

Avicenna [addendum] Encyclopedia Article

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Avicenna played an important role in Islamic aesthetics. Poetry relies on imagination, he argues, but that does not mean it is entirely without logical structure. On the contrary, one can only understand poetry if it is analyzed in terms of the syllogism. The premises of such a reasoning are statements produced by writers to bring about emotional states in the reader or hearer. This only works if there is some reason to connect the use of words with the emotion, and that reason has precisely to be a logical reason. The conclusion is the pleasure one feels at the bold and striking use of language, and because one is not the only person who can enjoy that use of language, the conclusion is also available to others. It then becomes a general conclusion rather like the conclusion of a strictly demonstrative syllogism. Avicenna follows a similar strategy in discussing music, in that at the end of the reasoning process one undergoes when listening to it, a conclusion is drawn in terms of a pleasure that one can expect others to share.

See Also

Aesthetics, History Of; Logic, Traditional; Music, Philosophy Of; Philosophy of Language.

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