

# Is Ontological Modality Distinct from Logical Modality? Tracing the Dispute on Wujūb, Imkān and Imtinā' in Kalām from Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī to 'Alī Qūshjī

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**Abstract:** In his *al-Mawāqif fi 'ilm al-kalām*, 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī argues that the concepts of *wujūb* (necessity), *imkān* (possibility), and *imtinā'* (impossibility) as analyzed in the general ontology (*al-umūr al-'amma*) sections of later books are not the same as the *wujūb*, *imkān*, and *imtinā'* of modal logic. The subsequent commentary tradition is almost unanimous in its criticism of Ījī on this point. Commentators of the *Mawāqif* such as Sayf al-Dīn al-Abharī, al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, and Ḥasan Çelebi; major commentators of the *Tajrīd* tradition; and the author of *Sharḥ al-Maqāsid*, Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, all criticize Ījī's claim. 'Alī Qūshjī represents an important culmination of this series of criticism, with his notable synthesis of the critiques of Jurjānī and Taftāzānī. This paper firstly charts the trajectory of these critiques, by presenting and analyzing them in chronological order. Secondly, it makes the case that these critiques, though formally valid, in fact miss the mark, as they fail to recognize the full significance of the distinctions between existence and essence, and between *wujūb* and *imkān*. More specifically, the later scholars had not expressly renewed the definition of the concept of *thubūt*. Owing in large part to Ibn Sina's distinctions between existence–essence and *wājib–mumkin*, *thubūt* in the later period radically diverged from the concept of existence, and in fact, the later scholars were using *thubūt* with this newer understanding in mind, despite this not always being made explicit. For this reason, it is more accurate to understand Ījī's statement not as a mistaken point or a stating of the obvious; rather it is an expression of his understanding that a new era of metaphysical analysis had commenced, as well as a characterisation of the nature of this era.

**Key Words:** Existence, Modalities, *Wujūb*, *Imkān*, *Imtinā'*, 'Alī Qūshjī, 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī.

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## Introduction

The distinction between the concepts *wujūb* and *imkān*,<sup>1</sup> first systematically addressed in the works of Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʿĀmirī (d. 381/992), and then in the corpus of Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), profoundly influenced discussions on the notion of existence in *falsafa*, *kalām*, and Sufism. The distinction became a prominent and recurring topic of discussion in later texts, even warranting independent works.<sup>2</sup> When used in conjunction with Ibn Sīnā's distinction between quiddity (*māhiyya*) and existence (*wujūd*), the implications of the *wujūb–imkān* distinction become more apparent. Through this appreciation of the *wujūb–imkān* and essence–existence distinctions, Muslim philosophers were able to construct a distinctive ontological framework that represents an original contribution in the history of philosophy. The carrying of the *wujūb–imkān* distinction from *falsafa* into *kalām* through such figures as Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), and into Sufism by the Andalusian mystic Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), allowed the three major metaphysical traditions within Islamic thought to acquire a common framework for analysing existence. This common framework and its interpretations gave rise to a vast host of debates within the commentary tradition, a comprehensive cataloguing of which is beyond the scope of the present study. That said, these interpretations and debates over the distinction between essence and existence, and that between *wujūb* and *imkān*, not only contributed to the continued vitality of Islamic thought up to and after its encounter with modern Western philosophy, it also influenced medieval Christian philosophy and strongly influenced the interests and content of metaphysical research that carried over into the modern period.

ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's (d. 756/1355) *al-Mawāqif fi ʿilm al-kalām* features a chapter discussing the concepts of *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtināʿ*, wherein he argues that these

- 1 This paper retains the original Arabic for *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtināʿ*, which correspond to necessity, possibility, and impossibility respectively (as well as *wājib*, *mumkin* and *mumtaniʿ* for necessary, possible and impossible). This is because the central debate analyzed in this paper is specifically on the meaning of these terms in different contexts. Note that the same ambiguity between one-sided and two-sided possibility is retained in the Arabic *imkān*; these are sometimes distinguished in the tradition as *al-imkān al-ʿamm* (one-sided possibility, lit. 'broad possibility') and *al-imkān al-khāṣṣ* (two-sided possibility, lit. 'narrow possibility'). For this reason, 'contingency' (which only captures the 'narrow' or two-sided sense of possibility) is not an adequate translation of *imkān* in this context. Other terms of art throughout the paper have been translated generally in accordance with Tony Street's renditions in his recent translation and commentary of Kātibī's *al-Risāla al-Shamsīyya*, with certain exceptions. [Translator]
- 2 This is especially notable in the contributions of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.

concepts as employed in *kalām* are different from the *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtinā'* of logic. This claim of Ījī's formed the basis of a major debate in the later commentary tradition, especially among the group of commentators on the *Mawāqif*. These scholars tried to clarify the general–specific ('āmm–khāṣṣ) relationship between *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtinā'* as the mode (*jīha*) or matter (*mādda*)<sup>3</sup> of a proposition on the one hand, and as concepts pertinent to discussion within the introductory sections of later texts which discuss the most fundamental, general ontological notions (*al-umūr al-'āmma*), such as existence, modality and causation. An important contribution to this discussion is that of 'Alī Qūshjī (d. 879/1474), who critiques Ījī's position in his *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*.

In section 1 of this paper, I present Ījī's position and the criticisms levelled against it in the commentary tradition, analyzing passages beginning from Ījī's earliest commentators up to Qūshjī. Then, in section 2, I assess whether the arguments and critiques of the commentators and super-commentators, especially Qūshjī's, are sound—concluding that they are not; I offer a novel interpretation and defence of Ījī's claim.

## 1. Ījī's Claim and the Critiques of His Commentators

In the section of the *Mawāqif* on *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtinā'*, Ījī argues that these three notions, as terms of *al-umūr al-'āmma*, are different from the notions of *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtinā'* that serve as the modes and matters of propositions. He states:

These [*sc. wujūb, imkān* and *imtinā'* in the present context] are different from the *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtinā'* which serve as the modes and matters of propositions. Otherwise, the implicates (*lawāzīm*) of quiddities (*māhiyyāt*) would be necessary (*wājiba*) by virtue of their [own] essences (*li-dhawātihā*). For when we say “Evenness [which is an example of a *lāzīm*] is necessary for four [which is an example of a *māhiyya*],” we mean the necessity of predicating [evenness of four] and the impossibility of [evenness] being separated [from four]. This is different from intrinsic [existential] necessity (*al-wujūb al-dhātī*).<sup>4</sup>

3 Asad Q. Ahmed, “Jiha/Tropos-Mādda/Hulē Distinction in Arabic Logic and Its Significance for Avicenna's Modals,” in *The Unity of Science in the Arabic Tradition*, ed. Shahid Rahman, Tony Street, and Hassan Tahiri (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2008), 229–53.

4 Ījī, *al-Mawāqif fi 'ilm al-kalām*, (in al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, trans. Ömer Türker, Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserleri Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2019), I, 670–672.

The first commentator to address the claim in this passage was Ījī's direct student Sayf al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Abharī (d. 780–800/1377–1397).<sup>5</sup> After discussing Ījī's claim that *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtināʿ* are mental considerations (*i'tibārī*), Abharī deals with the relation of these concepts to the matters and modes of propositions:

Know that the relation of predicates to subjects, whether in affirmation or denial, must have a quality that indicates the soundness of the copula (*rābiṭa*), and thus have one of the attributes of *wujūb*, *imkān* or *imtināʿ*. When considered in *naḥs al-amr*, they are referred to as the matters of propositions; when considered in mind or utterance, they are referred to as the modes of propositions. These are more general than the *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtināʿ* which serve as our subjects here, because our subjects are the *imkān* and *wujūb* of existence itself. The first [understanding of *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtināʿ*] concerns the *imkān* or *wujūb* of something's being affirmed (*thubūt*) [in relation to] something [else]. If they are modes, as the author of the *Tajrīd* [sc. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, d. 672/1274] suggests, they are both matter and mode in a proposition in which the subject is an essence, and existence is the predicate or copula. An example of existence being a predicate is in the proposition "*Imkān* exists with *imkān*". An example of existence being a copula is in the proposition "A human exists as a writer in *imkān*". However, existence does not differ from the first one when it is neither a predicate nor a copula in the proposition. As an example, when we say, "Four is necessarily even", we mean that being even is necessarily predicated of four and that it is impossible for four to separate from it; we do not mean that the *existence* of the evenness is necessary. The essence of evenness does not require the existence of evenness.<sup>6</sup>

Abharī explains Ījī's sentences without criticism. He considers Ījī's point to be a cautionary clarification that the *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtināʿ* discussed in the context of *al-umūr al-ʿamma* are to be understood *qua* existence. According to him, Ījī aims to raise awareness in order to distinguish between propositions in which existence is a predicate or copula and propositions in which it is not.

Moving the debate in a slightly different direction, Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390), another of Ījī's students, criticizes his teacher by directly quoting from him in his autocommentary *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*:

5 In the earlier *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* of Ījī's pupil Shams al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. 786/1384), there is no explanation of these words. See Kirmānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, Süleymaniye, Şehid Ali Paşa, Nr. 1685, Fol. 48a–b.

6 Sayf al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Abharī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, Süleymaniye Ktp. Fatih, Nr. 3117, Fol. 54a–54b; Fatih, Nr. 3116, Fol. 49a; Yeni Cami, Nr. 748, Fol. 65b. There are slight differences between the manuscripts. In some copies, *wujūd* is written as *wujūb* by mistake. The translation is based on the copy numbered Fatih 3116.

When existence is taken as a predicate, then what is described as having “essential necessity” (*al-wujüb al-dhātī*) is something that necessarily exists (*wājib al-wujūd*) by virtue of its very essence, like the Creator Most High, and what is described as being “essentially impossible” (*al-imtinā' al-dhātī*) is something that cannot exist (*mumtani' al-wujūd*) by virtue of its essence, like the conjunction of contradictories. On the other hand, when existence is considered as a copula (*rābiṭa*) between the subject and the predicate, then what is described as having “essential necessity” is whatever necessarily exists for the subject in relation to the essence of that subject (*dhāt al-mawḍū'*), like evenness for four. What is described as being “essentially impossible” (*al-imtinā' al-dhātī*), in turn, is that which is impossible (*mumtani'*) to exist for the subject in relation to its essence (*dhāt*), like oddness for four. Accordingly, the implicate (*lāzim*) of a quiddity (*māhiyya*), such as being even [for four], is a necessary existent (*wājib al-wujūd*) for the essence [of four], that is to say, it is necessarily affirmed for [four's] essence in respect to what [four] is. [Evenness, then] is not a necessary existent in respect to its own essence in the sense that it necessitates existence by virtue of what it is [this being the case for God in the first example], which would amount to the impossibility [referenced by Ījī, namely that the *lāzim* is now an “implicate” of something else, while also existing necessarily on its own].

Thus, Ījī's statement “these concepts are different from the *wujüb, imkân* and *imtinā'* which are the modes and matters of propositions. Otherwise, the implicates (*lawāzim*) of quiddities (*māhiyyāt*) would be necessary by virtue of their essence (*dhāt*)” is proven false. For if Ījī meant that the implicates would be necessary by virtue of their essences, we reject the implication between them. If he meant that quiddities would be necessary by virtue of their essences, then we reject the fallacy of the consequent (*tālī*) [the implicates (*lawāzim*) of quiddities (*māhiyyāt*) would be necessary by virtue of their essence (*dhāt*)]. For all it means is that [implicates] are necessarily affirmed for [their] quiddities in relation to what [the quiddities] are in and of themselves, and that nothing else is required [for this affirmation].

It is as if he [sc. Ījī] thought that existence is not found as a predicate or copula in some propositions. For example, he seems to reject that the proposition “man is a writer” means “man exists as a writer” or “man exists with the ability to write”. And he thought that this proposition meant that what is valid for man is the same as what is valid for writer or what is predicated of writer. However, those adhering to the path of verification (*al-muḥaqqiqūn*) are of the opinion that there is no difference between expressions such as “it exists for it (*yūjadu lahū*)”; “it is affirmed (*yathbutu*)”; “it is true of it (*yaṣḍuqu 'alayh*)”; “it is predicated (*yuhmalu*)”, and the like. Our statement is in agreement with the opinion of the *muḥaqqiq* [sc. Ṭūsī] in the *Tajrīd*.<sup>7</sup>

In his words beginning with the phrase “it is as if he thought that”, Taftāzānī makes an interpretation that agrees with Abharī's explanation. However, we do not

7 Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāsid*, ed. 'Abdurraḥman 'Umayra, Beirut: 'Ālem al-Kutub, 1998, I, 460-61.

find this interpretation in other scholars, whom we will mention below. Like Abharī, Taftāzānī thinks that Ījī may have meant that existence is not a predicate or copula in some propositions. Nonetheless, whereas Abharī presents this as a direct interpretation of Ījī's words, Taftāzānī implies that the expression is open to interpretation—notable from his phrase “as if”—and turns Abharī's explanation into a ground for his own criticism. In section 2 of this paper, I will analyze the full implications of Taftāzānī's analysis. I would like to state the following for now: the criticism expressed by Taftāzānī in the first two paragraphs of the above text will be utilised by later scholars, and will be repeated by Qūshjī in precisely the same way.

Another important voice in this debate is al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413), who in his commentary on the relevant passage in *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, begins by explaining Ījī's statement by drawing attention to the difference between mode and matter. Mode is the *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtinā'* in mind or utterance, while matter is the *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtinā'* in *nafs al-amr*. The *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtinā'* which are analyzed within the scope of *al-umūr al-ʿamma* are those of existence. For this reason, they can only be modes or matters in *makhṣūṣa* propositions (specifically, propositions where the predicate is the subject's own existence). However, the mode and matter of a proposition are not limited to the existence of the subject itself. When we predicate a subject with properties other than the existence of the subject, then the mode and matter—which consist of *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtinā'*—are no longer the *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtinā'* of existence. This being the case, *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtinā'* are more general; that is to say, they include both existence and other predicates. As Jurjānī puts it:

*Wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtinā'* which are the modes and matters of propositions are applicable in all [propositions]. Therefore, it is said that “Zayd's existence is *wājib/mumkin/mumtani'*” as well as “Zayd's being black or blind is *wājib/mumkin/mumtani'*”. Our current issue is this first case [i.e. Zayd's existence being *wājib* etc.]. What we mean by *wājib* here is not that which is *wājib* in Zayd's being an animal, or black, etc., but that [Zayd's] very existence is *wājib*. This is also the case with the *mumkin* and the *mumtani'*.<sup>8</sup>

Ījī's reason for this claim is clear. If there is no difference between the predicate of existence and other predicates, “the implicates of quiddities will be necessary in virtue of their essences”. Jurjānī, commenting in support of this reasoning, distin-

8 al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, I, 672.

guishes the *wujüb* of the existence of four from the *wujüb* of its evenness in the example given by Ījī. That is, four has to be even by virtue of being itself; the quiddity of four requires it to be even.<sup>9</sup> However, the quiddity of four does not require it to exist. Therefore, the fact that four is necessarily even does not in and of itself entail that four necessarily exists.

Jurjānī does not mention any disagreement with Ījī in *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*. In his *Hāshiya* 'alā *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd* however, after quoting Ījī's claim in the *Mawāqif*, he problematizes Ījī's statement and offers a critique. In the *Tajrīd*, Ṭūsī points out that when existence is the predicate or copula, three matters appear in reality, and three modes appear in the mind. After this, he explains the relationship between the concepts of *wujüb*, *imkân* and *imtinā'*:

Whenever existence is the predicate or copula, there are three matters, and three modes in the mind, that signify the strength or weakness of the copula: *wujüb*, *imtinā'* and *imkân*. The same is the case with non-existence. . . . Sometimes *wujüb*, *imtinā'* and *imkân* are understood in virtue of the thing itself (*dhātīyya*), in which case the division is genuine (*ḥaqīqīyya*) [i.e. both collectively exhaustive and mutually exclusive] and it is not possible for none of them to obtain. At other times, the first two [sc. *wujüb* and *imtinā'*] are understood to be in virtue of some other thing (*bi-ītibār al-ghayr*) and the division is thus such that the first two are mutually exclusive (*mānī'at al-jam'*) [but not exhaustive]—they can both fail to obtain—whereas all three are collectively exhaustive (*mānī'at al-khuluww*), with respect to *mumkināt*.<sup>10</sup>

For the commentator of the *Tajrīd* Shams al-Din Maḥmūd Iṣfahānī (d. 749/1349), *wujüb*, *imkân* and *imtinā'* are sometimes considered in terms of their being. In this case, the division of a certain concept as being either *wājib*, *mumkin* or *mumtani'*—in terms of the three possible situations in the above-mentioned cases—becomes a genuine division (*taqsīm ḥaqīqī*). Thus, it is not possible for more than one to obtain, or for none of the three to obtain; rather, one and only one of the three must obtain.<sup>11</sup>

Jurjānī, on the other hand, first states that this division can be applied to the concept regardless of its predicate. In his view, every concept is either *wājib*, *mumtani'* or

9 al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, I, 672.

10 Naṣīruddin al-Ṭūsī, *Tajrīd al-ī'tiqād*, in *Tasdid al-qawā'id fi sharḥ Tajrīd al-aqā'id*, ed. Eşref Altaş, Muhammed Ali Koca, Salih Günaydin and Muhammed Yetim, İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2020, II, 132-34.

11 Shams al-Din Maḥmūd al-Iṣfahānī, *Tasdid al-qawā'id fi sharḥ Tajrīd al-aqā'id*, II, 132-134.

*mumkin*. For example, motion is either *wājib*, *mumtaniʿ* or *mumkin*. But more commonly, *wājib*, *mumtaniʿ* and *mumkin* are considered for a concept in relation to the predicate of existence. In other words, when we say *wājib*, *mumtaniʿ* and *mumkin*, we primarily mean *wājib al-wujūd*, *mumtaniʿ al-wujūd* and *mumkin al-wujūd*. From this point of view, Jurjānī concludes that the *wujūb*, *imtināʿ* and *imkān* examined in the study of *al-umūr al-ʿamma* are the same *wujūb*, *imtināʿ* and *imkān* mentioned in the context of the modes and matters of propositions; the only difference is that in discussions concerning *al-umūr al-ʿamma*, this generality is restricted (*muqayyad*) to cases where the predicate is existence.<sup>12</sup>

Jurjānī's explanation here seems to trivialize Ījī's above-quoted remarks. However, despite this lack of criticism in the *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, we find Jurjānī presenting a direct critique of Ījī in his *Hāshiya ʿalā Sharḥ Tajrīd al-ʿitiqād*. Directly citing Ījī's claim from the *Mawāqif*, he states:

There is no basis for [Ījī's] statement, "If these were the same as those mentioned in the modes and matters, the implicates of quiddities would be *wājib* by virtue of their own essences", because it is *wājib* for four to be even, not *wājib* for it to exist. The reason for the difference in their meaning is not due to a difference in the notion of *wujūb*—which is the matter and the mode in both—but rather, it is because the predicate is different.<sup>13</sup>

The point that Jurjānī draws attention to in this critique is that the actual meaning of these three concepts does not change according to the predicate to which they are attributed; rather, their meaning is restricted (*muqayyad*) by the thing to which they are assigned. The point becomes clearer when we explain Ījī's example. The matter of the proposition "four is even" is *wujūb*. However, in the proposition "four is necessarily even", the mode is *wujūb* as well as the matter. In both propositions, *wujūb* defines the relation between four and evenness, meaning that the relation between four and evenness cannot be negated. Since four *qua* four or even *qua* even do not contain any notion of existence or non-existence, their respective modes and matters relate only to "four" in itself and "even" in itself. Therefore, in these propositions, *wujūb*, in the sense defined in *al-umūr al-ʿamma*, is a matter and a mode, but is conditioned by evenness. It is not the *wujūb* of the existence or non-existence of four or of even, but the *wujūb* of the relation (*nisba*) of even to four. Only the predicate with which necessity is conditioned changes, not its meaning.

12 Jurjānī, *Hāshiya ʿalā Sharḥ Tajrīd al-ʿitiqād*, II, 134.

13 Jurjānī, *Hāshiya ʿalā Sharḥ Tajrīd al-ʿitiqād*, II, 134.



These earlier commentaries paved the way for 'Ali Qūshjī, whose contribution to the discussion is found in his *Sharḡ Tajrīd al-'aqā'id*. In his commentary on the abovementioned passage of the *Tajrīd*, Qūshjī, following Jurjānī in particular, first explains the two well-known ways of predicating existence: existence in and of itself, and existence in another. The first kind of existence becomes the predicate of a particular thing, while the latter becomes the copula connecting two separate things. Examples of each of these kinds are the propositions "There is a table" and "The table is brown". In the first proposition, the table's predicate is existence, while in the second proposition, the table's predicate is brownness. To express it in terms of Ibn Sīnā's statements in the *Kitāb al-Burhān* of his *Shifā'*,<sup>14</sup> the second proposition means "The table exists as brown". In this way, asking whether  $x$  is or is not, and asking whether  $x$  is or is not  $F$  were differentiated: the former was called the *hal basīṭa* question, the latter the *hal murakkaba* question, and accordingly, the propositions containing simple and compound predication were called *taṣḏīq basīṭ* (simple assent) and *taṣḏīq murakkab* (compound assent).<sup>15</sup>

As stated by Qūshjī, in both predicates, there is a positive or negative relation between the subject and the predicate; when the predicate is based on existence, the relation is positive, and when it is based on non-existence, the relation is negative. These positive or negative relations necessarily have some quality (*kayfiyya*) in *naḡs al-amr*; this quality is either *wujüb*, *imtinā'* or *imkân*. When considered in themselves, they are known as matters; when considered in the mind, they are known as modes.<sup>16</sup>

After explaining the text of the *Tajrīd*, Qūshjī criticizes both Ṭūsī's statements in the *Tajrīd* and Iḡī's position mentioned above. According to Qūshjī, Ṭūsī's statements are at odds with the terminology of the logicians in two respects.<sup>17</sup> Firstly, for the logicians, modality refers to the judgement of the intellect about the nature of some

14 Ibn Sīnā, *Kitābu'ş-Şifā' İkinci Analitikler*, trans. Ömer Türker, Istanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2006, pp. 201-202.

15 For the explanation of predicate and questions, see 'Ali Qūshjī, *Sharḡ Tajrīd al-'aqā'id*, ed. Muhammad Ḥusayn al-Zirā'ī al-Razā'ī, Qom: Intishārāt al-Rāid, 1393, I, 199.

16 For details, see Qūshjī, *Sharḡ Tajrīd al-'aqā'id*, I, 200-201.

17 This criticism is an elaboration of Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjānī's critique in some respects. al-Jurjānī, *Ḥāshiya 'alā Sharḡ al-Tajrīd*, I, 132-33.

posited relation (*nisba*), whether or not it corresponds to reality. If it corresponds to reality, the mode is consistent with the matter, and if it does not correspond to reality, it is inconsistent with the matter. However, Ṭūsī's statement requires that mode and matter are one in essence, and so must always correspond to each other.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, according to the later logicians (*mutāakhhirūn*), "matter" (*mādda*) refers to every feature of any relation between a predicate and a subject, whether positive or negative, whereas according to the earlier logicians (*qudamā'*), 'matter' refers only to features of the positive relation. Moreover, for the earlier logicians (*qudamā'*), 'matter' did not encompass every feature of the positive relation in *naḥs al-amr*, but only its qualification by *wujūb*, *imkān*, or *imtinā'*. Qūshjī thus concludes that Ṭūsī's utterances contravene the terminological conventions of both the later and earlier logicians: Ṭūsī diverges from the earlier logicians by saying that there is matter in negative relations, and from the later logicians by restricting matter to the three modalities.<sup>19</sup>

According to Qūshjī, the only relevant distinction between modes and matters is that the former relate to the mind whereas the latter relate to *naḥs al-amr*. For this reason, he criticizes Ījī's view along the same lines as Jurjānī's criticisms in his *Hāshiya 'alā Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*. As stated earlier, Jurjānī's view there is that *wujūb*, *imkān*, and *imtinā'* as employed in discussions of *al-umūr al-āmma*, are the same as the *wujūb*, *imkān*, and *imtinā'* that are the modes of propositions in logic. There is no difference in the inherent meaning of these concepts according to Jurjānī. However, the propositions that feature in discussions of *al-umūr al-āmma* are propositions in which the predicate is the existence of the thing itself. This is because when we use *wājib*, *mumkin*, or *mumtani'* in *kalām* or metaphysics, we mean that an existent *qua* existent is *wājib*, *mumkin* or *mumtani'*—i.e. it is the *existence* of the thing which is *wājib*, *mumkin* or *mumtani'*<sup>20</sup> Qūshjī criticizes Ījī's claim in line with this observation:

18 Qūshjī, *Sharḥ Tajrīd al-'aqā'id*, I, 202-203.

19 Qūshjī, *Sharḥ Tajrīd al-'aqā'id*, pp. 203-204. 'Alī Qūshjī's criticisms of Ṭūsī are debatable. Because Ṭūsī does distinguish matter and mode and accepts that matter and mode can be differentiated in a proposition. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to assess whether these criticisms are accurate or not.

20 Qūshjī, *Sharḥ Tajrīd al-'aqā'id*, pp. 204.

The author of the *Mawāqif* [sc. Ījī] claimed that they [sc. *wujüb, imkân* and *imtinâ'* as the modes and matters of propositions] are not these [sc. *wujüb, imkân* and *imtinâ'* in the context of *al-umür al-'amma*], as otherwise the implicates of quiddities would be necessary by virtue of their essences. We respond with the following: If he meant that the implicates are necessary entities in and of themselves, then the entailment [in the conditional premise] is rejected (*mamnū'a*). If he meant that their existence is necessary because of the essences of the quiddities, the falseness of the consequent (*tālī*) is rejected. Because its meaning is that implicates being affirmed for a quiddity is necessary because of the essence of the quiddity, and nothing else is required [for this affirmation]. This is not an impossibility (*muḥāl*); in fact it is necessary for evenness to be affirmed for four. The only impossibility (*muḥāl*) would be for the existence of evenness to be necessary *in and of itself*; not its necessary affirmation to something else (i.e. four).<sup>21</sup>

Qūshjī here presents two ways of reading Ījī's contention, namely that were the modal notions used in *kalām* equivalent to those of modal logic, "the implicates of quiddities would be necessary by virtue of their essences". On neither reading, according to Qūshjī, does Ījī's argument stand.

On the first reading, Ījī's point that the implicates "would be necessary by virtue of their essences" is taken to mean "would be necessary by virtue of themselves". If this was what Ījī had intended, Qūshjī argues that the entailment of Ījī's conditional is to be rejected. What Qūshjī means here is that understanding the *wujüb, imkân*, and *imtinâ'* of *kalām* in terms of modal logic does not entail that the necessary implicates of quiddities are necessary existents in themselves. In other words, modal-logical necessity does not entail ontological necessity. Both describe the relation between subject and predicate. If the predicate is existence itself, what is being described is the *wujüb, imkân* or *imtinâ'* of the relation of existence to the subject; whereas if the predicate is an implicate of some quiddity (such as evenness of four), it describes the *wujüb, imkân* or *imtinâ'* of the relation of that implicate to the quiddity. Therefore, Qūshjī concludes that there is no necessary entailment between the antecedent (*muqaddam*) and consequent (*tālī*) of the conditional premise of Ījī's *modus tollens*, namely that if (P) the *wujüb, imkân* and *imtinâ'* of *kalām* were the same as the *wujüb, imkân* and *imtinâ'* of logic, then (Q) the implicates of essences would be necessary by virtue of their essences".

21 Qūshjī, *Sharḥ Tajrīd al-'aqā'id*, pp. 204-205.

On the second reading, Qūshjī takes the consequent, “the implicates of essences would be necessary by virtue of their essences” to mean that the implicates would be necessary in virtue of *the essences of the quiddities*. If read this way, Qūshjī concedes that there is a necessary entailment between the conditional premise’s antecedent and its consequent. However, even on this second reading, Ījī’s *modus tollens* still ultimately fails because, on this reading, the consequent is no longer false, for necessity does in fact qualify the relation between quiddities and their implicates, in respect to their being affirmed (*thābit*) for their respective quiddities, and *not* in respect to the very modality of their existence.

Comparing Qūshjī’s commentary to the previously quoted passages from Taftāzānī and Jurjānī, we see that the first part of Qūshjī’s explanation, before the example, is quoted from Taftāzānī, while the latter part, including the application to the example, is quoted from Jurjānī. Qūshjī thus successfully synthesizes Taftāzānī’s theoretical reasoning with Jurjānī’s explanatory example.

The interpretations of Taftāzānī, Jurjānī, and Qūshjī indicate that Ījī’s claim is either mistaken or redundant. Although he does not mention it as an objection, Ḥasan Çelebī Fenārī (d. 891/1486) in his *Hāshiyā* also takes the view that the modal notions employed in *kalām* are the modes and matters of propositions in terms of themselves. This is because these concepts are the qualifications of the predicate’s relation to the subject, although they are more specific than the modes and matters of propositions in logic in terms of taking into account the specificity of the predicate. Therefore, according to him, there is no contradiction between the modal notions of *kalām* being different from those of logic and their simultaneously being the modes of propositions, since ontological modality is simply a subcategory of logical modality.<sup>22</sup>

We see an apologetic statement on behalf of Ījī in the super-commentary of Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwānī (d. 908/1502). Commenting on Qūshjī’s statement, “If he meant that the implicates are necessary entities in and of themselves”, Dawwānī tries to reduce Ījī’s view to a terminological difference. According to him:

22 Hasan Çelebi Fanārī, *Hāshiyā ‘alā Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, (in al-Jurjānī’s commentary on *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*) tsh. Muhammad Bedreddin al-Na’sānī, Qom: Intishārāt al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, 1991, II, 121.

Ījī may have meant the following: The *mutakallimūn* do not term “the necessity of the existence of implicates” as “necessary by virtue of itself” (*wājib li-dhātihī*). Therefore, Ījī’s words indicate the following: in the terminology of the *mutakallimūn*, the meaning of “necessary by virtue of its essence” is that which is unique to existence in itself. For when the *mutakallimūn* say “necessary by its essence” (*wājib bi-l-dhāt*), they mean only this meaning. When they mean another meaning, they use the expression in a restricted way. This indicates that the expression “*wājib bi-l-dhāt*” is a customary concept (*ḥaqīqa ‘urfīyya*). The fact that the expression “*wājib bi-l-dhāt*” is used in a more general sense does not problematize this, provided that it is known among them only if it is expressed with an indication. Yes, this view is open to the following criticism: some individual uses of a word may be known in such a way that it is immediately understood, and is not considered a figurative expression in others. For example, the use of the word “existence” for “external existence” is like this, even though they divided existence into mental and external.<sup>23</sup>

Although Dawwānī provides this excuse, he does not seem to be convinced by it, and he believes that Ījī’s claim is still open to the criticism he goes on to express. According to him, the fact that this meaning became customary among the *mutakallimūn* does not entail that the *wujüb, imkân* and *imtinâ'* examined in the study of *al-umūr al-amma* are different from the *wujüb, imkân* and *imtinâ'* that serve as the matters and modes of propositions. Therefore, according to Dawwānī, Ījī’s explanation remains unfounded.

All of the scholars we have quoted so far state that the concepts of *wujüb, imkân* and *imtinâ'* examined in the study of *al-umūr al-amma* are included within the scope of the matters and modes of propositions in general. They thus tend to interpret Ījī’s remarks charitably as a warning against conflating the more specific sense of *wujüb, imkân* and *imtinâ'* in *kalām* with their more general sense in logic. The only exception is Abharī, who took Ījī to be distinguishing between propositions in which existence is a predicate or copula and propositions in which it is not. Qūshjī’s comments are merely a quotation of Taftāzānī’s passages in *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, therefore, he is in line with the scholars who criticized Ījī’s statements. But are these criticisms really deserved, or is there a more charitable way of interpreting Ījī’s words?

23 Dawwānī, *Ḥāshiyā ‘alā Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, (on the commentary of 'Alī Qūshjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*) I, 205.

## 2. Critiquing the Critics: a Defence of Ījī

At first glance, the interpretations offered by the commentators and super-commentators on the topic of the modes of propositions seem to be correct. As Jurjānī says, the definitions of *wujūb*, *inkān* and *imtinā'* are the same in logic and metaphysics. From this point of view, *wujūb*, *inkān* and *imtinā'* are employed in modal logic in relation to the predicate of existence as well as all other predicates, whereas in discussions of *al-umūr al-ʿamma* in *kalām* works, they are employed only in relation to the predicate of existence. Following this reasoning, the commentators and super-commentators on the subject criticize Ījī's argument. The essence of their criticism is twofold. On the one hand, they held that Ījī's words, in the plain sense of their meaning, are simply incorrect. On the other hand, if they are understood to amount to Jurjānī's analysis, then they are nothing but a declaration of the obvious. However, to think that Ījī was unaware of the definitions of these concepts in logic and metaphysics, or that he was simply careless about their particularities, is unconvincing to say the least. We also know that Ījī revised the text of the *Mawāqif* after writing it, both making corrections to existing passages and adding new ones.<sup>24</sup> Given this, it seems inconceivable that such a blatant error or redundancy would have escaped his notice. Instead, we need to find a sensible interpretation of Ījī's argument. In my opinion, we can derive this interpretation by reflecting on some of the differences between logic and ontology.

As is well known, logic is the methodological instrument of the theoretical and practical philosophical sciences. The sciences themselves, on the other hand, examine their own unique, particular subject matters (these being their essential accidents, or, *a'rād dhātiyya*). For example, the subject matter of medicine is the human body with respect to illness and health, and the medical doctor aims to determine the existence and causes of the body's illnesses. However, the assertions that the doctor makes about the body, which themselves suggest the existence of certain conditions and their causes, are judgements about the nature of a thing from a particular point of view. Mode and matter are the qualities of the relationship between this thing (which is the subject of the assent) and its state (which is the predicate of the assent). Since judgements are about the nature of a thing, the propositions of a science are judgements about things in *nafs al-amr*, not external existence. For this very reason, all the relations considered between the subject and the predicate are qual-

24 See for example, Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, I, 366, 574.

ified with *wujüb-lā-wujüb* or *dawām-lā-dawām* according to *naḥs al-amr* and not to the external world.<sup>25</sup> As mentioned before, the state of these qualities in *naḥs al-amr* is termed matter, and their judgement in the mind or utterance in language is termed mode. Therefore, what we call matter or mode is essentially necessity and perpetuity (*dawām*), their contraries and their various composites. This becomes clear when we look at the detailed presentation of modal propositions as they developed after Avicenna in Najm al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī al-Kātibī's (d. 675/1276) *al-Risāla al-Shamsiyya* and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 766/1364) subsequent commentary, *Tahrīr al-qawā'id al-mantiqiyya fī sharḥ al-Risāla al-Shamsiyya*. The following is a summarised list of the thirteen modal propositions.<sup>26</sup>

The forms of simple (*basīṭa*) propositions—whose essence consists only of affirmation or negation—are six: (i) absolute necessary (*ḍarūriyya muṭlaqa*), (ii) absolute perpetual (*dā'ima muṭlaqa*), (iii) general conditional (*mashrūṭa 'amma*), (iv) general conventional (*'urfīyya 'amma*), (v) general absolute (*muṭlaqa 'amma*), and (vi) general possibility (*mumkina 'amma*).

(i) An absolute necessary (*ḍarūriyya muṭlaqa*) proposition is one in which the affirmation or negation of the predicate in relation to the subject is judged to be necessary as long as the subject exists. This proposition indicates necessity, and this necessity is not determined by a quality or time.

Every C is necessarily B.

(ii) An absolute perpetuity (*dā'ima muṭlaqa*) proposition is one in which the affirmation or negation of the predicate in relation to the subject is judged to be perpetual as long as the individual instantiations of the subject (*dhāt al-mawḍū'*) exist.

Every C is always B.

(iii) A general conditional (*mashrūṭa 'amma*) proposition is one in which the affirmation or negation of the predicate in relation to the subject is judged to be nec-

25 For details, cf. Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tahrīr al-qawā'id al-mantiqiyya fī sharḥ al-Risālat al-Shamsiyya*, (together with Kātibī Qazwīnī, *al-Risālat al-Shamsiyya*), ed. Muhsin Bidarfer, Qom: Menṣūrāt-i Bidār, 1383, pp. 273-75.

26 This paper follows Nicholas Rescher's translations for the names of the propositions. Tony Street provides natural English examples for each proposition, in all four forms (i.e. universal affirmative, universal negative, particular affirmative, and particular negative). We have listed here his examples for the universal affirmative variant only.

essary provided that the individual instantiations of the subject are attributed with the description of the subject (*'unwān* or *wasf al-mawḍū'*).

Every C is necessarily B as long as it is C.

(iv) A general conventional (*'urfīyya 'amma*) proposition is one in which the affirmation or negation of the predicate in relation to the subject is judged to be perpetual, provided that the description of the subject exists.

Every C is always B as long as it is C.

(v) A general absolute (*muṭlaqa 'amma*) is a proposition in which the affirmation or negation of the predicate in relation to the subject is judged to be actual (*bi-l-fi'l*).

Every C is at least one B.

(vi) A general possible (*mumkina 'amma*) is a proposition that is judged to remove absolute necessity from the opposite side of the judgement.

Every C is possibly B.

Compound (*murakkaba*) modal propositions are seven: (vii) special conditional (*mashrūṭa khāṣṣa*), (viii) special conventional (*'urfīyya khāṣṣa*), (ix) nonnecessary existential (*wujūdiyya lā-ḍarūra*), (x) non-perpetual existential (*wujūdiyya la-dā'ima*), (xi) temporal (*waqtīyya*), (xii) spread (*muntashira*) and (xiii) special possible (*mumkina khāṣṣa*).

(vii) A special conditional (*mashrūṭa khāṣṣa*) proposition is a (iii) general conditional (*mashrūṭa 'amma*), which is conditioned by non-perpetuity (*lā-dawām*) *qua* essence.

Every C is necessarily B as long as it is C, and no C is always B.

(viii) A special conventional (*'urfīyya khāṣṣa*) proposition is a (iv) general conventional (*'urfīyya 'amma*) provided that it is impermanent *qua* essence.

Every C is always B as long as it is C, and no C is always B.

(ix) Nonnecessary existential (*wujūdiyya lā-ḍarūra*) is a (v) general absolute (*muṭlaqa 'amma*), provided that it is nonnecessary (*lā-ḍarūra*) *qua* essence.

Every C is at least once B, and no C is necessarily B.

(x) Non-perpetual existential (*wujūdiyya lā-dā'ima*) is a (v) general absolute (*muṭlaqa 'amma*) with the condition of impermanence *qua* essence.



Every C is at least once B, and no C is always B.

(xi) Temporal (*waqtiyya*) is a proposition in which the affirmation or negation of the predicate in relation to the subject is judged to be at a certain time among the times when the subject exists, conditioned by impermanence *qua* essence.

Every C is necessarily B at time T, and no C is always B.

(xii) Spread (*muntashira*) is a proposition in which the affirmation or negation of the predicate in relation to the subject is judged to be necessary at an indefinite time among the times when the subject exists, as being conditioned by impermanence *qua* essence.

Every C is necessarily B at some time, and no C is always B.

(xiii) Special possible (*mumkina khāṣṣa*) is a proposition in which absolute necessity is negated from both aspects of existence and non-existence.<sup>27</sup>

Every C is possibly B, and no C is necessarily B.

It is worth noting that all of the possible relations in the various propositions listed above are characterized by *ḍarūra* or *lā-ḍarūra* on the one hand, and by *dawām* or *lā-dawām* on the other. Additionally, in all of these propositions, the precise nature of the relationship between subject and predicate is given consideration. The subject is considered as an essence, independently of whether or not it exists, whereas the predicate is existence itself as well as its various actualizations. Therefore, as Ījī's critics were themselves suggesting, in modal propositions, existence is regarded only as a predicate or a relation, whereas *wujüb*, *imkân*, or *imtinā'* are what qualify that predication or relation. The question then is whether this is the case with *wujüb*, *imkân*, or *imtinā'* as and when they are used in the study of *al-umūr al-ʿamma*.

Considering the definition of these three concepts provided thus far, it certainly should be affirmed that there is a continuity between logic and ontology. In fact, the scholars who criticize Ījī raise this very point. However, there is an aspect in which this continuity is broken and which distinguishes ontology or, more generally, metaphysics from logic. At first glance, it appears that in the study of *al-umūr al-ʿamma*, there is a relationship between something itself and its existence. For example, we

27 For a detailed explanation of these propositions, see Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tahrīr al-qawā'id al-mantiqiyya*, pp. 275-295.

say that  $x$  is *wājib* if its positive relation to existence is inevitable, *mumtani* if its negative relation is inevitable, and *mumkin* if both its positive and negative relations are not inevitable. In these explanations, existence and non-existence are predicates. However, Ījī points out an important point that distinguishes metaphysical inquiry from logical explanations: existence is in fact the *subject*, not the predicate or the copula, in discussions of *al-umūr al-ʿamma*. In such discussions, we talk about the *wujūb*, *imkān*, or *imtināʿ* of existence, by saying, “Existence *qua* existence is either *wājib*, *mumkin*, or *mumtani*”. In this statement—which we could rephrase as the disjunct of the three separate propositions “Existence is *wājib*”, “Existence is *mumtani*”, and “Existence is *mumkin*”—existence in each case is not the predicate but the subject. Obviously, there is a copula between “existence” and its predications of *wujūb*, *imkān*, or *imtināʿ*, and this copula expresses *thubūt* (affirmation). However, this copula does not refer to the *thubūt* of existence in the external world or in the mind, but to *thubūt* in *naḥs al-amr*. Such a *thubūt* is more general than existence in the external world, and overlaps with but is not identical to existence in the mind. At first glance, this suggests that a thing has or does not have an attribute in and of itself, irrespective of whether it is grasped by a mind. However, on further analysis, it expresses a state of being-in-itself that, when affirmed, is identical to the thing itself, and, when negated, is merely a separation from the thing itself.

For this reason, the discussion on the *wujūb* and *imkān* of existence itself leads to the positing of two types of existence. The first of these is what is referred to as the Necessary Being (*Wājib al-wujūd*), which expresses pure existence and is identical to necessity. The second kind is termed “divine existence” (*al-wujūd al-ilāhī*), and is: (i) realized (*mutaḥaqqaq*) and determined (*mutaʿayyan*) in the external world as the essence of an object, and (ii) is identical to the necessity of that object when taken from its efficient agent. *Wujūb* in the first sense corresponds to the being *qua* itself, while in the second sense it corresponds to the being *qua* something else. *Imkān*, in the first sense, cannot be attributed to existence at all, but in the second sense, it corresponds to existence *qua* existence. Understood in this way, existence is not the predicate or copula of propositions, but its very subject. The existence which serves as the predicate in propositions is existence in the external world, which is Ibn Sīna’s second intelligible. In one sense, when considering existence in this framework, God and *mumkin* beings with their various properties do not differentiate from one another. This is because, if something exists, it exists, and if it does not exist, it does not exist; it cannot exist “more” or “less”. In another sense however, they are entirely

different; this is because existence in both the first and second senses is still totally identical to the object itself, and so the two kinds of existence can still be differentiated from one another to the extent that the objects themselves can be differentiated from one another.

This framework cannot be created unless one considers the distinction between *wājib–mumkin* and quiddity–existence together. For this reason, what we see in the books of *falsafa*, *kalām*, and *taṣawwuf* after Ibn Sīnā, on discussions pertaining to *al-umūr al-ʿamma*, cannot be found in studies of metaphysics before Ibn Sīnā. No doubt, prior to Ibn Sīnā one will still be able to find analyses of *wājib*, *mumkin*, and *mumtanīʿ* in the books of logic in general, and *burhān* (demonstration) in particular. Of particular note is Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, (d. 339/950) whose contributions to modal logic effectively laid the groundwork for Ibn Sīnā's investigations,<sup>28</sup> and which can in turn be traced back to Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias*. However, neither the specific headings nor the actual content of the discussions on the *wājib*, *mumkin*, and *mumtanīʿ* in *al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriḳiyya*, *al-Muḥaṣṣal*, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, *Sharḥ al-Maqāsid* and *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* can be found systematically in previous works on metaphysics. Thus it truly is in the texts of Ibn Sīnā that we find the first comprehensive philosophical explanation of these three concepts, which then go on to be utilised in the works of the *mutāakhhirūn*. Subsequently Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī systematized the argument further, in a manner that would influence the field afterwards.

The effect of the distinction between existence and quiddity on the shaping of the history of thought in general, and the history of Islamic thought specifically, cannot be understated. Without this distinction, it is not possible to prevent the concept of existence from being an attribute in the truest sense of the word. *Falāsifa* such as Fārābī, Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (d. 391/1001), and even earlier Neoplatonist thinkers ought not to misdirect us with their views that essence and quiddity cannot be separated in God. These thinkers argued that existence cannot be separated from quiddity at all; not only in God, but also in the separate intellects (*al-ʿuqūl al-mufāraqa*). Their view stems not from the Avicennan conception of existence, but from the principle of abstraction, which is a necessary consequence of their analyses of the relationship between simplicity–composition (or unity–multiplicity). For they

28 On this point, see Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-ʿIbāra*, ed. Muhammad Taqī Dānish Pejūh, Qom: Maktabat al-Āyatullah al-Uzma al-Marʿashī al-Najafī, 1409, pp. 184-221.

thought that it was impossible to abstract a definition from God and the separate intellects due to their simplicity and unity. Ibn Sinā developed a way of thinking in which not only is existence considered separate to quiddity, but also the consequents of existence and the consequents of quiddity are considered independently, and furthermore, the distinctions of *wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtināʿ* are applied to existence and quiddity separately.

Subsequent *falāsifa*, *mutakallimūn*, and Sufis inherited this way of thinking. As a result of deepening this distinction and unravelling its implications, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī formulated the *taḥqīq* method and Ibn ʿArabī put forth the concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. Specifically, the idea that existence is a natural universal (*kullī ṭabīʿī*) and that all existents are states of existence—as is believed by the proponents of *waḥdat al-wujūd*—cannot be argued without accepting a distinction between existence and quiddity. For this reason, none of the pantheistic doctrines that emerged in the Mediterranean region before Ibn ʿArabī possessed the idea of the unity and uniqueness of existence as presented in the theory of *waḥdat al-wujūd*.

This is precisely the context in which Ījī's argument can be understood. In fact, the following words of Taftāzānī—one of the scholars who criticized Ījī's claim—which we quoted earlier, imply that he at least recognized Ījī's standpoint:

It is as if he [sc. Ījī] thought that existence is not found as a predicate or copula in some propositions. For example, he seems to reject that the proposition “the human being is a writer” means “the human being exists as a writer” or “the human being exists with the ability to write”. And he thought that this proposition meant that “what is valid for the human being is the same as what is valid for the writer or what is predicated of the writer”.<sup>29</sup>

As we stated earlier, Taftāzānī's statement is a re-expression of Abharī's explanation in *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, albeit in a skeptical manner. According to this interpretation, Ījī means that the notions of *wujūb*, *imkān*, and *imtināʿ* used in modal propositions are not the *wujūb*, *imkān*, and *imtināʿ* of existence. Undoubtedly, in order to assert such a claim, it is necessary to take into account that there is not a unity of concept but a unity of scope between the subject and the predicate, as Taftāzānī states. For in this case, what makes it possible for the predicate to be predicated of the subject is that what is true of the subject and what is true of the predicate are the same.

29 Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, I, 461.

This sameness allows the essence of the subject (*dhāt al-mawḍū'*) to be attributed with the description of the predicate (*wasf al-mahmūl*). Therefore, existence is not a term (*tarāf*) in the proposition at all, nor is it a copula. However, Taftāzānī, on the grounds that expressions such as “exists”, “is true of”, “is predicated” and “is *thābit*” are used in the same sense by the *muḥaqqiqūn*, prefers Ṭūsī's position in the *Tajrīd* and generally stands with the position of the commentators and super-commentators.

Taftāzānī's decision's to read existence into Ījī's example is unsound. This is because it is not accurate to say both that the propositions are related to *nafs al-amr* and that existence and *thubūt* are the same. The view of *thubūt* in *nafs al-amr* emerged as a continuation of the Avicennan view of the *thubūt* of the quiddity in itself. To understand the *thubūt* of essence in itself as the existence of the quiddity in itself is as inaccurate as it is to understand the *thubūt* of assertions in *nafs al-amr* as equalling their existence in *nafs al-amr*. For in all of these expressions, *thubūt* refers to the self of whatever it is the *thubūt* of. To include existence or non-existence in the self in concepts and propositions—except pure existence or pure non-existence—is to render all these distinctions meaningless.

## Conclusion

I believe that the reason why the scholars of the later period criticized Ījī almost unanimously is that they did not expressly re-define the concept of *thubūt*, which as we have shown, radically diverged from the concept of existence due to Ibn Sinā's distinctions between existence–quiddity and *wājib–mumkin*. This was the case even though the later scholars were, at times, using *thubūt* with its new meaning themselves. We can also suggest that these scholars' criticism of the Mu'tazilite view that “*mumkin* non-existents are *thābit*” fuelled the ambiguity around this term. However, the idea of quiddity in itself or quiddity *qua* itself actually invalidated the previously held belief that *thubūt* and existence were one and the same. Hence, in all cases where the term *nafs al-amr* is used in the later period, *thubūt* does not specifically refer to external or mental existence, but to the object's being itself in the sense that it is what it is. This profoundly impacted the discussions on the notions of *wujūb*, *imkān*, or *imtinā'*, transformed their understanding of the issue's crossover from logic to metaphysics, and led to the extensive discussions of *al-umūr al-ʿamma* that we begin to see in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's works. Moreover, within studies of logic, this approach influenced the discussion of propositions in general, and modal propositions in par-

ticular. It also led to significant developments of Ibn Sīnā's original contributions concerning the judgements of propositions. But crucially these developments were the result of research proceeding not from logic to metaphysics, but from metaphysics to logic.

Contrary to the majority of his commentators then, it is better to understand Ījī's statements as precautionarily expressing his awareness of this new era of philosophical enquiry, as well as revealing the precise nature of this era. For the distinctions between *wājib–mumkin* and existence–quiddity, as manifested in the work of Ibn Sīnā, led to the emergence of two different positions through Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's critical readings.

As for the first of these positions: In the traditions of *falsafa* and *kalām*, the concept of *thubūt*, which expresses self-subsistence, was made central, and existence was transformed into merely a variant of *thubūt*. The texts of *falsafa* and *kalām* in the *muta'akhhirūn* period are based on a framework in which existence is prioritized in ontology, but *thubūt* is at the center of epistemology. In other words, in ontology, existence is primary and *thubūt* is derivative, whereas in epistemology, *thubūt* is primary and existence is derivative. The discussions on the distinctions between existence–quiddity and *wājib–mumkin* begin with the existent (*mawjūd*), continue with existence (*wujūd*), and end with *thubūt*. It is a cognitive analysis of the process by which something becomes realized (*mutahaqqaq*) or can be realized. The analysis, which begins from the thing's realized status, proceeds towards its being-in-itself and is finally completed in the thing-in-itself. Based on the form given by the analysis, the thing's self-assertion becomes the main focus, and the determination of the thing proceeds from its general states to its properties that enable it to be realized at a certain level of existence.

As for the second position: In the Sufi tradition beginning with Ibn 'Arabī, unlike *kalām* and *falsafa*, existence is the central concept, and *thubūt* is derived from it. For this reason, the Sufis rejected the division of existence into *wājib* and *mumkin* and generally based their differences from the *naẓar* tradition on the claim that existence is not capable of such a division. In a way, this can be viewed as putting ontology in the foreground and placing epistemology as an extension of ontology.

Whether we take existence or *thubūt* as the base concept, this understanding in general compels us to review all the distinctions used in ontology *before* the formation of the distinctions between existence–quiddity and *wājib–mumkin*, such as

cause–effect (*'illa–ma'lūl*), eternal–created (*qadīm–ḥādīth*), and universal–particular (*kullī–juz'ī*). In this context, the transformation that takes place—with all its various stages and dimensions—in the works of Ibn Sīnā, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, and Ibn Arabī has a common result: in both the proposition “Existence *qua* existence is either *wājib*, *mumkin*, or *mumtani'*”—which is the starting point of the *falāsifa* and *mutakallimūn*—and the proposition “Existence *qua* existence is the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*)”—which is the starting point of the Sufis—existence is the *subject*, not the predicate. In fact, we see that whenever these three traditions of thought discuss the *wājib–mumkin* distinction in their discussions of *al-umūr al-ʿamma*, existence is addressed not as a predicate but as a subject. For this reason, Ījī's words in his context are not a simple mistake, nor are they a needlessly different definition. On the contrary, he is drawing attention to a most crucial element of the topic at hand, namely that the study of existence in metaphysics aims to clarify the relation of being in itself to the notions of *wājib*, *mumkin*, and *mumtani'*.

Among the commentators and super-commentators who offered critical readings of Ījī, we can say that only Abharī and Taftāzānī partially realized his intention. Unlike Ījī however, these thinkers did not attempt any analysis of the character of *al-umūr al-ʿamma* in the new era, as an issue common to both *kalām* and *falsafa*.

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