

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

MASTER THESIS

**THE PRINCIPLE OF SUFFICIENT REASON
IN THE KALAM TRADITION**

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**THESIS SUPERVISOR
ASSOC. PROF. ENİS DOKO**

ISTANBUL, 2021

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IN THE KALAM TRADITION**

by

SAADEDİN SAY

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
Philosophy**

THESIS SUPERVISOR

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ISTANBUL, 2021

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy.

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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Kelam geleneğinin temel meseleleri hala tam olarak çalışılmış değil. Ontolojik bir ilke olarak Yeterli Sebep İlkesi metafiziğin en tesirli ilkelerinden birisidir. İslamî literatürdeki birçok felsefi tartışma bu ilkeyi işaret ediyor. Dahası, Kelamcılar bu ilkedeki ulvî maksat addettikleri, Kur'an ve Sünnet'e uygun sağlam bir ilahiyat teorisi kurmak maksadı için çokça faydalanmışlardır. Bu çalışma, Kelam geleneğinin metafiziğini daha iyi anlamak amacıyla muhakkiklerin Yeterli Sebep İlkesi'nin belli bir varyantını nasıl temellendirdiklerini ve kullandıklarını araştırıyor: Tereccüh bila müreccih batıldır. Çalışmadan maksat genel ama tam bir tablo çizmek. Bu sebeple, muhakkiklerin önemli eserleri incelendi ve farklı görüşlerin tartışmasındansa genel kabul gören görüşlerin açıklanması öncelikli oldu. Kelamcılarının muhtemel savunmalarına bir giriş mahiyetinde çağdaş felsefi görüşlerle karşılaştırmalar yapıldı. Kelamcılar, realist olmayan bir doğruluk teorisi üzerinden, modalist bir modal teoriyi, modal temellere dayanmayan bir özcülüğe dayandırıyorlar. Bu metafizik temellere değinerek ilkenin öngördüğü açıklananlar ve açıklayanlar sınırlandı. Böylece, ilkenin kapsamlı bir varyantı ve bir nedensellik teorisi ortaya çıktı. Bu nedensellik teorisi iradî sebepliliği içeriyor: haricî sebepler olmadan karar veren, irade sahibi kâdir bir fâil. Bu bulgulardan nasıl faydalandığı ve metafizik meseleleri nasıl etkiledikleri açıklandı. Son olarak da bazı vecih olabilecek itirazlar tartışıldı. Sonuç olarak anlaşılan şu ki, Yeterli Sebep İlkesi Kelam geleneğinde merkezî bir konuma sahip. Allah'ın varlığı için aslî deliller ve sıfatları hakkındaki genel hükümler bu ilkeye dayanıyor. İlkenin kısıtlanması keyfi değil, dikkatli modal

incelemelere dayanıyor. Öne sürülen varyant ya modern görüşlerden üstün ya da en azından onlarla aynı kulvarda.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kelam, modalite, müreccih, nedensellik, yeter sebep ilkesi



ABSTRACT

THE PRINCIPLE OF SUFFICIENT REASON IN THE KALAM TRADITION

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Foundational ideas of the *kalām* tradition are still to be studied. The Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) as an ontological principle is one of the most potent principles for metaphysics. Many philosophical discussions in Islamic literature refer to this principle. Moreover, the mutakallims, for their divine goal of building a solid theology consistent with the *Qur'ān* and the *Ḥadīth*, utilize it extensively. To better understand the metaphysics of the overall *kalām* tradition, this study investigates how the *muḥaqqiqīn* explained the foundations of a specific variant of the PSR and utilized it: *Tarajjuh bilā murajjih bāṭil*. The aim is a general but complete picture. Hence, primarily major works of the *muḥaqqiqīn* are examined and clarification of an accepted view had priority over the conveyance of different opinions. Comparisons to the contemporary philosophical debates enabled us to see how a possible defense by the mutakallims would start. The mutakallims claim a type of modalism based on a nonmodal account of essentialism, and there is a nonrealist truth theory behind everything. After addressing these metaphysical foundations, the explananda and the explanantia were restricted. As a result, a well-rounded variant of the PSR led to a theory of causality. The causal theory introduced a voluntary type of causation: a willing powerful agent who decides without any external reason. The utilization of these findings and their effect on some metaphysical issues were explained. Finally, some supposedly eligible objections are discussed. The results show that the PSR is central to the *kalām* tradition. Main arguments for the existence of God and important maxims about the divine attributes are based on it. Restrictions

on it are based on elaborations in the modal theory rather than pragmatic modifications. This variant of the PSR avoids the objections and is on par with contemporary solutions, if not better than them.

Keywords: causality, explanation, kalam, necessity, modality, sufficient reason



DEDICATION

Bismillāhi wa biḥamdihi wa'ṣ-ṣalātu 'alā nabiyyihī.

All dedication is to Allah, to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and unto whom all things are returned.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank TÜBİTAK BİDEB for the scholarship they provided me during the MA.

Saadeddin Say

ISTANBUL, 2021



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ÖZ	iv
ABSTRACT	vi
DEDICATION	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Purpose	2
1.2. Method.....	2
1.3. The Mutakallims.....	3
1.4. Literature	5
CHAPTER II MODAL THEORY	7
2.1. Definitions	7
2.2. Essential vs. Accidental Modality	8
2.3. Metaphysics of Alethic Modalities.....	11
2.3.1. Reality versus Considerationality	11
2.3.2. Essentialism and Modality	17
2.3.3. An Epistemological Solution: Mental Modalities.....	29
2.4. The Truth Theory Behind Everything	30
2.4.1. To Be True in Itself	30
2.4.2. Three Types of Propositions	33
2.4.3. Logical Modalities	35
2.4.4. Predication of Existence.....	36
2.5. Conclusion.....	39
CHAPTER III PRINCIPLE OF SUFFICIENT REASON	41
3.1. The Explananda: Analysis of Contingency	42

3.1.1.	The Need for a Factor of Preference	42
3.1.2.	Proofs for the PSR.....	44
3.1.3.	To Begin from the Explananda	44
3.1.4.	The Source of the Need for a Factor of Preference.....	46
3.1.5.	Necessitation for the Contingent without a Default State	47
3.2.	The Explanantia: Involuntary versus Voluntary Causation.....	50
3.2.1.	Assertion of Metaphysical Causation	50
3.2.2.	Involuntary Causation	51
3.2.3.	Voluntary Causation	53
CHAPTER IV CONSEQUENCES.....		67
4.1.	The Necessary Being	67
4.1.1.	Existence of the Necessary Being.....	67
4.1.2.	Attributes of the Necessary Being	73
4.2.	Nothing Contingent is Pre-Eternal	85
4.3.	Dependent versus Independent Contingent Facts.....	86
4.4.	Necessitarianism.....	87
4.5.	Modal Fatalism.....	88
4.6.	Free Will and Theological Fatalism	89
4.7.	Principle of Plenitude	90
4.8.	Nomological Application	91
4.8.1.	Normative Judgments and Scientific Explanation.....	91
4.8.2.	Quantum Mechanics	92
4.9.	Identity of Indiscernibles	93
4.10.	Answering Objections	96
4.10.1.	Objections from the Kalām Books	96
4.10.2.	Ibn Taymiyya’s Objection	97
4.10.3.	Hume’s Objection	98

4.10.4. A Modern Version of Hume's Objection	99
4.10.5. Objections to Unrestricted Variants.....	100
4.10.6. Other Variants as De Facto Objections.....	101
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION	104
REFERENCES.....	108
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	112



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

n.d. no date

PSR Principle of Sufficient Reason



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first thing we know about the Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) is that it is a principle, obviously. We ask for reasons, and this principle is to put rules for that. Reasons are everywhere in our lives. If we are not given reasons for the facts given by media outlets, we are not satisfied. Plane crashes, war declarations, earthquakes, fluctuations in the economy: we ask for reasons. The scientists are not to accept any brute facts. They ask for reasons, and for any reason they find, they have further questions. We do not think our perceptions are arbitrary. When we hear a loud noise, we look for a reason for it. Even animals and infants seem to behave so. An animal will look for a source when it hears a loud noise and may escape anticipating a dangerous reason behind it. Sometimes, we ask for reasons to believe in things. The rain is a reason for us to believe that the streets will get wet. However, sometimes wet streets are a reason for us to believe that it has rained. The PSR asserts that these and similar questions and reasonings are not arbitrary, but they have a grounding.

The PSR is a controversial principle in philosophy that aims to ground the stipulation of explanations. For the supporter of it, the first thing to decide is the domain of this principle. It can be taken purely epistemological, and if it is claimed to concern ontology, it is indeed one of the most potent principles for metaphysics. One cannot found a consistent metaphysics without paying enough attention to this principle. How one decides to designate his understanding of this principle dramatically affects the rest of his metaphysics. The Islamic literature is aware of this fact, and many critical philosophical discussions refer to this principle. Some significant disputes between the mutakallims and the *falāsifa* boil down to a difference of opinion about this principle. More importantly, the ultimate goal of the mutakallims, to build a solid theology consistent with the *Qur'ān* and the *Ḥadīth*, utilizes this principle starting from heavy foundations to small details.

1.1. Purpose

There has been a growing interest in the Islamic tradition of *kalām* and philosophy in recent years. One can choose any era and indulge in such research merely for historical purposes. However, if the aim is to learn the metaphysical theories in the *kalām* tradition to see how they fit into the contemporary discussions, we need to study the tradition in its most ripe form, rather than go into, say, discussions between Abū Ḥāmid al-Ġazālī and his peers. Such an approach has become a common practice, but this study does not repeat the same mistake. It aims to look into where the mutakallims ended, rather than where they started, and unearth how their theories, in their most elaborated form, interact with the contemporary questions of metaphysics. Among those theories, one essential to solving a vast number of questions is their take on the PSR. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to present which variant of the PSR, and on what grounds is established and what the major outcomes of its utilization are in the *muḥaqqiqīn* (verifying scholars) era of the *kalām* tradition. Besides, how this all finds a place in the contemporary discussions is investigated because that is crucial for a better grasp of the findings. In order to attain this purpose, this study aims to answer: (1) What variant of the PSR is defended by the mutakallims? (2) How did they justify their variant? (3) What are the restrictions on the explanantia and the explananda according to their variant? (4) What is their causality theory? (5) What are the outcomes of their variant and their causality theory in metaphysics? (6) How does this variant defend itself against objections?

1.2. Method

Since this work is a first in the subject, it aims at a general but complete picture, which is helpful for further studies. For that reason, rather than identifying every single opinion mentioned in the sources, clarification of an accepted view had priority. Unless there were significant differences between the sources—which is mostly not the case—, the main idea was presented as the opinion of the mutakallims. Since the aim is not to distinguish such details, an opinion or a method advocated by the mutakallims was presented without indicating its origin. Also, mostly, the statements we find in the main sources of this work were decisive for the

statements about the earlier mutakallims (*mutaqaddimīn*). The purpose is to understand the kalām in the *muḥaqqiqīn* era.

For the same reason, at every step, the opinions of the mutakallims were compared to ideas discussed in the contemporary philosophical debates. However, the discussions were not followed till the end, and not all arguments were analyzed. Mostly, the discussions are to see how a debate could start with a defense of the mutakallims. That is not to deny that these discussions deserve separate studies to reach more conclusive judgments.

The PSR has relations to the key issues of metaphysics. Hence, some of those issues needed to ground the PSR had to be examined. Rather than a detailed investigation, the discussion concerned only what is needed for the main purpose. That is because those issues are exhaustive enough to be subject matters of other works.

Firstly, the modal theory of the mutakallims is discussed. They claim a type of modalism based on a nonmodal account of essentialism. There is a nonrealist truth theory behind everything. As a result, the truth theory and the account of essentialism are addressed just enough to make the connections. While doing that, for further clarification, comparisons to the contemporary philosophy followed.

Once the metaphysical foundations were explained sufficiently, based on them, the restrictions on the PSR from the designated explananda and explanantia were discovered. In the end, these foundations resulted in a well-rounded variant of the PSR. Naturally, it led us to a theory of causality. The work proceeded to the utilization of these findings and their effect on some metaphysical issues. Finally, some supposedly eligible objections against this variant were discussed.

1.3. The Mutakallims

From Abū al-Ḥasan al-Aṣ‘arī and Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī to the last Šayḥ al-Islām Mustafa Sabri, one can name a lineage of mutakallims. When Sa‘d al-Dīn al-Tāftāzānī said “the mutakallims,” he meant al-Aṣ‘arī, al-Bāqillānī, al-Ġazālī, Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and the like. However, when Mustafa Sabri uses the term, he can as well

mean Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī, ‘Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī, al-Taftāzānī, al-Sayyid al-Šarīf al-Jurjānī and the like. And, we can say that Mustafa Sabri himself is a qualified mutakallim. In this work, unless indicated otherwise, the lineage of the mutakallims till the *muḥaqqiqīn* era is referred to as “the mutakallims.” Furthermore, these sources adhere to the Razian school, the most prominent of all kalām schools. Therefore, we can say that this work presents the review of the kalām from the eyes of the post-classical Razian mutakallims and tries to animate how they would stand as philosophers today.

The kalām is a way of doing philosophy and implies a school of thought. As al-Taftāzānī defines it, it “is the knowledge of religious creed through absolute proofs.” However, he states, its subject matter is all objects of knowledge in virtue of their relevancy to the proofs (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 93). As al-Ġazālī showed, this task was dependent on an extensive study of philosophy and logic. Therefore, we find the mutakallims to be philosophers with a divine goal. In recent years, researchers have come to realize that introduction of philosophy to kalām by al-Ġazālī was not an end but the beginnings of a dynamic era for philosophy. Therefore, we see an increasing interest in the literature. Following the footsteps of al-Ġazālī, al-Rāzī, by his extensive study of philosophy and logic, founded a new school of thought within the lineage of kalām. As none was free to disregard Avicenna if he was to philosophize after him, none was free to do so disregarding al-Rāzī after him. The primary task of the Avicennian philosophers was to answer al-Rāzī’s objections in philosophy and logic (Gölcük 2015, 188–89; Yıldırım 2017, 108). His last book, *al-Maṭālib al-‘āliya*, amazes the reader for its introduction of such perspectives and questions that are yet to be investigated.

The peak of the Razian school is the era of the *muḥaqqiqīn*. That era is considered to be the neo-classical era of the kalām tradition. Systematization of problems was completed, and a complete corpus of pedagogical texts with detailed commentaries and supercommentaries were written. The *muḥaqqiqīn* have come to agreements on crucial problems, analyzing detailed arguments for different opinions. They have embraced the entirety of philosophy into kalām. From then on, the discussions were footnotes on what they have written. Now, the libraries are filled with a vast literature of works commenting on or citing al-Taftāzānī’s *Šarḥ al-‘aqa’id al-*

nasafiyya and *Šarḥ al-maqāšid*; al-Ījī's *al-Mawāqif* and al-Jurjānī's commentary on it; Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-ʿaqāid*, Maḥmūd ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Iṣfahānī's commentary and al-Jurjānī's supercommentary on it. As a matter of fact, the Ottoman kalām scholars were all successors of al-Rāzī, either through al-Taftāzānī or al-Jurjānī. This fact shows us how influential this school of thought was, that it eliminated alternative lineages (Gölcük 2015, 188–89; Yıldırım 2017, 104–9).

Consequently, for the purpose of this study, the choice of the *muḥaqqiqīn* era is justified. It is a good starting point to understand the kalām tradition and extract competent ideas to present them in comparison to the contemporary debates in philosophy. After that, one can look for hidden gems in commentaries on Avicenna and in al-Rāzī's cutting-edge problematics, or can study what came after the later milestone, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī.

1.4. Literature

There are no substantial specialized works on this subject. There are written pieces on causality and occasionalism according to some mutakallims, especially early ones, but the way they approach the problem is different from here. Therefore, going through the primary sources, relevant passages were studied. The prominent mutakallims of the *muḥaqqiqīn* era are at the center of this study: Saʿd al-dīn al-Taftāzānī, al-Sayyid al-Šarīf al-Jurjānī, ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī.

The primary source is al-Taftāzānī since his text *al-Maqāšid* is the most concise and precise among other texts and the latest chronologically. For al-Taftāzānī, our main source is his magnum opus, *al-Maqāšid*, and his own commentary on it. For al-Ījī, it is *al-Mawāqif*, on which al-Jurjānī has a commentary. For al-Jurjānī, rather than his pedagogical commentary on *al-Mawāqif*, his supercommentary on *Tasdīd al-qawāʿid* is more resourceful. There, we can even infer approval from his silence. *Tasdīd al-qawāʿid* is a competent commentary by Maḥmūd ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Iṣfahānī on Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-ʿaqāid*. For matters related to logic, we used literature following Najm al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī al-Kātibī's *al-Risālaʿ al-šamsiyya* and Sirāj al-Dīn al-Urmawī's *Maṭaliʿ al-anwār*. Both of these books are given commentaries by the prominent logician Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī. Al-Taftāzānī studied

this tradition in his commentary on *al-Risālat al-šamsiyya*, and al-Jurjānī has supercommentaries on both commentaries of Quṭb al-Rāzī.

Other than these primary sources, the ideas were checked against other books by these mutakallims and commentaries on those, the works of the early mutakallims, and other systematic texts like al-Bayḍāwī's *Ṭawāli al-anzār*. Also, later books that aim to gather discussions together or rephrase and verify in a different style, like Muḥammad 'Alī al-Tahānawī's *Kaššāf iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn*, Maḥmūd Abū Daqīqa's *al-Qawl al-sadīd fī 'ilm al-tawḥīd* and 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥarbūtī's *Tanqīḥ al-kalām fī 'aqā'idi ahl al-islām* benefited this work.

For the comparisons to the contemporary discussions, to reach different sources on different opinions, internet encyclopedias like the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and books that address different opinions like Andrea Borghini's *A Critical Introduction to the Metaphysics of Modality* and Alexander Pruss's *The PSR: A Reassessment* were used. Since it is not the essential purpose of this work to verify the debates in contemporary philosophy, an extensive survey for these ideas was deemed unnecessary.

CHAPTER II

MODAL THEORY

2.1. Definitions

The mutakallims do not have significant disagreements with each other about their modal theory. Therefore, we could excerpt a definition from any of their books. As al-Taftāzānī is known to be one of the most concise and precise in his words, see his definition: “The modes of necessity (*wujūb*), contingency¹ (*imkān*) and impossibility (*imtināʿ*) are concepts that emerge from attribution of existence—be it as a predicate (*maḥmūl*) or connecting a predicate (*rābiṭa*)²—to a meaning in mind” (2019, 181).

What are these concepts? About taking them as logical modal terms (*maṣdarī intizāʿī*), contrary to some other senses we will discuss later, there is no discussion among the mutakallims and the falāsifa about that their apprehension (*taṣawwur*) is *ḍarūrī*.³ Therefore, they are not existential (*wujūdī*), but considerational (*iʿtibārī*) concepts (Al-Tahānawī 1996, 2:1759). Moreover, there are no propositions eluding these modes. All propositions need to have one of these modes. They are readily available to the extent that even people who do not have any ways of learning know them. Since they are *ḍarūrī*, these modes are not definable. One cannot find more fundamental concepts they can be reduced to. Therefore, the definitions given for necessity, contingency, and impossibility are lexical definitions. One can define necessary (*wājib*) as “impossible not to be,” contingent (*mumkin*) as “not necessary

¹ Here, contingency is used in a specific sense of not being necessary nor impossible, however it is not the literal translation of the Arabic word *imkān*. It translates literally as possibility. The distinction in Arabic is made, when needed, by calling contingency *imkān al-ḥāṣ* (special possibility), whereas possible in the sense of not being impossible, thereby including necessity, is called *imkān al-ʿām* (general possibility).

² Existence is a predicate in propositions like “The table is.” It is connecting the predicate in propositions like “The table is green.”

³ A *ḍarūrī* apprehension is a primitive concept, which do not require any definition and known without any investigation.

to be or not to be,” and impossible (*mumtani*) as “necessary not to be.” The circularity is obvious; thus, these definitions, if taken as real (*ḥādd*), fail. However, if insisted, the best way to build this circular definition sequence is to express in terms of necessity because it is a more natural concept. That is, its relation to existence, the most natural of all, is strongest (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:114-5; Al-Ījī, n.d., 68).

2.2. Essential vs. Accidental Modality

There are two types of necessity and impossibility. They can either be essential/by itself (*biḍātihī*) or accidental/by another (*biġayrihī*). The following are accidental necessities. The necessity emerges not from the thing itself but by something else.

- (1) The thrown stone moves.
- (2) The writer has moving fingers.
- (3) It is the new moon at a specific time of a certain alignment and not the new moon at the time of the quarters.
- (4) A thing, on the condition that it moves, moves (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:115).

An accidental necessity is always by a cause (*illa*). However, one can look at it from different perspectives. In (1), the cause (a) is emphasized, the throwing made by the thrower. In (2), an accidental property of the person signified by the subject (*wasf lidāt al-mawḍū*) (b) is emphasized, namely, the writing. The person necessarily has moving fingers because he has an actual property of writing. (3) emphasizes the time of the subject (*waqt li al-mawḍū*) (c). At that specific time, it is necessary for the moon to be a new moon. (4) emphasizes the establishment of the predicate for the subject (*tubūt al-maḥmūl li al-mawḍū*) (d). When movement is the case for a thing, it is necessarily a moving thing. Having said that, these different perspectives must be further analyzed, and they all, in the end, are reduced to a cause (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:115). For (b), we can question why the person has a property of writing; for (c), the question is about what coincides with the specific times, and for (d), why the predicate is established, to begin with. This reduction to a cause should not be taken as a stance concerning the PSR because what it is to be a cause and how something, if anything, can be considered eligible to be a cause is not discussed here.

The following are essential necessities. The necessity emerges from the thing itself.

- (1) The Originator (*al-Bārī*) exists.
- (2) Contradiction—as in the Law of Noncontradiction—does not exist.
- (3) Four is even, not odd (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:115).

As it is stated in the definition of modalities, existence always plays a part in a proposition. For the case of the essential necessity, if it is the predicate (*maḥmūl*), as in the first proposition, the one that is attributed by the essential necessity is the Originator. He is “necessarily existing by himself” (*wājib al-wujūd liḍātihī*). If it is connecting a predicate (*rābiṭa*), as in the third proposition, evenness is necessarily existing for four. A subtle difference must be pointed out here. Evenness of four is not “necessarily existing for itself” (*wājib al-wujūd liḍātihā [liḍāt al-zawjiyya]*), but “for four” (*wājibul wujūd liḍāt al-arba‘a*). This is a very crucial solution from al-Taftāzānī for the propositions with existence as the connector for the predicate (*rābiṭa*). Note that the evenness of four is not something other than four but is an essential property of it. Therefore, we cannot take it as an accidental necessity. Not that “evenness” is necessary to exist by four (*wājib biḡayrihī*), but rather “evenness of four” is necessary for four by its being “evenness” of “four” (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 183).

Unlike necessity and impossibility, for contingency (*imkān*), there is only one type: essential/by itself. Something that is not essentially contingent is either essentially necessary or essentially impossible. For either of necessity and impossibility to become one another or essentially contingent is contradictory because that requires the necessity or impossibility to be accidental, not essential. Other than that, it is obvious that what is accidentally necessary or impossible must be essentially contingent, and there is no essential problem of something accidentally necessary becoming accidentally impossible or vice versa (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 183).

This distinction made by the mutakallims solves some significant problems. One such problem is the evaluation of counterfactuals. When we say, “It could have rained today.” and it is snowing outside, we are speaking about an essential contingency. Rain or snow, both are essentially contingent, but since snow is

actualized by some cause, it has become accidentally necessary. Our knowledge of the current actuality indicates such accidental necessity.

Another is how the divine foreknowledge of the actuality of an essence reconciles with its contingency. Suppose that it is decided by the Creator that this cat exists. Is the cat a contingent being, meaning could it be the case that it did not exist? Or is it necessary, unlike other nonexistent cats? Actually, can there be anything contingent, if anything is known to either exist or not exist? Then, things that exist necessarily exist, and nonexistents are impossible to exist. As it became clear above, the solution is to say that this cat is essentially contingent but accidentally necessary to exist at certain times by some cause and accidentally impossible to exist at some other times by the lack of such a cause. The divine foreknowledge includes all these facts.

Future contingents are understood in the same vein as well. When we say, “Either there will be an earthquake tomorrow, or there will not be one.”, we are speaking of the essential contingency. However, if we knew a predestined cause would have an effect on the situation, we could easily say that it is necessary for one of the cases. This necessity is just accidental; thus, no contradictions are present.

The mutakallims were aware of these problems, and they made some distinctions between concepts. Upon consideration of the existence or nonexistence of an essence, we come to know its accidental necessity or impossibility. This type of necessity and impossibility are called succeeding necessity (*al-wujūb al-lāḥiq*) and succeeding impossibility (*al-ımtināʿ al-lāḥiq*). We can also know of accidental necessity or impossibility by knowing the cause of it. If that is the case, what we have is preceding necessity (*al-wujūb al-sābiq*) and preceding impossibility (*al-ımtināʿ al-sābiq*). Both are accidental, and they do not contradict with the essence being contingent in itself (Al-Ījī, n.d., 74; Al-İşfahānī 2020, 2:155).

This approach brings us a way to understand forecasting and probabilistic judgments as well. All options about the future are equally contingent. Essentially none is preponderant over another. Despite that, based on additional expectations, that is, by things other than itself, a certain scenario can become more likely. This type of contingency is called dispositional contingency (*al-ımkān al-ıstiʿdādī*) (Sačaklizāda

2013, 43). The fetus has a stronger disposition towards becoming human than the sperm. The conditions it needs to meet are less than those for the sperm. Unlike this dispositional contingency, neither has a stronger essential probability of becoming human. This is a very tidy solution to what became a headache for many theorists.

The S5 system of modal logic is not sufficient for the essential and accidental distinction we have made here. There is no operator to denote such a difference and its effects on modal sentences. S5 tells us that whatever is possible is necessarily possible. Here, in the framework given by the mutakallims, this can be taken as the essential possibility. Therefore, even if, in a temporal structure of events, we have reached a point where some future contingents do not seem possible anymore, we can speak about their essential possibility as in the case of counterfactuals. Pruss tried to solve this problem in a very tedious way using formal language. In the end, he comes up with a new possibility operator that is a better candidate for metaphysical possibility because it is more ultimate than the usual one. His extension of S5 with such an operator at the formal level seems to be a superficial solution to the problem because the metaphysical significance is not clear. His employment of “ultimacy” as the crucial difference has no explanatory power. He does not explain what it means to be “ultimate” and what metaphysical difference between it and the standard possibility operator, other than pointing toward intuition (Pruss 2011, 13–17). In contrast to this, the distinction made by the mutakallims has a better metaphysical grounding and solves the problem well. Nevertheless, as Pruss pointed out, S5 is not enough to represent such distinctions.

2.3. Metaphysics of Alethic Modalities

2.3.1. Reality versus Considerationality

As mentioned above, there is no dispute about the meanings of these concepts as logical modes (*maṣḍarī intizāʿī*), that, in this sense, they are primitive notions and have no real existence, but are considerational (*iʿtibārī*). However, if they are true in themselves (*naḥs al-amr*), there needs to be a metaphysical grounding (*manṣaʿ al-intizāʿ*) behind. And these words (*wujūb*, *imkān* and *imtināʿ*) can be used in that sense, too (Al-Tahānawī 1996, 2:1760; Al-Jurjānī 1907, 2:108).

Since what can exist is only the necessary and contingent things, only their grounding is inquired (Al-Jurjānī 1907, 1:109). Accidental necessity and impossibility emerge from external causes to the thing, and grounding can be based on metaphysics of causation. Other than that, when existence is connecting a predicate (*rābiṭa*) in a proposition, one can either indicate a logical necessity like in “Four is even.”, so the grounding is the essence itself, or one might in a way claim a deduction to propositions with existence as a predicate (*maḥmūl*). Hence, the inspection should be done about the grounding of the propositions with existence as the predicate (*maḥmūl*).

Whether these concepts as metaphysical groundings are really established (*haqīqī*)—that there are really existing properties we can call ‘necessity’ or ‘contingency’—or not, so that they are only considerational (*iʿtibārī*) concepts of our minds is debated among the mutakallims. The late mutakallims came to a consensus that they are not existing (*ʿadamī*). Therefore, we will take this idea to the center of the debate, and the rest is taken as the opposition (Al-Jurjānī 1907, 2:109; Al-Tahānawī 1996, 2:1760; Abū Daqīqa 1995, 1:127).

When we say that God is powerful (*qādir*), what makes this sentence true, that is how it is grounded metaphysically, is a real attribute of power (*qudra*). So, God’s powerfulness is explained by his attribute of power, which is a qualitative attribute (*ṣifāʾ maʿnā*). In spite of that, when we say that God is one, it is not grounded on something we can call a qualitative attribute of oneness (*wahdāniyya*). It is grounded on the fact that there are no other gods, and taking into account this metaphysical state, we consider (*iʿtibār*) an attribute, namely oneness. So, God’s being one is explained by an attribute of oneness, which is a negating attribute (*ṣifāʾ salbiyya*), not really existing. However, since this attribute of oneness is a conceptualization of a real metaphysical state (*intizāʿ*), it is true in itself (*naḥs al-amr*).

Therefore, the situation demands a grounding either as a qualitative attribute, namely established attributes of necessity and contingency, or a grounding as a “conceptualization of something that is true in itself” (*intizāʿ*). This problem is discussed as the problem of existence of necessity (*wujūb*) and contingency (*imkān*) in the kalām tradition (Al-Jurjānī 1907, 2:109).

Al-Ījī and Al-Taftāzānī mention a general clean-cut rule: Any concept whose any theorized individual takes it as an attribute is not real but considerational (*i'tibārī*). Otherwise, an infinite regress (*tasalsul*) would occur (Al-Ījī, n.d., 69; Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 187). Let's assume that necessity existed. This necessity—whatever may it be, since it is a thing that exists—can be taken as a subject in a proposition where existence is the predicate, namely, we can say, “This or that necessity exists.” The modality of this proposition is either necessity, contingency, or impossibility. Clearly, it must be necessity, or else the former necessity attributed by this necessity would not be an essential necessity of the thing it is attributed to. Repeating this for the latter necessity results in an infinite regress. The same goes for contingency (*imkān*). If it existed, it itself would either be contingently existing or necessarily existing. Because the thing attributed by it, by definition, does not necessarily exist, the contingency is just contingent.

There are some other reasons given by the proponents of this idea. They can be laid out in six:

- (1) If they existed, the non-existent could not have been attributed by them.
- (2) A property needs a locus (*mawṣūf*) to exist. That would make necessity dependent on something else, therefore not necessary. And the contingency would be contingent for the locus; therefore, that thing is contingently not contingent (and neither necessary), which is an impossible case of being.
- (3) Again, as a property, necessity depends on something to exist. If it depended on itself, that is a vicious circle (*dawr*); if on another property, it leads to an infinite regress.
- (4) The contingent would exist before the contingency. That is contradictory to its being contingent originally.
- (5) This property, as an existing property, would establish itself on nothing or something other than the attributed by this property. That is because this property is essential and what is essential precedes existence, and since it is a property, it needs a locus.
- (6) The contingency is a relation between existence and the contingent thing. Therefore, it is dependent on them and follows their actualization. That means the contingent thing before its existence is not contingent, rather one

of its opposites, namely necessary or impossible. That is contradictory to the definition of essential modalities (Al-Taftāzānī 2019; Al-Jurjānī 1907, 3:109-16).

Al-Taftāzānī labels these as open to discussion, and, in his commentary, he will go into these discussions and answer some of the objections to defend these arguments (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:120-1). Al-Ījī and Al-Jurjānī also have their discussions over them (Al-Jurjānī 1907, 3:109-16).

The opponents, who think modalities have real existence as they are, have their arguments, too. Al-Taftāzānī says that the arguments of the opponents indicate that the modalities are not nonexistential (*'adamī*), but rather existential (*wujūdī*), without any further implication of reality (*haqīqiyya*) or considerationality (*i'tibārīyya*).⁴ It is clear that, based on some definitions of existential (*wujūdī*), it can still be the case that the concepts are considerational (*i'tibārī*). What is suggested by the proponents is that there is no extramental reality (*wujūd/haqīqa*) to these modalities, without any implication of them being existential (*wujūdī*) or nonexistential (*'adamī*). Therefore, the opponents miss the main issue in their arguments (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:122).

The arguments of the opponents, who attribute real existence to modalities, can be generalized in four:

- (1) If necessity (*wujūb*) did not exist, nothingness (*'adamī*) would be what strengthens existence and entail it.
- (2) The impossible is attributed by not being necessary. Since the impossible is nonexistent by all its properties, not being necessary is not an existing (*tubūtī*) attribute. If necessity did not exist, it would be that a thing and its negation

⁴ Here, we need to clear up some terms used by the mutakallims. Concepts are either existential (*wujūdī*) or nonexistential (*'adamī*). While there are different definitions for these terms, the most useful is to explain existential as which does not include negation in its understanding and nonexistential as what includes it. Blindness is an example for a nonexistential concept. It has, in its understanding, a negation, namely negation of sightedness. Other definitions given for existential (*wujūdī*) are existence (*wujūd*) and existent (*mawjūd*), oppositely for nonexistential (*'adamī*) nonexistence (*'adam*) and nonexistent (*ma'dūm*). Another distinction is between real (*haqīqī*) and considerational (*i'tibārī*) concepts. A real concept has an extramental reality as is, but a considerational concept has no extramental reality, be it true or not in itself (*nafs al-amr*). It has an existence as a concept in mind, and that is only when it is taken into consideration in mind (Abū Daqīqa 1995, 1:167).

are both negated (*irtifāʿ al-naqīḍayn*), and that is against the Law of Noncontradiction.

- (3) The contingency would be negated for the contingent and the necessity for the necessary when they are not considered in mind since what is not realized only by consideration cannot be a property of something, but only by consideration.
- (4) Following from the third argument, if they do not exist in the extramental reality, they do not exist at all. It does not matter if there is a consideration of them or not since what does not exist in itself cannot exist by relation to any other thing either (Al-Ījī, n.d., 69–70; Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:122-3).

The first is answered by just saying that a concept that is based on consideration is not merely nothingness, which has an absolute distinction from anything related to existence (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:122).

The second is a misconception about the Law of Noncontradiction. The Law of Noncontradiction is about propositions, where there is a dichotomy between affirmation and negation. However, sometimes two things which are contradictory to each other might both be nonexistential, as in blindness and no blindness. For them to be contradictory just means that they cannot be predicated for the same thing, not that one should exclusively be existent (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 191; Al-Jurjānī 1907, 3:124-5).

The third is answered by the “the thing itself” (*nafs al-amr*) concept. What is not realized only by consideration is realized in the mind when considered. When it is not considered, even if it does not exist, it might still be true for the thing in itself. Hence, the claim that it cannot be a property is denied. It can still be a property for the thing in itself. An example is the Law of Noncontradiction. As it is a law, it can only exist in mind. When there is no consideration, there is no extramental reality to it as it is. However, this does not mean that it can be false in itself when not considered. Whatever may the assumptions or consideration be, it is necessarily the case regardless of them (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:122; Al-Jurjānī 1907, 3:122-3).

The fourth is based on something Avicenna declared. Whose contingency is negated (*imkānahu lā*) has no contingency at all (*lā imkāna lahū*). That is because, he will say, nonbeings are not discerned one from another. This is answered by that rational discernment between them is enough and what is meant by the negation of contingency is not its negation from the thing itself, rather its negation from the extramental reality as it is. Therefore, what is negated in itself like blindness can be affirmed for something else like a blind person. Similarly, nonexistence, which is in itself negated, is affirmed for the phoenix. Actually, it is undeniable that properties that are affirmed for a thing, we find some of them to be qualitative/existential (*tubūṭī*) and some to be negating (*salbī*) (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:123; Al-Jurjānī 1907, 3:125-6).

Summing it up, this view simply states that in our minds, we relate existence to concepts and that relating, which is actually a consideration (*i'tibārī*) and not existent in extramental reality, has a quality to it that we name modality. While nonexistent, it is still true in itself (*nafs al-amr*). (We will explain what it means to be true in itself according to the truth theory of the mutakallims.) Since one side of the relation is always existence, the other side is what matters when it comes to the type of modality. Therefore, the essence is decisive for the modality. However, we cannot call the modality a property of the essence, neither a property of the existence, because both are prior to the modality, which emerges from their relation. Without that relation, neither has any modality. Yet, surely the modality is prior to the extramental existence of the essence since the considerational relation is prior to the extramental existence (Al-Jurjānī 2020, 158).

In any case, this property is a nonexistential property; that is, it does not have an extramental reality to it, but still true in itself, similar to endless negations we can attribute to a single thing. The metaphysical grounding is done on essences, but modality is still something other than and not reducible to essences. In order to further understand this theory, we need to look into the essentialism of mutakallims.

As a last note, some early mutakallims, namely a few Mutazilites and al-Bāqillānī and al-Juwaynī from the Asharites, claimed these modal properties to be existential. The idea is that modal properties and other considerational relations if they have

existential grounds, have a level of establishment in the extramental reality. It is based on a theory of modes (*aḥwāl*), mentioned by Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī for the first time (Fah̄r al-Dīn al-Rāzī 2019, 53–56). Other than this, according to the majority of the Mutazilites, nonexistent contingent essences are entities in the Meinongian sense. The falāsifa and other mutakallims criticized this view strongly, as it entails the rejection of the Law of Noncontradiction and other problems. For them, the suggested categories either exist or do not exist. There is no meaning to the claim that they exist but in another sense (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 147–57; Yavuz 1989). Whatever the case, we do not see a critical shift in modal theories of the proponents of these ideas. As they are rejected ideas and not significant to our purpose, they are not our concern here.

2.3.2. Essentialism and Modality

2.3.2.1. De Re and De Dicto Modalities

Certainly, the mutakallims are neither skeptics nor expressivists about modality. In order to have a grasp of how could the skeptical objections be answered by them, we can analyze some arguments. Quine has concerns about modality based on his distrust of Aristotelian essentialism. This costs him a lot, and in the end, necessity becomes merely “the way in which we say things” (1953). If it were true that essentialism is the only way to a metaphysical grounding for modality, we might say many would incline towards accepting it, rather than denying it, since Quine’s reduction feels very unnatural.

We can say that the mutakallims buy into the strong relation between essentialism and metaphysical grounds of modality. However, there is more to say. After skimming through their literature on logic, it is seen that the distinctions between de re and de dicto modalities are well-observed by the mutakallims. However, a somewhat different approach is present in their books (Al-Tahānawī 1996, 2:1793).

Consider the proposition: “My pet is a cat, necessarily.” This proposition, taken de dicto, is not true. My pet is not necessarily a cat, for I could have a dog to be my pet. Yet, the existing individual I point out as my pet is necessarily a cat. Therefore, the

actual case commits us to the truth of this proposition taken de re. Here, as Quine and those who take essences to the center of metaphysics of modality claim, the essence of the cat is the grounding for this necessity, if there is a metaphysics to the modality at all. The mutakallim will acknowledge this, unlike Quine, who altogether denies de re modalities. According to him, the only meaningful ones are de dicto modalities, which at the end of the day are nothing but attitudes of the speakers (Borghini 2016, 53–54). We see that, for Quine, reducing one to the other is not a solution for de re and de dicto modalities. We might say that this is because de dicto modalities also concern essences if they are taken to be more than attitudes.

We see, in the classical logic books, the mutakallims as logicians and others have a distinction similar to the one between de re and de dicto modalities based on a general approach to subjects of propositions. A subject has a meaning in mind (*mafhūm*). That meaning, as it is, can be what is intended in the proposition. That is what is called a first-order predication (*al-ḥaml al-awwalī*). If, however, the intention is to go beyond this meaning and speak about the persons corresponding to this meaning, it is a case of spread-predication (*al-ḥaml al-šāyiʿ*). In this case, the meaning is called a title (*ʿunwān*), since it is a title for a corresponding person (*dāt*) or persons. So, de re and de dicto readings of propositions can be taken as different ascriptions of the meaning of the subject before predication (Al-Tahānawī 1996, 2:1793). For the above proposition, the meaning (*mafhūm*) is the universal “being my pet” defines. This is always the case, and whether you ascribe it to persons and how you ascribe them will decide the proposition. If this meaning is taken as it is—that is a first-order predication—the proposition is false since “being my pet” does not entail being a cat, as it entails being an animal, for example. If it is taken as a title (*ʿunwān*) for a person (*dāt*) beyond this meaning, which is the person that corresponds to it, the living being I have in my house currently is what is intended in the proposition. In this case, the proposition is true because a cat qua cat is necessarily a cat. We need to be aware that the necessities emerging from these readings are both based on essential accounts. For the former, we take into account what it means to be my pet, and for the latter, what I have in my house in reality is. Differentiating these as different readings clears up many semantical confusions, and the discussion melts down to what concerns essentialism.

2.3.2.2. A Nonmodal Account of Essentialism

Essentialism is established by philosophers based on two main lines of thought. One of the ways is to establish it based on definitions and to seek definitions for actual and nonactual objects. The other way is to base it onto a modal framework, laying out the necessary properties of a thing qua itself. Kit Fine (1994, 3), a proponent of the former, says that contemporary work mostly started to give up on the way of definitions before him. What we see mostly is that they took modality *de re* as an explanation for essences, using the advantages of quantified modal logic. This could mean that they have actually given up on explaining modality through essences. Quine's objection to Aristotelian essentialism is directed towards this kind of essentialism. Unlike them, Quine (1953) does not see any other way of putting a metaphysical framework for modality than essentialism, so that there is a circular dependency, and that leads him to dismiss essentialism and modality altogether. However, there are philosophers like Kit Fine and Jonathan Lowe (1998; 2012) who are aware of this problem and go with the former way to establish an essentialist account of modality.

The modal account of essence, in the contemporary course of discussion, follows two different fashions. According to one, a property is essential for a thing, if and only if that thing has that property necessarily if that thing exists. According to the other, a property is essential for a thing, if and only if that thing has that property necessarily if that thing is identical to that very thing. Hence, one account conditions with existence and the other with identity. The significance of either one of them, however, is not clear. That is, there feels something about essence in relation to these conditions, but this approach seems to miss the point and end up with redundant concepts being introduced. Fine, indicating this problem, claims that any essential property is necessary, but not vice versa (1994, 4). So, we may say it is true to say that essence entails necessity but to say that necessity entails essence is a type of converse fallacy according to Fine's claim.

Considering the two conditions given by proponents of this opinion, we might claim that they actually introduce a scent of essence into the equation. By supporting the necessity of the property by these conditions, it seems like we are going back to

essence. That is because both, the existence of a thing and its being identical to itself, have something to do with its essence. If the necessity were not conditioned by these but given to be in virtue of them, it would be a clear confession that essence is the ground. However, by evading that, the modal account of essence falls down to assert some dubious cases.

Based on these dubious cases, Fine raised some objections, which have become famous in the relevant discussion. We consider Socrates and the singleton of Socrates, which has only the member Socrates. We satisfy both accounts, conditioning with existence and conditioning with identity. If Socrates existed, there would be the singleton, and Socrates would be a member of it necessarily. Also, if Socrates is Socrates, Socrates constitutes a singleton. Is this necessity enough to claim that belonging to the singleton of Socrates is essential to Socrates? Kit Fine answers by saying that we do not require or consider it when thinking about the nature of Socrates and do not take it as an explanation of his essence. So, he claims, this claim is not intuitive to anyone other than who is blinded by a conceptual bias. Also, all necessary truths will be essential for all things. The definitions do not prevent the evenness of four from being essential to Socrates. Whenever Socrates exists or if Socrates is identical to Socrates, four is necessarily even. That inflation is not only unnatural but also kills the main idea behind essences. Specifically for the first definition, where existence is the condition, another objection presents itself. If Socrates exists, necessarily Socrates exists. Therefore, existence should be necessary for Socrates or any other being at that. Fine discusses some possible ways out and shows that the core of the problems remains (1994, 5–9).

Lowe, following Fine's steps, wants us to be careful about definitions of words and objects. We are not looking for lexical definitions of words; rather, "a real definition of an entity, E, is to be understood as a proposition which tells us, in the most perspicuous fashion, what E is..." Lowe says (2012, 17). He stresses that "essence" is a generic translation for a phrase of Aristoteles, more literally would be translated as "the what it is to be" or "the what it would be to be." About this issue, Fine discusses the relation between analyticity and meaning. Definitions cannot be structures based on synonymity taken as a relation between expressions only, as some who favor the modal account of essence take it to be. Such a reduction to

analyticity tries to solve some mysteries about definitions; however, it misses a very crucial aspect. As Fine elucidates, the word “bachelor” has a meaning independent of it being explainable or equivalent to “unmarried man.” Its definition does not depend on the foreknowledge of synonymy between these different expressions; rather, it is validated by a meaning common between them. This meaning is what is relevant to our search for essences. Moreover, he points out that the definition for “man” is not well-grounded by “bachelor” or “unmarried.” We can say that defining “man” with “what is married or unmarried” is not enough of a definition. If that is the case, why is that the case? Here prevails the significance of the meaning of “man” we have in our minds independent of linguistic relations (1994, 10–14).

This type of treatment of definitions as expressions of real meanings in mind corresponding to essences is also what we find in the mutakallims. Inspecting the mutakallims, we see that their essentialism fits into an approach based on definitions, following a traditional understanding of Aristoteles. As al-Taftāzānī (2019, 161) explains it, an essence (*māhiyya*) is that by which the question “What is it?” is answered. This definition makes a definition an essence. However, he explains: in other words, the essence of a thing is that by which the thing is the thing itself. Clearly, he is after a reality expressed by a definition, not the definition itself as a linguistic structure. The apprehension (*taṣawwur*) of it as a unique essence is the real representation of it in mind. al-Ījī (n.d., 59) explicates it by saying that for everything, there is a reality (*haqīqa*) by which it is itself, and that reality is distinct from any other thing, be that other thing an entailment to it or not. Four has an essence different than five, but also, it has an essence different than evenness. When we say four qua itself is even, what we mean is evenness is entailed by its essence, but, in a literal sense, it is not right to say anything other than four qua itself is four. No other predicate will fit, considering four qua itself signifies the essence of four (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 163; Al-Ījī, n.d., 60). We can conclude that by choosing the way chosen by Fine and Lowe today, the mutakallims have dismissed Quine’s objection about modality de re. As Torza (2015, 2) explains in his paper, where he defends Fine’s objections in a formal way, this type of essentialism is a primitivist approach. The idea of essence is not reducible to more basic notions, be it modal or nonmodal notions.

The mutakallims did not care to defend essentialism, most probably because their biggest rivals, the Peripatetics and later branching schools, were all essentialists. It was never a question for them; however, we also see a contemporary philosopher, Lowe, to be not considering defending essentialism a necessary task. The serious question he asks, “if we do not at least know what a thing is, how can we talk or think comprehendingly about it?” blames not only an epistemological problem but additionally an ontological problem on anti-essentialist ideas. Quine’s objections about the governance of some property over another can be a serious threat against modal accounts of essence, but against Lowe’s question, they fall too short. Anti-essentialism brings an anti-realism that is not simply about extramental reality but also menacing against the very notion of identity. Our words and thoughts cannot be about different things because what it means for things to be distinguished in themselves, that they have identities, our own identity not excluded, renders meaningless. This is obviously a denial of what is very obvious to any thinking being, or even it is a denial of the very prerequisite of being a rational being (Lowe 2008, 34–38). We should also note at this point that Fine’s critique, as Torza analyzed it also, tries to show that these anti-essentialist problems are not solved successfully by modal accounts of essentialism, and analyticity does not guarantee identity. Anyhow, Lowe’s offensive argument in favor of essentialism does not seem dissonant to what a mutakallim would say. According to them, the essence-existence dichotomy is a priori. It is the mere reason why we can ask the questions “What is it?” and “Is it?”

2.3.2.3. Essential Properties

There is a substantial problem essentialism faces. To see how it finds its place in the classical discussions, let us begin with another detail we find in the Arabic logic books. It is about the spread-predication (*al-ḥaml al-šāyi*). Based on a modality of conditioning the subject with the title (*unwān*), we can have two different readings. Consider the proposition: “The cyclist has moving legs, necessarily.”

The person (*dāt*) behind this title without any condition, qua human, does not necessarily have moving legs. However, on the condition of this title (*bišart al-waṣf*), qua cyclist, he necessarily has moving legs. That is to say, if he is cycling currently,

he necessarily has moving legs (Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī 2013, 197–99). Here, we see that not being a cyclist is considered a possible state for the person referred by the title, namely “cyclist.”

Based on this distinction, one might claim that when we said that a cat is a cat necessarily, we assumed that not being a cat is not a possible state for the cat. That is, we just said that a cat qua cat is necessarily a cat, but we cannot say a cat qua something else is necessarily a cat. This brings us to a critical question, which is asked by Quine, about essentialism: Be it the modal account or the other, how can we decide the natural essence of a thing, what makes it itself? We have seen the definition given by the mutakallims above immediately going towards this. By saying that “by which the thing is the thing itself,” some predicates are reserved to be about the identity of the thing itself. That is, its identity cannot persist without those predicates. Those favoring the modal account, like Kripke, will ask a question about necessary and contingent properties in order to decide the essence of a thing. For the skeptic, Quine, identity should be understood in terms of fleeting and enduring attributes, for these are clearer than necessity and contingency (Kripke 2017, 22–23). Since, for Kripke, the necessity is reduced to affirmation in all possible worlds, we can say that for both parties, a property being essential follows from it being the case. Both approaches make it so that it is not meaningful to speak about the identity of my cat at this single moment, at this actual place. My cat’s identity is a result of consideration of endurance through time or consideration of other possible worlds. However, for the mutakallims, how they handle the problem shows us that neither necessity nor endurance is what grounds identity, but rather both necessity and endurance is because of the identity grounded by essence.

The mutakallims, in their discussions in logic, handle definitions following the Porphyrian scheme of five predicables. The first thing to say about definitions is that definitions are not always about essence. The mere function common to all definitions is to differentiate between the set of the defined from others. This goal can be attained by what is peripheral to the essence but specific to it. In this case, it can be what is necessary to the essence, or it can be what is actual for it without any necessity. The predicables that inform about the essence are three. These essential universals are species (*nawʿ*), genus (*jins*), and differentia (*faṣl*). Species is defined to

be a universal that is said in response to “What is it?” and that refers to numerically different but essentially the same members, such as “human” for that man and this man. Then, species is supposed to be a universal for a natural essence. Therefore, definitions of different species are what concern us. Their definition is made up of a genus and a differentia ideally. The genus is defined to be that is said in response to “What is it?” based solely on shared members which are not necessarily the same, such as “creature” in relation to “human” or “horse.” The differentia is what distinguishes a member from other members of the shared genus. It is defined as the response to “What thing is it in its essence?” like “rational” given as an answer for “human” in order to distinguish it among other creatures. For that genus and that differentia, one can seek definitions. In the end, what one reaches will be a set of high-level universals, namely the categories (*al-maqūlāt*). The categories are the end of this endeavor, for that they are not definable with a genus and a differentia (Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāzī 2012, 1:319-23). By taking into consideration the mysteries about the categories, the mutakallims seem to admit that the natural essences are not actually definable to the extent of full knowledge about them. We see Al-Jurjānī (2013, 257) saying that a complete apprehension (*taṣawwur bi al-kunh*) of something should reach its whole essence. For him, that is not only difficult but also not in reach for us humans. Therefore, sciences inspecting natural things do not aim—and should not aim for obvious reasons—complete apprehension of natural essences, but rather they use incomplete apprehension of them to make simpler judgments that are useful for us. It is not daring to say that this is indeed the case we observe even today. We do not have complete apprehension of electrons, protons, quarks, etc., but we have useful judgments about them like what attracts what and how.

Putting aside this problem, naming a differentia for every genus while going down the tree of essences, we encounter another problem. It is the problem of deciding a differentia from a particular accident (*ḥāṣṣa*) for the defined. We have this other universal, the particular accident. It is an accidental universal which is specific to an essential reality. Mostly, it follows from the differentia by entailment, as in “who can potentially write” in relation to “rational.” While this potentiality is necessary in any case, it is still not essential. Since the particular accident is specific to one essence under the genus, one can give a successful definition of a species by a genus and a particular accident, a definition that is inclusive of all members of that species and

exclusive of others. This definition, however, is more of a description (*rasm*) than a real definition (*ḥādd*) because it does not inform us about the essential universal, namely the differential, from which this particular accident and possibly many other unmentioned particular accidents emerge. Already having admitted our deprivation of complete apprehensions, trying to give a real definition is almost always impossible. Acknowledging this difficulty takes the problem given by Quine a step further. He questioned somewhat unrelated properties like “being a cyclist” and “being a mathematician.” Here, the question is to decide between universals to choose one to be the essential ground for others, even when there is a necessary relation between them (Al-‘Attār 1928, 54).

Al-‘Attār, after stating that this problem is a very difficult one, reports from classical books like *al-Muḥtaṣar* of Ibn al-Hājib that there are three criteria which can be useful in recognizing accidental from essential. Firstly, an essential universal for an essence and the essence itself, if they are conceptualized together in mind, it is impossible for the former to be negated. Secondly, it is not possible for this essence to be conceptualized without it being attributed by that essential universal. This is more exclusive than the first because here, there is no requirement of ready conceptualization of the essential universal in mind; on the contrary, the essence is enough by itself. Thirdly, an essential exists before the essence in mind and in reality, meaning the essence cannot be possible without the existence of the essential. As an example, “green” has “being colorful” essentially. When they are conceptualized together, one cannot negate “colorful.” When “green” is conceptualized, it is always attributed by “being colorful.” Finally, “green” cannot exist without the prior existence of “being colorful” in mind and in reality (1928, 54). The problem is the subtle cases of natural essences. One can settle for a universal, thinking it to deserve to be the differentia; however, what is dealt with is a natural essence, of which our information is very limited due to the limited empiric data at hand. Therefore, most of the time, the contentment after the arduous task of defining might only be self-deception. Vigilant philosophers, who do not want to fall into this trap, admit the fragile nature of their definitions as al-Jurjānī does. One such example is “life.” We see that, in the Arabic logic books, the genus is distinguished by “intentionally moving.” However, they will admit that this can be, at most, a particular accident. The differentia is out of reach, a mystery. Even today, with a vast

empiric flow of details, we still see that the philosophers are very indecisive and conflicting in what they say about “life” (Bedau 1996).

In favor of essentialism, what we can benefit from these investigations is that there are some properties that seem to depend on others. One needs to be aware that how a universal belongs to one of the five types is relative. “Being colorful” is a genus for “black,” a differentia for “howness,” a species for “what has howness,” a particular accident for “physical body” (*jism*) and a common accident (*‘araḍ ‘ām*) for “animal” (Al-Taftāzānī 2016, 146–47).” However, as we said, the dependence trees end up at some high-level universals. The mutakallims reduce them to three: substance (*jawhar*), accident of whereness/place (*ayn*), accident of howness/quality (*kayf*) (Abū Daqīqa 1995, 1:173).⁵ Any low-level universal cannot keep its identity as it is if it loses an essential part, but we can consider the identity of some parts of its essence to be kept. When a man turns to stone, it does not turn to it as it is, since a part of its essence, namely “animacy,” is lost. What turned to stone is some substance that is accidentally attributed by “animacy.” The identity survives by and for what is common between “man” and “stone,” and that is individualized “substanceness.” Therefore, a man qua man is necessarily a man, but a man qua substance is not necessarily a man.

To claim that there are some high-level universals that are not reducible to each other or to some higher-level universal is to say that there is nothing common between these universals. That means there is nothing that makes it possible that one becomes another without losing its identity. Therefore, there is no way a substance, an accident of whereness, or an accident of howness can become one another. A “cat” cannot become the “accident of whereness” for another substance. The “whereness” of a cat cannot become a “cat.”

Consequently, based on the understanding of a hierarchy of universals, we can say that Quine’s objection is to claim that there is only one high-level universal, and it is haecceity. According to Quine, substance, whereness, and howness have something in common, then. This requires us to go into theories on haecceity. According to

⁵ There are many subcategories under howness (*kayf*) and they might be considered essentially different. However, for the sake of the argument, that detail is irrelevant.

Quine, the haecceity of something is not dependent on any of its properties. This is not an easy thing to accept. The mutakallims, addressing the problem of haecceity (*ta'ayyun*), argue that it requires an essential discernibility. How the discernible thing earns its haecceity is the question. For it is a weighty problem for our purpose in this work, we will not get into those discussions.

Furthermore, no matter what, we can claim that the mutakallims do not need to deal with these problems. We said that a modality of conditioning is used to see different readings of “The cyclist has moving legs, necessarily.” This proposition is true on the condition of its title. However, without any condition, it is not. The latter is the heart of Quine’s objection, we might say. That is because the essentialist claims “The cyclist has intellect, necessarily.” is true without any condition, since “having an intellect” is an essential property of a human. Consequently, Quine asks: what is the difference, and what decides something to be an essential property?

Assume that, to get rid of this question, we claimed that the readings without any condition are problematic and to be dismissed. Still, we can say that existence is a different matter. Consider the proposition, “The phoenix exists.” If we do not want to deny predication of existence to be meaningful, we have to admit that, on condition of the title or without any condition, existence is not entailed. That is what the mutakallims mean by contingency. One might want to go too far to say that the phoenix is not necessarily something contingent, but it might be contingently something else that is necessary to exist. However, if something is contingently necessary, it is not necessary by definition. Hence, either that necessary existence is an essential property of something, or there is no such thing as necessary existence. That means rejection of essential modalities is nothing but the affirmation that everything is contingent. Then, there is some contingent existent. That fact, we can say, is enough for the mutakallims to ground their theory of the PSR on and proceed from there to argue for an essentially necessary being.

In conclusion, there are clearly ambiguities about the nature of these definitions and the definability of things. Nevertheless, the practical definability of things does not seem to be a serious problem. The main idea behind this essentialism is the concepts in our minds which correspond to things, not the linguistic structures. As mentioned

before, the modality emerges from attribution of existence to meanings in mind, regardless of how those meanings correspond to the things in the actual world. What is definable, how successfully defined are the defined, and what to do with ambiguous cases are irrelevant epistemic problems. Despite our poor epistemic resources on natural essences, that we do not—even cannot—learn and apprehend them completely (*taṣawwur bi al-kunh*), we have apprehensions about them at some level (*taṣawwur bi al-wajh*), by which we can distinguish things from others and treat them as independent identities. This idea is what grounds the analysis of essences in order to seek how they relate to existence in this approach of the mutakallims. We might not understand the reality of the green object we consider; however, we certainly know that being green requires it to be colorful. Moreover, being colorful does not require being green. This kind of analytic relations can give us a way into how that essence is predicated by existence, that is, how its essence relates to existence. Also, the opposite, what exists essentially, how its essential existence relates to other essential universals, can teach us about a hypothetical necessary being. This is the insight of the mutakallims when they attend to modality-related ontological issues about essences.

Comparing this approach to Lowe's, we see that he thinks that essences are expressed by real definitions. However, is it really necessary for us to know an essence wholly to ascribe it by some modal judgments? Oddly enough, Lowe (2012, 29) seems to think so, too. Sometimes, he says, we know of real definitions, and through such definitions, we can know whether an essence is metaphysically possible or necessary. His requirement of real definitions is criticized as a weak point in his theory of modality (Borghini 2016, 85). It is really not clear why he thinks he should go to that extent. There are examples that show us this is not required. For instance, if we know a hypothetical essence to be contradictory, we know that it is not possible without any further questions about it. Or, we know that if an essence is actualized without a certain property, that property is not necessary for it. In that case, we can say that the mutakallims have a more refined approach with less baggage here, and they prove strong against objections of availability of real definitions.

2.3.3. An Epistemological Solution: Mental Modalities

All propositions have alethic modalities. However, we are not always able to assess the modality of a proposition. An arithmetic proposition that is clearly necessary according to a mathematician, might not seem necessary to the uneducated. This is an epistemological problem. Some propositions, we can assess their modality after a long course of study, and some will always remain unknown.

To make a distinction between epistemological problems and the alethic modalities in themselves (*nafs al-amr*), an additional type of modality is defined. Mental (*ḍihnī*) modalities are the current decisions of the mind about a proposition. If something is mentally-necessary (*wājib ḍihnī*), the mind assesses necessity to the relation between the subject and the predicate, following the apprehension of both. Mentally-impossible (*wājib ḍihnī*) is the opposite. If these are the case, the real modalities of the proposition cannot be different in itself (*nafs al-amr*). However, when the mind cannot assess positive or negative necessity, that is, the proposition is mentally-possible (*mumkin ḍihnī*), it is not given that neither necessity nor impossibility is true. There can be a lack of apprehension. Upon completion of that apprehension, things will become clear, but it is also possible that there might not be a way to complete it. Therefore, if a proposition is mentally-possible, it can still be necessary or impossible in itself (*nafs al-amr*) (Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī 2012, 2:116-7).

The mind does not necessarily know every metaphysical necessity. Theistic arguments try to prove that “God exists.” Before the arguments, for the thinker, this might be a mentally-possible proposition. However, that does not prove that it is not necessary in itself. Furthermore, as we will see, the mutakallims claim that all qualitative attributes of God, which are existential, are necessary for him. There cannot be any contingent attributes. However, while all Asharites affirm the attribute of speech (*kalām*) for God, many of them deny that it is mentally-necessary. The prophets inform us about it, and its actuality informs us about the metaphysical necessity (Al-Ījī, n.d., 293).

We can conclude that for a certain assessment of metaphysical contingency, mentally-possibility is not enough. To be able to do that, we need to know that a

proposition is neither necessary nor impossible. That can only be the case if we know some other properties of necessity and impossibility. For example, we do not know that the existence of a tree is contingent because we cannot assess either mentally-necessity, or mentally-impossibility to it. We know that a metaphysically impossible thing cannot exist; therefore, it cannot be impossible in itself. And we know that a necessary being cannot have contingent properties like being in different places and having physical parts—for reasons we will discuss later on— therefore, we conclude that the existence of a tree is contingent.

2.4. The Truth Theory Behind Everything

2.4.1. To Be True in Itself

It is clear that for the mutakallims, both essence and modality are primitive concepts that cannot be explained completely through each other or any other metaphysical concept. Essences can have extramental existence as the specific essences they are; however, modality never has such an existence. It is always a concept in mind, but, as the mutakallims claim, true in itself (*nafs al-amr*). In order to further understand their modal theory and how so-called logical modalities fit into the picture, we need to look into what it means for a proposition to be true in itself. This is the key concept behind the truth theory of the mutakallims. This concept has a long course of discussion and some Islamic philosophers had different interpretations leading them to a certain type of truthmaking.

A proposition is not always about things we can show in extramental reality. Moreover, when it is about an extramental entity, not necessarily the predicate has an extramental correspondence, as in predicating something with possibility or necessity. Therefore, either one abandons a realist view or is willing to claim extramental facts for every true proposition. Many contemporary correspondence theorists of truth go with the latter. They are willing to make up for what we do not perceive by inventing entities in the fashion of Platonic ideas. However, we see that there are some who do not want to pay this price and choose the nonrealist way, claiming that it is not necessary for every fact of correspondence to be a mind-

independent entity (Kirkham 2001, 133). The mutakallims also consistently advocate such a view.

This view is explained by al-Iṣfahānī (2012, 321–23) concisely. Three types of propositions are given by him. First is where you have an extramental entity as the subject, and the predicate is also extramental, as in predicating “human” with “creature.” The second type is predication of an extramental entity with a mental concept, as in predication of “human” with “possible.” The third type is where both the subject and the predicate are mental concepts, as in predication of “species” with “universal.” These last two ones show us that not necessarily there should be a correspondence (*muṭābaqa*) between the extramental reality (*al-ḥārij*) and the proposition for the proposition to be true since neither “possibility” nor “universal species” are real entities in the extramental reality. Therefore, it is wrong to say that the correspondence is always with a real entity; rather, it is right to say that the correspondence is to the matter itself (*nafs al-amr*).

This position is not trying to overcome the troublesome task of reducing or linking every such nonexistence-related proposition to something real as some nonrealists like McTaggart do (1968, 26–36). It is not a rationalist claim in the sense that truthmaking is satisfied by mental constructs, either. That is, truthmaking is not mind-dependent. Conceivability is common between true and false; any statement you take, its negation is also apprehensible. Therefore, neither mental nor extramental provides a frame of correspondence (Al-Iṣfahānī 2012, 1:321-23; Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:95).

What is meant by “the matter itself” or “the thing in itself” (*nafs al-amr*)? As some explain, it means the matter or the thing itself without the consideration of who considers and the assumption of who assumes. Some explained it to be the subject of the proposition and explained it in the same vein (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:95; Al-Jundī 1911, 25). A possible objection is to say that we came to this point because some things just do not exist in themselves, so how can we speak of them to be in a certain way in themselves? This question is answered by al-Taftāzānī neatly:

Correspondence (*muṭābaqa*) is a relation (*iḍāfa*) sufficed by the establishment (*tahaqquq*) of relata in mind. It is clear that the mind, upon consideration of these two meanings and comparison between them, regardless of whether they are existent or nonexistent, finds between them an affirmative or negative relation at any time, entailed by either necessity (*dārūra*) or convincing proof (*burhān*). That affirmative or negative relation, in virtue of being a result of necessity or convincing proof with respect to that conception, (*ma'qūl*) without being exclusive to the perceiver nor the reporter, is what we mean by what the thing in itself is (*nafs al-amr*) (1888, 1:95).

This explains to us that correspondence is actually in mind, but never in a relativist sense. This internalist solution is still mind-independent. Many states of individual things like dependency, independence, entailment, requirement, accidentals, and essentials are explained through this approach. Also, mathematical objects and all their relations, impossible objects, and logic rules are all explained in this manner.

If a subject is not eligible to be a mind-independent object, as in the case of mathematical objects, its establishment has a sense only when it is considered in mind. But for an object of the real world, its establishment in the extramental reality (*al-hārij*) is also a part of what it is in itself. The propositions of the former kind have their correspondence only when they exist, and they exist only in mind. Since this correspondence is not specific to a certain instance of consideration, but it is unchanged for the considered relation at hand regardless of who considers it, it has self-establishment. This self-establishment surfaces for every thinker at the time of consideration, and the thinker knows that it is not specific to that instance of consideration (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:95; Al-Jurjānī 2017).

The mutakallims are aware of how their correspondence theory lacks truthmaking real entities. Arguing against others like al-Ṭūsī, who depicts a real truthmaking entity, we see a thorough explanation by al-Taftāzānī about how he understands this concept of being established in itself (*nafs al-amr*). Propositions like “One is half of two.” are not actualized after being potentially so, but rather they are eternally true, unchanging, and independent of time and place. This meaning is common for all correspondences of such. Therefore, al-Ṭūsī claims, what such propositions correspond to must be inlaid on an eternal, immaterial entity (*mujarrad azalī*). This entity is the Active Intellect (*al-'aql al-fā'āl*). Al-Taftāzānī's defense for the

mutakallims against this, we can say, is an objection against all realist accounts of the correspondence theory, including the ones that try to use the divine knowledge as the ultimate truthmaker. As he says, we do not consider anything related to correspondence to the Active Intellect when we say “One is half of two.” is true, and the denial of such an entity does not affect our knowledge of it. This example concerns mathematical objects; thus, it is easy to claim that this is an objection against all realists. Are we really aware of correspondence to a real entity, even if it is a very ambiguous one? Other than inconvenient efforts by some philosophers, no common person seems to think of these propositions to be corresponding to any such entities but satisfied with the affirmation in mind, which is a surfacing of the self-established truth. Though we will not mention here, there are other objections by the mutakallims (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:95). Moreover, we see that the judgments made by the mutakallims about the divine knowledge support this antirealism. Denying any ideas about the divine knowledge being a truthmaker, they say that the divine knowledge is by which the known is manifested, remarking its being subject to truths whose truth-values do not depend on it (Abū Daqīqa 1995, 2:28).

2.4.2. Three Types of Propositions

Having seen their theory of truth, we know how modality is grounded, according to the mutakallims. Modality, by definition, emerges in the mind when a subject is attributed by existence. When existence is the predicate, things are clear since that can only be a matter of extramental establishment. On the contrary, logical and mathematical propositions, as the mutakallims claim, have no extramental reality, so their attribution to existence is a different matter. In order to explain how the mutakallims deal with this, we need to go back to basics about propositions.

Russell (1905) introduced a new problem in contemporary philosophy by asking questions around the proposition, “The present king of France is bald.” How we understand this sentence and its relation to the actual existence of a king of France brought a new depth in the analysis of propositions. Many came to think about this problem after Russell’s paper. However, this is a matter of research in Arabic literature since al-Fārābī. There is a difference of opinion between him and Avicenna, which led later logicians to deepen their analysis of the problem (Quṭb al-

Dīn al-Rāzī 2012, 2:44). We will not deal with the details of that discussion; however, there is a distinction important for us here.

For an affirmative proposition to be true, its subject has to exist. If it does not exist, the proposition is straightforwardly false. This existence can be at two different levels, mental or extramental. Based on how we take existence into account, there are three different readings of propositions:

- (1) If we are evaluating a proposition with consideration of the members of its subject as an extramental existent, that proposition is called an actuality-proposition (*qadiyya ḥārijīyya*). In this case, for the truth of the proposition, extramental existence is required.
- (2) If we are evaluating a proposition by assuming an extramental existence to it, without considering whether the members of its subject really exist or not, that proposition is called an essentiality-proposition (*qadiyya ḥāqīqīyya*). In this case, for the truth of the proposition, mental existence is enough.
- (3) If we are evaluating a proposition with consideration of its subject to be only in mind, with it having an extramental existence being impossible, that is a mental-proposition (*qadiyya dīhniyya*) (Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī 2012, 2:57-8).

The propositions can be evaluated in different senses and can have a different truth value based on a different evaluation. Take “The phoenix flies.” as an example. If we take it as an actuality-proposition, it is false since the phoenix does not exist. Taking it as an essentiality-proposition, however, it is true, since assuming that it exists, it flies. The mental establishment of the subject is all that we need for this affirmation without the extramental establishment. It is obvious that this distinction solves many problems regarding evaluations of the latter kind. This is clear when we say, “The king of France lives in France.” Is this true or not? His being bald added another level and made things ambiguous, but in this case, if there were a king to France, he would naturally be living in France. How do we state that fact, considering that there is no king to France?

Now, let us take “Some numbers are divisible by two.” As an actuality-proposition, we can say that this is false since a number is an abstract object and have no

extramental reality to it. Also, since we cannot assume any numbers to exist in the extramental reality, their existence is always taken to be mental. Hence, it does not work as an essentiality-proposition. Therefore, this proposition can only be true if taken as a mental-proposition. This approach is useful when we speak about impossible objects, too. “A triangular square is an impossible object.” Here, the subject has a mental representation, and based on that, we can predicate it in a proposition.

Finally, as a side note, it is obvious that the distinction made here solves some crucial problems in ontology. There is much to say about Kant and Hume’s problems, and the discussions we can find in the books of the mutakallims are not even slightly inferior to the level of Russell and Frege’s discussions, if not superior. We will leave this claim without any elaboration, as this is a subject matter for another study.

2.4.3. Logical Modalities

These three different approaches provide us a strong framework for logical modalities. Logical modalities are not different from metaphysical modalities. The only difference is their frame of existence. Consider “The king of France is necessarily human.” Taken as an essentiality-proposition, this is true, but as an actuality-proposition, it is false. “Two is necessarily even.” is true, and it is sufficient for us that the existence of two is only mental.

This solution seems stronger than what Fine proposes. Fine tells us that there are different kinds of modalities. While we take essences as the ground for metaphysical necessities, logical necessities are propositions that are true in virtue of the nature of all logical concepts. The necessities of any given discipline are grounded by its characteristic concepts and objects (1994, 9–10). This idea can be interpreted to be somewhat similar to the classical approach we have seen, but it is not nearly as elaborate as it is. The nature of these concepts and objects of different disciplines is not clear in his suggestion. Even nomic modalities are treated with this approach by Fine. That lack of discrimination is a sign of disregard for this big question of logical modalities. Hence, as Borghini (2016, 163) says, we can say that Fine’s is a piecemeal approach rather than a wholesome solution.

The other essentialist we mentioned, Lowe, aims at a general theory of modality that is wholly grounded on essences. He shows that some examples given as logical necessities are actually metaphysical necessities. He analyzes “Water is H₂O.”, saying that it is broadly logically necessary, which means it has relations to the metaphysical state of natural essences. He is trying to solve this famous problem of Kripke based on his own theory of modality (Lowe 1998, 8–16). However, what he calls narrowly logical necessities, the ones which concern definitions, and strictly logical necessities, which are about laws of logic like the Law of Noncontradiction, are not clearly explained. Therefore, we can say that the mutakallims have a wholesome solution at their hands before playing the modality game, compared to these philosophers.

2.4.4. Predication of Existence

Consider the proposition: “The cat exists.” How do we read this proposition when we mean that in the extramental reality, there is an entity that is a cat? It seems that none of the readings work here. A mental-proposition does not concern extramental existence at all; thus, it is not an option. An actuality-proposition requires consideration of its subject to be existent. Therefore, there is no meaning to predication of it with existence. In that case, it cannot be affirming anything we do not know. Finally, if we consider it as an essentiality-proposition, the existence is already assumed. Assuming that the cat did exist, it exists. That does not benefit us anything.

There is something common between these three readings. They all take existence as the connector for the predicate. Given the mental or extramental existence, we study the proposition. The predicate can be grounded on a given extramental existence, or an assumed one. If it is not apt for such assumption in its essence, we make our judgment solely by mental establishment. However, when extramental existence is the predicate itself, speaking about another existence as the connector between it and the subject is absurd. Hence, the rule of three readings does not apply here.

For the predication of existence, we have two different ways. Take “Some animals exist.” We consider the subject without existence. We consider it in our minds

without its relation to the extramental reality. Like in a mental-proposition, we are satisfied with its mental existence and do not question its extramental existence. It can be attributed by the title, based on its discernment in mind. This way, we have individualization in mind. However, the way we handle it is about its whatness (*mā al-šāriḥa*), not its isness (*hal al-baṣīṭa*). Upon that consideration, we predicate existence. What we mean is: The thing that I mentally consider regardless of its existence has existence in itself (*naḥs al-amr*); that is, it has extramental existence. This approach works well for particular propositions like “Some animals exist.” That is because we can have an establishment of the individuals in our minds before predicating existence to them.

The other way does more than disregarding extramental existence, but also individualization is disregarded. In this case, the proposition is like a naturity-proposition.⁶ Consider “The human exists.” The meaning is: The essence we know in our minds as “human” has existence in itself (*naḥs al-amr*); that is, it is instantiated in the extramental reality. The difference between this and the former way is that there is no consideration of individualization of the essence “before” its predication of existence. However, that the essence needs to be individualized by this predication is not our concern. Also, note that when this way works for a proposition, the other way also works. We can just consider “The human exists.” with individualization, where its meaning becomes “Some humans exist.” Ultimately, both are affirmations of some extramental individuals for the essence.

2.4.4.1. Predication of Existence to the Necessary Being

There is a lineage of ontological arguments from Anselm to Gödel in Western philosophy. Contrarily, one cannot find even one such argument suggested or considered seriously by even a single mutakallim. Their ontology will not let them do that. As one of the last Ottoman mutakallims, the last Šayḥ al-Islām Mustafa Sabri

⁶ Consider the difference between “(All/some) humans are rational.” and “Human is a universal.” Obviously, there is a critical difference between these two. When we say that humans are rational, we take into account individualization of the essence “human.” In that case, rather than the universal meaning, the individuals that correspond to that meaning are the subject. But the latter is about the nature of the meaning itself. Some meanings are singulars (*juz ṭ*), and some others are universals (*kullī*). It is as if we are taking the meaning itself as an individual to speak about its nature. Therefore, propositions like this are called naturity-propositions (*qadiyya ṭabī‘iyya*).

(1981, 2:226), proclaims, it was a known fact to the logicians that “there are no boundaries to apprehensions (*taṣawwurāt*).”

Let us apply different readings to the proposition: “The Necessary Being necessarily exists.” This proposition as an actuality-proposition does not inform; thus, it is meaningless, as we have explained previously. As an essentiality-proposition, it can be informing us about the main thing we know about the Necessary Being, that he is necessary to exist by definition. This reading is meaningful and beneficial. If we assume there to be the Necessary Being, he has to exist necessarily, not contingently. Since there is a difference between existing necessarily and existing contingently, this informs us about a difference in the essence of the Necessary Being.

Based on this, it is clear that an argument of the kind “The Necessary Being has to be necessarily existing to be the Necessary Being, therefore he exists.” is moving from one reading to another. The premise is true as an essentiality-proposition. In that case, the conclusion, which shifts to predication of extramental existence, does not follow. The premise can also be true as one that predicates extramental existence; however, in that case, the argument begs the question.

As it is one of the most famous forms of ontological arguments, let us consider the argument from perfection:

- (1) God is supremely perfect.
- (2) Supreme perfection entails existence.
- (3) From (1) and (2): God exists.

The analysis of this argument based on the principles given by the mutakallims is rather straightforward. We see that Mustafa Sabri, who practices these principles, says that he is baffled by the weakness of the ontological arguments. The first premise is an essentiality-proposition: If God were to exist, he would exist as supremely perfect. The second one is also an essentiality-proposition: If supreme perfection existed, it would entail existence. This second proposition is actually similar to what we analyzed above, “The Necessary Being necessarily exists.” That is, “entailed” might mean “necessarily.” Anyhow, from these premises, the

conclusion can only be an essentiality-proposition, that is: If God existed, his existed is entailed. That is not a proof of God.

The only way to make the conclusion a statement about extramental reality is to read the first premise as an actuality-proposition. In that case, the argument begs the question. That is because for an actuality-proposition to be true, its subject has to have extramental existence.

The distinction accepted by the mutakallims between predication of existence and the other three readings undoubtedly dismisses all ontological arguments. It is not a daunting task to show that all ontological arguments, including the most contemporary ones by Plantinga and Gödel, make a forbidden shift between these different readings of propositions.

Finally, let us see how we can understand the proposition “The Necessary Being exists.” as one that predicates with extramental existence. Two different ways were offered. Since this is a singular proposition, both ways will work well. According to the first: The Necessary Being that we consider in our minds as an individual, but disregarding extramental existence, exists in himself; that is, he has extramental existence. The second will read: The essence we know in our minds as “necessarily existent” has existence in itself (*nafs al-amr*); that is, it is instantiated in the extramental reality.

2.5. Conclusion

The mutakallims have a mature nonrealist truth theory with well-defined mental-extramental relations. As a result, they are modalists. That is to say, they do not think modalities can be explained by other concepts, and they are not existential. They do not consider any realist or ersatzist alternatives to be consistent. They are not willing to give in to the assertion of any existential objects to solve truthmaking and modality problems. The mutakallims consider all such efforts a result of lack of perspicacity.

There is much more than what we have mentioned concisely here. The focus of this work is the fourteenth century. The detail in the supercommentaries then and from then on opened up new discussions, new details, and different understandings. There is much to learn from these theories, and the questions they discuss should be considered seriously by contemporary philosophers. Since there are all types of theories today, it is certain that some are founded on much weaker grounds. This is a result of, as Borghini says in his critical introduction to the metaphysics of modality, what is common in the contemporary debate that is “a methodology that is still much in vogue among analytic metaphysicians: they settle on a certain metaphysics, . . . but do not employ metaphysical arguments to defend it, appealing to sophisticated and subtle semantic machinery instead. . . . Contemporary scholars still have much to dig up and learn from the writings of the Arabic and Scholastic authors” (Borghini 2016, 39).

The modal theory of the mutakallims, by itself, deserves a thorough investigation. There are obvious strengths of it against most of the contemporary theories. This claim is to be argued for in another work. Nevertheless, for our purpose here, the modal theory gave us a relation between existence and essence. We affirm contingency, which is a primitive concept, for predication of existence to some subjects in propositions. Contingency in itself carries a dichotomy between existence and nonexistence, which needs to collapse for either one. This is where we start to look for a variant of the PSR.

CHAPTER III

PRINCIPLE OF SUFFICIENT REASON

The Principle of Sufficient Reason, in its most unrestricted form, asks for a reason for every true fact. It dictates that there be a reason for every true proposition we can recall. It seems an impossible task to defend this variant since it might require endless or circular chains of explanations. Therefore, we see philosophers—if they accept it at all—defend restricted variants of it. How they restrict becomes the distinctive characteristic of their variant.

The PSR is about reasons, specifically sufficient ones. Something is a reason for some other thing. On one side, we have the explananda, things that require a reason, and on the other, we have the explanantia, things that can work as a sufficient reason. For these relata, we have a relation. Therefore, for any form of the principle, these three are important characteristics. A well-explained form of the PSR requires one to determine the explananda and the explanantia and show how they are restricted. One would, of course, be demanded the grounds of his restriction. Moreover, he needs to inform about the nature of the relation. Therefore, one of the first things we look for should be the explananda, the explanantia, and the relation in the works of the mutakallims.

The mutakallims do not have any principle by this name. The first to have used this name is Leibniz (Melamed and Lin 2020). We have preceded going into their understanding of the PSR with their modal theory. That is because their discussion of matters that concern this principle comes after founding their metaphysics on essence and understanding modality as an essential property. From there on, the PSR smoothly appears as a natural follow-up. It is not introduced as a brute principle to arrange ideas but rather as a natural consequence of understanding essence and modal properties.

Our discussion on the modal theory gave us an insight into essences. Even if an essence is not apprehended wholly (*taṣawwur bi al-kunh*), still its attribution to existence is known to be limited to one of the three modalities, namely necessity, contingency, and impossibility. It can also be the case that we know something about an essence, and that bit of apprehension is not enough to find out the modality. Hence, at this point, before discussing the modalities of natural essences and going into an ontological endeavor in search of a necessary being, it seems right to analyze hypothetical essences with different modalities and find out what is entailed solely by the modal status of an essence. That is nothing other than what the mutakallims did. They brought an analysis of contingent and necessary essences, and relevant disputes are brought under the spotlight. There, among these matters, we find what relates to the PSR.

3.1. The Explananda: Analysis of Contingency

3.1.1. The Need for a Factor of Preference

In kalām books, we see that three main judgments are made about the contingent essences. The first is that a contingent essence needs a reason (*sabab*) for its existence and its nonexistence. The mutakallims formalize this principle with a famous sentence: “*Tarajjuh bilā murajjih bāṭil.*” It means preponderance without a factor of preference is impossible. The preponderance can only be between two equivalent alternatives. Contingency presents us with such an equivalence.

The late mutakallims unanimously agree with the majority of the early mutakallims that this is self-evident (*badīhī*). That means it is necessarily known to any rational being. Not only that, even infants and people with intellectual disabilities, as well as animals, behave in accordance with this principle (Abū Daqīqa 1995, 1–161). For further clarification, if the meaning of contingent (*mumkin*) is present in mind, being in need of a reason (*iḥtiyāj ilā sabab*) is justified for it without any need for proof. That is because being contingent means that there is no essential entailment of existence or nonexistence. Being in need (*iḥtiyāj*) means that neither existence, nor nonexistence of that thing is essential (*liḍātihī*), but rather it acquires either one for something external to it (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:123; Abū Daqīqa 1995, 1:134). If the

mind judges a proposition to be true only because it apprehends its subject and predicate, that is, by conceiving those, a judgment is necessarily made, the proposition is self-evident (*badīhī*) (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 103). This definition for self-evident statements given by the mutakallims does not specify self-evident statements to be exclusively analytic. Even if synthetic, if a proposition satisfies this condition, according to them, it is self-evident. Therefore, we cannot be sure completely if they were willing to go to the extent of saying that this claim is analytic. However, to say that it is analytic, of course, seems plausible, considering the way contingency is defined in their modal theory. Despite the fact that this statement has an ontological extent, that we are speaking about existing things and introducing causality into the frame, rushing to consider it synthetic is not well-grounded. That is because the way contingency is brought up in their modal theory gave us a rich primitive concept, in which existence, nonexistence, and maybe causality are hidden to be analyzed. Therefore, it can be claimed that the statement that a contingent essence needs a reason is analytic, but to be fair, whether contingent essences are metaphysically actual or not depends on empiric information.

As Melamed and Lin (2020) name them, there are factive and regulative types of the PSR. A factive variant states it as a fact without asserting the unintelligibility of the contrary. It is true in actuality, and falsification of it is just a matter of search for a counter-example. A regulative variant takes it to be true like the Law of Non-Contradiction, seeing no sense in empirical falsification. The mutakallims, obviously, defend a variant of the regulative kind.

There had been some criticism against the self-evidence of this principle, based on its obvious complexity compared to some other simpler self-evident statements like “One is half of two.” In defense, the complexity is acknowledged, and the prima facie ambiguity is blamed on possible hardships in apprehending the subject and the predicate. Actually, that is claimed to be always the case when people have hardships about self-evident judgments. “One is half of two.” is easy because nobody has a hardship in apprehending “one” or “half of two,” which is a result of the easy composition of “halfness” and “two.” However, for “contingency” and “being in need of a reason,” one might feel indecisive for a short moment, for there are layers into these concepts. This, however, does not prevent him from having a certainty

after apprehending these concepts (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:123; Abū Daqīqa 1995, 1:135).

3.1.2. Proofs for the PSR

The proofs given by those who do not take it self-evident are not welcomed by the mutakallims. One of the proofs given is dismissed by showing that it actually begs the question. Contingency is analyzed to be indicating equivalence of existence and nonexistence for an essence. If one of those is the case, the preponderance of it contradicts this equivalence. Al-Taftāzānī answers this by saying that this equivalence is with regard to the essence, and the preponderance does not contradict it unconditionally. It contradicts the equivalence only if it is also essential like the equivalence. This objection to the proof cannot be solved by saying that if there is no external reason, the only option is that the preponderance is also essential. That is because, in order to say that, we need to assume the conclusion, namely that there is always a reason (Al-Ījī, n.d., 71; Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:124).

The second proof makes a more fundamental mistake. It is based on that the collapse of the equivalence should be before the existence of the essence since the existence is a result of it. Therefore, the collapse must be something existential (*wujūdī*), other than the essence itself, existing before it. This formation is problematic, as al-Taftāzānī and al-Ījī answers, since it cannot be that existence became preponderant over nonexistence at the time of nonexistence of the essence. That is contradictory. The right thing to say is that the collapse is in alignment with existence. If there is a cause, it is not the collapse itself; rather, it is what causes the collapse. The collapse itself is just a considerational (*i'tibārī*) concept. The second proof is by al-Razi, and there is another proof he relays from the philosophers that assumes a controversial metaphysics of time (Al-Ījī, n.d., 72; Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:124).

3.1.3. To Begin from the Explananda

The first judgment the mutakallims make about contingency, namely “*Tarajjuh bilā murajjih bāṭil.*” is what we can call the PSR in the metaphysics of the mutakallims. The other two judgments about contingency, which we will speak about later on,

give us more details about the principle. At this point, what we can say is that the principle is not about all facts but only about some contingent ones. By asking for a reason, what is demanded is not a proposition to prove another one but a metaphysical status that is external to the contingent status at hand. For any contingent essence, existing or nonexisting, there is an external metaphysical status, which serves as a reason for either one to be the case. That is the case if existence is the predicate (*maḥmūl*) in a proposition. However, if it is connecting a predicate (*rābiṭa*) in a proposition, the existence or nonexistence of a contingent property of the subject, which serves as the predicate, requires an external metaphysical status. Therefore, for the variant of the PSR suggested by the mutakallims, we can say that the explananda are existence or nonexistence of contingent essences and their contingent properties. Hence, not necessarily all contingent facts are to be explained. “The tree exists.” and “The tree does not exist.” both demand an external reason to be the case. “The tree is green.” and “The tree is not green.” both demand an external reason to be the case.

We can claim that this variant of the PSR concerns itself with ontological problems. While justification is a matter in epistemology for the mutakallims, what we discuss here is purely ontological and should not be conflated with epistemological problems. Moreover, it is not necessary that we give explanations for every contingent truth. As we will see in the upcoming sections, there are some contingent truths that do not require an external reason to be explained, according to the mutakallims. That becomes possible by suggesting the concept of voluntary causation.

For many theorists, this approach by the mutakallims can be seen as a denial of the PSR. However, as we have seen, their approach is not a factive but a regulative one. They hold onto this principle as it is a natural consequence of their modal theory. Whatever we name their principle, it clearly solves many problems and avoids major objections against the PSR. At the end of the day, this is what everyone wants. Most philosophers feel very uneasy about denying this principle all at once, and its unrestricted assertion brings paradoxical problems. There, what we need is a restriction, but suggesting restrictions just to solve the problem without any solid grounding, is not an appreciable approach. The mutakallims did not start by asserting

this principle, just to try to lick it into shape by modifications later on. Rather, they started from the explananda. What does demand a reason? Therefore, we can say the restrictions are well-engraved from the very beginning.

3.1.4. The Source of the Need for a Factor of Preference

There is no dispute among the mutakallims and the falāsifa about the principle. In spite of that, there are crucial disagreements about the details, which have tremendous effects on metaphysical outcomes. The second one of the three main judgments about contingency is such an important detail; thus, it is discussed extensively in books. That discussion relates to the three things we have mentioned to be the key to one's take on the PSR. It is the nature of the explananda, as well as the relation between them and the explanantia.

For what a contingent essence needs an external preferential factor for its existence and nonexistence? The majority of the early mutakallims insisted on that it is incipience (*ḥudūt*) against the philosophers who claimed that it is contingency (*imkān*). Incipience is defined as the existence preceded by nonexistence. Some also claimed that it is incipience and contingency together, and some others took contingency on condition of incipience (*imkān bišart al-ḥudūt*) to be the source of the need. The later mutakallims, however, agree with the philosophers that it is solely contingency (Al-Iṣfahānī 2020, 2:157; Abū Daqīqa 1995, 1:136).

Al-Taftāzānī disagrees with the idea that there is anything related to incipience in what makes a contingent need a preferential factor. He repeats the reasoning by the philosophers that incipience is a property for the existent and a contingent exists because of a factor only after being in need of it. Therefore, the need precedes the existence (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 195).

There is another argument for the dismissal of incipience as the source of need. Upon introspection, we find that for the mind, it is enough to know that something is contingent for it to know that it is in need of a factor regardless of whether its existence is preceded by nonexistence or not (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:126; Al-Iṣfahānī 2020, 2:157).

Al-Jurjānī, for a third argument, says that it works only in the case that the incipience is taken to be the reason exclusively. We can conceptualize an incipient being (hadith) without its need for a cause, and that is possible only when we do not consider its contingency. Its need for a cause is not clear in mind unless its contingency is present (Al-Jurjānī 2020, 2:157).

In defense of the early mutakallims, al-Ījī says that they did not mean that the incipience is something external, and it causes the need. It was not an ontological statement, rather an epistemological one. That is, we know of the need in our minds through incipience. A contingent essence needs a factor of preference, but for what? Obviously, it needs for its incipience (Al-Ījī, n.d., 73). Al-Taftāzānī objects to the refutations of both sides based on the same idea. The source of the need is not something existential, through which the need is realized. Anyhow, the need is found in mind by consideration of contingency or incipience. So, attacking the early mutakallims for this issue is not relevant. However, he admits that the contingency as the source is more obvious and more deserving to be accepted, as the late mutakallims agreed upon it (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:127).

3.1.5. Necessitation for the Contingent without a Default State

While deciding the explananda, the proponents of the PSR face another question. Is there a default state of the explananda which do not require a reason? The mutakallims, facing this question, come to the agreement that there is no default state. The existence and nonexistence of a contingent essence stand at equilibrium since essentially neither is necessary for it. As we have mentioned before, the mind comes to realize that neither existence nor nonexistence is entailed by the essence.

The question is asked differently in the kalām books. Does nonexistence have priority over existence for a contingent essence? In other words, does a contingent essence have an inclination for existence or nonexistence? The third judgment about contingency is that it has no essential inclination towards either existence or nonexistence. Al-Taftāzānī proposes various ways to understand the claim that nonexistence has priority for contingent essences. Firstly, he says, if what is meant by this claim is that nonexistence does not need a reason, it is false without any

doubt. We see that this way of reading the claim makes it relevant to the default state discussion. For further clarification, an explanation is given by *reductio ad absurdum*. If nonexistence has priority, the dismissal of that priority is either possible or not. If it is not possible, simply nonexistence is necessary, and that makes contingent impossible, which is absurd. If it is possible for the priority to disappear without any need for a reason, that is just a preponderance of an inferior state over the preponderant one, which is way worse than a preponderance of equivalent states without any factor of preference, thus obviously absurd. If it is possible by an external reason and that reason cannot give existence priority over nonexistence, it fails to be a reason. If that reason can give priority to existence, the nonexistence loses what it has essentially. Losing something essential by something accidental is absurd. Therefore, nonexistence cannot be the default state. Reversing the argument for existence shows that it is also impossible for existence to be the default state (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:127; Al-Jurjānī 2020, 1:158).

Al-Taftāzānī's second interpretation takes priority as lesser conditions to be met and easier reasons to be attained. If that is the case, this priority is not essential to the nonexistence but rather to things external to it. Nonexistence, by itself, has no say over anything about these external conditions. Therefore, this priority does not make nonexistence the default state (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 97).

His third interpretation is based on a type of ambiguous priority that does not make any state the default. This reading renders the objections above irrelevant. However, there are no benefits there to be taken that can add something to our understanding of contingency. The priority is not enough and has no effect unless it reaches necessitation (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 198).

At any rate, the contingent essence cannot exist without being necessary to exist and cannot be nonexistent without being necessary to be nonexistent. Every contingent being is between a succeeding (*wujūb sābiq*) and a preceding (*wujūb lāḥiq*) necessity. There is nothing in between contingency and necessity; therefore, if it is not made necessary by a reason, it cannot become existent. By succession and precedence, real succession or precedence are not meant. What is meant by the succeeding necessity is that the mind does not accept a contingent to exist without

necessitation. In mind is the succession. Same with precedence, which is mentioned in logic books as a modality of conditioning. On the condition of the predicate (*bišart al-mahmūl*), the predicate is necessary for the subject. As in, on the condition that a tree exists, it exists necessarily, and it is impossible for it to be nonexistent. This metaphysically insignificant concept is a mental consideration. Still, our apprehension of succession and precedence of these necessities tell us that a contingent being cannot exist without a reason (Al-Jurjānī 2020, 1:159; Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:128). This clarification gives us a new hint about the relation between the explananda and the explanantia. The explanantia serve for the necessitation of the explananda, and not only that the relation between them is purely ontological, but it is also strictly for necessitation.

Should we take this approach as a choice of the most convenient option regarding this issue? The matter seems to be more serious than that. Deployment of the Principle of the Sufficient reason for the defense of this position in the discussion above tells us that the mutakallims strictly believe that if there is such a principle, the principle can only be this way, without any default state. Otherwise, it would be self-contradicting.

For the claim that nonexistence requires a reason, we need further clarification. When there is a necessitating cause for the existence of a contingent essence, its nonexistence becomes impossible. That impossibility is a result of the lack of a sufficient reason for nonexistence. The contingent essence cannot disappear if that reason is not actualized. That reason is stated to be the nonexistence of a sufficient reason for existence (Al-Iṣfahānī 2020, 1:224). As we have seen in the arguments above, the reason being nonexistential does not make the nonexistence of a contingent essence the default state, for that nonexistential state cannot be guaranteed by the contingent essence, and it is something other than it (Al-Ījī, n.d., 74; Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 227).

This teaches us that the explanantia can be nonexistential; that is, it can be the lack of a valid reason for existence. Moreover, these nonexistential explanantia are exclusively for nonexistence. At this point, the first question we should ask is what makes a sufficient reason for existence. Considering that lack of that reason is the

reason for nonexistence, this question will lead us to everything we want to know about the explanantia.

3.2. The Explanantia: Involuntary versus Voluntary Causation

3.2.1. Assertion of Metaphysical Causation

Existence is there. Hypothetically, it can be the case that whatever exists necessarily exists by an essential necessity of its own, without being in need of any external reason. There have been philosophers who claimed that. However, if, like the mutakallims and the falāsifa, for reasons we will discuss later on, we deny such an explanation and claim there to exist contingent beings, our discussion about the PSR is not fictitious leisure. On the contrary, it burdens us with the task of finding what is behind these contingent beings and how they brought them to existence. If we are to say that there exists at least one contingent being, that is our task. This concerns the explanantia of the Principle of the Sufficient Reason. There are three types of sufficient ontic reasons analyzed in the literature as candidates to be the explanantia: cause (*'illa*), nature (*tabī'a*) and power (*qudra*).

The first two are such explanantia that their relation to the explananda is involuntary causation. Power is an explanans according to the mutakallims. They introduce this concept of voluntary causation and claim that it is necessary to solve many metaphysical problems. Other than that, both the mutakallims and the falāsifa agree that the PSR gives us a causal relation that is irreflexive, asymmetric, and transitive. It is irreflexive because a contingent being needs an external cause to exist, and a necessary being does not need a cause. It is asymmetric because a circular dependency is impossible.

Before we examine involuntary and voluntary causation, there is a problem, which concerns any type of causation. If there is a result (*ma'lūl*), there needs to be an agent (*fā'il*) for it. Can there be more than one? Other than the Mutazilites, the mutakallims agree with the falāsifa that it is impossible. For a collection of caused individuals of the same species, there can be different agents. Some water can be heated by the fire and the sun. There are many particles to the water, and heating is a fragmental

process. In the end, some of the heat is only from the fire, and some of the heat is only from the sun. There is no problem. However, if we are speaking about exactly one individual as the result, it can only have one agent. The same bit of heating cannot be from the sun and the fire (Al-Ījī, n.d., 86; Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 229; Abū Daqīqa 1995, 1:151).

The argument given by the mutakallims claims that such a scenario is contradictory. If there are two causes such that they need each other to affect, they should just be counted as incomplete parts of a complete cause. If they are such that one takes effect and the other does not, the former is the real agent, and the latter is trivial. The critical alternative that should be solved is if the agents both take effect independently and sufficiently. If that is the case, the result is in need (*iḥtiyāj*) of one of them, for it cannot exist without a cause, but at the same time, it is not in need of it because the other is sufficient for it. Therefore, both causes are needed and not needed at the same time. Since that is contradictory, it is an impossible case (Al-Ījī, n.d., 86; Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:155-6; Abū Daqīqa 1995, 1:153).

If a cause is sufficient, we cannot add more to it. For a simple effect, you cannot have a more-than-sufficient reason. The explanantia, then, are such that they cannot be the reason for an already satisfied explanandum. Also, it is a question that if there are two different explanantia for a single explanandum, would the effect have the same identity regardless of whichever caused it. Al-Taftāzānī was indecisive about this question and left it unanswered (1888, 1:156-7).

3.2.2. Involuntary Causation

The cause is what takes effect unconditionally. If it exists, merely by its existence, its effect is necessary. The cosmology of the falāsifa gives us examples. The existence of the Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*) is the sole reason for the existence of the First Intellect (*al-‘aql al-awwal*). That is involuntary causation; there is no choice for the cause to hold back or go for a different effect. The nature (*ṭabī‘a*) is somewhat close to the cause (*‘illa*), only that for its involuntary effect, there are conditions to be met or obstacles to be removed. Many of the causal explanations of everyday events are done by natures. It is the nature of the apple to fall down, but if there are

obstacles preventing it, that effect will not take place. The fire has the nature to burn, but if the cotton is not close to it, the conditions are not met, and the cotton will not get burnt. These two types of causation, both of which are involuntary and necessarily effective solely by their existence when external conditions are met, are the only ontic sufficient reasons there can be according to the *falāsifa*. The notion of power, according to them, is inconsistent in its essence. Therefore, from beginning to the end, all reality must be explained through causes and natures (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 226–35; Al-Sanūsī 2017, 162).

In *kalām* books, we see four causes of Aristoteles are discussed and analyzed following the philosophers. The problem is taken from where the philosophers left it, and relevant discussions are made for the sake of the literature. In the end, the conclusions brought by the *mutakallims* show that some of those discussions are actually irrelevant to their view on the subject. We can learn more about the explanantia in their variant of the PSR through these discussions and conclusions.

Since a nature (*tabī‘a*) is practically a cause (*‘illa*), once its conditions are met, and there are no obstacles for its effect, they are both analyzed under the name of cause. Then, we will say there are unconditional causes and conditional causes. According to the *falāsifa*, when the cause (*‘illa*) is complete with all necessary means in order to affect, the result of the effect (*ma‘lūl*) has to exist. Claiming that a cause is something that may or may not take effect; that is, it is something necessary for the contingent to exist, but not sufficient all the time, takes us back to the beginning. The effect of the cause is, then, contingent, and it needs an external cause to occur. Denying that it is in need is the denial of what is stated to be self-evident. If that is the case, that the cause is in need of another one to take effect, it is just an incomplete cause (*‘illa nāqiṣa*) (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 223–25; Abū Daqīqa 1995, 1:149).

Therefore, there cannot be anything that is a cause for something randomly. It can be the case that something is an incomplete cause (*‘illa nāqiṣa*). However, it is never effective unless completed. The complete cause (*‘illa tāmma*), which is everything that one needs for its existence, is impossible not to take effect and it is never

complete unless all necessary means to effect are included in it (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 225–27; Abū Daqīqa 1995, 1:149).

From the four causes, what concerns the existence of a contingent is its efficient cause (*'illa fā'iliyya*) or agent (*fā'il*). It is by which something exists. If it is completed by other causes, if they are needed, and is complete with all other necessary means to affect, it necessarily takes effect. The agent for the existence and the nonexistence of a contingent is the same. Its existence necessitates the existence, while its nonexistence necessitates the nonexistence (Al-Iṣfahānī 2020, 1:356; Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 227). The explanantia, then, are always effective. If there is a valid existential explanans, which is an agent with all necessary means satisfied, the explanandum, which is the existence of a contingent, is necessarily true. Also, if there is a valid nonexistential explanans, which is a lack of an agent or necessary means for its effect, the explanandum, which is the nonexistence of a contingent, is necessarily true.

In conclusion, involuntary causation is such that the cause necessarily coexists with the result. Just as the result cannot be before the cause temporally, similarly, the cause cannot be before the result temporally. Causation is a necessary propagation of existence from one essence to other.

3.2.3. Voluntary Causation

3.2.3.1. Power

According to the mutakallims, there is not an essential contradiction about involuntary causation, as they are suggested by the *falāsifa*. On the other hand, they suggest that voluntary causation, namely power (*qudra*), is another candidate to be an explanans. It is not only hypothetically valid but also the current metaphysical situation makes it necessary to be a part of our explanation (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 531).

Power is defined as the ability to act (*fi'l*) and abstain (*kaff*). The existence of power does not guarantee effect. The difference between action and abstinence is not because of conditions or any other reasons. If it were so, it would be an incomplete

cause, basically. Therefore, there can be nothing external to the powerful (*qādir*) to decide between action and abstinence. Also, we cannot say that the powerful acts randomly. That would just be an involuntary cause without the necessity to take effect. As it is mentioned, this is not accepted by anyone since it is contradictory to the sole reason we ask for causes, the PSR (Abū Daqīqa 1995, 2:15-6).

If the powerful being does not act randomly and cannot have an external reason for its actions, what remains there to make it a valid candidate to be an explanans? The mutakallims, as an answer, introduce a new notion which does not please the falāsifa. Every powerful being, that is, every being with the attribute of power, has to have another attribute. There needs to be a sufficient reason for the power to take effect or not to take, and that reason is the will (*irāda*) of the powerful himself. Since the will is not external to the individual who holds the power, the power is not like an ordinary incomplete cause (Abū Daqīqa 1995, 2:16).

3.2.3.2. Arguments for Power

Before going into what the will is, let us see why the mutakallims thought that this concept is not only possible but necessarily actual. To understand where they come from, note that there is no dispute between the mutakallims and the falāsifa about the existence of a necessary being. As the existence of a necessary being is one of the most important subjects in anyone's metaphysics, there are many proofs discussed, and lengthy elaborations over them can be found in books. Some of these proofs will be discussed later in this work. Here, we need to know that both the mutakallims and the falāsifa claim that the PSR takes us to the necessary conclusion that there is some necessary being from the fact that there is existence. You cannot have circular causal relations between contingent beings, and an infinite regress—even if accepted to be possible—does not solve the problem of the need for an external reason for the whole set of contingent beings when we take them as one whole contingent entity. Therefore, every causal chain needs to end up at a necessary being at some point (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 509–11).

Through a causal chain, through many causal chains or directly without any chains, all contingent beings are caused by one or more necessary beings. That level of

information is enough for the mutakallims to claim that the power must be introduced into this problem. In the end, the Necessary Being has this power, according to them. However, at this point, who has the power is irrelevant to the question at hand. Regardless of who holds the power, there needs to be power. Hence, the falāsifa are in denial of a key piece of a solution to explain the actuality we observe. Claiming that the only valid explanans is involuntary causation means that the Necessary Being started everything by involuntary causation. What was caused by him? The falāsifa claim that it was the First Intellect. A chain of causation following it led to everything we observe in this universe.

The biggest problem the falāsifa face is that we still observe temporal change. There can be arguments using this change, but there are arguments disregarding the change also. Disregarding the temporal change—also making them work even if the B-theory of time is accepted—, arguments based on diversity of possibilities are formulated. The actual reality is not superior to alternative realities. Therefore, there are no eligible factors that can justify why the cause is in such a way that its effect is this specific actuality. Take celestial objects, for example. For a cause, in virtue of being a cause, all places and motions for these objects are equal. With respect to being the necessary effect of the Necessary Being, who is the First Cause, the chain of events that led to the actual properties of those objects equals to another one which could put them into different places with different motions. This argument does not significantly change if there are assumed to be more than one necessary being (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 531).

This argument does not deny that there can be causes for specific places and motions but rather takes back the question to the beginning of everything. What makes a cause take a specific effect rather than some other contingent effect must be essential to it. Otherwise, clearly, the PSR is violated. There is no dispute about that. By the falāsifa, the Necessary Being claimed to be simple and to be the cause for the simplest and most perfect effect of all, the First Intellect. It is immaterial and as close as possible to the perfection of the Necessary Being. Despite the claims of self-evident foundations to this theory, this is not evident at all, according to the mutakallims. However, even if such a theory is assumed to be true, it is still not evident where things went astray, and the actual universe is filled with all these

imperfect physical objects, which could have been provided with different accidents than they currently have (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 531).

The arguments that make use of temporal change employ incipience (*hudūt*) as it contradicts a pre-eternal (*qadīm*) cause. By pre-eternal, we mean what has no beginning to its existence, is before any incipient being and cannot be after any. By definition, a complete cause cannot be separated from its effect. Therefore, it is inconceivable to connect the observed change, which is necessarily incipient, to the First Cause. If there is a causal chain of complete causes, those causes are either pre-eternal or incipient. If the former, connection with the incipient; if the latter, connection with the First Cause is a problem for any of these causes. If they are incomplete but completed through time one after another, what completes any of them either exists pre-eternally or incipiently. If the former, the complete cause is actualized pre-eternally, so the problem remains. If the latter, the complete cause is actualized incipiently, so the problem remains (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 531).

The answer by the falāsifa is that the universe is not incipient but rather pre-eternal. It existed through a pre-eternal causal chain. From the First Cause to the last intellect and sublunar four elements, everything exists since pre-eternity. If there were no change in the universe, they might have pulled off with this claim, but trying to explain the observed temporal change in the universe by means of the A-theory of time brought many objections against them. What can change temporally about something is only its accident (*'araḍ*), not its substance (*jawhar*). In terms of this understanding, no substance is brought to existence after nonexistence. For the substances, this is an assertion of “*ex nihilo nihil fit*,” which denies creation from nothingness without any exception. The history of the universe is an infinite change of accidents, one after another. This brings the problem of infinite regress (*tasalsul*). Although the falāsifa were convinced that an infinite set of coexisting individuals is impossible to exist, they denied that the problems of such a set apply to an infinite set of temporally separated individuals (Sačaklizāda 2013, 358).

The mutakallims are not satisfied with this explanation. Other than the problem of infinite regress, the main problem, connecting between the pre-eternal and the incipient, is still there. These accidents, as incipient beings, are results of causal

chains. The falāsifa came up with a solution, which complicates the theory of causal relations a step further. A concept of preconditioning (*mu'īd*), which complete a cause to take effect by existing and vanishing before the result, is suggested. Also, going back to the Aristotelian categories, they made use of a metaphysical theory about motions. It is that a motion is one thing, like gunk in mereology, indivisible, and it should not be considered as a process of accidents of changing place, but it should be treated as a single accident of motion from beginning to end. Therefore, the motion of a celestial object is only one pre-eternal motion. These dubious concepts are strongly objected to by the mutakallims (Al-Ġazālī 1972, 125–35).

Another problem is that the supposedly pre-eternal substances are always equipped with incipient accidents. There does not pass a moment in the history of a substance when it does not have an incipient accident. Thus, all moments of a substance are incipient moments. This makes the totality of the substance incipient. This argument by the mutakallims can be taken as a demonstration of contradiction between temporality and pre-eternity. Time has to have a beginning since all its moments are incipient regardless of whether it is assumed to have a beginning or not. Therefore, time is exclusively for incipient beings, and the relation between pre-eternity and incipience is a dual, meta-temporal relation. The falāsifa did not believe in such a distinction. In response, they came up with another conceptual distinction. The claim is that there is a difference between special pre-eternity (*qidam naw'ī*), that is, pre-eternity with regard to a species, and individual pre-eternity (*qidam dātī*). The latter is the usual pre-eternity, as we know it. Something that does not have a beginning and succeeds any incipient being is individually pre-eternal. The former concept brings the claim that a species can be pre-eternal with all of its individuals incipient. If a physical object has changing colors since pre-eternity, its color at any moment is incipient; thus, there is no individual pre-eternity for the colors. However, the color of that object, as a species, is pre-eternal. The mutakallims do not have any respect for this idea, as it is an obvious fallacy according to them, based on a leap of faith from individuals to considerational totalities (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 201).

To sum it up, by *reductio ad absurdum*, the mutakallims claim that we need to accept power as an actual metaphysical property. Otherwise, as al-Ījī summarizes, at least one of these four is the case: that there are no incipient beings, that incipient beings

do not need reasons to exist, infinite regress or that an effect can lag behind a complete cause (*tahalluf*) (Al-Ījī, n.d., 281).

3.2.3.3. Arguments against Power

Other than their defense against the arguments for the need for power as an explanans for the actuality, the philosophers have their own arguments against the conceptual validity of power. They also have arguments based on an understanding of divine simplicity, which renders it impossible for the Necessary Being to be attributed by power. However, whatever the case, if conceptual invalidity of power is given, the workarounds made by the *falāsifa* and the new concepts they introduced seem to be the only alternative for this variant of the PSR. For this reason, we will discuss their arguments against the conceptual validity of power here and leave other arguments for later discussions about the Necessary Being. These arguments are important since, through the answers of the *mutakallims*, we are given an entrance to deeper details about their theory on this explanans, namely power, which makes their variant of the Principle of Sufficient unique.

The arguments of those who deny the validity of power, using similar arguments to the *mutakallims*, try to show its contradictory nature through *reductio ad absurdum*. Either that, the power needs a reason to take effect or not. If it needs a reason, then that reason is either a power or a cause. If we keep answering with the former, an infinite regress is unavoidable. The latter renders power to be a part of a complete cause; therefore, it is just an incomplete cause in that case. If it does not need a reason, it is a violation of the PSR. The answer to this objection is that the powerful does not need a reason, because of his will. The powerful, by will, chooses his action. Therefore, by essence, the will is a source of preference. Does not the same objection apply to will? It is admitted that it applies. Therefore, the *mutakallim* must answer how he justifies such a concept, whose activation is without a reason (Al-Ījī, n.d., 281–82; Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 533). We will discuss this concept later.

Another argument is based on the activation we have just mentioned. Both the power and the will either connect (*ta'alluq*) to the target essence pre-eternally or incipiently. If the former, everything should have been pre-eternal. If the latter, this theory

suffers from problems about connecting between the pre-eternal and the incipient. The answer to this objection asserts that neither is problematic. Be it the connection of will is pre-eternal, the power's taking effect pre-eternally does not follow from that. Also, it can be thought that the connection is incipient by these properties themselves, and that does not threaten their pre-eternality. All this is based on that the connection between these properties and their effects is considerational, not existentially real. By definition, as for the activation, they do not need an external reason; the preference by their essence is absolute without any conditions. This answer, again, as in the previous case, demands more about the concept of will (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 533).

There is also an argument based on a comparison to complete causes. If everything that a result needs exist, then it necessarily exists. In this case, if the powerful has everything for the result to exist, the result must exist. This means that it is a cause. However, clearly, this argument begs the question because it assumes that something can be a reason only through involuntary causation, where neither the effect nor the cause lags behind each other, and there is no choice (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 533).

There are some other arguments, which confuse essential and accidental necessities. If it is necessary for an essence to be nonexistent in pre-eternity, it cannot become existent incipiently. Also, the divine foreknowledge makes it impossible for the powerful to act with free will. As we have seen in modality-related discussions, both are accidental necessities. Therefore, these problems are dismissed right away (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 535).

The mutakallims are insistent that there are no conceptual problems about the ideas of will and power. The idea of indeterministic voluntary causation by a willing powerful being is not inconsistent. For such a being, to will the existence of incipient beings is not in contradiction with his pre-eternal will. As al-Ghazali puts it, if there were any problems to it, it is either to be proved or to be claimed *ḍarūrī*. There are no substantial arguments to be put, and the actuality forces that it is actual, thus possible. For any claims that it is *ḍarūrī*, that is, the apprehension of incipient causation and pre-eternality is enough to infer inconsistency, if it were so, it would

not be subject to extensive discussions and difference of opinions (Al-Ġazālī 1972, 98).

3.2.3.4. Will: Preference versus Preponderance

It is obvious that the concept of a willing powerful being offered by the mutakallims suggests a restriction to the Principle of the Sufficient Reason. The explananda are restricted to the contingent essences. Not every contingent fact needs an explanation. That is because the will is taken to be a source of preference essentially. Without any dependency whatsoever, it is enough for the will to exist to be a source of preference.

The falāsifa do not appreciate such restrictions. This is a grave crisis, for them, in one's metaphysics. The formalization of the PSR according to them is: “*Tarjīh bilā murajjih bāṭil.*” It means preference without a factor of preference is impossible. This sentence differs by a word from what is suggested by the mutakallims. The early mutakallims used this sentence, but what they meant was different. Considering that difference, we see a change from preference (*tarjīh*) to preponderance (*tarajjuh*): “*Tarajjuh bilā murajjih bāṭil.*” Preponderance without a factor of preference is impossible. By preponderance, the self-preponderance of existence or nonexistence of a contingent essence is meant. A contingent essence, essentially, cannot be the source of preference. The early mutakallims interpreted the sentence used by the falāsifa exclusively for such cases. Therefore, when we say a willing being prefers, the principle is not violated. There is a factor of preference: the will of the willing being. Is it necessary for the preference of the preferer to have an external factor of preference? By any means, the answer is no (Al-Ījī, n.d., 281).

We can conclude that the explanandum according to the falāsifa is preference (*tarjīh*), while it is preponderance (*tarajjuh*) according to the mutakallims. Preference is taken to be inclusive of and more general than preponderance. Claiming that all preferences need an existential factor of preference makes it impossible for any unchanging being to be the sole source of alternative preponderances anywhere.

Preference cannot be without any external reason, according to the *falāsifa*. According to them, this is a part of the self-evident principle. For the *mutakallims*, far from being a part of it and being self-evident, it is actually false. For them, one cannot find a rational proof for the impossibility of the hypothetical will, which is an independent source of preference. The only way we can speculate about it is by looking for empiric evidence. There, we find that it is actually impossible for the current universe to be actual without the actuality of such will. Actuality entails possibility, and that further strengthens the claim that there are no rational drawbacks to such a concept (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 1:124).

Assuming external motives for the preference due to will and trying to put it back to a necessitarian frame harms the intention behind its admittance. As the previous discussion pointed out, claiming to solve the problem of incipient beings only through involuntary causation is not a viable option. Therefore, we are speaking about such will that it is absolutely free and independent. Some, for the sake of a more unrestricted variant of the PSR, try to put it under constraints. However, according to the *mutakallims*, such variants of the Principle are necessarily false, by the empiric fact that there are incipient beings.

In conclusion, we see that the concept of voluntary causation should be studied in order to understand the PSR according to the *mutakallims*. Approving of it as an explanans restricts the explananda to contingent essences and their contingent properties, rather than contingent facts.

3.2.3.5. The Best Possible Choice as Constraint of Will

Some philosophers came up to the point of asserting will, specifically the will of God, in their theories of the PSR. However, perplexed by the contingent facts regarding actions based on this will, they ended up trying to find a way to constraint it to the extent of compulsion, that they claimed that there is only one possible world the willing agent could prefer, and it is the actual one. By this, one thinks, the PSR is as unrestricted as possible, similar to its variant proposed by the *falāsifa*. On this matter, we find some ideas by some *mutakallims* that one could mistake for such an account. However, upon examination, we find that they do not even remotely see it

as a matter concerning the PSR. In any case, the claim of will as an independent preferer remains standing.

To begin with, is there a best possible choice? In order to find more about that, we need to look into a debate among the mutakallims, known as the problem of good and evil (*mas'ala' al-husn wa al-qubh*). There is a question about objective good and evil that is essential to actions. There are a variety of answers to this question. Based on the answers, if there is a motive to God's will is discussed (Fūda 2009, 42–45).

The Asharites save themselves from bringing any constraints to the will of God by denying objective good and evil altogether. The Maturidites and the Mutazilites acknowledge that good and evil extend to actions. There comes the question of God's actions. They will straightforwardly say that no action of God is evil. The Maturidites, despite that confirmation, go into a discussion to prove that this is not because the will of God is forced in any way whatsoever. They insist that God wills to do good without being incapacitated of doing evil. What makes him ultimately good and deserving to be praised is actually his abstinence from evil with this unconditional power to do so (Fūda 2009, 45–56).

The Mutazilites are said to defend a position that God is claimed to be forced. He has no choice but to do some actions. There are some classes of actions named, but the most significant is that it is necessary for him to create the most beneficial (*al-aṣlah*) for those under his sovereign. The Mutazilites are criticized by objections mentioning some observable actions of God. There exist actions of God that do not fit into such rules (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 611–13). We will not deal with how the Mutazilites answer and how the rest of the discussion goes because it is not related to our main problem at this moment. What concerns us is that it is not easy to claim that, according to them, there exists only one best possible world. Also, all good and evil seem to relate to living beings. Therefore, it is a long leap to extend their views to inanimate objects. Moreover, not necessarily everything possible for living beings can be classified as good or evil, but some things seem to be neutral. Also, for one, there can be alternative goods, all of which are open to God's will. Other than that, the Mutazilites claim that some evil is done by the hands of humans, and humans have independent free will with power (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 581). These strong clues

show that their ideas about these constraints on will are not related to their variant of the PSR. That is, those ideas are not to eliminate indeterministic aspects of voluntary causation.

3.2.3.6. Effect of Power

Effect of power for the existence of contingent beings is better to be called creation (*halq*) than causation. The involuntary causation requires the coexistence of the cause and the result together. If the cause is pre-eternal, so is the result. If all causation is by involuntary causes, then “*ex nihilo nihil fit*” is the case. However, if there is also voluntary causation, it brings *creatio ex nihilo* necessarily. That is, voluntary causation cannot have pre-eternal effects.

Involuntary causation is not about making changes. Taking effect of involuntary causation is by entailment. By the existence of a cause, its result is entailed. Hence, their coexistence is necessary, and there is no reason to deny that coexistence pre-eternally. However, the power is different. For the power to take effect, there needs to be specification (*taḥṣīṣ*) by the will. The will of creation is only valid if the object is in need of creation. Therefore, it is not viable if the effect is assumed to be pre-eternal. A pre-eternally existing entity cannot be an object of the will. That would be the creation of what already exists, and that is absurd (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 201).

The mutakallims, using this argument, claimed that by power, there could only be a creation from nothingness. Also, since there are no pre-eternal involuntary causes along with God, there are no pre-eternal contingent entities. All that there is other than God are incipient beings. This is not only an empirical statement based on observation of change as it is used in the Proof from Incipience (*dalīl al-ḥudūt*)—also known as the Kalām Cosmological Argument—, but a result of what the PSR entails by application to matters regarding the Necessary Being (Abū Daqīqa 1995, 1:141).

Consequently, the explananda at hand are all incipient. However, this is not essentially necessary to the PSR but rather accidental to it. As Al-Taftāzānī proclaims, if there were involuntary causes, there could have been pre-eternal

contingent entities (2019, 201). The essential contingency is not in clash with the accidental necessity, even if the accidental necessity is pre-eternal. Therefore, while the actual explananda are all incipient, this cannot be taken as a restriction to the PSR.

After the claim that the effect of power cannot be pre-eternal existence of a contingent being, the question of the original nonexistence of contingent essences follows. That is something other than destruction, which follows existence. Based on two different views on the need of contingent for effect, the original nonexistence is explained.

The early mutakallims, by saying that incipience is the source or a part of it or a condition for it, made it so that the original nonexistence is not in need of a factor of preference. We might even say that, for them, it is the default state for the PSR. However, as the mutakallims gave up on that view for various problems it brought and took the source of the need to be contingency only, the original nonexistence must have a reason. As mentioned above, a pre-eternal existence for contingent beings is out of the question. Therefore, it does not need a reason provided by God's power. The reason is the lack of involuntary causation and contradiction to being a result of willing power. For the incipient nonexistence, which continues until creation or forever, part of the reason is the lack of involuntary causation. However, since power is eligible to take effect in this case, the reason is willing abstinence by the powerful. This is an action because abstinence from using effortless power as a choice of nonexistence is not different than using it for existence. This approach provides us with an explanation of how the PSR is at work for the original nonexistence of contingent essences. No exceptions are made, and as originally suggested, nonexistence is not taken for granted but provided reasons.

After the creation of contingent essences, another effect of power we need to discuss is the maintenance (*ibqā*) of created contingent beings. This problem is also related to the source of need problem. If incipience is taken as somewhat related to the source of need, its continuation (*baqā*) does not need the agent that created it. However, if the contingency is taken to be the source, since it is essential to the contingent being at the time of its existence also, the need continues. Some objected

to this as it entails the creation of already created. Also, the need of the contingent essence is for its existence, and once that is provided, why would it need the agent? The reply of those who take the source of need as contingency is that the contingent essentially has no guarantee over existence. At the moment of incipience, it is created. That is, the agent provides it with the origination of existence through creation. After the incipience, any moment that comes, it still essentially needs existence provided for it. Therefore, it keeps existing not by the renewal of existence every moment but by the continuation (*baqā*) of existence through the agent's act of making it continue (*ibqā*). Hence, we can say, the universe existed and kept existing only by the power of God. All substances and accidents, without any exception, are in an essential need (Al-Jurjānī 2020, 2:225-26).

Confessing that everything unconditionally is in need of God is a pleasing result for the mutakallims for its complete confirmation of what is stated by the Qur'an. The early mutakallims, trying to solve the problem of pre-eternal contingent beings, emphasized incipience as a part of the source of need. This brought them heavy problems, as it harms the relation between God and needy creatures of him. For a solution, not revising their view on the source of need, they ended up with some complicated theories about substances and accidents. Firstly, they said that there could not be a contingent substance without an accident. Secondly, an accident cannot continue, but it is essentially momentary. Essentially an accident is so that it exists for only a single moment and cannot maintain its existence for another moment. It is not that it is in need of maintenance, but it is not logically possible for it to continue to exist. Based on this, since all substances are in need of accidents, every substance is in need of the Creator, every moment of its continuation. This tricky solution effectively puts substances in need of God, but that need is not complete and direct. This solution is not as pleasing as what is agreed upon by the late mutakallims (Al-Jurjānī 2020, 2:225-26).

The theory of accidents not continuing had to be built on some arguments. However, the arguments in favor of this claim seem very forced. In later kalām books, for the serious results of the discussion, all of these arguments are refuted from many perspectives, and actual candidates for seemingly continuing cases of accidents are

given as counterexamples. Other than that, additional arguments for the inconsistency of such a view are discussed in detail (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 257–61).

Lastly, the effect of power for the nonexistence of contingent beings is destruction (*i'dām*). This nonexistence follows existence; therefore, it should be explained how the only reason for contingent changes, namely power, fits into the picture. This problem is closely related to what we have just discussed, the continuance. The problematic view of taking incipience as the source of need takes bigger revenge here. We encounter solutions that sound really absurd. Some claimed that an accident of destruction is created for the substance. It is such an accident that the moment after its existence, the substance equipped by it cannot continue anymore. Some claimed that by lack of creation of necessary accidents for the substance, God puts it into a trap of inconsistency. For example, by not creating motion or rest for a physical object, it is put into this trap of not being in motion neither in rest. Such an inconsistent state makes it impossible for the physical object to exist, so it is destroyed (Al-Ġazālī 2012, 103–6).

Unlike the old view, the view that the source of need is contingency solves this problem very smoothly. The agent, who is responsible for the continuation of existence, which is not essentially guaranteed by the contingent essence itself, drops his act of continuation. There comes the destruction. The reason for destruction, which is the incipient nonexistence the contingent essence faces, is the lack of continuation provided by the powerful (Al-Jurjānī 2020, 2:226).

In conclusion, we see that power is the sole first-order explanans in actuality, according to the mutakallims. Therefore, all existential explananda are incipient. However, in theory, the PSR satisfies enough ground for hypothetical pre-eternal contingent entities. In conclusion, the power has four functions: continuation of nonexistence by abstinence (*kaff*), origination of incipient existence (*halq*), continuation/maintenance of existence (*ibqā*), and destruction of existence (*i'dām*). The mutakallims believe that through these, we solve the problem of change in the universe, once and for all.

CHAPTER IV

CONSEQUENCES

4.1. The Necessary Being

4.1.1. Existence of the Necessary Being

The most important consequence of the PSR is, without any doubt, the affirmation of necessary existence. We have seen what it means to be necessarily existent, according to the mutakallims, in discussions about modality. Also, we do not need to mention that the necessity in question here is the essential necessity. Most variants of the PSR end up with an ontological version of the Agrippan trilemma. The causal chain of reasons requires at least one of the three: an infinite regress, a circular dependency, an uncaused reason. The mutakallims are satisfied with the assertion of the Necessary Being as the uncaused reason. The falāsifa, on top of that, also claim infinitely regressive causal chains in order to solve the problem of connection between pre-eternity and incipience.

We can consider the Agrippan trilemma, together with the denial of the PSR a tetralemma. Hence, in order to avoid the first three, one can deny the PSR. However, the denial of this principle, which is based on a modal theory as we have seen, is the worst of all, according to both the falāsifa and the mutakallims. As we will see, even if an infinite regress or a circular dependency is used as an explanation of the actual universe, one still needs to assert an uncaused cause.

There are two main lines of cosmological arguments in the literature. The early mutakallims came up with the Proof from Incipience, which is also known as the Kalām Cosmological Argument today. It is based on proving a pre-eternal being using incipient existence as evidence. After that, it is claimed that the only pre-eternal being is the Necessary Being. The other one, which is formulated by

Avicenna, is based on modal premises. It is the Proof from Contingency (*dalīl al-imbkān*). It is a cosmological argument because it starts from the empirical premise “There is some existent.” Both proofs are acknowledged by the mutakallims (Al-Iṣfahānī 2012, 2:923; Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 2:57). They further investigated these arguments and laid out various solutions for possible objections. There are many treatises specialized in arguments for the Necessary Being, which gained the attention of commentators (Topaloğlu 2012, 115–33).

4.1.1.1 The Proof from Incipience

The Proof from Incipience is based on the empirical information that there are incipient beings. Its formulation is as follows:

- (1) There is some existent.
- (2) An existent is either pre-eternal or incipient.
- (3) An incipient being could not have existed without an agent.
- (4) From (3): For a causal chain, at least one side of the Agrippan trilemma is the case.
- (5) An infinite regress and a circular dependency are impossible.
- (6) From (3), (4), and (5): If there is an incipient being, there is an uncaused being.
- (7) From (3), an uncaused being is not incipient, therefore pre-eternal.
- (8) From (1), (2), (6), and (7): There is a pre-eternal being.
- (9) All contingent beings are necessarily incipient.
- (10) From (8) and (9): The Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*) exists (Al-Ījī, n.d., 266; Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 2:57).

There is another variant of this argument that does not make use of the impossibility of an infinite regress. However, it is susceptible to some objections. Al-Taftāzānī considers them reasonable objections (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 2:58-9).

This proof takes a longer path than the Proof from Contingency, also considering that the ninth premise needs to be proved. That is because originally, it was not intended as proof for necessity. It is intended for the Creator, who is something other than the

universe (*al-‘ālam*) and created it. Therefore, proving that the universe is in need of creation is enough as a proof for the Creator, given that the universe, with all of its parts, is incipient. The claim is that, upon inspection, all parts of it, the substances and the accidents, are discovered to be incipient. By denial of infinite regress, the universe is necessarily incipient. Theory of multiverses and similar concepts are not directly relevant as problems against this proof because, by the universe, everything other than the Creator is meant. In that case, the formulation will be as follows:

- (1) The universe exists.
- (2) The universe is incipient.
- (3) An incipient being could not have existed without an agent.
- (4) From (2) and (3): The universe could not have existed without an external cause.
- (5) From (1) and (4): There is an external cause for the existence of the universe, namely the Creator (Al-Ījī, n.d., 266; Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 2:57).

For some reasons we will not discuss, the early mutakallims favored this proof over the Proof from Contingency. However, this proof requires one to take other steps to conclude pre-eternity and endlessness (*baqā*) through denial of infinite regress and proving necessity. Also, note that the second premise of this proof demands an argument that uses denial of infinite regress (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 513).

For the Proof from Incipience, the PSR is at work in the form of the premise: “An incipient being could not have existed without an agent.” As we have mentioned earlier, considering that the source of the need for an agent is incipience according to the early mutakallims, this statement is actually more natural than one demanding an agent for a contingent being.

4.1.1.2 The Proof from Contingency

The Proof from Contingency is based on the empirical information that there are contingent beings. Unlike the Proof from Incipience, it does not care whether these beings are pre-eternal or incipient. Since the *falāsifa* assert pre-eternal contingent beings, this is the only proof that works for them. For the mutakallims, especially the

later mutakallims, this proof is as good as the former, and it deserves to be studied thoroughly. We can even say that the later mutakallims favored this proof over the former since it requires less empirical information, fewer premises to be argued for, and gives more about the Creator in conclusion (El-Harputi 2016, 121). For this reason, we see that al-Ṭūsī (2012, 2:923) gave this proof in his text, without even mentioning the Proof from Incipience. A formulation of the Proof from Contingency is as follows:

- (1) There is some existent.
- (2) An existent is either essentially contingent or essentially necessary.
- (3) A contingent being needs a reason for its existence.
- (4) From (3): For a causal chain, at least one side of the Agrippan trilemma is the case.
- (5) An infinite regress and a circular dependency are impossible.
- (6) From (3), (4), and (5): If there is a contingent being, there is a necessary being.
- (7) From (1), (2), (6): The Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*) exists (Al-Ījī, n.d., 266; Al-Iṣfahānī 2012, 2:923).

There are other forms of this argument that do not make use of the impossibility of an infinite regress. First to give such an argument is al-Suhrawardī (2019, 390):

- (1) Every contingent needs an external cause in order to exist.
- (2) From (1): The aggregate of all contingent beings is contingent; therefore, it needs an external cause in order to exist.
- (3) The only being external to the aggregate of all contingent beings is the Necessary Being.
- (4) From (2) and (3): The Necessary Being exists.

This and other arguments like this are mentioned by al-Ījī and al-Taftāzānī. The objection against this argument is not that it is weak, but it actually includes an argument for the impossibility of an infinite regress. This is the main objection against this type of arguments, that they actually include known arguments for the impossibility of an infinite regress. Al-Taftāzānī sees this to be a problem in all

suggested proofs of this kind and finds some other faults in some. However, to the disagreement of him, there is a variant that is claimed to work by al-Ījī. It seems that al-Jurjānī also thinks that this variant does not need denial of infinite regress (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 2:57-9; Al-Jurjānī 1907, 8:11). Hasan Chalabī (1907, 8:11) explains that while these arguments imply some arguments for the impossibility of an infinite regress, they work without consideration of it being impossible. Al-Ījī's argument is more complex than al-Suhrawardī's:

1. Assume that there is no necessary existence, and everything that exists is contingent.
2. A contingent being needs a reason for its existence.
3. From (1) and (2): The aggregate of everything needs a reason.
4. There is no reason for existence that does not make nonexistence impossible.
5. From (3) and (4): It is impossible for the aggregate not to exist, given the existence of the reason.
6. That it is impossible for it not to exist, given the existence of its own or its part is necessarily existent.
7. From (5) and (6): The reason cannot be the aggregate or a part of it.
8. From (7): The reason is not contingent.
9. From (1) and (8): Contradiction. Therefore, (1) is false. The Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*) exists (Al-Ījī, n.d., 268).

The sixth premise in this argument might feel problematic, but it is not. A contingent being is not necessarily existent, given that it exists. That is because once its nonexistence is assumed, there does not remain any existence to make its nonexistence impossible. This is different from the logical entailment, which represents an entailment in mind. Here, does its existence work as a reason for its existence is the question we ask. That is to say that a contingent being does not become essentially necessary merely by existing. It is still contingently existing.

One of the objections against arguments that claim not to use the impossibility of an infinite regress is that the aggregation of an infinite number of beings is taken for granted. The claim is that the idea of a set implies finitude; therefore, a set with infinite members cannot be considered to be like finite sets. Hence, it cannot be

assumed to be contingent because its members are contingent. A later polymath, the famous al-Dawānī suggests a way to overcome this problem. Rather than inferring its contingency from the contingency of its parts, he infers its contingency from its dependency on its parts. Anything that has a part and cannot exist without is dependent on its part, therefore not essentially necessary (Al-Dawānī 2013, 64–68).

Under any circumstances, the Proof from Contingency uses the PSR. It is taken in the form of the proposition: “A contingent being needs a reason for its existence.” That was also the case for the Proof from Incipience. Since there is a debate on the need for denial of infinite regress, the PSR seems to be the key principle for those who want to prove that the Necessary Being exists. It actually dictates that if the Necessary Being had not existed, there would not have been any existents. That is, existence would be accidentally impossible. Moreover, we might even say that the PSR is all that one needs for asserting the Necessary Being.

4.1.1.3 An Argument without the PSR

Al-Taftāzānī shows an argument for the Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*), without the PSR. He demonstrates that this argument, which is proposed by some, does not work. It is as follows:

- (1) There is some existent.
- (2) If all existents have a reason, either an infinite regress or a circular dependency is the case.
- (3) An infinite regress and a circular dependency are impossible.
- (4) From (2) and (3): There is at least one being without a reason.
- (5) What does not need a reason is essentially necessary.
- (6) From (4) and (5): The Necessary Being exists (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 2:57).

The fifth premise is obviously problematic. It assumes that every contingent being needs a reason for its existence. That is the PSR itself. Therefore, there does not seem any escape from the PSR for one who wants to prove that the Necessary Being exists.

4.1.2. Attributes of the Necessary Being

4.1.2.1 The Negating Attributes

We see that the mutakallims, using the PSR extensively, come to decisive solutions for many discussions on matters related to the Necessary Being. We will analyze such arguments for attributes of the Necessary Being and see how critical this principle is for a well-rounded conceptualization of the Necessary Being.

The negating attributes (*ṣifāt al-salbiyya*) are found mostly as an analysis of what it is to be the Necessary Being. After proving the existence of the Necessary Being, the only thing we know about him is that he is necessarily existent. As we have mentioned in related discussions, the mutakallims admit that our knowledge of essences is very limited. In this case, the only thing we know about this essence is its predication by existence is necessary. That is our starting point. There is not a leap of faith to the conclusion that this is the supremely perfect being, such that he is attributed by all perfection. Rather, step by step, the attributes are discussed. The main conclusions are as follows:

- (1) The Necessary Being is pre-eternal and endless. (*Qidam* and *Baqā*)
- (2) The Necessary Being is one and only and not composite. (*Wahdāniyya*)
- (3) The Necessary Being is different from the contingent essences by his entity and not attributed by incipient properties. He is absolutely dissimilar to the incipient beings. (*Muhālafā li al-ḥawādīṭ*)
- (4) The Necessary Being cannot be in a locus or cannot depend on another thing for his existence. (*Qiyam binafsihī*)

One important point in the arguments for these attributes is that if there were properties or any type of existential states of being that are contingent for the Necessary Being, such that they bring about alternative pre-eternal scenarios, we would face a violation of the Principle of the Sufficient Reason.

For the oneness of the Necessary Being, the mutakallims use a variety of arguments. Al-Taftāzānī names the different arguments, admitting some of them to be weaker

arguments. There are some arguments based on the power of the Necessary Being. We will mention them later, with discussions about the scope of his power. There are other arguments that are suggested by the *falāsifa*. Since they deny power as a possible metaphysical concept, these are the only arguments they have. However, for the *mutakallims*, all arguments deserve attention. Those arguments by the *falāsifa* are related to problems about identity, and we will look into them later (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 515–17).

The impossibility of attribution by incipient properties is known as the doctrine of divine immutability today. For the *mutakallims*, this is one of the most important principles of their school. According to them, this is a key principle for the right way to understand the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition. There are many arguments. Note that by “property,” we mean ontic properties, not considerational relations or negating attributes. We will analyze one argument that uses the PSR:

- (1) Assume that the Necessary Being had an incipient property X.
- (2) An incipient property is preceded by its nonexistence, by definition.
- (3) From (1) and (2): The Necessary Being had two different actualized states: having X, not having X.
- (4) From (3): There are two alternative contingent states of being for the Necessary Being.
- (5) From (4): The Necessary Being is attributed by one of the contingent states pre-eternally, or there is an infinite regress of alteration.
- (6) A pre-eternal state does not need a reason, therefore necessary.
- (7) An infinite regress is impossible.
- (8) From (5), (6), and (7): Contradiction (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 2:70-1).

Another variant of this argument does not make use of the impossibility of infinite regress. It uses another premise to deny pre-eternally alternating incipient states: “What is aligned by an incipient in all moments of its existence is incipient itself.” That is obviously a contradiction to necessity (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 2:71).

The immutability claim has a profound effect on the concept of the Necessary Being. By admitting this restriction, what we can say about the qualitative attributes (*ṣifāt*

al-ma'ānī) of the Necessary Being comes to order, since they signify existential distinctions about him.

4.1.2.2 The Qualitative Attributes

4.1.2.2.1 Finding Out the Qualitative Attributes

The negating attributes made use of the fact that the Necessary Being is essentially necessary. The qualitative attributes are based on an additional premise on top of that: “There is more than one existent.” Assuming that the Necessary Being did not create anything, there would not be any proof for these attributes. It is a brute fact that there is causation in reality, and we know about it and its preconditions we will discuss now, only because it is actual. Let us look at an argument, starting with the two premises:

- (1) The Necessary Being exists.
- (2) There is more than one thing.
- (3) There can only be one necessary existent as a result of analysis of necessity.
- (4) From (2) and (3): There is some contingent existent.
- (5) A contingent being needs a reason for its existence.
- (6) From (5): For a causal chain, at least one side of the Agrippan trilemma is the case.
- (7) An infinite regress and a circular dependency are impossible.
- (8) From (4), (5), (6), (7): There is an uncaused reason.
- (9) From (1), (3), and (8): All causal chains end up at the Necessary Being.

This argument is not different from the arguments for the existence of the Necessary Being because those arguments use the fact that he is the Agent. Therefore, all arguments that work for proving his existence work for proving him being an agent. We need to pay attention to what follows from this point. There are other lines of argumentation, but we will give this one, which collects everything we want to prove in one place:

- (1) The Necessary Being is attributed by being an agent.

- (2) An agent is a reason for a contingent either by involuntary causation or voluntary causation.
- (3) An involuntary cause cannot be specialized for a specific contingent in virtue of being an involuntary cause; therefore, the specialization is contingent.
- (4) The Necessary Being cannot have any contingent states.
- (5) From (3) and (4): The Necessary Being cannot be an involuntary cause.
- (6) From (1), (2), and (5): The Necessary Being is attributed by power.
- (7) Power cannot be without will.
- (8) From (6) and (7): The Necessary Being is attributed by will.
- (9) Willing cannot happen without the knowledge of the objects of it.
- (10) From (8) and (9): The Necessary Being is attributed by knowledge.
- (11) Apprehension cannot be without life.
- (12) From (10) and (11): The Necessary Being is attributed by life (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 529–53).

At the beginning of the argument, we see that the demand for an explanation of contingent existents shows its face as demand for their specialization. As it was demanded that there needs to be an uncaused cause, the demand here is that there needs to be an unspecialized specializer.

The qualitative attributes that can be known by reason without the aid of scriptural evidence are agreed to be power (*qudra*), will (*irāda*), knowledge (*qudra*), and life (*ḥayāt*). The Necessary Being is attributed by power, will, knowledge and life. This is all based on what entails voluntary causation. The mutakallims believe that the power without will is against the PSR. The will without knowledge is meaningless. The voluntary agent, to direct his will and power towards the existence of a contingent, needs full awareness of his aim. Partial knowledge does not work because ignorance about a small detail will leave it to randomness, which is against the PSR. As for life, its definition cannot be given, but it is agreed that it is a precondition for apprehension. Knowledge cannot be affirmed without life. There is a dispute among the mutakallims whether other qualitative attributes need the *Qurʾān* and the *Ḥadīth* to state them beforehand or not. Also, everyone agrees that it might be that our epistemological means can take us only this far. Therefore, the possibility of other qualitative attributes is not denied.

There are objections against these attributes. Some are about the metaphysics of the relation between an entity and its attributes. For example, it is said that this makes him composite or results in multiple necessary beings. These objections are denied by the mutakallims by explaining their respective take on these problems (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 523–29).

There are also objections by the falāsifa, by the claim that oneness of the Necessary Being is in contradiction with the concept of power. One part of the claim is that only one can be caused by one. This claim by them is not accepted by the mutakallims, for they find faults in their arguments for this claim. Other than that, the actual universe and the multiplicity in it do not fit into the succession of events given this claim (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 227–35).

Another claim by the falāsifa against the attribute of power is based on the idea that properties of the Necessary Being are effects of his essence. Based on that, the causal relation between the Necessary Being and the contingents cannot be both a necessitation and a capacity. These two properties are two effects, but from one, only one can occur. That is denied by the mutakallims; therefore, this objection is not valid. Another problem with this is that there are contradicting relations, for necessitation is a necessity relation, but capacity is a contingency relation. This is not considered a problem. Something can have different relations from different perspectives. Those relations are mere considerations in mind, which emphasize some properties over some other (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 235). In relation to this problem, the Maturidites claimed that other than power, we need to assert another attribute. The power is about capacity, but the actualization of such capacity must be another attribute, by which is the necessitation. That attribute is called creation (*takwīn*). This argument is refuted by the Asharites. Their argument is that such an addition does not solve the supposed problem since the attribute of creation can be considered to have a pre-eternal capacity to necessitate, and that capacity is actualized in accordance with the will. Therefore, the supposed problem cannot be a problem. The attribute of power has two relations to the contingent essences. One is pre-eternal potentiality, and the other is incipient effectiveness (El-Harputi 2016, 162–63).

There are other qualitative attributes. Sight (*baṣar*) and hearing (*sam`*) are, according to many, attributes that can be known by rational arguments without the aid of scriptural sources. Also, speech (*kalām*) is like that, according to some. The way to prove them depends on a general rule by the mutakallims. If there is a possible perfection for the Necessary Being, it needs to be necessary. We can formulate this argument as follows:

- (1) The Necessary Being cannot have contingent attributes.
- (2) From (1): If an attribute is not impossible for the Necessary Being, it is necessary.
- (3) From (2): The Necessary Being is necessarily attributed by all possible attributes for him.

In order to make use of this argument, one needs to find out possible attributes for the Necessary Being. That, however, is not an easy task. Therefore, there are debates among the mutakallims on the validity and strength of such arguments. Anyhow, this argument takes the first premise from an argument that uses the PSR, as we have mentioned before.

4.1.2.2.2 The Scope of the Qualitative Attributes and Their Immutability

There are some attributes of the Necessary Being that have linkages (*ta`alluq*) essentially. A linkage is not an existential property or extension of these attributes. It is rather a considerational concept that helps us explain these attributes. The power, the will, the knowledge, the sight, the hearing, and the speech are attributes that have linkages.

The linkage of power is a relation of effect (*ta`tir*). This relation is with the contingent essences. When we say “God created the man.”, we are stating a linkage between God’s power and the essence of man. What exists is only God with his power and the man; however, this sentence states a linkage between them. This linkage is the relation of effect; that is, the man is a result of the effect of God’s power. Similarly, “God could create a unicorn.” is about a linkage between God’s

power and the essence of unicorn. However, this time it is not a linkage of effectiveness (*tanjīz*), but a linkage of potentiality (*ṣalūhiyya*).

For the will, the linkage is of specification (*tahṣīṣ*) or effect. That is, by the will, what to be created and not created is specified. The relation is with the contingent essences. The linkage of knowledge is a relation of manifestation (*inkiṣāf*). Knowledge is such that by it all the known is manifested as it really is, by a manifestation that does not carry the possibility of deficiency in any way whatsoever. Its relation is with essences and facts. For the sight and the hearing, the relation is of manifestation, but exclusively for the existents. The speech has a linkage of signification (*dalāla*) to meanings. The conceptualization of these linkages helps us understand some predications to the Necessary Being in many sentences, as in the example for the power we have given above.

These attributes, which have linkages, must have a definite scope. What is the scope of God's power? Can God know the future? Could God not have created anything at all? Can God create other creators? Can God create the impossible? There are many questions like these, which are at the center of one's theology. What gives a substantial ground for the answers to such questions is offered by the mutakallims, based on the PSR:

- (1) The Necessary Being cannot have contingent attributes.
- (2) Specialized attributes are equivalent to each other in contingency.
- (3) From (2): A specialized attribute is a contingent attribute.
- (4) From (1) and (3): The Necessary Being cannot have a specialized attribute.
- (5) The Necessary Being has power, will, knowledge, sight, hearing, and speech.
- (6) From (4) and (5): The Necessary Being has absolute power, absolute will, absolute knowledge, absolute sight, absolute hearing, and absolute speech.

By absolute, we mean not limited or specialized. This means God's power is applicable to all that power can be applicable to by definition. The mutakallims, dismiss the omnipotence paradox. This is based on their solid modal theory. The source of the need for a reason is contingency. There are essences for whose predication of existence is the mind finds neither necessity nor impossibility. The

PSR emerges from this balance. The impossible, whose existence is impossible, is not in the scope of the PSR. Therefore, neither voluntary causes nor involuntary causes are expected to be serving as a reason for impossible essences.

One might object here with accidentally impossible essences. That is, the color yellow is not impossible essentially. However, given the object is green, it is impossible accidentally. Such a case just requires the destruction of the reason that makes the essence impossible. In this case, it is the color green. That is because it is also an impossible concept that something has accidental impossibility and accidental necessity at the same time. Therefore, it is out of the scope of the PSR.

Unanimously, everyone thinks that everything directly or indirectly is connected to God. Since absolute power has a scope inclusive of every contingency, could there be other causes, voluntary or involuntary? This is disputed among the mutakallims. While some early Asharites, other than al-Aš'arī, and the Mutazilites see it possible, later mutakallims seem to have come to an agreement. They defend strong occasionalism based firstly on scriptural evidence. They also have two arguments for it. One of the arguments is the Proof from Cooccurrence (*dalīl al-tawārud*):

- (1) Assume that, other than the Necessary Being, there is a cause for x.
- (2) Every contingent being has only one cause.
- (3) The Necessary Being is all-powerful and has absolute will.
- (4) From (1) and (3): It is possible that the Necessary Being wills x and cooccurs as a cause for it with something else.
- (5) From (2) and (4): Contradiction, since impossible cannot be possible. Therefore (1) is impossible (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 2:85).

We have seen the arguments for the second premise above at the beginning of this chapter. The other argument is the Argument from Reciprocal Hindrance (*dalīl al-tamānu*):

- (1) Assume that, other than the Necessary Being, there is a cause for x.
- (2) The Necessary Being is all-powerful and has absolute will.
- (3) From (2): It is possible that the Necessary Being wills not-x.

- (4) From (1) and (3): Contradiction, since it is possible that not-x given that x.
Therefore (1) is impossible (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 2:85-6).

Based on these arguments and some evidence from the *Qur'ān* and the *Ḥadīth*, which are stronger than the rational proofs in this case according to al-Taftāzānī, the mutakallims decided that there are no involuntary or voluntary causes other than the Necessary Being. Al-Taftāzānī is aware of possible objections against these arguments and sees that they might not be enough for strong occasionalism. Therefore, he admits that the mutakallims, him included, believe in this because of the evidence from the *Qur'ān* and the *Ḥadīth*. That is a restriction to the PSR. The only explanans we have now is God. However, this is not a theoretical restriction. It seems that a cause is not essentially impossible; rather, it is impossible because God exists. That makes it accidentally impossible. The PSR is asking us for reasons, voluntary or involuntary. However, the actuality provides us with only voluntary causation.

The claim that there cannot be numerous causes for the same result rather than only one opens doors to some arguments for the oneness of the Necessary Being. We can formulate it using some premises we have given proofs for. It is as follows:

- (1) A necessary being is attributed by all possible attributes for him, necessarily.
- (2) God has absolute power.
- (3) There are no causes, voluntary or involuntary, other than God.
- (4) From (1) and (2): If there were another necessary being, he would have absolute power.
- (5) From (3) and (4): There are no necessary beings other than God (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 515).

We can have a weaker claim than the third premise, but the argument still works: “There are no more than one absolute power.” While the Proof from Cooccurrence and the Proof from Reciprocal Hindrance might not be enough for occasionalism, they are certainly enough for this claim, thus for proving oneness. This argument has different variants based on these two proofs (Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 2:62-3).

For the absolute will, all that can be specified must be in the scope of the will. There are formulations of the Proof from Cooccurrence and the Proof from Reciprocal Hindrance to defend strong occasionalism for the will, also. This brings issues related to the concept of contingent free will, which we will mention later.

The knowledge of the Necessary Being is also absolute. This means that everything that can be known is known by him. Included in that are all contingent, necessary and impossible essences and all facts. Also included in that is the foreknowledge of every single future event without any exception. Similarly, since his sight and hearing are also absolute, he sees and hears all existents without exception. His speech is also absolute. Therefore, he speaks every truth that his knowledge has a linkage to.

None of the qualitative attributes is composite. None changes. None could have been different than what it is. This is all based on immutability, for which we have given an argument based on the PSR. This brings some questions. Could not have God willed differently? If he had created differently, would not he know differently? Does not he see, hear differently by changing contingents? How does he know the moment, which keeps changing?

All of these questions and others that threaten immutability are answered. None of these attributes could have been different. What could be different is their linkages. As we have stated for power before, that power is one thing, but it can alternatively be the cause for different contingent states. If the power required a change in order to be the cause for alternative states, that reason also would require another reason for its change. This was actually an argument for the Necessary Being. The problem with the universe is that it changes, or it could have been different. For that reason, we ask for a creator. If the Creator is like the universe that he changes or he could have been different, he cannot be the uncaused cause.

The attributes do not change. The linkages are what change. The absolute power is such that it is not specialized and not in need of specialization for taking effect. So is the absolute will. Their effect, which is a linkage between them and their objects, changes. However, as we have stated, linkages are considerational concepts, not

existential. “God willed the man to exist.” means that his will has a linkage to the essence of man. This linkage, as well as the essence before existence, is not an additional qualitative attribute, neither for God nor for his will. “God created the man.” means that his power has a linkage of effect. However, this effect as an action does not exist. What exists is the result of the effect, the man. In this case, the mutakallims also say that if the intermediary effect existed, it would be considered a result of another effect. Obviously, this will lead to an infinite regress. Therefore, in any case, not only for immutable voluntary power but also for involuntary causation, one needs to be aware of linkages. These metaphysical relations are reasoned in mind between two. Insisting that they be existential leads to either an infinite regress or to that no relations are true at all.

The absolute knowledge is such that by it, every essence and fact is manifested—this manifestation is not some additional ontic property but the linkage of the knowledge—. It is absolute, not specialized for specific facts, rather essentially so that it assures correspondence unconditionally. This means that the absolute knowledge is essentially true, which is not like our propositional knowledge. The sight and the hearing are similar to the knowledge in this sense. The *falāsifa* did not have this type of one-for-many concept. Hence, some claimed that God’s knowledge does not directly extend to the particulars but only through the universals. For the mutakallims, there is no difference between particulars and universals that they are all objects of knowledge. The mutakallims claim that just because we have only essentially specialized types of powers, willings, knowledges and similar attributes, we cannot go and force that this is the only way for those to exist metaphysically. Our knowledge of facts is propositional and not essentially true. As an attribute, it is a mental state of us that needs correspondence to facts to be called true. There is no metaphysical difference between a false belief and true knowledge as mental states. This empirical information is not enough to assume that there cannot be one-for-many types of attributes. There is no logical impossibility in that. On the contrary, the PSR asserts that there have to be such attributes.

Lastly, the approach that the attributes are not specialized but essentially absolute also solves the problem of infinitude within the attributes. For example, since the attribute is knowledge is just knowledge, the Necessary Being does not need a

different knowledge for every known. That means, even if the knowns are limitless, the single attribute of knowledge he has is enough for them. Furthermore, based on the PSR and the divine immutability, we can give an argument for this kind of absoluteness to be the case, rather than a composite type that satisfies every possible linkage by contingent parts:

- (1) The scope of the knowledge of the Necessary Being includes all true facts.
- (2) The contingently true facts could have been false.
- (3) From (1) and (2): If the knowledge had parts for some contingently true facts, it could have different parts than it has now.
- (4) From (3): If the knowledge had parts for some contingently true facts, it would be contingent.
- (5) From (4) and the divine immutability: The attribute of knowledge cannot have contingent parts for every true fact.

Clearly, this argument also works for the other attributes. Therefore, we are speaking about a one-for-many type of absoluteness. The attributes are not specialized for any contingent reality by having contingent parts or not.

4.1.2.3 Incipient Attributes

Previous arguments showed that God is pre-eternal and immutable, and all of his qualitative attributes are so, too. For all existential attributes, that is the case, but we can speak about incipient considerational attributes. Such attributes are mostly about linkages of his qualitative attributes.

For example, when we say that God is the one who created the moon, we are attributing him with the incipient attribute, “being the one who created the moon.” Since this proposition does not predicate something existential to God but only states a relation, it is not contrary to immutability. It is true, for it is grounded on the fact that God has power and the existence of the moon is by that power. The considerational linkage between God and the moon we conceptualize in our minds is about this fact. Other than this, neither God nor the moon has an additional qualitative attribute that constitutes this relation.

As we have mentioned before, if there were such an additional qualitative attribute, it would be created by God necessarily. Then, we would question the linkage between it and the power of God. That obviously leads to an unacceptable infinite regress.

Furthermore, although God cannot be a passive object of a causal relation, he can be an object of some other relations. Those are also incipient considerational relations. Since they do not signify any change about God and his attributes, they are not violations of immutability. As examples, we can give “being known,” “being praised,” “being seen in the afterlife,” and the like.

4.2. Nothing Contingent is Pre-Eternal

As a result of the assertion that the Necessary Being is the sole source for every other thing that exists and the only way for that is his power, the mutakallims claimed that they found a factive principle about the actuality: Nothing contingent is pre-eternal. We can formulate one of their arguments as follows:

- (1) God’s power takes effect by his will.
- (2) The intention of creation by will cannot be directed towards what already exists.
- (3) From (1) and (2): God only creates what was not existent before. That is, his power takes effect only incipiently.
- (4) Each one of contingent beings depends on God’s power taking effect, directly or indirectly.
- (5) From (3) and (4): All contingent beings are incipient.

This is necessarily true because there are no pre-eternal involuntary causes. Therefore, this is not a regulative condition for the PSR; rather, it is a factive principle based on brute facts. Moreover, based on the second premise, we can argue that even for the B-theory of time, nothing contingent can be pre-eternal like God. That is because, in that case, at least it is objected to a change of states from nonexistence to having existence. This is necessary. It must be that, in some sense, it did not exist before for God’s will to be directed towards its existence.

4.3. Dependent versus Independent Contingent Facts

It is obvious that the variant suggested by the mutakallims does not claim to explain all contingent facts. Rather, there are some contingent facts that are not apt for explanations. We can make a distinction between facts here. There are three different types: necessary facts, dependent contingent facts, and independent contingent facts. Necessary facts are facts that are just true, and their nature is that they cannot have any explanations, or they explain themselves. Dependent contingent facts are facts that you can ask and give an explanation for. Independent contingent facts are not apt for explanations but could have been false.

We have seen the proofs given by the mutakallims for the existence of the Necessary Being. None of those proofs give ontic reasons; rather, all we have are epistemic reasons. We start from some empiric facts, which we know before knowing their ontic reasons. The empiric fact we use for the existence of the Necessary Being is: “There is some existent.” In the end, the argument is: “If there is some existent, the Necessary Being exists.” This is what they call an assertoric proof (*burhān innī*), which infers from effect to cause. Hence, it does not intend to claim that there is a reason for the existence of the Necessary Being. Why does the Necessary Being exist? The answer to this question is that he just exists, and we know that he exists, according to some. It is a brute fact. Based on this, we can also say that the question “Why is there something rather than nothing?” can only be answered by the existence of the Necessary Being, which, as we see, is a brute fact. However, the mutakallims argued that it is not that the Necessary Being exists without reason only, but also there cannot be any possible metaphysical state without his existence. That is to say that an empty world is impossible accidentally. This is the difference between “being necessary to exist” and “to exist without a cause if existed.” The details of this discussion are not our concern in this work (Fah̄r al-Dīn al-Rāzī 1987, 1:182).

The facts that can be given an explanation for are the contingent facts about contingent essences and properties. According to the distinction we made, they are dependent contingent facts. The explanation given for them is an act of grounding using independent contingent facts and brute facts. “There is a tree.” or “The tree is

yellow.” are such facts. We explain them by these facts: “God willed to create a tree.” and “God willed the tree to be yellow.” Both are independent contingent facts that imply a brute fact: “God exists.”

The independent contingent facts do not have explanations. Furthermore, they are not apt for an explanation. That is because particular willings of God are not to be explainable by the definition of will. The motives suggested by some mutakallims are not inclusive of every willing, and even if it were so, they are not considered as forcing agents that officiate as metaphysical reasons. Therefore, there are contingent facts without reasons in any case.

4.4. Necessitarianism

Necessitarianism is the belief that the actuality could not have been different. Based on the modal theory given by the mutakallims, we can think of two different versions of it. One version might be that all that exists is essentially necessary. In this case, either that there is nothing to cause contingent essences or that for an essence to be contingent is essentially impossible. The former means that there is only the Necessary Being, but without power. According to the mutakallims, it is a brute fact that this is not the case. As the aforementioned arguments showed us, we came to the awareness of this fact through other existents. The latter, however, is a denial of the PSR as the mutakallims define it. It is also a brute fact that some essences are just contingent. This does not require a reason. It is something we know a priori.

Another version of necessitarianism is that there are some contingent things that exist. However, there could not have been a different actuality. This can be because all causal chains consist of involuntary causation exclusively, or there is a forcing motive for the voluntary agent. Those who claim that God necessarily creates the best possible world are necessitarians, based on the latter. The former can be based on either that voluntary causation is essentially impossible or just that it does not exist as a brute fact. The falāsifa took it to be impossible and claimed this type of necessitarianism.

The mutakallims, because of the restriction they put on the PSR by asserting voluntary causation, save themselves from falling into any type of necessitarianism.

4.5. Modal Fatalism

Modal fatalism is a specific type of necessitarianism. It is mentioned as an objection against the PSR. Pruss gives different versions of this objection from Peter van Inwagen, James Rose, William Rowe, and Francken and Geirsson. As Pruss mentions in his formulation, there are three premises the defender of the PSR must pay attention to solve the problem:

- (1) No necessary proposition explains a contingent proposition.
- (2) No contingent proposition explains itself.
- (3) We can take the conjunction of all true contingent propositions as a big conjunctive fact, and it is contingent (Pruss 2006, chap. 6).

As for the falāsifa, they deny the first premise. They give necessary rules that make only one line of causation possible. The Necessary Being is such that his effect can only be the First Intellect. Moreover, because of what he is, he is necessarily an involuntary cause. According to them, these judgments are logical conclusions based on the meaning of necessity and existence. Therefore, the proposition “The Necessary Being exists.” explains the contingent proposition “The First Intellect exists.” This type of causation continues down to the changes in the four elements we observe.

As for the mutakallims, we know that the only facts that need an explanation are what we named dependent contingent facts. We might say that the independent contingent facts are explained by the necessary proposition “God has absolute will.” and deny the first premise. Or, we might say those propositions explain themselves since the will is a part of their predicate and deny the second premise. In any case, the mutakallims accept the third one.

The solution suggested by Pruss is actually the same. He is aware that the key to the solution is free will if we want a variant of the PSR without any holes. He considers

different options, but at the end, he asserts what he calls “indeterminate causation.” He explains, “sufficient reason needs to be understood not as ‘necessitating reason’ but as ‘sufficient explanation,’ where we understand that a causal account is always sufficiently explanatory, even when indeterministic.” This is the only variant that survives the criticism (Pruss 2006, 159, 185). Obviously, this is what we named voluntary causation, and what he suggests is not even slightly different than what the mutakallims suggest. However, he has completely different modal grounds doing that. He disagrees that the modality cannot be reduced to simpler concepts (Pruss 2011). He defends an Aristotelian dispositionalist opinion he explains as follows:

If one shares the Aristotelian intuition that this-worldly capacities, powers, and dispositions can make modal statements true, one might opt for a fully Aristotelian definition of (mere) possibility: A nonactual state of affairs is possible if there actually was a substance capable of initiating a causal chain, perhaps nondeterministic, leading to the state of affairs that we claim is possible (Pruss 2006, 316).

From the viewpoint of the mutakallims, his idea misses the essential truth about modalities: the relation of essences to existence as they are. His solution is a definition of what the mutakallims call a dispositional contingency (*al-imbkān al-isti'dādī*) as we have explained before. It is a considerational concept based on alethic modalities and different than them. Therefore, the objection would be that capacities, powers, and dispositions are defined based on modality. If modality is based on them, there is a problematic circle.

4.6. Free Will and Theological Fatalism

The PSR led us to that the Necessary Being has an attribute of absolute will. His will is such that it cannot depend on anything. This exclusion from the PSR is the free will itself. Therefore, the mutakallims not only think that free will is possible, but it is necessary to explain the actuality we observe. Even those who think that he wills according to some principle claim that this accordance is done willingly. It is not that the external principle forces the will, that it causes it to be directed necessarily

towards certain contingents, but rather the contingents in line with that external principle are willed.

As we have mentioned, there are formulations of the Proof from Cooccurrence and the Proof from Reciprocal Hindrance for the will of the Necessary Being. Since the will has to be absolute, anything that is eligible to be chosen, even if nonexistent, must be chosen by God. This brings issues related to the concept of contingent free will. Once this is affirmed, even the solutions based on the nonexistence of the contingent willings by the Maturidites do not work. Mustafa Sabri, primarily basing his stance on the *Qur'ān* and the *Hadīth*, denies independence of contingent free will from God (Sabri 1933).

Al-Aš'arī and the late Asharites denied free will for contingent beings. We, people, have specific willings created for us at every moment. That is, we will, but not freely. This seems to be paradoxical for responsibility, but the Asharites insist that there are mysteries in the matter, but there must be a solution, even if it is unreachable for us. Therefore, many of them assert that theological fatalism is false. The Mutazilites, some early Asharites, and the Maturidites claimed that people have free will. However, almost none of them had a different opinion about divine foreknowledge, and they claimed that there are ways to show that our free will is compatible with divine foreknowledge (Sabri 1933).

The Asharites and the Maturidites deny that we create our actions, unlike the Mutazilites. According to them, we do not have a causal relationship to what comes of our hands. However, there is a difference between what we do voluntarily and what happens independently of us. It is the difference we perceive between imitation of shivering and shivering from cold. Hence, we have a quality that connects our actions to us, by which we can be named agents of them. However, it is not one for creation (Al-Taftāzānī 1911, 1:147-8).

4.7. Principle of Plenitude

The Principle of Plenitude, which asserts that all possibilities are actualized or even necessarily actualized, is advocated by some philosophers. The mutakallims see no

reason to believe in it. Furthermore, they do not see it to be possible at all, for the impossibility of infinite regress and coexisting infinite sets. Since the Necessary Being is not forced to do anything, even that nothing other than him has existed could have been the case.

4.8. Nomological Application

4.8.1. Normative Judgments and Scientific Explanation

The consequences of modality showed us that according to the majority of the mutakallims, there are no other causes than the Necessary Being. How do we explain the daily observed causal relation? According to the falāsifa, some physical objects can be complete causes, but mostly they are causal agents by nature; that is, they cannot take effect merely by existing as it is for complete causes. There are some conditions to be met and some obstacles to be removed for the completion of their natures to become complete causes. For example, a fire burns some cotton by nature. However, there are conditions like being in the proximity of the cotton and obstacles like the wetness of the cotton. Once these conditions are met, and these obstacles are removed, the burning of the cotton is metaphysically necessary. This approach of the falāsifa is taken to be true completely or partly by some mutakallims also.

The majority of the mutakallims, who are occasionalists, have a theory on nomic modality. Their approach claims that the seeming causation we observe satisfies some conditions required by real causation. Real causation would require repetition. That is, without any exception, a real complete cause takes effect. Observing this property of real causations in daily events, we expect the seeming causation to continue in the future. That, we can say, is a weak application of the PSR. We observe some conditions, and we assume the outcomes that follow it to be the default outcomes for those conditions. Based on this assumption, we expect the outcomes not to differ without a sufficient reason, which will take it out of the default.

Based on our experience, we start to see some patterns. There are many complex relations. Nevertheless, the common person has many theories that indeed hold true always. For example, he knows that dropped apples fall down. Based on countless

repetitions, his experience is so strong that he uses the modal language to say that apples necessarily fall down. When using it, if he means metaphysical modality, that is philosophical ignorance. However, the philosophically vigilant catches the process and admits that his usage is a figure of speech. There are two different types of modal sentences. The first type is the real modal expressions, which indicate metaphysical states. Such judgments are called rational (*aqlī*). The second type is what we have introduced here, which indicates the seeming causality based on experience. Such judgments are called normative (*‘ādī*).

The denial of the seeming causality to be real may put us into a philosophical ambiguity. That is the case if the superficial trust we want to put on the normative judgments is not founded by any connection to real causation. The mutakallims make such a connection by occasionalism. Every single change is directly caused by God. We put our trust in his continuation with these patterns we observe. However, there is no denial that he can do otherwise at any moment. It is all up to his will. Some mutakallims further reinforce their trust by saying that he acts wisely. Some may say that practically we have no other choice but to trust. At any rate, the seeming causality, with all its complex inner mechanisms, is a perfect pattern drawn by God.

As for the scientific explanation, the mutakallims, having denied involuntary causation, still gave credit to and made use of rules and models given by the *falāsifa*. They even further deepened the analysis of this theory of causation and raised objections against the *falāsifa* about some details. Moreover, the investigations they made on substances and accidents and on how they interact and change can be seen as an attempt to scientifically explain.

4.8.2. Quantum Mechanics

There are some astonishing experiments that led to the theorization of quantum mechanics. These experiments perplexed many about their theories on modality, causation, the PSR, and even logic. A variant of the PSR that takes involuntary causation to be the only valid explanans for contingent events falls into deep troubles in the face of these new experiments. Explanation attempts like quantum mechanics

dismiss such approaches and assert that identical conditions can yield different outcomes.

For the occasionalist mutakallims, obviously, there is no problem at all about the related phenomena. No interpretation within the limits of logic can affect their theories on modality, causation, and the PSR. However, even if we were to go for possible scientific explanations for the sake of those who asserted contingent causation, we find the concept of voluntary causation useful. Based on the distinction made by the mutakallims, we can say that if there are independent causes with indeterministic outcomes, they necessarily have power, will, and knowledge. This may lead us to some panpsychist theories, given certain interpretations.

Lastly, there is an interesting objection by the mutakallims against the *falāsifa* that reminds us of quantum entanglement. The mutakallims denied that it is necessary for a physical object to be in spatial proximity in order to take effect. This is also because of occasionalism (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 236).

4.9. Identity of Indiscernibles

The Identity of Indiscernibles is seen to be one of the outcomes of the PSR (Melamed and Lin 2020). It dictates that for any *x* and *y*, if *x* and *y* have all the same properties, then *x* is identical to *y*. That is because there is no sufficient reason to provide identity for one that will differentiate it from the other.

The mutakallims investigated this and other problems about identity, as it concerns many other issues in their metaphysics. From the definition to by which haecceity (*ta'ayyun*) occurs, there are discussions and different opinions between them and the *falāsifa* (Al-Farhārī 2012, 53).

The mutakallims claim that haecceity is not existential; that is, it is not an ontic property that essences have. Rather, it is a considerational concept in mind, which indicates that a concept is not shared among many members. For example, the concept of an existent tree is a shared concept. It is a universal. There is no individualization here since we can think of many different actualizations of this

concept. We can add more universals to that concept: a tall green palm tree that is located in Istanbul. We can keep adding details down to the atoms of that tree. Still, it does not have haecceity. It is not a particular, but a universal. That is because we have seen that adding an additional universal to a concept can specify it to become a more special universal, but does not give it particularity, which is required for haecceity. Therefore, there is no reason to believe that there is a limit after which such a thing occurs. Believing that there is such a limit would be a violation of the PSR (Al-Ījī, n.d., 65–68; Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 109–14).

Some philosophers claimed that if an essence has enough specifications to be differentiated, it has its haecceity by these properties. According to them, every essence has its haecceity because it is a different essence than others. For example, a tree has its haecceity by being a tree, which is not a horse. Once they are objected with many trees, they answer that these trees earn their haecceity by additional accidents that are enough to differentiate them from other instances of that essence. This is objected by some mutakallims, for it just takes a result of haecceity as the reason for it. That is, we might admit the Indiscernibility of Identicals, which asserts that for any x and y , if x is identical to y , then x and y have all the same properties. However, indiscernibility is an outcome of haecceity, not a reason for it (Al-Ījī, n.d., 65–68; Al-Taftāzānī 1888, 109–14).

If it is not the indiscernibility, what does give the haecceity? Nothing can exist but as a particular. The Necessary Being creates things by giving them particularity and haecceity by his will. That is, for a universal to have a particular instance is contingent. Since every contingent is actualized by the will of God, he wills it to be a particular and creates it. This is the solution given by al-Taftāzānī (1888, 1:113), and it is an appreciated one (Sačaklizāda 2013, 137). Not everyone agrees with him, and there are alternative answers (Al-Ījī, n.d., 65–68; Al-Iṣfahānī 2020, 2:301-7; Al-Jurjānī 2020, 301–7). However, according to most of these solutions, if not that, at least based on the solution given by al-Taftāzānī, it seems that even if the Identity of Indiscernibles is taken to be true, it does not serve as a reason. Rather, it is just an entailment of what concerns haecceity.

How do we explain the haecceity of the Necessary Being himself? He is not object to any will, and his having haecceity cannot be contingent. It can only be that he necessarily has haecceity, and he is necessarily one so that his particularization is not needed. This fact is actually used in some arguments for the oneness of God. The first to suggest those arguments were the *falāsifa* since they could not use any proof based on absolute power. Both them and the *mutakallims* use these arguments because they work regardless of what theory of haecceity you choose. One of the arguments based on the haecceity problem is as follows:

- (1) Assume that there are two necessary beings.
- (2) A necessary being has only necessary attributes.
- (3) From (2): There cannot be a difference between the necessary beings.
- (4) From (3): Their different haecceities cannot be by their entities or attributes.
- (5) Nothing can exist without haecceity.
- (6) From (4) and (5): Their different haecceities must be by something other than them.
- (7) From (5) and (6): Their existence is dependent on something other than them.
- (8) From (1) and (7): Contradiction, since a necessary being cannot be dependent on something else for its existence (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 515).

Lastly, as a result of the Identity of Indiscernibles, the relativity of space and time is suggested as a consequence of the PSR. It might not be a necessary consequence from the PSR, according to some *mutakallims*. However, based on definitions of space and time, one can still claim relativity. Since the *mutakallims* take time to be a mental conceptualization based on change, it is by definition relative. The spatial relations are based on an accident physical objects have, namely whereness/place (*ayn*). Space is not thought to be existential. The spatial relations are only based on whereness, which subsists with the substance itself. Therefore, we can say that the *mutakallims* might assert the relativity of space and time for other reasons (Al-Taftāzānī 2019, 265,273).

4.10. Answering Objections

4.10.1. Objections from the Kalām Books

Al-Taftāzānī (2019, 193–95) chooses three objections against the PSR to be the strongest objections among all. We will mention those and see how they are answered.

The first objection claims that something cannot be caused. It sees the concept of causation as inconsistent. That is because if the result did not exist at the moment of causation, the existence and nonexistence of the result is the case together. That is a contradiction. If it did exist, it did not need the cause; therefore, there was no causation. Al-Taftāzānī answers by the claim that temporal adjacency is not a problem. The precedence of cause is not necessarily a temporal one. When we consider its existence, we consider it to be preceding the result based on a dependency relation. In virtue of this dependence, a new type of precedence is conceptualized. Such precedence does not entail temporal precedence.

The second objection might work against some variants of the PSR that claim a preference (*tarjīh*) to be impossible without a reason. It is based on a scenario where someone makes a choice between two things, like two cups of water, that are completely identical in terms of motive. Clearly, this objection is based on the assumption that voluntary causation is impossible. It is trying to give an example that can only be solved by the admission of voluntary causation to make an argument that there are instances that the PSR does not apply.

The third objection is about nonexistent contingent essences. They should need a cause if the PSR is true. The answer is that they need a reason, not an existential cause. As we have mentioned, the reason for the nonexistence of contingent essences is the nonexistence of a voluntary or involuntary cause. This is clearly a mental assessment of a fact that is true in itself.

4.10.2. Ibn Taymiyya's Objection

Ibn Taymiyya, as a passionate critic of the mutakallims, has objections to their solution of voluntary causation. He argues that the cosmology of the falāsifa was worse than the faults of the mutakallims, but the mutakallims could not solve the causality problem. He agrees with the falāsifa that the pre-eternal power of God, by itself, cannot be the reason for the incipient beings. That is because of the coexistence principle given by them. A complete cause and its effect have to coexist at all times (Ibn Taymiyyah 2019, 249–51).

His solution to this problem is that God's willings and his actions are incipient qualitative attributes, which are not considerational but existential. They subsist within his entity. Therefore, he rejects divine immutability. This, of course, brings serious problems. His defense is that his idea is better than what the falāsifa claim. They cannot explain the incipient changes happening in the universe, but he can explain them by the incipient changes God undergoes. However, he has no solutions to where these incipient qualitative attributes come from (2019, 293–95).

There are predecessors for Ibn Taymiyya's view. Some of the Mutazilites who did not think the qualitative attributes to be possible at all claimed there to be incipient willings of God coming into existence one after another. The objection against both ideas is the same:

- (1) Assume that every incipient being needed God to have an incipient qualitative—thus existential—attribute of willing or action for it.
- (2) From (1): The incipient attributes also need incipient attributes.
- (3) From (2): At the very moment of the existence of an incipient attribute, there has to be another attribute like it that caused the former.
- (4) From (2) and (3): There is an infinite regress of incipient attributes.

The escape from this problem is either to say that every attribute is a result of another one before it in time or to say that the incipient attributes are caused by the pre-eternal attributes or the entity of God. The former is based on a different and additionally problematic type of causation, and it asserts a temporal type of infinite

regress of causation. This assertion can even be threatening our arguments for God's existence. The latter is the assertion of what was supposed to be problematic in what the mutakallims say. If that is the case, there is no need to assume incipient attributes, which may even result in additional problems.

4.10.3. Hume's Objection

Hume's objection is based on conceivability. Hume disagrees with those who use reason to make judgments about causal relations and necessary dependencies. If it is all about reason, why can Hume successfully imagine so-called impossible cases? Let us take a tree as an example. It seems possible that we can conceive that the tree exists without even considering any other thing than the tree. Then, why would we assume that the tree needs a cause before it? Hence, Hume argues, there is no necessary conceptual relation between the ideas of cause and effect. Its denial is not contradictory like the concept of a triangle square. Therefore, he objects assertion of a necessary relation of causality that is based only on reasoning from mere ideas (1739; 1779).

The problem of conceivability is not something ignored by the mutakallims. As we have seen, their truth theory takes this problem seriously. They concluded that we could not take mere conceivability to be the truthmaker for our judgments because some obviously false claims are conceivable. For example, we can imagine that Hume did not exist at all. Would that make the claim that he existed groundless? Even for mathematical truths, we can conceive what is obviously false. Is not that the case when someone makes a basic arithmetical error? Therefore, we cannot take conceivability to validate our conjectures. Rather, we need to look if these propositions hold true in themselves.

Furthermore, we have seen that the mutakallims used conceivability in their discussion about the source of the need of the contingent essences for a cause. They denied that it is incipience because one can conceive an incipient being without a cause if he does not consider its contingency. Therefore, as per how the mutakallims theorize, Hume seems to start from an irrelevant point. Without considering the contingency of the tree, we cannot speak about its need for a cause. When Hume

imagines a tree without a cause, he does that, disregarding its contingency. As for the contingency of it, we know that it is a question of attribution by existence. A tree qua tree is attributed by existence either necessarily or not. It is obvious that Hume will not go for such a necessity. Therefore, he has to admit that essentially a tree does not relate to existence. According to the mutakallims, it is a priori that this leads to a need for a reason.

Hume's conceivability approach can be used in the formation of another objection. One can claim that the concept of a necessary being is meaningless since one can imagine the nonexistence of anything that exists. Actually, that is why we needed proof for the Necessary Being. What we mentioned above applies here as an answer. The question of the Necessary Being is an epistemic question. The reasons given to us are not reasons for his existence; rather, they are ways to infer his existence from what we know about the actuality. Moreover, as the modal theory of the mutakallims suggests, one cannot imagine the Necessary Being nonexistent without ignoring that he is necessary. We have explained how predication of existence works. There are two levels to the proposition: "The Necessary Being necessarily exists." If we take it as an essentiality-proposition (*qadiyya ḥāqīqiyya*), it is an analytic proposition that is a priori true. However, if we take it as an actuality-proposition (*qadiyya ḥārijiyya*) it is a synthetic proposition that is a posteriori true based on empiric evidence. The Humean approach misses the difference.

4.10.4. A Modern Version of Hume's Objection

Another objection is formalized by Pruss, inspired by the ideas of J. Brian Pitts. Based on his own understanding of the PSR, he gives some answers. Based on the variant given by the mutakallims, we can take his answers a step further.

The main argument is based on a possibility principle, which states that "for any consistent theory there are a possible world and an interpretation of that theory such that the theory is true at that world under that interpretation." Pruss answers this by saying that this is not enough to make the PSR unnecessary. It just states that you can make any consistent theory work, but unless we are shown that there can be no

interpretation of that theory given the PSR, we do not have a problem with its necessity (Pruss 2006, 75–81).

For the mutakallims, since the PSR is not merely about some relations, but based on a relation between existence and essence, the mere consistency of a theory is not enough. As a matter of fact, they do not seem to have the slightest care about consistent causal chains since they choose to be occasionalists. Thereafter, any possible world one can suggest must have the Necessary Being and the rest just relies on his power. Any theories for relations between the contingents are read to be nomic interpretations, which has nothing to do with metaphysical causation at all.

For this objection, there is a specific case that needs extra attention. Pruss claimed that, for any consistent theory, he could show an interpretation that the PSR is admissible. One case, however, seems not to be like that: the empty world. In an empty world, where it is assumed that nothing exists, not even the Necessary Being, there is no use for the PSR. He suggests some workarounds by some restrictions to the principle. For the mutakallims, this and similar problems are solved from the start, the modal theory. If there were nothing, all contingent essences would be accidentally impossible. The impossibility has a reason: lack of voluntary and involuntary causes. Still, the contingent essences in themselves are just contingent essentially. The metaphysical state is that they do not exist; even more, it is necessary that they do not exist. Hence, the PSR is always valid. As a matter of fact, for an empty world, more than explaining it, it makes an important statement about it: The empty world will always remain empty, for there can never be reasons to change it.

We see that objections of this type cannot force the variant given by the mutakallims into workarounds and modifications. It is enough for us to go to the basic principles on what the PSR is grounded.

4.10.5. Objections to Unrestricted Variants

The mutakallims do not claim that every contingent fact needs an explanation. As we have mentioned, the independent contingent facts about what God wills are not a part

of their explananda. This saves them from all criticism based on problems of unrestricted variants. The Principle of Plenitude, modal fatalism, and all other types of necessitarianism are denied, as we have seen. Other than that, theories that try to explain some perplexing phenomena, like quantum mechanics, do not even slightly threaten the variant given by the mutakallims.

As a matter of fact, the mutakallims base their theory of voluntary causation on arguments used in these objections. However, rather than denying the PSR altogether, they are careful about choosing their explananda and putting restrictions on the explanantia. As we have mentioned, Alexander Pruss, who set himself a goal of finding out what survives all the criticism we see in the contemporary philosophy against the PSR, arrived at the same result.

Even if we ignored every reason the mutakallims have for not denying the PSR, it could still be argued that it is very worrisome not to accept any variant of it. Even an ad hominem argument is not all that fallacious in this case. Therefore, prima facie, the mutakallims have the high ground.

4.10.6. Other Variants as De Facto Objections

Other variants of the PSR can be considered de facto objections since the mutakallims claim that their understanding is exclusively the right one.

The falāsifa deny voluntary causation, but the necessary rules they designate for involuntary causation, like that “one causes only one,” are objected to be violations of the PSR. As our discussion is based on arguments between them and the mutakallims, no need to repeat them again.

Leibniz is the first one to name this principle. Based on his theory of monadology, Leibniz claims that the reasons are buried in the subjects in an analytic sense. That Alexander defeated the Persians is essentially necessary, for Alexander is Alexander. However, being Alexander is to carry an infinite web of relations to every other thing, from the small ants on the battlefield to the huge stars of the galaxy. Analysis of Alexander is, then, an impossible task. The PSR is not to stipulate external reasons

but to demand a partial analysis of the web of relations. Every proximate reason we can give for Alexander's victory needs another reason, and unless the infinite relations came clear to us, we do not have a complete reason (Melamed and Lin 2020).

Could there be alternative consistent worlds with alternative relations? The answer is negative; hence, it really is the case that this web of relations, which is inherent to every object, can only be one way. Leibniz makes a connection to the Principle of the Best here. That is, the only actuality is the best possible actuality. Leibniz sees a need to give God a reason to distinguish between things so that he can intend one. It seems that otherwise since God is at the center of the explanation web, the PSR would be false. That intention of his, which could not be any different, is what makes the current web of relations necessary like "Four is even." Even if it is logically possible that Alexander could have lost the war, his relation to God and how he fits the world decided that he wins. However, since this is not independently Alexander's essence, Alexander is contingent (Bobro 2020).

We can conclude that Leibniz has a similar idea to the *falāsifa* when it comes to restrictions on the PSR. His understanding of God's will is not that it is an independent source but a forced one that needs to be directed to something for a prior reason. That prior reason is grounded on the Principle of the Best. Whatever way Leibniz grounds his theory, his objection against the *mutakallims* would be that they do not give reasons to the will of God. Therefore, the answers against the *falāsifa* are valid against him, too.

Unlike Leibniz, it is claimed that Descartes accepted God's will to be free and indifferent. One can object that based on his arguments for the actuality of perceptions, that God is good. Moreover, Descartes claims that God is the one who created mathematical and logical truths (Hatfield 2018). The objection would be that the need for a reason itself is a type of truth, and if it depended on God's choice, it would depend on itself. Therefore, it is either that the PSR, with all logical entailments, is true or that it is completely false. Then, the logical grounds it sits cannot depend on God's will either. Since this will entail all logical truths, then Descartes cannot claim that God creates mathematical and logical truths.

Kant has arguments similar to Hume's objection. However, he does not deny the PSR completely. It is a condition for the possibility of experience and the objects of experience. As it is a general problem in Kant's dichotomies, this does not transcend to a metaphysical level (De Pierris and Friedman 2018). The mutakallims do not think that the primitive concepts and categories we have in our minds are limitations. Rather, they are what enable us to go beyond the limits of perception. It is such that we can even apprehend and speak about impossible objects and be sure that they are impossible. We make necessary judgments about everything. As in the modal theory, we put rules to existence. The mutakallims do not see these as rules of perception and conceivability but as rules of existence.

Moreover, we can argue that Maimon's critique is similar to what a mutakallim would say against Kant. According to Kant, intuitions and concepts come from entirely different sources. Intuitions are from sensibility, and concepts are from understanding. However, we do not have any reason to claim a constant agreement between these two. The only way to reconcile between them is to accept that intuitions are concepts (Melamed and Lin 2020). In that case, the PSR is accepted.

To put everything in order, we can generalize that all views that do not restrict the PSR are rejected by the mutakallims because of the actuality. The actual universe, with all its incipient changes, needs some indeterministic cause. Any claims of an indeterministic involuntary cause are rejected. The only way to explain the universe is the assertion of voluntary causation.

Here, indeterministic involuntary causation, that is, a cause randomly taking effect, is to be given attention. In this case, it is a cause without intrinsic will. As previously mentioned, that cause is either sufficient or not. If sufficient, it must always be effective. If not, it is always in need of an external addition to complete it. This is based on that a sufficient cause always takes effect. This was a result of the modal theory, as we have seen. The difference between necessity and contingency is strict, and nothing can become without necessitation.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The kalām tradition is a continuous tradition with an unbroken lineage continuing more than a millennium. Many scholars gave their life to study and teach as mutakallims. It would be arrogant to think that there is nothing to learn from that tradition. To consider ourselves better with the contemporary before evaluating the history of philosophy does not fit to be a sincere intention for the seeker of the truth and the lover of knowledge. Hence, one of the purposes of this study is its very subject matter, and whatever the conclusions may be, the effort is worthwhile.

The mutakallims suggest alternative solutions to fundamental problems of philosophy starting from the truth theory. Their nonrealist theory based on the “being true in itself (*nafs al-amr*)” concept provides a consistent framework to solve our biggest problems in metaphysics. They are not willing to fall into the affirmation of any alien abstract objects, and they try to keep everything neatly. Their modal theory is the result of this approach. Not only did they dismiss realist ideas from the beginning, but they avoided asserting any immaterial entities very carefully. There is no denying that a nonrealist view, *ceteris paribus*, is the better one.

Along with the modalist account of the modal theory, where modality is considered primitive and irreducible, we find a nonmodal account of essentialism. The essentialism the mutakallims suggest does not depend on modal relations but is analyzed as a problem based on different primitive concepts. In the end, the modal theory brings in the concept of contingency and needing a reason.

The mutakallims stipulate a reason for contingent beings. It is only contingency, what stipulates a reason. Therefore, their take on the PSR is not to explain propositions but to start from fundamental ontological grounds. How a reason can work, and the nature of the relation between a reason and its existential effect must

be studied. After the rational analysis, the actual causal relations follow as empirical problems.

There would be a need for a reason if a contingent essence were to exist. Furthermore, we could look for those causes and study them as actual instances if that were the case. And that is really the case. We have a problem of contingent beings: some contingents exist. This problem is not merely a rationalist problem, but it has empirical grounds. In demand of a solution, cosmological arguments are presented. Ontological arguments like Anselm's do not fit into the truth theory, thereby being disregarded by the mutakallims as light-minded attempts. Their elaborated cosmological arguments, the Proof from Incipience and the Proof from Contingency, do not aim to prove God but start as ways to solve the actuality problem. The modal theory faces existence as a problem, and the only solution is that there is a necessary being.

The Necessary Being is a widely accepted solution. That said, the problem does not end here. As an extension to the problem of contingent beings, the relation between a reason and its effect needs to be understood. Other than the idea of involuntary deterministic causes, which have to coexist with their effects at all times, the mutakallims claim that the actuality at hand demands more. The only way to explain it is to realize its dependency on a willing powerful agent. Despite all objections, the mutakallims insist that there has to be at least one being equipped with power and will. This new idea of voluntary causation is what makes their variant of the PSR unique and valuable.

Some contemporary philosophers arrived at the same solution that there must be an indeterministic cause, and it is not problematic to the validity of the rest of what relates to the PSR. However, we cannot say that their variants are as elaborated as what the mutakallims discussed extensively. Moreover, the holistic approach of the mutakallims from the beginnings of the truth theory saves them from obligations to provide exceptions and modifications. From the start, one feels where everything will end.

In conclusion, the explananda that stipulate reasons is the ontic status of contingent essences, and the explanantia that provide reasons have to include voluntary agents. As an ontological principle, this is the PSR according to the mutakallims. Utilizing this principle for questions from metaphysics and the metaphysical actuality leads them to decisive results.

The first and foremost consequence is the assertion of the Necessary Being. As the following consequence, by analyzing necessity, he is attributed by some negative attributes: pre-eternality, endlessness, absolute dissimilarity from all contingent beings, self-subsistence, oneness, unity, immutability. By inference from his existence and the fact that there is some contingent existent, he is attributed by some qualitative attributes: absolute power, absolute will, absolute knowledge, immutable life. As an additional consequence, it follows that nothing contingent is pre-eternal.

For there is a voluntary agent, necessitarianism, modal fatalism, and the Principle of Plenitude are dismissed. The Identity of Indiscernibles, even if accepted, does not follow from the variant suggested by the mutakallims. Despite that an agent with free will is accepted to be actual, the free will of contingent beings and theological fatalism gave rise to a difference of opinion between mutakallims.

Nomic causation is based on mere repetitions of proximate “causes” and “effects” according to the majority of the mutakallims, who defend strong occasionalism. The real reason is the creation of God by his power and will. Based on this, quantum mechanics is an eligible way of God putting his designated order to reality. Other than that, we can infer from the principles that if there are to be any independent indeterministic agents in an interpretation of quantum mechanics, the mutakallims would claim that they are conscious beings with power and life.

The mutakallims avoid any objection against the PSR that indicates unrestrictedness to be problematic because of the restriction put by voluntary causation. Also, their truth theory dismisses all objections based on the conceivability of the contrary because conceivability does not entail truth in itself. The concept of voluntary causation is at the center of some objections. Nonetheless, the mutakallims ask for proofs of inconsistency and assert that proof is impossible since voluntary causation

is the only solution for the actual universe. We can conclude that there is no strong objection that provides alternative solutions against the mutakallims.

In conclusion, there seems that there is much we can benefit from the mutakallims. Their consistent metaphysical theories can resist formidable objections. Some can argue that the modal theory and the variant of the PSR the mutakallims suggest are superior to contemporary theories. If that is too big of a claim, at least, these theories are on par with the contemporaries.



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