioned is the separation of the two seas: the sweet and the bitter. I give below a substantial passage (with ellipses) from Arberry's translation before commenting on its possible relevance to Ibn Nāqiyā's narrative (Koran 25:45–62):

Hast thou not regarded thy Lord, how He has stretched out  
the shadow? Had He willed,  
He would have made it still.  
Then we appointed the sun, to be a guide to it; . . .  
It is He who appointed the night for you to be a garment  
and sleep for a rest, and day  
He appointed for a rising . . . and We  
sent down from Heaven pure water  
so that We might revive a dead land. . . .  
And it is He who let forth the two seas, this one sweet,  
grateful to taste, and this  
salt, bitter to the tongue,  
and He set between them a barrier, and a ban forbidden. . . .  
Blessed be He  
who has set in heaven constellations, and has set  
among them a lamp, and  
an illuminating moon.  
And it is He who made the night and day a succession.

Treatment of the Resurrection together with the less common notion of

the separation (or unmixed and unmixable state) of two liquid bodies (in this case two seas) provides a no more than faint echo of aspects of the philosopher's ramblings. It would be rash to force this tentative interpretation beyond this point. Furthermore, even if we are to accept that there *may be* authorial intent behind these echoes they do not support the materialist's argument (other than to suggest that both men are ultimately arguing with an equal measure of incoherence).

The rhetorical and literary fabric of this piece is one based on contrast and antithesis. This feature encompasses the two parts of the dialogue; it is also enhanced on a "micro"-level by elements of the imagery within each half: for the extended deliberations that unfold from the Koranic verses about Night and Day / Sun and Moon<sup>82</sup> together with the discussions of Water and Wine, and Body and Soul, help to sustain and modulate the dichotomy so essential to the narrative. Some manner of "fractal" structure operates here, such that a moral anarchy cannot be seen to undermine fully the aesthetics of literary construction. This *maqāma* must also be viewed essentially as containing a narrative that unfolds: the whole is generated by a series of associations and only locally logical *sequiturs*: in a sense the entire dialogue has its seeds in the very first question.

*Falsafa* was quintessentially elitist. The irony, given that the *falāsifa* were condemned for denying the resurrection of the body (and hence immortality), is that in the formulations of some it was only through philosophy that the soul could achieve its final salvation. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī's description of the philosophy of Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā al-Rāzī illustrates the point well:<sup>83</sup> "L'homme ne peut atteindre le monde véritable que par la philosophie. . . . Les âmes restent dans ce monde jusqu'à ce qu'elles soient éveillées par la philosophie au mystère et dirigées vers le monde véritable."<sup>84</sup> Such a view would obviously not have been shared by many outside this circumscribed discipline. Few who were not themselves philosophers or theologians can have delved into the intricate intellectual system of *falsafa*. For the orthodox masses, this *maqāma* would have made some sense: it would have been read (or heard) as an attack on philosophy

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<sup>82</sup> I am reminded of Abdelfattah Kilito's stimulating analysis of the imagery of Sun and Moon / Night and Day in the fifth *maqāma* of al-Ḥarīrī; see *al-Ghā'ib: Dirāsa fī maqāma li-l-ḥarīrī* (Casablanca, 1987), pp. 7–14. In a very imaginative way Kilito highlights the symbolism of Good and Evil.

<sup>83</sup> See *Histoire de la philosophie en Islam*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1972), p. 588.

<sup>84</sup> Similarly elitist and exclusivist notions are set out in chapter 16 (On the After-life) of al-Fārābī's *Mabādi' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*.

more than on *kalām*.<sup>85</sup> Yet an engaged analysis of *falsafa* forces one to reserve judgment, for there is greater rhetorical force and coherence in the dialogue of the philosopher than there is in the unfocused exegesis of the *mutakallim*.<sup>86</sup> Or perhaps the whole is a deliberate evocation of *Tahāfut*. As Umberto Eco has written: “In order to talk nonsensical, you even become Aristotelian.”<sup>87</sup>

### Postscript

The material in this essay was presented at the Columbia Seminar in Arabic Studies in April 1999. Discussion was animated and some disagreements with the above analysis should be noted here. It was noticed that the Koranic verses quoted by the *mutakallim* in fact make perfect sense astronomically: the verses are consistent with the astronomical phenomena discussed in the

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<sup>85</sup> In this way the blasphemy contained in the text is justified. Kilito has pursued this issue by discussing the Islamic heresiographical tradition (*Les séances*, pp. 167–68): “Dans les ouvrages hérésiographiques, les croyances étrangères au dogme islamique (et, à l’intérieur de l’Islam, les croyances jugées condamnables par telle tradition de pensées) sont citées, mais en vue d’être réfutées.” The author’s understanding of Ibn Nāqiyā’s quasi-heresiographical intentions is explained thus: “. . . le discours profanateur de Yachkurī est enveloppé par la désapprobation du narrateur et l’énoncé de ce que celui-ci considère comme vrai. Yachkurī est dans l’«égarement» (*ḍalāl*); ses paroles sont des «obsessions diaboliques» (*wasāwis*), des indices de la «corruption de la foi» (*fasād al-‘aqīda*) et de l’«impiété» (*kufr*).” But one must add an important remark which highlights the ambivalence of the text: “L’attitude réprobatrice du narrateur est claire, mais l’attitude de l’auteur reste indéterminée, . . . en tout cas, l’attribution du discours hérétique à un bouffon, ivrogne de surcroît, dévalorise du même coup ce discours. . . .” Kilito asserts an epistemological view of the role of the outsider and the outsider’s discourse: it is this which helps to demarcate the area subsumed by orthodoxy. *Falsafa’s* role in medieval Islam fits into this view (it is only in this context that Kilito discusses the most striking elements of the narrative): “La *falsafa*, en effet, était à la fois rejetée et acceptée, ou bien alternativement rejetée et acceptée selon les conjonctures, et le philosophe était de son côté écartelé entre la nécessité d’adhérer au «nous» et la tentation de s’en évader.”

<sup>86</sup> It is perhaps wise to leave the question about who won the debate unanswered. Indeed, a different question is possibly more relevant in that it uncovers another layer of irony: Why is the *mutakallim* telling this story in the first place? Obviously he would only be retelling this episode if he considered himself to have outshone his rival. However, since the *maqāmāt* are an ambivalent genre, the author’s view is far from settled.

<sup>87</sup> *The Island of the Day Before* (London, 1995), p. 303.

text. It was suggested, therefore, that the narrator/*mutakallim* understands what is going on and feels obliged to explain this to the drunken and would-be philosopher who has adopted an empty philosophical posture. Seen in this light, the contrast between the two men is the following: the narrator gives a very clear explanation of the Koranic celestial spheres and their behaviour, while the philosopher for his part has failed to pursue coherently the Aristotelian subjects he has brought up in conversation. This may be true; it is also perhaps missing the point, since the philosopher may simply be teasing the theologian, moving from problematic topic to problematic topic. We must own, of course, that he does not present a cohesive argument, but he does proceed by a series of associative steps to make a gallingly blasphemous and fatalist/*dahrī* statement. And as a drunkard, he is perhaps beyond caring.