

RETHINKING PROPOSITIONS BEYOND TAUTOLOGY: AL-SUHRAWARDĪ ON THE ONTOLOGICAL BASIS OF PROPOSITIONS

Zehra Oruk Akman

Muş Alparslan University, Muş-Türkiye

zhr_ork@hotmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3673-7536>

Abstract

This study examines Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī's ontological critique of tautology within his Illuminationist philosophy. Al-Suhrawardī challenges the Aristotelian view of tautologies such as "A is A" as meaningful, arguing that they lack epistemic value by failing to distinguish between the subject and predicate. His essence-based ontology demands that valid propositions involve distinct concepts fulfilling different epistemic roles. Tautologies, by collapsing this distinction, do not yield true judgment. This research analyzes al-Suhrawardī's position through his primary texts and a comparative reading of select medieval commentators. Methodologically, it combines close textual analysis with historical interpretation to show how his metaphysics shapes his logic. This study contributes to two areas: it repositions al-Suhrawardī as a critical figure in the history of logic and metaphysics, and it offers a conceptual framework that bridges logical form with ontological substance, highlighting the

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continued relevance of his thought to contemporary debates in logic, semantics, and the foundations of meaningful judgment.

Key Words: Logic, al-Suhrawardī, existence, proposition, tautology, subject, predicate

Introduction

Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), the master of Illuminationist (*Isbrāqī*) philosophy and the founder of the Isbrāqī tradition, introduced a philosophical system that has been widely recognized for its departure from the Peripatetic tradition.¹ This divergence is not merely oppositional; it represents a profound shift in the philosophical discourse of his time. Al-Suhrawardī's metaphysical system, which is deeply influenced by mystical and Platonic approaches,² reimagines the concepts of existence and essence in ways that challenge conventional frameworks of thought. His interpretation of existence (*wujūd*) as a purely mental construct without a direct counterpart in the external world stands at the heart of this reimagining, offering a paradigm that intertwines metaphysics with logic.³

This ontological perspective has significant implications for al-Suhrawardī's understanding of propositions. By categorizing concepts such as "the being of something" (*kawn al-shayʿ*) and "thingness" (*shayʿiyyah*) as mental constructs or "beings of reason" (*iʿtibārāt ʿaqliyyah*),⁴ al-Suhrawardī shifts the focus of logical inquiry from

¹ Abū l-Futūh Shihāb al-Dīn Yahyā ibn Ḥabash al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination: Hikmat al-isbrāq*, ed. and trans. John Walbridge - Hossein Ziai (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1999), 31-76; Also see Sajjad H. Rizvi, "An Islamic Subversion of the Existence-Essence Distinction? Suhrawardī's Visionary Hierarchy of Lights", *Asian Philosophy* 9/3 (1999), 219.

² For detailed information see al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 65-67.

³ Al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 123; Also see Mehdi Amin Razavi, *Subrawardī and the School of Illumination*, ed. Ian Richard Netton (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997), 33; Cevdet Kılıç, "Sühreverdī'nin Varlık Düşüncesinde Nurlar Hiyerarşisi ve Meşşâî Felsefe ile Karşılaştırılması", *Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 13/2 (December 2008), 57.

⁴ John Walbridge - Hossein Ziai, "Translators' Introduction", *The Philosophy of Illumination: Hikmat al-isbrāq*, auth. Abū l-Futūh Shihāb al-Dīn Yahyā ibn Ḥabash al-Suhrawardī (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1999), xxi.

external existence to intrinsic essences. This shift necessitates reevaluating how judgments are made and propositions are constructed. Consequently, the study of tautology, a concept often overlooked in classical logic, becomes crucial for understanding the deeper connections between al-Suhrawardī's metaphysics and his logical framework.

The term "tautology" has undergone considerable evolution in its usage. Just as a thematic or evidential connection between two propositions constitutes a fundamental condition for valid reasoning,⁵ a similar coherence must also exist between the subject and predicate within a single proposition. This relationship shapes not only the formal structure of the proposition but also its capacity to generate meaning. The proposition is considered tautological if there is no semantic distinction between the subject and the predicate. Historically, it also referred to the repetition of a word or phrase.

In modern logic, the term "proposition" refers to a formula that holds true under every possible assignment of truth values, such as $\sim p \vee p$. This reflects a key distinction from classical logic, which analyzes statements primarily in subject-predicate form. Modern logic involves the evaluation of formulas on the basis of their truth-functional properties. As such, a tautology is defined as a formula that remains true regardless of the truth values assigned to its components, including both premises and conclusions. That is, tautological propositions are necessarily true, as they cannot be rendered false under any circumstances, holding their truth value invariant across all possible configurations of subject and predicate.⁶ While analytically valid, these tautologies are often criticized for not providing any factual information.⁷ This raises important questions about their status within classical logic:⁸ Can a tautological statement be considered a proposition if it fails to convey new knowledge? Addressing this

⁵ Zeynep Çelik, *Diyalojik İlgisizlik* (Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık, 2025), 94.

⁶ Şerife Büyükköse - Özlem Çakır, *Ayrık Matematik* (Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2019), 7; Teo Grünberg, *Modern Logic* (Ankara: METU Press, 2002), 12-13; Karama Hassan Hussain, "Tautology and Pleonasm in Political Interviews: A Semantic Study", *Journal of the College of Languages* 50 (2024), 63.

⁷ Alfred Jules Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (London & New York: Penguin Books, 1971), 34-35.

⁸ For some reviews of a contemporary classical traditional logician see Elif Özel, "Mehmet Naci Bolay ve Mantıkçılığı", *Cumhuriyetimizin 100. Yılında Felsefecimiz*, ed. Elif Özel (Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık, 2023), 109-117.

question is central to this study, as it uncovers the underlying assumptions about meaning and judgment in classical and modern logical systems.

Al-Suhrawardī's critique of tautology extends beyond the formal structures of logic. In his philosophy, propositions are not merely linguistic or symbolic constructions; they serve as vehicles of judgment, requiring meaningful information about their subjects. A proposition in which the subject and predicate convey the same meaning, even if expressed through different terms, fails to satisfy this criterion. Al-Suhrawardī challenges the validity of tautologies, contending that a proposition must involve two distinct concepts with differing epistemic functions: one serving as the "address" of a nature and the other as its "attribute". For instance, al-Suhrawardī critiques propositions such as "Human is man (*al-insān bashar*)", which ostensibly repeat the same concept, asserting that the subject and predicate differ in meaning owing to their distinct logical roles. This paper analyzes the ambiguity in al-Suhrawardī's treatment of propositions, particularly his insistence that the subject and predicate cannot both refer to a single, identical nature. By examining al-Suhrawardī's works, the study reveals that he implicitly rejects the notion that a proposition can simultaneously encompass a nature, its address, and its attributes. The research underscores that, for al-Suhrawardī, a valid proposition must feature an address signifying the nature itself in the subject term and an attribute related to the subject without being another nature in the predicate term.

This study defines tautology in this specific sense: as propositions where the subject and predicate are synonymous, leading to a lack of substantive judgment. Such propositions, common in rhetorical contexts,⁹ challenge the foundational principles of classical logic, particularly the principle of identity.

The principle of identity itself is a tautological proposition, underscoring the complexity of the debate. Classical logic often treats tautological statements as foundational, but this study questions whether such statements fulfill the essential criteria of a proposition. Examining this issue within al-Suhrawardī's framework makes it clear

⁹ Hussain, "Tautology and Pleonasm in Political Interviews", 63.

that tautologies fail to meet the requirements for meaningful judgment, thereby challenging their place in logical systems.

While tautology has been extensively studied in fields such as mathematical logic, computer science, and linguistics,¹⁰ its implications for classical conceptual logic remain underexplored. Even less attention has been given to its relevance within al-Suhrawardī's philosophical framework. This study addresses this gap by investigating the possibility and validity of tautological propositions through al-Suhrawardī's lens.

The concepts used by al-Suhrawardī, such as “being a subject” (*mawḍūʿiyyah*) and “being a predicate” (*maḥmūliyyah*), redefine the parameters of propositional construction. His argument that a proposition cannot simultaneously be tautological and valid introduces a critical challenge to traditional Peripatetic logic. To clarify the scope and argumentative flow of this study, the discussion unfolds in three main sections. The first section contextualizes the concept of tautology within the Peripatetic tradition, focusing on how key logicians approached its logical and ontological dimensions. The second section turns to al-Suhrawardī's critique, analyzing his reinterpretation of predication and the conditions for meaningful propositions. The final section evaluates the broader implications of his framework for classical logic, especially with respect to the nature of identity, judgment, and propositional structure.

This study is structured into three sections to unpack this argument: the first section explores the treatment of tautology in the Peripatetic tradition, highlighting key logicians' perspectives; the second section focuses on al-Suhrawardī's critique and his redefinition of propositional judgment; and the concluding section evaluates the implications of his approach for the broader discourse on the nature of propositions.

The significance of this study lies in its twofold contribution: it not only advances our understanding of al-Suhrawardī's philosophy and

¹⁰ For some of these works see Hussain, “Tautology and Pleonasm in Political Interviews”; Marek Zainonc, “Probability Distribution for Simple Tautologies”, *Theoretical Computer Science* 355/2 (2006), 243-260; Ali Muhammad Rushdi et al., “A Modern Syllogistic Method in Intuitionistic Fuzzy Logic with Realistic Tautology”, *The Scientific World Journal* 1 (2015), 1-12; Hadumod Bussmann, *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*, trans. and ed. Gregory P. Trauth - Kerstin Kazzazi (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), 1179.

logic but also fills a critical gap in classical logic scholarship. While al-Suhrawardī's Illuminationist metaphysics and epistemology have garnered substantial academic interest and his logical thought, including critiques of the Peripatetic tradition, symbolic language, syllogism, and modal concepts such as necessity and possibility, has been explored in several contexts,¹¹ existing studies tend to emphasize broader themes or specific modalities. To date, no research has systematically examined his treatment of tautological reasoning or the ontological grounding of propositions. This article directly engages with that neglected area, offering an original analysis of al-Suhrawardī's critique of tautology concerning the ontological structure of propositions. By doing so, it recovers a marginal but significant aspect of his thought and initiates a historical dialogue with contemporary debates concerning the limits of classical logic. Situating his critique in a broader conceptual framework, this study challenges prevailing assumptions about propositions, truth, and meaning and offers a new perspective at the intersection of metaphysics and logic. Ultimately, it encourages modern scholars to reassess the foundational tenets of logical systems, highlighting the continued relevance of al-Suhrawardī's insights in both historical and contemporary philosophical contexts.

1. Understanding Propositions through Subject-Predicate Dynamics

A proposition is a statement that can be either true or false. The simplest form of a proposition is the categorical proposition, also known as the predicate proposition, which serves as the foundation for more complex propositions. A categorical proposition, consisting

¹¹ For some of these works see Razavi, *Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination*; Rizvi, "An Islamic Subversion of the Existence-Essence Distinction? Suhrawardī's Visionary Hierarchy of Lights"; Eyüp Bekiryazıcı, *Şibâbeddin Sühreverdî'nin Felsefesinde Ontoloji Problemi* (Erzurum: Atatürk University, Institute of Social Sciences, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2005); Kılıç, "Sühreverdî'nin Varlık Düşüncesinde Nurlar Hiyerarşisi"; Zia Movahed, "Suhrawardi on Syllogisms", *Sophia Perennis* 2/4 (2010), 5-18; Kamil Kömürcü, "Meşşâî Burhandan İsrâkî İrfana Sühreverdî el-Maktûl'ün Mantık Anlayışı", *Universal Journal of Theology* 2/1 (2017), 58-73; Jari Kaukua, "İ'tibârî Concepts in Suhrawardî: The Case of Substance", *Oriens* 48/1-2 (2020), 40-66; Shahid Rahman - Alioune Seck, "Suhrawardī's Stance on Modalities and His Logic of Presence" (Conference on Arabic Logic in Honour of Tony Street, Berkely, United States, 2022).

of a subject and a predicate, asserts that the subject either is or is not the predicate.¹² In the classical tradition of logic, there must be a partial identity between the subject and predicate within a proposition. This identity entails both difference and unity (*ittiḥād*) between the subject and predicate terms. In other words, if there is no partial difference between the subject and predicate, two scenarios emerge: either there is a complete disjunction, preventing any predication, or there is a complete identity, as seen in tautologies, such as the proposition “Human is human”.¹³

For a valid judgment to be made, unity between the subject and predicate must be established, but only after an initial disagreement. This unity can take various forms, including *ḥaqīqī* (real), *inḥimāmī* (integrative or synergistic), *tarkībī* (composite), *maḥbūmī* (conceptual), and *wujūdī* (existential).¹⁴ Without any difference between the subject and predicate, the proposition results in “oneness” rather than meaningful unity, making the predication invalid. Therefore, a distinction must exist in one aspect, whereas unity must be present in another, as predication cannot occur between identical entities, nor is it meaningful for something to predicate itself.¹⁵

1.1. Forms of Unity: Conceptual and Existential

Unity occurs in two forms, conceptual and existential, under the condition that there is some form of disagreement between the subject and the predicate. *Conceptual unity* refers to a type of difference between the subject and predicate, as seen in definitional sentences, where the definition and the defined correspond to the same concept. In this form of unity, both general and detailed disagreements can arise. For example, in the sentence “Man is rational”, no conceptual difference is found between the subject and the predicate. This

¹² Al-Suhrawardī, “Kitāb Ḥikmat al-ishrāq”, *Majmū‘ab-‘i duwwum-i Muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq Shihāb al-Dīn Yahyā al-Subrawardī dar ḥikmat-i ilāhī*, ed. Henry Corbin (Tehran: Inṣitū Irān va Farānsah, 1952), 22.

¹³ Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah*, ed. ‘Abbās ‘Alī al-Zārī‘ī al-Sabzwārī (Qom: Mu‘assasat al-Ma‘ārif al-Islāmiyyah, 1377 HS), 131. Also see Mehmet Özturan, “Yüklemleme Dilemması: Taşköprüzade’nin Dışsal Özdeşlikçi Yüklemleme Teorisi”, *Kutadgubilig Felsefe-Bilim Araştırmaları* 41 (2020), 167-180.

¹⁴ Al-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah*, 131.

¹⁵ Zehra Oruk Akman, *Klasik Mantıkta Yargının Onto-Epistemolojisi: Konusunun Varlığı Bakımından Önermeler* (Ankara: Elis Yayınları, 2024), 76-77.

definition is equivalent to saying “Man is man”.¹⁶ To properly understand a tautological proposition, one must grasp the reflections of the types of unity between the subject and predicate within the proposition.

Existential unity occurs when the subject and predicate, although differing conceptually, coincide with the same existence. For example, the proposition “Man is laughter” is not a tautological expression. While “man” and “laughter” are not identical in concept, they refer to the same entity in terms of existence, thus achieving existential unity.¹⁷ On the other hand, when the existence of something becomes necessary, predication will not serve any purpose. If an entity exists in a self-evident and necessary manner, meaning that its existence is ontologically certain and not contingent upon any condition, predication becomes meaningless in this context. Predication refers to the process of associating, defining, or explaining something in relation to another. However, when an entity’s existence is already clear and self-evident, a predicative statement that affirms its existence does not add new information or meaning; it merely reiterates an already established fact. For example, a statement such as “God (if considered as Necessary Existent/*Wācib al-wujūd*) exists” does not provide any additional insight, as the existence of God is already apparent. Therefore, such predications become redundant, offering no new understanding. For predication to be meaningful, there must be a level of difference or an aspect that requires further explanation or

¹⁶ Sayyid Kamāl al-Ḥaydarī, *Sharḥ Bidāyat al-ḥikmah*, ed. Khalil Rizq (Qom: Dār Farāqid li-l-Tibā‘ah wa-l-Nashr, 3rd ed., 1431/2010), 2/96-97. According to Zayn al-Dīn al-Kashshī, there are three types of unity (*ittiḥād*):

1. *Unity in Meaning*: This type of unity can be interpreted as the correspondence of a term to its meaning, as seen in propositions like “The lion is a lion”.
2. *Unity in Existence*: In this type of predication, the subject and predicate are distinct in kind, as exemplified by propositions such as “Humans are rational beings” or “Human is animal”.
3. *Unity in Nature*: In this type of unity, the essence of the subject and the essence of the predicate unify within the same entity.

These types of unity are followed by propositions categorized based on the quantity of the subject (universal, particular, singular, or indefinite) and the quality of the proposition (affirmative or negative). Zayn al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Kashshī (as Zaynuddīn Keşşî), *Mantık: Hadâiku’l-Hakâik [Logic Section of Hadâiq al-ḥaqâiq]*, ed. and trans. Ali Rıza Şahin (Ankara: Kitabe Yayınları, 2024), 76-77; Ali Rıza Şahin, *Zeynuddin el-Keşşî’de Önergeler* (Ankara: Kitabe Yayınları, 2023), 39-40.

¹⁷ Al-Ḥaydarī, *Sharḥ Bidāyat al-ḥikmah*, 2/96.

clarification. When unity between the subject and predicate is considered, the existence of different types of predications reflects the different forms of unity that arise from the nature of the subject and the predicate.

1.2. Types of Predications: A Priori and Synthetic-Common

In the Arabic logic literature, the types of predications have been addressed through different classifications.¹⁸ However, without entering detailed classifications, all forms of predication may be broadly grouped into two main categories: *a priori* predication and synthetic-common predication. This categorization aims to offer a clearer way of understanding how propositions can be analyzed by distinguishing different types of relationships between subjects and predicates.

A priori predication is based on the intrinsic characteristics of the subject and predicate, and it represents universally accepted judgments. For example, the sentence “Human is rational” establishes a necessary relationship between the subject (human) and the predicate (rational). Such predication does not require empirical verification, as its truth is directly related to the essence of the terms involved.

Synthetic-common predication does not involve a direct internal relationship between the subject and predicate but expresses a relationship that holds true in the external world. Within synthetic-common predication, four subtypes can be identified to further explore its various dimensions, as outlined below. While this framework is intended to provide a useful tool for analysis, it is not definitive, and alternative categorizations may also be possible.

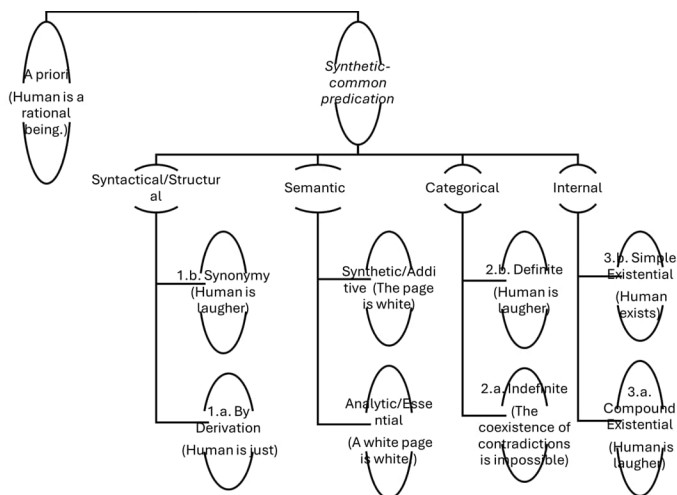
- a. Syntactical/structural predication (in terms of affixes)
- b. Categorical predication (in terms of considering individuals)
- c. Internal predication (simple-compound)

¹⁸ For some see Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Sinā, *al-Shifā’ al-Mantiq 1: al-Madkhal*, ed. George C. Anawati et al. (Cairo: Wizārat al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Umūmiyyah, 1371/1952), 28-29; al-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah*, 132; Abū Ja‘far Nasīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, *Asās al-iqtibās fī l-mantiq*, trans. Mullā Khusraw, ed. Ḥasan al-Shāfi‘ī - Muḥammad Sa‘īd Jamāl al-Dīn, (Cairo: al-Majlis al-A‘lā li-l-Thaqāfah, 2004), 1/44; al-Ḥaydarī, *Sharḥ Bidāyat al-ḥikmah*, 2/96-100; Muḥammad Riḍā Muẓaffar, *al-Mantiq* (Beirut: Dār al-Ta‘āruf li-l-Maṭbū‘āt, 2006), 81-85; ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Rifā‘ī, *Mabādi’ al-falsafah al-Islāmiyyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Hādī, 2001), 299-300.

d. Semantic predication (analytic-synthetic)

The categorization of predications into syntactical/structural, categorical, internal, and semantic dimensions plays a crucial role in providing a more nuanced understanding of propositions. Each category offers a distinct perspective that enriches the analysis of logical and philosophical structures. Syntactical/structural predication (in terms of affixes) emphasizes the importance of linguistic structure in forming propositions. By examining how words and their components, such as affixes, interact within a sentence, this category highlights the grammatical underpinnings that determine the meaning and relationships between the subject and predicate. On the other hand, categorical predication focuses on the individuals referred to by the subject and predicate, addressing the ontological aspect of propositions by considering what types of entities are being discussed and how they are categorized. Internal predication (simple-compound) allows for the distinction between basic assertions and more complex assertions, helping clarify propositions' internal structure and their logical implications. Finally, semantic predication (analytic-synthetic) explores the distinction between judgments that are true by definition (analytic) and those whose truth depends on empirical or external factors (synthetic). Together, these categories provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing propositions, enabling a deeper understanding of their structure, meaning, and ontological implications while also offering flexibility for future categorizations and interpretations.

The following table of predication types is presented to explore the different categories and their nuances further. It offers a structured framework for analyzing propositions and understanding the various dimensions of predication. These categories indicate an essential framework for the logical examination of predication, offering insight into the relationships between the subject and predicate and allowing the construction of various types of judgments.

Figure 1

Source: Oruk Akman, *Klasik Mantıkta Yargının Onto-Epistemolojisi*, 107.

Table 1

<i>Types of predications</i>	<i>Subtypes</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Logical analysis</i>	<i>Tautological Nature</i>	<i>Justification</i>
<i>Syntactical/Structural</i>	<i>Synonymy</i>	"Human is laugher."	<i>The predicate is implied by the essence of the subject.</i>	<i>Nontautological</i>	<i>The predicate clarifies a property of the subject but does not restate it fully.</i>

	<i>Derivation</i>	<i>"Human is just."</i>	<i>The predicate introduces a derived property.</i>	<i>Nontautological</i>	<i>The predicate adds meaning by implying a contingent property.</i>
<i>Semantic</i>	<i>Synthetic</i>	<i>The page is white</i>	<i>The predicate depends on external verification.</i>	<i>Nontautological</i>	<i>Truth relies on empirical observation, not logical identity.</i>
	<i>Analytic</i>	<i>A white page is white</i>	<i>The predicate is implied but not identical.</i>	<i>Nontautological</i>	<i>While the predicate affirms an implied property, it does not restate the subject.</i>
<i>Categorical</i>	<i>Definite</i>	<i>Human is laugher</i>	<i>The predicate defines an inherent property.</i>	<i>Nontautological</i>	<i>The predicate adds meaning to the subject without being identical.</i>
	<i>Indefinite</i>	<i>The coexistence of contradictions is impossible</i>	<i>Express a logical impossibility.</i>	<i>Nontautological</i>	<i>The predicate introduces a principle about logical relationships.</i>
<i>Internal</i>	<i>Simple</i>	<i>Human exists</i>	<i>The predicate asserts existence.</i>	<i>Nontautological</i>	<i>Existence is not identical to the subject but an assertion about it.</i>
	<i>Compound</i>	<i>Human is laugher</i>	<i>The predicate defines an essential property.</i>	<i>Nontautological</i>	<i>The predicate adds an essential characteristic; it is not identical to the subject.</i>

The framework outlined above reveals that tautology is rendered impossible within Aristotelian logic as a mere repetition of the subject in the predicate. Each type of predication –syntactical/structural, categorical, internal, and semantic– ensures that the relationship between the subject and predicate remains meaningful and distinct rather than reducible to identity. For example, in syntactical/structural predication, the predicate may be implied by the subject's essence but is never identical to it. A proposition such as "Human is laughter" clarifies a specific property of the subject without redundantly restating its essence. This differentiation underscores the role of linguistic structure in preserving the logical integrity of propositions by avoiding tautological restatements.

Similarly, semantic predication upholds this principle by distinguishing between analytic and synthetic judgments. Analytic propositions, such as "A white page is white", affirm properties that are implied by the subject without collapsing into tautology. Although the predicate might seem self-evident, it emphasizes a particular attribute of the subject, thereby contributing to the proposition's overall meaning. In synthetic judgments, the predicate introduces information that relies on external verification, further distancing itself from tautological repetition. For example, "The page is white" connects the subject and predicate in a manner contingent on empirical observation, ensuring that the truth of the proposition is not confined to mere definitional identity.

This nuanced approach extends to categorical and internal predications. Categorical predication examines the ontological dimensions of propositions, distinguishing between definite and indefinite assertions. A statement such as "Human is laughter" defines an inherent property of the subject but does so in a way that enriches the proposition's meaning rather than restating the subject. Similarly, whether simple or compound, internal predication involves assertions about the subject that extend beyond mere identity. For example, "Human exists" asserts a relationship between the subject and the predicate that is nonidentical and contingent on existence itself.

Thus, as applied through this categorization, Aristotelian logic ensures that tautology is avoided by preserving the distinct contributions of subjects and predicates within propositions. By emphasizing the varied dimensions of predication –syntactical,

semantic, categorical, and internal– this framework maintains the logical and ontological depth necessary for meaningful analysis, rendering tautology impossible within its system.

1.3. The Subject-Predicate Relationship and Modality

In propositions, the scopes of the subject and the predicate usually differ from each other. In some cases, the predicate is equal to the subject, but more often, the predicate is more general than the subject.¹⁹ This distinction is important in understanding the relationship between the subject and predicate in a proposition. The scope of the subject refers to the set of entities to which the subject term applies, whereas the scope of the predicate defines the set of characteristics or properties that can be attributed to those entities.

For example, in the proposition “Every human being is rational”, the predicate term “rational” is not more general than the subject term “human”. In fact, in this case, all possible members of the predicate are equal to all possible members of the subject. This is because, for a proposition, there is no possible rational being that is not human, nor can there be a human who is not rational. In other words, the set of rational beings is entirely contained within the set of human beings, with no external rational entities. The scope of the predicate “rational” and the scope of the subject “human” thus overlap entirely, and there is no possibility of existence for any individual who is rational but not human or who is human but not rational. However, this structural clarity between subject and predicate becomes unstable when the subject is examined in terms of its internal components or more abstract categorical parts. In such cases, the proposition may fail to preserve its universality since a component part of the subject may, in fact, be extensionally broader than the subject as a whole. For instance, consider the statement, “Every human being is rational”. While this seems straightforward, the predicate “rational” cannot be universally

¹⁹ The contradiction of a term that is equal to another term is itself equal, while the contradiction of a general term is more specific. In this context, if the predicate is identical to the subject, the negation of one term will remain equivalent to the negation of the other. However, if the predicate is more general than the subject, the contradiction of the general term corresponds to the negation of the more particular term. Şadr al-sharī‘ah al-Thānī ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd al-Mahbūbī, “Sharḥ Ta‘dīl al-‘ulūm/Ta‘dīl al-mizān”, in *Sadru’ş-Şerā‘nın Ta‘dīlu’l-Ulūm’unun Mantık Bölümü: Metin ve İnceleme* by İbrahim Özkılıç (İstanbul: Marmara University Social Sciences Institute, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2022), 298-299.

applied to all broader categories under which “human” falls – such as “animal” or “body”. We cannot validly infer from this that “Every animal is rational (*kull ḥayawān nāṭiq*)” or “Every body is rational (*kull jism nāṭiq*)”. The underlying logical form in such a case corresponds to the third figure in syllogistic reasoning: from “Every human is an animal” and “Every human is rational”, the best we can derive is “Some animals are rational”, which clearly lacks universality.²⁰

For the formation of a valid proposition, additional elements beyond the subject-predicate pair and the copula that links them are needed. These include the nature of the subject (*dhāt al-mawḍūʿ*), the address of the subject (*ʿunwān al-mawḍūʿ*), the attribute of the subject (*wasf al-mawḍūʿ*), and the attribute of the predicate (*wasf al-maḥmūl*). Nature (*dhāt*) refers to the being or term to which both the address and the attribute are attributed. The address (*ʿunwān*) is the term that reflects the subject’s wording (*lafẓ al-mawḍūʿ*).²¹ According to the Aristotelian tradition, a nature (*dhāt*) cannot serve as the predicate of another nature, meaning that the nature of one being cannot be attributed to another.²² This suggests that a being cannot possess more than one nature. Consequently, the nature of a thing cannot be fully captured in a proposition but is expressed within the subject as either an address (*ʿunwān*) or an attribute (*wasf*). The inner reality of the address (*ḥaqīqat al-ʿunwān*) cannot exist independently (*tashakkbhuṣ*) but must remain tied to the nature to which it refers. In contrast, the attribute is a quality associated with this inner reality (*ḥaqīqah*). While the predicate can be an attribute, it is inappropriate for the address to serve as the predicate.

²⁰ This line of reasoning holds effectively for affirmative propositions, but its applicability becomes more problematic in the case of negative propositions. The reason is that the negation of a collective or compound subject from a given predicate does not entail the negation of that predicate from each of the subject’s constituent parts. For detail see Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ashraf al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ al-Qisṭās*, ed. Mahrdād Ḥasanbagī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Tūs, 2016), 250-251.

²¹ Sayyid Kamāl al-Ḥaydarī, *Sharḥ Kitāb al-Manṭiq li-l-ʿAllāmah Muḥammad Riḍā al-Muẓaffar* (Baghdad: Muʾassasat al-Imām Jawād li-l-Fikr wa-l-Thaqāfah, 2015), 2/68-69; Muḥammad Ṭāhir Āl Shubayr al-Khāqānī, *al-Matbal al-aʿlā fi l-manṭiq* (Qom: Anwār al-Hudā, 1435 AH), 130.

²² See Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Sīnā, *al-Shifāʾ al-Manṭiq (al-Maqūlāt)*, ed. Aḥmad Fuʾād al-Ahwānī et al. (Qom: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Marʿashī al-Najafī, 2006), 102-103.

This distinction between the subject and predicate is also critical when considering the conversion of propositions (*‘aks al-qadīyyah*). For example, in the proposition “Man is literate”, and its converted form “Literate is man”, the two propositions are not equivalent in terms of necessity. The subject-predicate relationship in the first proposition is possible, but in the second proposition, this relationship is necessary. While not every individual is literate, anyone who is literate must be human.²³ Thus, the way the subject and predicate relate to each other in the original proposition differs significantly from the conversion.

The subject and predicate are considered two quarters (*qāsimān*), or parts (*qism*), that differ in their inner reality within the proposition. Their relationship depends on their role as subjects and predicates in terms of their position in the proposition. In a proposition such as “J is B”, the subject term “J” is attributed to the predicate “B” through its role as a subject (*mawḍū‘īyyah*), whereas “B” is ascribed to “J” through its role as a predicate (*maḥmūliyyah*). In the conversion, the terms switch positions: “B is J” becomes “J is B”, but the relationship between the subject and predicate in the converted proposition differs from the original.

Importantly, the position of a concept –whether it is a subject or predicate– determines its inner reality and its role in the proposition. For example, in the proposition “human is animal”, the subject is required for the concept of “animality”.²⁴ There are four possible dimensions for propositions in this context:

1. B’s being a subject, not J’s being a subject,
2. J’s being a predicate, not B’s being a predicate,
3. B’s being a predicate, not J’s being a predicate,
4. J’s being a subject, not B’s being a subject.

²³ Al-Khāqānī, *al-Mathbal al-a‘lā fī l-manṭiq*, 128-129.

²⁴ Hasan Akkanat, *Kadī Siraceddin el-Ūrmevi ve Metalii’l-Envar (Tabkik, Çeviri, İnceleme)* (Ankara: Ankara University Institute of Social Sciences, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2006), 28; İbrahim Özkılıç, *Sadru’ş-Şer‘a’nın Ta’dilu’l-Ulûm’unun Mantık Bölümü: Metin ve İnceleme* (İstanbul: Marmara University Social Sciences Institute, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2022), 171; Abū ‘Abd Allāh Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Rāzī, *Lawāmi‘ al-asrār bi-sharḥ Maṭālī‘ al-anwār*, ed. Abū l-Qāsim al-Raḥmānī (Tehran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy, n.d.), 2/32; al-Samarqandī, *Sbarḥ al-Qisṭās*, 178-181.

Thus, B and J cannot simultaneously hold the roles of being a subject and being a predicate in the same proposition. When one concept assumes the role of being a predicate, the other cannot do so.

This issue has prompted discussions in the Peripatetic tradition. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), a key logician in this tradition, suggested that if being a subject of one concept is equivalent to being a predicate of the other, the original and converted propositions do not differ in modality. However, al-Samarqandī (d. 702/1303) challenges this view, arguing that even if there is unity between the concepts (subject and predicate), the original and converted propositions still differ in modality. Al-Rāzī might have been right in his statement, that is, if the predicate with the same being a subject remained the same in the conversion. However, this is not the case, as the predicate replaces the subject.²⁵ Al-Samarqandī posits that being a subject is inherent in the subject term, whereas being a predicate exists in the predicate term. When these roles are reversed in conversion, the modality of the proposition changes. In the case of the proposition “human is animal”, the necessity for the subject term to be human to possess animality suggests a structural dependency of the subject and predicate. However, the relationship between the subject and predicate remains a matter of debate owing to their distinct natures. Notably, if the subject and predicate were to unite (*ittiḥād*), it would result in a conceptual impossibility, akin to the existence of a single entity in two distinct locations.²⁶ The unity in question implies that the two distinct concepts represented by the subject and predicate convey the same meaning.

Şadr al-sharī‘ah (d. 747/1346) offers a different perspective, asserting that the modalities of the original and converted propositions do not differ. He argues that if the subject is necessary for the predicate, the predicate must also exist to confirm the subject. For example, in the proposition “human is animal”, animality is necessary for humanity, but there are other beings that can possess animality, such as other animals such as cats and dogs.²⁷ Şadr al-sharī‘ah, examining the proposition structurally, suggests that the necessity in this context is also structural in nature. This is why the predicate cannot exist independently of the subject. In other words, the roles of being a

²⁵ Al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ al-Qisṭās*, 180-181.

²⁶ Al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ al-Qisṭās*, 180-181.

²⁷ Özkılıç, *Sadrü’ş-Şerīa’nın Ta’dilu’l-Ulûm’unun Mantık Bölümü*, 171.

subject and being a predicate inherently require one another rather than the subject and predicate themselves. For example, if the being a subject of humanness is necessary for animality, then the predicate of animality is likewise necessary for humanness. The modality of a proposition, however, lies in the relationship between the subject and predicate, representing a quality distinct from the subject and predicate that necessitate one another. This perspective addresses modalities as nonoppositional. Nonetheless, Şadr al-sharī'ah acknowledges that being a subject and being a predicate are fundamentally distinct concepts.

Examining the views of al-Suhrawardī alongside those of key Peripatetic thinkers, it is evident that when a conversion occurs between the subject and the predicate, the resulting proposition is not identical to the original. The subject retains its identity as a subject, whereas the predicate maintains its role as a predicate. Thus, an objection to the notion of tautology can be articulated through the Peripatetic tradition by examining propositions such as “every white is white”. According to this perspective, such statements cannot be considered tautological because the roles of “white” in the subject and predicate positions differ fundamentally. In the subject position, “whiteness” functions as a designation or address, signifying an individual entity by virtue of its essential nature. In contrast, “white” in the predicate position refers to a quality or attribute that is inherent in the individual identified by the subject. This distinction highlights a nuanced difference: while the subject term captures an entity’s essence or definitional nature, the predicate term ascribes a specific characteristic or property to it. As such, the apparent repetition in “Every white is white” does not result in pure tautology but instead reflects an interplay between different aspects of predication within the proposition.

2. The Logical and Ontological Foundations of the (Im)possibility of Tautology in al-Suhrawardī’s Philosophy

The logical system developed by al-Suhrawardī, rooted in his metaphysical principles and influenced by the Peripatetic tradition, represents a unique synthesis of Aristotelian and Platonic philosophies. While building on the Peripatetic framework, al-

Suhrawardī introduces significant departures, particularly concerning the nature of existence, quiddity, and the role of logic. These differences are deeply embedded in his Illuminationist philosophy, which prioritizes the metaphysical principle of light and the unveiling of truths through illumination.

Al-Suhrawardī's integration of Aristotelian realism and Platonic idealism produces a logical framework that serves as more than a mechanical tool for reasoning. It is a system that reflects the ontological reality of existence and quiddity, treating logical propositions as windows into deeper metaphysical truths. His emphasis on the conceptual distinction between existence and quiddity led to a reinterpretation of foundational logical concepts, such as predication, judgment, and tautology.

A key aspect of al-Suhrawardī's logic is his rejection of tautology as a meaningful component of reasoning. His critique is grounded in the idea that propositions must convey differentiation and novelty to qualify as valid judgments. This perspective diverges sharply from Aristotelian logic, where tautological expressions might be accepted for their structural formality. Al-Suhrawardī argues that tautological statements fail to introduce substantive content, rendering them ineffective within a metaphysical framework that demands illumination and knowledge expansion.

A comprehensive understanding of al-Suhrawardī's rejection of tautology requires an inquiry into the ways in which his metaphysical principles shape his conception of logic. By situating his logical framework within the broader context of his Illuminationist philosophy, it is essential to explore al-Suhrawardī's novel contributions to the discourse on predication, existence, and propositions.

In al-Suhrawardī's framework, tautological statements are invalid not because of a deficiency in logical form but because of their failure to achieve the ontological and epistemological objectives of logic. Logic, for al-Suhrawardī, is a tool for revealing the realities of existence and quiddity, and it must, therefore, facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge. By analyzing al-Suhrawardī's critique of tautology through the lens of his metaphysics, this article demonstrates how his system bridges the gap between logic and ontology, offering a transformative view of reasoning and judgment.

2.1. Al-Suhrawardī's Approach to Predication and Propositions

According to al-Suhrawardī, for a proposition to be meaningful, the conceptions (*taṣawwur*) of the subject and predicate must differ, as they are common in the tradition. Judgment, he asserts, relies on two distinct conceptions, even if the underlying nature is unified. Tautological statements –where the subject and predicate share the same conception– do not constitute valid propositions. As mentioned above, the statement “Human is man” is equivalent to asserting that “Human is human” and fails to offer any new information. In such cases, the predicate merely reiterates the subject without adding any meaningful judgment or differentiation.²⁸

To address this issue, al-Suhrawardī allows for modifications to such statements. For example, the proposition “Human is named as man” introduces an additional layer of meaning by focusing on naming rather than equivalence. Importantly, the predicate in such propositions does not merely indicate naming but conveys that the nature of humanity is fully represented in the term “man”. However, even in these cases, al-Suhrawardī emphasizes that the addition must provide substantive content rather than mere redundancy. In propositions such as “Every J is B”, the statement implies that what is designated as J can also be referred to as B. However, al-Suhrawardī emphasizes that, in essence, the subject remains fundamentally identified with either J or B. This nuanced view highlights that predicates must offer meaningful differentiation or context rather than simply reiterating the subject's essence.²⁹

Naming, for al-Suhrawardī, is not an arbitrary process. In his system, a name encapsulates all the essential attributes of the entity being named.³⁰ Therefore, tautological expressions, such as “Human is man”, fail to offer additional knowledge because the subject and predicate merely repeat the same essence without introducing new attributes. This principle underscores al-Suhrawardī's broader critique of

²⁸ Al-Suhrawardī, *al-Mashbārī‘ wa-l-muṭārahāt*, ed. Maqṣūd Muḥammadī - Ashraf ‘Ālīpūr (Qom: Markaz-i Pazhūhishī-yi ‘Ulūm-i Islāmī, 2006), 43; al-Suhrawardī, *Manṭiq Talwīḥāt*, ed. ‘Alī Akbar Fayyāḍ (Tehran: Ṭab‘at Jāmi‘at Tahrān, 1955), 6; Synonymous means naming one thing with varies names; al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 8.

²⁹ Al-Suhrawardī, *Manṭiq Talwīḥāt*, 6.

³⁰ Al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 9.

propositions that lack differentiation between the subject and predicate.

Using the example of human attributes, al-Suhrawardī elaborates on his critique of tautology. In the propositions “Human is laughter” or “Laughter is human”, the two necessary terms “human” and “laughter” refer to the same underlying entity. This entity is either a human or a laughter, but it cannot simultaneously embody both qualities in their entirety. While the same entity can be referred to as both “human” and “laughter”, these terms do not have identical meanings in the context of judgment. Similarly, the proposition “Human is literate” introduces yet another attribute applicable to the same underlying entity. This suggests that the entity, while remaining singular in itself, can be described as human, literate, or laughter on the basis of different perspectives.³¹ However, al-Suhrawardī emphasized that “laughter” does not encompass “literate” in terms of being laughter, and vice versa. What an entity is in its essence cannot be simultaneously identified as two distinct things; it remains one in its inner reality.

Al-Suhrawardī’s approach posits that attributes such as being literate or laughter are not intrinsic to the entity’s essence but are universal qualities ascribed to it.³² These attributes are external additions to the entity’s core reality of “being human”. They represent meanings imposed conceptually after the fact rather than qualities inherent to the entity itself. Propositions, therefore, consist of meanings that refer to individuals, requiring differentiation between the terms used in judgments.

In short, for a proposition to be meaningful, al-Suhrawardī asserts that the terms used to describe the same entity must not have identical meanings. This principle represents a significant implication, which focuses on the roles of the subject and predicate by using the concepts of being a subject and being a predicate without necessarily demanding a novel contribution from the predicate. However, al-Suhrawardī’s framework insists on predicates that introduce new and

³¹ Al-Suhrawardī, *Manṭiq Talwīḥāt*, 6.

³² Al-Suhrawardī, *al-Mashārī‘ wa-l-muṭārahāt*, 45. According to al-Suhrawardī, the universal is not an entity that exists independently outside the mind. Rather, it consists of meanings that exist in the mind and serve to characterize individuals by being communicated to the many and shared in common; al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 7-8.

substantive content, ensuring that propositions illuminate rather than reiterate.

2.2. Ontological Foundations and the Rejection of Tautology

Al-Suhrawardī claims that some interpreters have misunderstood the problem of predication, suggesting that all qualities –including existence (*wujūd*)– are attributes added (*zā'id*) to subjects, which are quiddities (*mābiyyāt*). Al-Suhrawardī rejects this notion, asserting that “thingness” (*shay'īyyah*) or “being-a-thing” (*kawn al-shay'*) is real, but the inner reality of things is rooted in existence itself. Attributes such as humanness, laughing, or being literate are not intrinsic to the entity (*talḥaqq'*) but are realized (*taḥaqqāqa*) within it. The concepts of humanness or substance are not independent realities in the external world but rather exist as mind-dependent constructs (*i'tibārī*). While they do not have an objective existence outside the mind, they are nonetheless real in the sense that we recognize them and assign names to them. Their essence, along with certain qualities that validate their existence, is attributed to these concepts. For example, humanness or substance are considered “things” or “realities” in this context, although their existence is tied to the mind’s recognition and categorization.³³

Al-Suhrawardī’s views on tautology also extend to the role of demonstrative pronouns in propositions. For example, in statements such as “This is laughter” or “This is literate”, the demonstrative pronoun “this” refers to the same underlying entity, yet the predicates “laughter” and “literate” remain distinct. This distinction prevents the predicates from being equated with each other, as one entity cannot simultaneously embody two distinct essences.³⁴ Al-Suhrawardī’s rejection of tautology is thus grounded in his insistence on the ontological uniqueness of entities and their attributes.

Al-Suhrawardī’s philosophy is grounded in a clear distinction between existence and the existent.³⁵ He argues that existence is not a

³³ Al-Suhrawardī, *Manṭiq Talwīḥāt*, 6; al-Suhrawardī, *al-Mashbārī' wa-l-muṭārahāt*, 727.

³⁴ Al-Suhrawardī, *al-Mashbārī' wa-l-muṭārahāt*, 45. For mind-dependent existence in al-Suhrawardī’s opinion see Kaukua, “I’tibārī Concepts in Suhrawardī”.

³⁵ Rizvi discusses al-Suhrawardī’s distinction between existence and existent in detail. See Rizvi, “An Islamic Subversion of the Existence-Essence Distinction?”, 219-222; For further information about this discussion also see Fedor Benevich, “The

real thing in itself but precedes shape or quiddity. Nothing can be considered an object before it takes on a specific form. While existence and the being of a thing precede its attributes, a thing's actualization involves its quiddities. A thing exists independently of its essence, but the precise nature and form of this existence are indeterminate. It is certain, however, that existence does not lie outside the mind. This framework forms the foundation of al-Suhrawardī's Ishrāqī philosophy, summarized by two principles: knowledge by presence (*al-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī*) and the primacy of quiddity (*aṣālat al-mābiyyah*).³⁶

Al-Suhrawardī's view that existence is mind-dependent, alongside the "primacy of quiddity", is central to his metaphysical and logical approach. In the medieval debate on universals, he distances himself from Peripatetic thought, aligning more with the Platonic view. For al-Suhrawardī, universals do not exist independently in the external world.³⁷ Existence as a universal concept is added to individual entities that have external reality, emphasizing its separation from the tangible reality of those entities.³⁸ Thus, rather than attributing Platonic realism to al-Suhrawardī, his view is better described as conceptualism, where existence is a mental construct, with certain mental forms reflected in external entities.

It is suggested that al-Suhrawardī's conceptualism diverges from the representational approach attributed to Ibn Sīnā. According to Ibn Sīnā, when we assess objects of knowledge in terms of existence and quiddity, mental forms and external objects share the same essence.³⁹ However, al-Suhrawardī rejects this notion, arguing that mental existents require a fitting predication. In his view, mental and external existents have separate quiddities. Thus, when a mental proposition is made about a mental entity, a predicate within the mind is necessary,

Essence-Existence Distinction: Four Elements of the Post-Avicennian Metaphysical Dispute (11–13th Centuries)", *Oriens* 45/3-4 (2017), 217-226.

³⁶ Walbridge - Ziai, "Translators' Introduction", xx-xxi.

³⁷ Al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 7.

³⁸ See Walbridge - Ziai, "Translators' Introduction", xxi; Bekiryazıcı, *Şihâbeddin Sübreverdi'nin Felsefesinde Ontoloji Problemi*, 105-106.

³⁹ See Francesco Omar Zamboni, "Weak Discourses on People's Lips: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī against Representationalism and Conceptualism", *Nazariyat* 9/2 (2023), 73-79.

whereas an appropriate external predicate must be used for an external object.⁴⁰

For al-Suhrawardī, propositions must relate to something (a nature). In his conceptualism, the predicate of a proposition must correspond to the same kind of existence as the subject. Thus, in the proposition “A is A”, both the subject and predicate are either entirely mental or entirely external. Since one nature cannot be attributed to another, the characteristics that a nature acquires depend on its role as a subject or predicate. A proposition’s subject refers to a nature, which, although a mental concept, represents an external or mental nature. The nature to which the proposition refers determines whether it is external or mental. For a proposition to form, there must be a subject representing nature and a predicate adding a new attribute. A term can serve as both a subject and a predicate in different contexts, conveying distinct meanings. Therefore, attributing two things to each other, as in a tautological proposition, is not possible in this case.

Conclusion

This study explores al-Suhrawardī’s rejection of tautology within the context of his Illuminationist philosophy, revealing its deep connections to both his metaphysical and logical systems. Through a careful analysis of predication, propositions, and the nature of existence, it is clear that al-Suhrawardī’s critique of tautological reasoning is not simply a logical objection but an ontological stance that seeks to preserve the differentiation and illumination central to his philosophical project. By positioning his framework in opposition to the Peripatetic tradition, al-Suhrawardī emphasized the need for logical propositions to offer substantive content, moving beyond formal validity to engage with more profound metaphysical truths.

Al-Suhrawardī’s synthesis of Aristotelian and Platonic ideas leads to a sophisticated reconfiguration of logical principles, wherein propositions are not merely mechanical statements but vehicles for revealing the nature of existence and quiddity. The insistence on meaningful differentiation between the subject and predicate in his system ensures that logic remains a dynamic tool for the acquisition of new knowledge rather than a static, self-contained structure. In this

⁴⁰ Al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 15.

way, al-Suhrawardī's approach challenges conventional understandings of tautology and offers a transformative perspective on the relationships among logic, ontology, and epistemology.

By grounding his critique of tautology in the ontological primacy of quiddity and the conceptual nature of existence, al-Suhrawardī invites a reconsideration of how we understand truth and judgment in both the mental and external realms. His philosophy, particularly his conceptualism, bridges the gap between logical form and metaphysical substance, offering a distinctive alternative to his predecessors' representationalist and realist views. His conceptualism asserts that being a subject and being a predicate are epistemic constructs rather than independent realities. These constructs arise within the mind, enabling the treatment of quiddities regardless of their external or mental status. In this sense, the subject and predicate positions represent distinct epistemic roles rather than ontological separations. al-Suhrawardī's framework ensures that A, as both subject and predicate in a proposition, represents the same nature while fulfilling different conceptual functions within that proposition. By redefining the roles of the subject and predicate within propositions, al-Suhrawardī offers a transformative perspective that challenges traditional logical frameworks while aligning them with his broader Illuminationist philosophy. This reinterpretation highlights the essential distinction between nature and attributes, ensuring that propositions remain vehicles of epistemic and ontological significance. Ultimately, al-Suhrawardī's work contributes to broader philosophical discourse by emphasizing the importance of differentiation, illumination, and the pursuit of knowledge through logical reasoning, solidifying his position as a key figure in the development of Islamic philosophy.

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