

التفاوض بين السلطة والعاطفة: تحليل أسلوبى-بلاغى للمصداقية والاستمالة العاطفية والحجة

المنطقية في كتاب "إحياء علوم الدين"

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*Negotiating Authority and Emotion: A Rhetorical-Stylistic Analysis of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in Al-Ghazali's The Revival of the Religious Sciences*

**Negotiating Authority and Emotion: A Rhetorical-Stylistic Analysis of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in Al-Ghazali's *The Revival of the Religious Sciences***

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**Abstract**

One of the most influential works in the Islamic intellectual tradition, *Ihyā' ulūm al-Dīn* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences, 1095-1106 CE) by Al-Ghazali has been given little attention as a rhetorical artefact.



This paper fills that gap through a rhetorical-stylistic analysis of the *Ihyā'*, exploring the ways Al-Ghazali appeals to the classical appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos to negotiate the power, induce spiritual change, and authorise the unification of Islamic law (*sharī'a*) with mystical interiority (*ḥaqīqa*). Based on a purposive corpus of passages in the *khuṭba* (preface), the *Book of Knowledge*, the *Book of the Wonders of the Heart*, and the *Book of Remembrance of Death*, the analysis reveals that Al-Ghazali develops a three-part persuasive structure where authority is asserted and exercised simultaneously; emotive appeals are made using eschatological imagery and rhymed prose. Importantly, the three appeals do not operate independently, e.g. Quranic citation as such is at the same time an intertextual ethos, a communal logos, and an affective pathos. Placing its results in the context of both Aristotelian rhetoric theory and the native Arabic *balagha*, the paper argues that the *Ihyā'* is a kind of integrated rhetoric that challenges strictly linear approaches to persuasion and rhetoric, and the stylistics of devotional prose.

### المخلص

رغم مكانته كأحد أهم المؤلفات في التراث الفكري الإسلامي، لم يحظ كتاب "إحياء علوم الدين" (١٠٩٥-١١٠٦م) للغزالي باهتمام كافٍ من منظور بلاغي. تسد هذه الورقة هذا الفراغ عبر تحليل أسلوبه-بلاغي للكتاب، لاستكشاف كيفية توظيف الغزالي لعناصر الإقناع الكلاسيكية (الإيثوس "الأخلاق"، والبائوس "العاطفة"، واللوغوس "المنطق") لترسيخ السلطة المعرفية، وإحداث التغيير الروحي، وإجازة التوحيد بين "الشريعة" الإسلامية والتجربة الصوفية "الحقيقة". بالاعتماد على عينة مدروسة تشمل (خطبة الكتاب/المقدمة، وكتاب العلم، وكتاب عجائب القلب، وكتاب ذكر الموت)، يكشف التحليل عن بنية إقناعية ثلاثية؛ حيث يتم تأكيد السلطة وممارستها في آنٍ واحد، وتُستخدم الاستمالات العاطفية عبر الصور الأخروية والسجع. والأهم من ذلك، أن هذه العناصر الإقناعية لا تعمل بمعزل عن بعضها؛ فالإقتباس القرآني -على سبيل المثال- يُعد في الوقت نفسه: مصداقية تناسية (إيثوس)، ومنطقاً جمعياً (لوغوس)، وتأثيراً وجدانياً (بائوس). وتخلص الدراسة، بوضع نتائجها في سياق كل من البلاغة الأرسطية وعلم البلاغة العربية، إلى أن كتاب "الإحياء" يقدم نموذجاً للبلاغة المتكاملة التي تتحدى المقاربات الخطية الصارمة للإقناع وأسلوبيات النثر التعبدي. تطرح هذه الورقة البحثية ثلاثة أسئلة مترابطة: كيف يحقق الغزالي مصداقية مؤلفه متجاوزاً حدود التخصصات؟ وبأي أساليب بلاغية يخاطب مشاعر القارئ؟ وكيف يستخدم الحجة العقلانية لتبرير دمج الشريعة والحقيقة؟ والأهم من ذلك، أنها تؤكد



أن هذه الأسئلة لا يمكن الإجابة عنها بمعزل عن سياقها، إذ إن هذه الأساليب الثلاثة في الإحياء ليست مرتبة ترتيباً معيناً، بل متداخلة. ويمكن أن تكون هذه الدراسة ذات صلة بمجال البلاغة، وأسلوبية النثر الديني، والتحليل المقارن بين الثقافات لأعمال الأدبية الإسلامية في الإجابة عن هذه الأسئلة.

## II. Introduction

Few works in the Islamic intellectual tradition have commanded so enduring or so wide a readership as Al-Ghazali's *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-Dīn* (*The Revival of the Religious Sciences*). Described by Nasr (2009) as perhaps the most influential work on ethics in Islamic history, the *Iḥyā'* is widely regarded as the most frequently read Islamic text after the Quran and the canonical Hadith collections. Composed in Arabic between approximately 1096 and 1111 CE, it spans forty books across four thematic quarters, seeking nothing less than the comprehensive revitalisation of Muslim religious and moral life by bringing orthodox Sunni theology and Sufi mysticism together into a single, coherent guide. That this synthesis was achieved through the written word alone, without institutional pulpit or political patronage, makes the *Iḥyā'* a uniquely consequential rhetorical achievement, and one whose persuasive architecture has remained largely unexamined.

The circumstances of the text's composition are themselves rhetorically significant. Al-Ghazali was the holder of the most elite academic appointment in the medieval Islamic world, lecturing to over three hundred pupils at Baghdad at the Nizamiyya college, when he suffered in 1095 a severe personal crisis of epistemological doubt, spiritual inquiry and physical ailment to the point where he was unable to continue teaching (Griffel, 2009). He later quit Baghdad with a promise never to lend himself to political figures or even teach at government-funded institutions. The *Iḥyā'* was the fruit of this division between institutional excellence and spiritual sincerity, the stamp of its birth, it is at once a demonstration of a commanding learning and a declaration of personal faith, a formal *summa* and a personal witness. The issue of Al-Ghazali coping with these conflicting imperatives must be essentially a rhetorical question.

Although the *Iḥyā'* has a long history of scholarship regarding both the theology and the philosophy along with the mysticism of Al-Ghazali (Watt, 1953; Treiger, 2012; Griffel, 2009), it has been entirely ignored as a rhetorical artefact. Rhetoric, construed classically in Aristotelian terms as the art of determining the resources of persuasion accessible (Kennedy, 1991), would provide the means to explain how the text persuades,



touches and changes its readers in response to the three major appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos.. The classical Arabic tradition of *balagha*, organised around *'ilm al-ma'ānī*, *'ilm al-bayān*, and *'ilm al-badī'*, offers a complementary indigenous framework, and the partial convergence of these two traditions creates a productive analytical space for examining the *Ihyā'* on its own rhetorical terms.

This paper thus poses three related questions: how does Al-Ghazali achieve authorial credibility across the boundaries of disciplines; by what stylistic means does he appeal to the emotions of his reader; and how does he use rational argumentation to justify the fusion of *sharī'a* and *ḥaqīqa*? More importantly, it claims that such questions cannot be answered individually out of context of each other, as the three appeals in the *Ihyā'* are not placed in the order but interwoven. The study could be relevant in the field of rhetoric, the stylistics of devotional prose, and cross-cultural analysis of Islamic literary works in answering these questions.

### III. Literature Review

Any rhetorical discussion of a classical Islamic text has to start by placing itself within and subjecting itself to the Western rhetorical tradition which provides its major analytical terms. The classic work is still Aristotle Rhetoric, most authoritatively translated and annotated by Kennedy (1991), and an introduction that renders it the earliest systematic research on civic oratory, and that remains a key influence on the study of rhetoric and composition in contemporary times. To Aristotle, rhetoric is the art of determining what means of persuasion exist in a particular situation, and the three main means of persuasion, which he referred to as the *pisteis* or artistic proofs, and which include ethos, pathos, and logos, act respectively on the credibility of the speaker, the emotional condition of the audience, and the argument itself (Kennedy, 1991)..

A significant scholarly debate concerns the hierarchical relationship between these three appeals. Braet (1992) argued that logos is the primary form of argumentation in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, while ethos and pathos are secondary, though both remain necessary even in ideal rhetorical contexts. More recently, scholars have moved toward an integrative reading. Grimaldi (1972) and Braet (1992) have supported interpretations of the interconnection of all three appeals, arguing against the traditional view represented by Cope (1867), who claimed mutual exclusivity among them. This shift from a sequential to an integrated model is directly relevant to the present study, which argues that in the *Ihyā'* the three appeals are woven together rather than arranged in sequence. Kennedy's



(1998) *Comparative Rhetoric* further supports this paper's cross-cultural methodology, offering a universalist premise, that rhetorical energy, if not rhetorical terminology, crosses cultural boundaries, that provides the epistemological licence for applying Aristotelian categories to a classical Arabic text, provided sufficient sensitivity to its cultural and linguistic conditions is maintained.

There has been a significant amount of scholarly work regarding the use of rhetorical criticism of religious texts. Smith (2008) claimed that religious rhetoric has specific limitations such as appeals to higher authority, the form of collective belief, which both expand and complicate the classical model. The genre of sermon has been demonstrated to be based on rhetorical techniques like antithesis and parallelisms in order to render abstract theological concepts emotionally relevant (DiCicco, 1995). The analysis of Paul's use of ethos, pathos and logos in his letters in the New Testament by DiCicco (1995) showed that the three appeals are entirely viable in written religious argument and that the analysis of these appeals in non-oratorical situations exposes the persuasive strategies that would have been unseen otherwise. This precedent is directly applicable to the *Ihyā'*, which, while shaped by the sermon tradition, operates as a written text addressed to a diffuse, multi-generational readership rather than a gathered assembly. Within the domain of Arabic-Islamic religious rhetoric, scholars such as Neuwirth, Stewart, and Izutsu have produced extensive work on the Quran and pre-Islamic poetry, but these studies leave the vast domain of classical Arabic scholarly and devotional prose, including texts of the *Ihyā'*'s magnitude, largely unexamined from a rhetorical-stylistic perspective. Scholars have specifically urged to broaden the study of cross-genre Arabic stylistics to the classical prose and devotional literature, stating that such analysis will enable a holistic understanding of Arabic as both a religious and a literary language (Ahmad and Ghafar, 2025). This gap is more apparent in English-language scholarship than it might be in Arabic-language scholarship, where the prose of Al-Ghazali has been the subject of longstanding literary and rhetorical discussion; the current study is concerned with the relative lack of such discussion in the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary literature.

Alongside the Aristotelian tradition, classical Islamic scholarship developed its own sophisticated science of rhetoric — *balagha* — integrating linguistic analysis with aesthetics and logic, drawing on Quranic exegesis, poetry criticism, and theological discourse. The pivotal figure in its systematisation was 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, whose two foundational works, *Dalā'ail al-I'jāz* (1984 edn) and *Asrār al-Balagha*



(1954 edn), laid the groundwork for *'ilm al-ma'ānī* (linguistic pragmatics) and *'ilm al-bayān* (figurative language) respectively (Laher, 2017). The key idea of *nazm*, a syntactic and semantic organization of words, introduced by al-Jurjani, led to the understanding that the power of rhetoric lies not in the individual word, but the interdependence of the structure and meaning (Tsung, 2021), which has far-reaching implications when it comes to the consideration of the architecturally ordered prose by Al-Ghazali. *Balagha* and Aristotelian rhetoric are related to each other partially convergently and partly divergently: the three components of logos, ethos, and pathos in Aristotle are spread out in various terms in Islamic rhetoric, where ethos is found in the discussion of the moral character of the speaker, pathos is found in the term *ta athhih al-kalama* (the impact of speech), and logos is found in the This homology of structure, the existence of similar though non-identical concepts, permits Aristotelian categories to be productive analytical prisms of the *Ihyā'* without breaking down actual differences between the two traditions. More importantly, *balagha* is not presented in this paper as simply a background information but as an equal analytical instrument and the analysis parts below do not prioritize either of the traditions but apply them jointly.

In the last 30 years, scholarship on Al-Ghazali has been revised extensively. Watts *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali* (1953) remains the canonical work in English on Al-Ghazali, and has made a scholar who experienced a life-altering spiritual crisis and who wrote the *Ihyā'* a canonical text of his own -the narrative of which has been both developed and challenged by other scholars. Al-Ghazali as a philosopher: This image was dramatically altered by the work of Griffel, *Al-Ghazali: as a philosopher* (2009) who depicts Al-Ghazali as a negotiator between rationality and spirituality who revised the philosophy of Avicenna to make it acceptable to mainstream Islamic history. This stance directly relates to the interpretation of the interaction of logos and pathos within the *Ihyā'*. Farther, Treiger in his *Inspired Knowledge in Islamic Thought* (2012) claimed that Al-Ghazali was among the most popularisers of philosophy in medieval Islam, and his mysticism was structurally founded on Avicennian epistemology. In his review of the Treiger work, it was pointed out that the *Munqidh* -autobiography of Al-Ghazali is actually an apologetic writing with literary tropes and rhetoric devices that ensure that its historical value remains questionable (Janssens, 2011). This point establishes the area within which the current paper will dwell: the *Ihyā'* also is a rhetorically produced artefact which needs to be considered in terms of its persuasive structure, as well as its content



matter. The translations of Al-Ghazali in the Islamic Texts Society series mention the rhetorical sophistication of Al-Ghazali and how he would adjust tone to suit his audience, but does not go further to systematic analysis of the same - as does Marmura (1994), in her philosophical commentary. What is still lacking is a long-term, systematic analysis of the use of ethos, pathos, and logos by Al-Ghazali as a system of rhetoric throughout the *Ihyā'*.

The last avenue of literature that is relevant is the aspect of stylistics. Fiction Style in Fiction (1981; 2nd edition) by Leech and Short. The methodological point of reference is given by (2007) which was awarded the PALA Silver Jubilee Prize, the most influential book on stylistics since 1980, which is based on the concept of foregrounding: the psychological conspicuousness of artistic effects in contrast to the background of ordinary language, in which it may be a deviation or parallelism (Leech and Short, 2007). Although it developed out of English fictional prose, the lexical choice, syntactic patterning, figurative language, and foregrounding are the main tools of its analysis which can be applied to classical Arabic devotional prose with the necessary adjustment. The concept of *saj'* (rhymed prose), for instance, functions as phonological foregrounding with no direct parallel in Leech and Short's system but is analysable through analogous tools, and its operation in Al-Ghazali's prose is best understood through al-Jurjānī's account of *nazm* as the source of secondary, affective meaning produced by phonological coordination (Tsong, 2021). The integration of Leech and Short's stylistic framework with both Aristotelian rhetorical criticism and *balagha* provides the three-level analytical model underpinning this study. Taken together, the four strands reviewed here converge on a single productive gap: the *Ihyā'* has been studied extensively for its theology, philosophy, and Sufism, but not for its integrated rhetoric. The present paper addresses that gap.

#### IV. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This study adopts a qualitative, text-immanent methodology grounded in rhetorical-stylistic criticism. The analytical framework integrates three complementary bodies of theory: Aristotelian rhetorical criticism, as elaborated through Kennedy's (1991) authoritative translation of and commentary on the *Rhetoric*; the stylistic tools developed by Leech and Short (2007) in *Style in Fiction*; and the indigenous Islamic rhetorical tradition of *balagha*, particularly al-Jurjānī's theory of *nazm* as theorised in *Dalā'ail al-I'jāz* (1984 edn) and *Asrār al-Balagha* (1954 edn). Together, these frameworks provide a three-level analytical model in



which rhetoric accounts for the macro-structural organisation of persuasive intent, stylistics explains how specific lexical, syntactic, rhythmic, and figurative choices enact that intent at the level of the sentence and paragraph, and *balagha* supplies the indigenous analytical vocabulary needed to describe features, such as *saj'*, *isti'āra* (metaphor), and *tashbīh* (simile), for which no precise Aristotelian or Leech-and-Short equivalent exists.

The three Aristotelian appeals, ethos, pathos, and logos, are treated not as mutually exclusive instruments deployed sequentially, but as relational and co-constitutive, in line with the integrative readings of Braet (1992) and Grimaldi (1972). This integrative model is extended and revised through Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) *New Rhetoric*, which repositions the *Ihyā'* as a form of extended epideictic discourse addressed simultaneously to particular and universal audiences, thereby legitimising the application of classical categories to a non-deliberative written text.

Three contextual modifications are proposed to adapt the framework to the specific conditions of classical Arabic devotional prose. First, ethos in the *Ihyā'* is understood as intertextual as well as personal, operating through Quranic and Hadith citation. Second, pathos is analysed through Al-Ghazali's Islamic psychology of the *qalb* (heart), as theorised in his own *Marvels of the Heart* and documented by Treiger (2012). Third, logos is extended to encompass Al-Ghazali's epistemological scheme of rational, experiential, and mystical knowledge, a scheme that, as Treiger (2012) demonstrates, is structurally grounded in Avicennian philosophy. Where these modified Aristotelian categories map onto *balagha* concepts, the analysis draws on both traditions simultaneously; where they diverge, both divergences and correspondences are noted explicitly.

The corpus comprises purposively selected passages from the *khuṭba*, *Kitāb al-'Ilm* (Book I), *Kitāb Sharḥ 'Ajā'ib al-Qalb* (Book XXI), and *Kitāb Dhikr al-Mawt* (Book XL). Passages were chosen based on three criteria: rhetorical density (the density of recognizable persuasive strategies in a short passage), representativeness across the four thematic quarters of the *Ihyā'*, and complementarity of analysis (in each section of the part, a pair of passages sheds light on a different aspect of the same appeal). Each analytical section is analysed based on two passages (six in total), to present enough evidence in the primary-text and to offer a manageable scope. Any Arabic transliterations are based on the norms of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

## V. Analysis I — Ethos: Constructing Scholarly and Spiritual Authority



Al-Ghazali's *Ihyā'* opens not with argument but with posture. Before a single doctrinal claim is advanced, the reader encounters a carefully engineered performance of authorial identity in the *khuṭba* (opening address), and what is most striking about this performance is its deliberate contradictoriness: Al-Ghazali asserts mastery over the full range of Islamic sciences while simultaneously disavowing personal ambition, constructing *āretē*, moral virtue, not by asserting it directly but by demonstrating its operation in the very act of critique. In terms of *balagha*, this opening constitutes a form of *'ilm al-ma'ānī* at the macro-level: al-Jurjānī's principle that meaning arises from the arrangement of elements rather than from individual units (Tsung, 2021) applies directly to Al-Ghazali's strategy of juxtaposing scholarly authority with public humility, the credibility claim is produced by the tension between the two, not by either one alone.

A representative passage from the opening address reads:

"Know that the harm done to religion at the hands of those who do not know is less than the harm done by those who know but do not act upon their knowledge; for the common people look to them and follow them." (Al-Ghazali, 1962, p. 16)

The passage advances a causal *logos* about scholarly moral failure while simultaneously performing ethical authority. As Kennedy (1991, p. 38) might put it, Al-Ghazali demonstrates the qualities that make him worthy of credence through the quality of the argument itself. The self-effacement is structural rather than explicit: as Griffel (2009, p. 67) has shown, Al-Ghazali's departure from Baghdad was itself a renunciation of the worldly prestige he condemns here, yet he does not invoke it autobiographically, he allows the critique to carry the argumentative weight. In *balagha* terms, the passage exemplifies what al-Jurjānī identifies as the most powerful form of *tashbīh* (simile-based argument): one whose persuasive force derives not from explicit comparison but from implied equivalence, here between the scholar-who-does-not-act and the leader-who-misleads.

Another aspect of *ethos*-construction is revealed in the use of what this paper calls *intertextual ethos* by al-Ghazalī the usurping of Quranic and Hadith authority in order to support the credibility of the author himself. Al-Ghazali in the *Book of Knowledge* adopts a thick series of Quran verses on knowledge and quotes the verses six or seven times in quick succession ((Al-Ghazali, 1962, pp. 12–13). But the role of this density of



citation is not simply the role of evidence. Read the passage of the same book given below:

"Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know? [Quran 39:9]. And the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: The search for knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim."  
(Al-Ghazali, 1962, p. 13)

This is not just a coincidence of the juxtaposition of the Quranic verse and the Prophetic Hadith in one breath. As has been shown by Tsung (2021) in the case of the theory of *naẓm* by al-Jurjani, the structuring of language is what generates meanings beyond the aggregate meanings of the words. The scriptural voices that have accrued in the citational practice of Al-Ghazali create a single voice of an author: the man who is speaking the Quran and the Hadith in the same syntactic frame is a man whose intellectual construction cannot be separated out of the canonical tradition. This is intertextual ethos at full-throttle. Moreover, since the epistolary rhetoric of Paul, as shown by DiCicco (1995), generates a kind of presence: the absent writer is credible by the voices that he gathers. Al-Ghazali's disciplinary breadth, his fluent movement between legal vocabulary (*wājib*, *ḥarām*) and Sufi affective register (*dhawq*, *kashf*, *wajd*), enacts what Leech and Short (2007, p. 75) identify as "mind style": the revelation of a consciousness of unusual scope. No single specialist could have written the *Iḥyā'*, and that impossibility is precisely the credential the text performs. In *balagha* terms, this breadth exemplifies *'ilm al-badī'*, the science of rhetorical ornament, operating at the level of discourse architecture: the ornamentation is not decorative but constitutive of the author's projected identity.

## VI. Analysis II — Pathos: Emotion, Fear, and the Architecture of the Heart

Al-Ghazali's pathos in the *Iḥyā'* is not diffuse sentiment but a precisely targeted architecture of emotional appeal organised around the concept of the *qalb* (heart) as the primary site of moral vulnerability and transformation. The text assumes the reader is neither entirely virtuous nor entirely corrupt but wavering, and it is to this wavering soul that Al-Ghazali directs his most powerful emotional strategies. As Janssens (2011) has shown, the *Marvels of the Heart* categorises the heart into three moral orientations, good, evil, and wavering, providing practical guidance that integrates reason with Sufi piety. To address the reader as wavering is itself an act of pathos: it meets them where they are rather than where they ought to be. In *balagha* terms, this constitutes *ta'athhīr*





*al-kalām* — the intentional shaping of speech to produce an effect in the listener's interior state — which al-Jurjānī treats as inseparable from the formal properties of the utterance (Laher, 2017).

The heart-as-mirror passage from *Book XXI* exemplifies this:

"Know that the heart resembles a mirror: it is capable of reflecting whatever faces it. The mirror of a heart polished by the remembrance of God reflects the realities of the divine world; the mirror blackened by sin reflects only the darkness of its own surface." (Al-Ghazali, 2010, p. 30)

The syntactic level is played out, the moral binary at the semantic level, by the structural parallelism polished mirror against blackened mirror, divine reflection against darkness. This is the literary prose characteristic resource, as Leech and Short (2007, p. 188) define, when it can accomplish its greatest effects: form enacting content. The passage is an example of *isti'āra* (extended metaphor) functioning according to the terms of *balagha*: the metaphor is not simply the description of the state of the heart but an actual performance of it, creating in the reader the self-examination the passage itself expresses. It is the *naẓm* the system of the mirror images in antithetical parallelism which gives the emotional charge an exactness instead of a vagueness: the reader is not simply moved, but guided to a certain self-recognition.

In the *Ihyā'*, the twin attractions of *khawf* (fear) and *rajā'* (hope) play all through each other, never degenerating to the paralysing terror of intoxicating despair or the complacent optimism. In Book XL, Al-Ghazali writes:

"Know, O heedless one, that death is nearer to you than anything, and yet you are occupied with that which is furthest from it." (Al-Ghazali, 1989, p. 14)

An apostrophe of O heedless one (*ayyuhah al-ghafilī*) directly involves the reader, and creates the effect of communion that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969, p. 177) refer to as the communion of emotional address. The temporal paradox -death closest and most distant- generates cognitive dissonance, which is, paradoxically, affective, and the rhetorical framework produces *energeia*: bringing the absent to the present by vivid proximity. In the process, as Badawi (2021) notes of Al-Ghazali, he consistently turns to the specific to bring the concepts home with the power of first-hand experience.

A less common strategy that is analysed as complementary pathos is used as a narrative anecdote earlier in the same book. Al-Ghazali recounts:

"It is related that a man of learning lay on his deathbed and was asked: what has your knowledge profited you? He replied: It has profited me nothing, for I have built upon it no deed." (Al-Ghazali, 1989, p. 41)

The anecdote functions at multiple rhetorical levels simultaneously. As a narrative it provides what Aristotle identifies as *paradeigma* (example) within logos; yet its emotional resonance is pathos, the dying scholar's admission of self-defeat is designed to produce in the living reader a fear of arriving at the same deathbed confession. In *balagha* terms, the anecdote exemplifies what al-Jurjānī calls the production of secondary meaning through *naẓm*: the dying man's question and answer are arranged so that the answer exceeds its propositional content and becomes an emotional indictment. Leech and Short's (2007) concept of foregrounding applies here too: the anecdote's brevity foregrounds the finality of the dying man's verdict, amplifying its affective charge. This is the integration of pathos and logos, and, through the implied authority of the transmitted tradition, ethos, operating within a single short narrative unit, demonstrating precisely the co-functioning of appeals that this paper's thesis requires.

Finally, *saj'* (rhymed prose) functions as an emotional amplifier, appearing selectively at moments of heightened moral urgency. Its selective deployment acts as a register-shift signal: the reader encounters rhymed cadences and recognises, before processing the content, that something emotionally significant is being communicated. This is what Leech and Short (2007, p. 51) describe as scheme-level foregrounding, and what al-Jurjānī's *naẓm* captures in the *balagha* tradition: the secondary meaning produced by phonological coordination reaches the reader before the argument does, priming the emotional state into which the argument then arrives.

## VII. Analysis III — Logos: Reason, Structure, and the Legitimation of Synthesis

Al-Ghazali's logos in the *Ihyā'* operates at three distinct levels: the macro-architectural, the analogical, and the dialectical. Together, these levels constitute a form of rational persuasion that goes well beyond explicit argumentation, embedding logos into the very organisation and genre of the text.

At the macro-level, the *Ihyā'*'s fourfold structure, ritual practices (*ibādāt*), social customs (*ādāt*), destructive vices (*muhlikāt*), and salvific virtues (*munajjiyāt*), is itself an argument. As Griffel (2009) confirms of Al-Ghazali's design, this taxonomy reflects his underlying





ethical epistemology: the path to God proceeds from outward observance, through social conduct, through the elimination of vice, to the cultivation of virtue. The structure of the text *is* the argument. To read the *Ihyā'* from beginning to end is to undergo structurally the very spiritual journey it prescribes. In *balagha* terms, this constitutes *nazm* operating at the grandest possible scale: the entire forty-book sequence is arranged so that its order produces a meaning, the narrative of spiritual progress, that no individual book could produce alone.

At the micro-level, Al-Ghazali deploys *qiyās* (analogical reasoning) with diplomatic precision. In the *Book of Knowledge*, he argues from bodily nourishment to spiritual knowledge:

"Just as the body cannot be sustained in health without appropriate food... so the soul cannot be sustained in moral health without appropriate knowledge; and just as the physician who prescribes the wrong food may harm the patient... so the teacher who imparts the wrong knowledge may corrupt the student." (Al-Ghazali, 1962, p. 24)

The analogy is rhetorically powerful not merely because the parallel holds logically, but because it moves the argument onto neutral ground, the universally accepted domain of medicine, thereby sidestepping sectarian resistance. As Badawi (2021) has noted of Al-Ghazali's use of *qiyās*, his approach to analogical reasoning consistently seeks the path of least dialectical resistance, advancing contested theological conclusions from directions the audience cannot easily reject. In *balagha* terms, this is *tashbīh* deployed not for ornament but for epistemic leverage: the comparison constructs a logical bridge between a domain the audience accepts (medicine) and one they may contest (spiritual pedagogy), with the formal structure of the analogy, its *nazm*, providing the bridge's structural integrity.

A second deployment of *logos* operates through systematic classification. In the *Book of Knowledge*, Al-Ghazali divides knowledge into categories with the precision of a jurist:

"Know that knowledge is of two kinds: the knowledge of bodies and the knowledge of religions. The knowledge of religions is divided into that which is an obligation of the individual [*farḍ al-ʿayn*] and that which is an obligation of the community [*farḍ al-kifāya*]." (Al-Ghazali, 1962, p. 18)

The taxonomic structure here is not merely expository but argumentative. By positioning the classification within the legal vocabulary of *farḍ al-ʿayn* and *farḍ al-kifāya*, categories any trained jurist would recognise and



accept, Al-Ghazali legitimises his subsequent inclusion of Sufi experiential knowledge within the category of individual religious obligation. The logos here is, in Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) terms, a *dissociation of concepts*: by splitting knowledge into recognised legal subcategories, Al-Ghazali creates space for an expansion of what counts as obligatory knowledge without appearing to depart from legal orthodoxy. In *balagha* terms, the taxonomic precision exemplifies *'ilm al-ma'ānī*: the pragmatic arrangement of concepts to achieve a communicative effect, in this case, the expansion of religious epistemology under the cover of established legal form.

The most philosophically ambitious application of logos is the dialectical or, as al-Ghazali is known to say, the apologetic, reconciliation of *sharī* by (exoteric religious law) and *ḥaq* by (esoteric spiritual truth). Instead of making a case in favor of Sufism, he uses definitional reframing: he makes the distinction between *'ilm al-mu'āmalā* (knowledge of transactions) and *'ilm al-mukashafa* (knowledge of unveiling), showing that the jurists and the Sufis do not compete over the same field but are engaged in entirely different registers of knowledge. These reactions are structured, as Treiger (2012, p. 40) has explained, and relies on the Al-Ghazali epistemology of the Avicenna based upon which the highest development of the intellect is naturally directed to the mystical perception. By establishing this distinction, Al-Ghazali dissolves the conflict without requiring either side to concede defeat, a resolution that depends entirely on the precision of its definitional work, and one that fully integrates logos with the ethos of a scholar trusted by both camps.

### **VIII. Discussion: Integration, "Balagha", and the Architecture of Integrated Rhetoric**

The preceding analyses, taken individually, demonstrate that Al-Ghazali commands each of the three Aristotelian appeals with considerable sophistication. Taken together, however, they reveal something more significant: that the *Ihyā'*'s rhetorical power derives not from the sequential deployment of discrete appeals but from their structural interdependence. This section draws the three analyses together, examines the mechanisms of their integration, and reflects on what that integration means for both Aristotelian rhetorical theory and the *balagha* tradition from which Al-Ghazali wrote.

The most paradigmatic site of integration is Quranic citation, which this paper has encountered in each analytical section performing a different function. In the ethos analysis, the rapid succession of Quranic verses on knowledge (Al-Ghazali, 1962, pp. 12–13) establishes intertextual



credibility. In the logos analysis, the same citational practice supplies scriptural proof for epistemological claims. Yet these functions cannot be fully separated, because Quranic language in the *Ihyā'* also carries an irreducibly affective charge, it is the language of prayer, of liturgy, of communal formation, and therefore operates simultaneously as pathos. As Higgins and Walker (2012, p. 194) have observed, by unravelling the threads forming the rhetorical fabric of a text, one exposes the hidden persuasive strategies that account for its social effects. Quranic citation is the clearest example of such a thread in the *Ihyā'*: pull it, and it holds together ethos, logos, and pathos in a single knot.

This integration is structural, not incidental; and this theory of *balagha* has its accurate counterpart. The concept of *nazzm* advocated by al-Jurjani is that the sense of the Arabic literary and rhetorical prose is created through the structuring of the elements and not through the elements and that secondary meanings, including affective, ethical and epistemic, are created by structural relations (Tsung, 2021). This rhetorical synthesis of the *Ihyā'* is, in fact, an example of *nazzm* on the level of the entire work: the composition of ethos, pathos, and logos in the forty books, or in an individual passage, gives rise to persuasive connotations that no appeal could have had separately. The parts are called the components; *bala-gha* details how they are combined. Both tradition and tradition cannot be used separately to analyze them.

This finding has implications for the scholarly debate on the hierarchy of the three appeals. Braet (1992) argued for the primacy of logos in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, with ethos and pathos as auxiliary. The *Ihyā'* suggests a different model: one in which primacy is contextually variable. In the *khutba*, ethos is primary because the text's first task is to earn the right to be read at all. In the eschatological passages of *Book XL*, pathos is primary because the reader must be moved before they can be argued with. In the epistemological discussions of *Book I*, logos is primary because the classifications must hold before the emotional and ethical consequences can follow. This contextual variability is itself an argument: it suggests that integrated rhetorical models — those proposed by Grimaldi (1972), Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), and the present study — better account for the workings of extended devotional prose than do hierarchical ones.

Another implication is about the cross-cultural portability of rhetorical categories. According to the comparative rhetoric by Kennedy (1998), rhetorical energy transcends the boundaries of cultures at times when terminologies fail to do so. The current discussion largely substantiates this assertion, although with a rider: the indigenous *balagha* system is not

simply a synonymous system of the same phenomena but a system of analytical tradition, which discovers properties of al-Ghazali prose - the affective role of *saj* in, the secondary values generated by *nazm*, the epistemic power of *tashbih* - which is not well explained by Arist To do a truly cross-cultural rhetorical analysis of classical Arabic devotional prose, then, it is necessary not to translate one tradition into the other, but to have both. The holistic perception of the Arabic language as a sacred and literary means, as Ahmad and Ghafar (2025) have contended, requires analytical frameworks that are sufficient to the complexity of the matter. The *Ihyā'* is a case in point.

Another implication is related to the fact that rhetorical categories can be transferred within the tradition. The comparative rhetoric by Kennedy (1998) is based on the assumption that rhetoric power transcends cultures despite lack of language. This assertion is widely supported by the current analysis, albeit with a qualifier: the indigenous *balagha* system is not only a set of parallel terms that designate the same phenomena but a set of analytic tradition that recognizes aspects of the prose of Al-Ghazali such as the affective role of *saj*, the by-products of *nazm*, the epistemic advantage of *tashbih*, that are To analyze classical Arabic rhetorical devotional prose truly as cross-cultural, one must have both traditions and not either translated into the other. The comprehensive view of Arabic as a sacred and a literary language is, as argued by Ahmad and Ghafar (2025), reliant on analytical schemes sufficient to its intricacy. The *Ihyā'* is a case in point.

## IX. Conclusion

This paper has suggested that the work of Al-Ghazali, *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-Dīn*, should rather be seen as a continuous exercise in integrated rhetoric, that is, where ethos, pathos and logos are interwoven in an argumentative structure that is all the more convincing because its constituent appeals are not completely separable.

Three interrelated findings emerge from the analysis. First, Al-Ghazali constructs ethos through discursive self-presentation, intertextual borrowing from the Quran and Hadith, and disciplinary breadth across the Islamic sciences — a form of authority-building that is simultaneously personal, communal, and textual, and that corresponds in *balagha* terms to the deployment of *'ilm al-badī'* at the level of authorial identity. Second, his pathos operates through a distinctively Islamic psychology of the *qalb* (heart), deploying the paired appeals of *khawf* (fear) and *rajā'* (hope) through eschatological imagery, structural parallelism, and the phonological rhythm of *saj* to produce self-recognition and moral



urgency in the reader — what *balagha* theorises as *ta'athhīr al-kalām* enacted through *nazm*. Third, his logos functions through the rational architecture of the text's four-part structure, through *qiyās* (analogical reasoning) extended into spiritual ethics, and through the dialectical reconciliation of *sharī'a* and *ḥaqīqa* by means of definitional reframing — a procedure that corresponds to al-Jurjānī's *'ilm al-ma'ānī* operating at the level of epistemological architecture.

It was shown in the discussion section that these three appeals are, in fact, not parallel tools, but are structurally interdependent, such that the Quranic citation serves as ethos and logos at the same time, the narrative anecdote as pathos and as logos and as borrowing the credibility of ethos, the taxonomic classification is a tool that builds logos and supports the authority claims of ethos. It is not the content, but the form of the *Iḥyā'*, that makes it last. By unwinding the strands of the rhetorical fabric that constitute a text, as Higgins and Walker (2012, p. 194) have noted, one reveals the concealed persuasive modes that explain the social impact of a text. The present analysis has attempted precisely such an unravelling, and in doing so has proposed that any adequate account of the *Iḥyā'*'s extraordinary durability must take its integrated rhetoric seriously.

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