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A THEORY OF THE PARTS OF SPEECH IN ARABIC
(NOUN, VERB AND PARTICLE) :
A STUDY IN 'ILM AL-WAḌ'

BY

B. WEISS

THE most fundamental classification of words recognized by the medieval Arab grammarians is the well-known three-fold classification into noun (*ism*), verb (*fiʻl*) and particle (*ḥarf*). Said to have been first enunciated in Islam by none other than the Caliph 'Alī, this classification has remained to the present day a leading principle of Arabic grammar and is regularly set forth in the opening pages of grammar books still used in the Muslim East. Even the Wright-Caspari grammar, taken still to be the classic Arabic grammar in English, treats the three classes of words as « parts of speech », subsuming the parts of speech traditionally recognized in English grammars under them. Thus the adjective and the pronoun are subsumed under the noun, and the adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjection under the particle.

Two different methods of distinguishing the three parts of speech from each other were employed by the Arab grammarians. One of them, which we may call the descriptive method, placed the emphasis on observed features (*ʻalāmāt, ḥaṣāʼiṣ*) of the parts of speech, features noted as a result of an inductive (*istiqrāʼī*) examination of specimens, mostly literary, of « pure » Arabic, i.e. the *kalām al-ʻArab*. Thus for Ibn Mālik, author of the famous *Alfiyya*, the distinguishing features of the noun are : the genitive case, the nunation, the vocative, the definite article and the presence of a predicate (*musnad*) in relation to which the noun is subject. The distinguishing features of the verb are : the suffixal *tāʼ* (as in *faʻalta* and *atat*) and *yāʼ* (as in *ifʻalī*) and the energetic *nūn*. Words which are distinguished by none of the foregoing features fall, according to Ibn Mālik, in the remaining category of particles [1].

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1. Bahāʼ al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh IBN 'AQĪL, *Šarḥ Ibn 'Aqīl 'alā Alfiyyat Ibn Mālik* (Cairo, 1962), vol. I, pp. 16, 21, 22. Cf. Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh IBN HIŠĀM, *Šarḥ Qaṭr al-nadā wa-ball al-ṣadā* (Cairo, 1966), pp. 15, 33f.

The other method of distinguishing the parts of speech has been termed the « rational » (*'aqlī*) method [1]. The term rational indicates that the method is non-empirical and non-investigative; it relies rather upon categories arising from pure reflection which form a logically complete set, i.e. which admit of no further categories. Thus the noun is that which signifies a meaning « in itself » (*fī nafsihi*) and does not qualify this meaning as to time (i.e. past, present or future); the verb is that which signifies a meaning « in itself » and qualifies the meaning as to time; and the particle is that which signifies a meaning « in something else » (*fī ġayrihi*) [2]. The classificatory scheme (*taqsīm, inḥiṣār*) upon which these distinctions are based runs as follows. A word either signifies a meaning « in itself », or it does not. If the latter is the case, the word is called a particle. (A particle, as we have just learned, signifies a meaning « in something else »). If the former is the case, then the word either qualifies the meaning as to time, in which case it is called a verb, or it does not, in which case it is called a noun. The operative concepts in this scheme are represented by the phrases « in itself », which is the opposite of « in something else » (both to be explained shortly), and « qualifies as to time ». The former separates the particle from the other two parts of speech, while the latter further separates the verb from the noun.

This « rational » approach to the three parts of speech is perhaps nowhere in the literature of Arabic philology more fully developed than in the literature of *'ilm al-waḍ'*, that is to say, in the commentaries on the *Risālat al-waḍ'* of 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Īǧī (d. 1355) [3]. Though the science which bears the name of *'ilm al-waḍ'* is, as the name itself suggests, primarily concerned with the origin or « positing » of language, a subject which lies outside the purview of the present study, the literature of that science deals at great length with the problem of the classification of words. Īǧī's short treatise is in fact devoted mainly to this problem. Though famed as a theologian rather than grammarian, Īǧī is in *'ilm al-waḍ'* the enunciator of philological

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1. Ibn Hišām, p. 14, footnote no. 2. The author of this footnote is Muḥammad Muḥyi al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, a modern annotator on the *Qaṭr al-nadā*.

2. Ibn 'Aqīl, p. 15. Cf. Al-Tahānawī, *Kaššāf istilāḥāt al-funūn* (Istanbul, 1899), I, p. 711; Al-Zamaḥšarī, *al-Mufaṣṣal* (J.B. Broch, Christiania, 1879), pp. 4, 108, 130.

3. The text of the *Risālat al-waḍ'* is to be found embedded within the commentaries themselves. The most renowned of these commentaries are those of 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Ǧurǧānī (d. 1413), 'Alā al-Dīn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Qušǧī (d. 1474), Abu l-Qāsim al-Samarqandī (fl. 1483), and 'Iṣām al-Dīn al-Isfarā'īnī (d. 1537).

rather than theological concerns. The few lines which he composed
on the classification of words were to give rise to an entire science,
one of the principal branches of traditional Muslim philology.

Īǧī's classification (taqsīm) is more extensive than the three-fold
one we are presently concerned with. It embraces nine classes in all :
the generic noun (ism al-ǧins), the maṣdar, the derived noun (muštaqq),
the verb, the proper noun, the particle, the personal pronoun, the
demonstrative pronoun, and the relative pronoun. However, this is
not to say that the three-fold classification is cancelled out. Two of
the three parts of speech remain intact in Īǧī's classification, i.e, the
verb and the particle. The remaining seven of Īǧī's classes are thus
all in effect sub-classes of the noun. That the three-fold classification
was present in Īǧī's mind is evident from the fact that one of the
notes (tanbīhāt) which constitute the concluding section of the Risālat
al-waḍʿ, namely the fourth, contrasts the particle with the verb and
the noun. The three-fold classification comes very much to the fore
in the commentaries.

The theory of the three parts of speech which emerges out of the
ʿilm al-waḍʿ literature may be stated briefly as follows : *The noun
signifies a meaning for its own sake and for this reason stands by itself as
a totally self-sufficient unit of significance* (mustaqill bi-l-mafhūmiyya).
*The particle is just the opposite : it signifies a meaning, not for its own
sake, but as an element « in something else »* (fī ġayrihi) *and therefore
has significance only within a context, that is to say, only when adjoined
to other words. The verb, as it were, straddles the fence separating the
noun from the particle. It signifies part* (ǧuz') *of its meaning for its
own sake and part as an element « in something else »; accordingly it is,
like the noun, an independent unit of significance with respect to one
part of its meaning, but with respect to the other is, like the particle,
dependent upon the verbal context. Since dependence cancels out inde-
pendence, the verb is said to be dependent upon the verbal context with
respect to its total meaning considered as a single entity.*

It should be noted that this theory entails a modification of the
« rational » classificatory scheme of the grammarians indicated above.
The notion of a qualification as to time, used by the grammarians
to distinguish the verb from the noun, has dropped out entirely,
whereas the phrases « in itself » and « in something else » now represent
the primary operative concepts. That a word signifies a meaning
« in itself » has been taken here to mean that the word signifies the
meaning for its own sake. The theory is in a broad sense semantics-

oriented. It does not, however, distinguish the parts of speech so much on the basis of categories of thought, i.e. of meaning, as on the basis of what may be termed *perspective*, that is to say, the perspective of the speaker.

In the following pages we will consider in greater detail the elaboration of this theory by the *'ilm al-waḍ'* writers, noting in conclusion some syntactical ramifications of the theory.

The noun, on this theory, is clearly a name in the most obvious sense : it is simply the label for something, such that when it is uttered the attention is fixed squarely upon the thing named and upon nothing else. When a speaker wishes to draw attention to a particular object or meaning, he instinctively uses a name, since this is the appropriate instrument for direct referral. (It is no accident that in Arabic grammar noun and name should be designated by the same word, i.e. *ism*.)

Medieval Muslim thinking about the particle is summed up in a short treatise by 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Ǧurǧānī (d. 1413) entitled *al-Risāla al-ḥarfiyya* [1], the main ideas of which are recapitulated in the commentaries on the *Risālat al-waḍ'*. In this treatise Ǧurǧānī elaborates upon the notion that the particle signifies a meaning « in something else ». Roughly, his argument may be stated as follows. There are in human thought certain ideas which represent, not concrete entities, but states of affairs (*ḥālāt*) existing between or among entities. These ideas do not have an independent status. They are so bound up with other ideas, that is to say, ideas representing concrete entities, that they may be said to be « in » those other ideas. Thus in general these ideas may be said to be « in something else ». That a particular idea is « in something else » may or may not, however, be uppermost in the mind of the one who contemplates it. If one is primarily interested in the idea for its own sake, then its being « in something else » will be a purely incidental consideration. If, however, one is primarily interested in the idea as an element « in something else », then the focus of attention shifts from the idea itself to the « something else », i.e. to those other ideas which the idea in question is said to be « in ». In this case the idea serves as a means (*āla*) of apprehending the condition (*ḥāl*) of the other ideas.

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1. Princeton University Library : Garrett Ms. no. 448H, fol. 107a-112a.

In the former case, the idea is independently comprehensible (*mustaqill bi-l-mafhūmiyya*); in the latter case it is not.

The point may be illustrated by means of the preposition *from* (*min*) [1]. *From* signifies the idea of « commencement » (*ibtidā'*). This idea, insofar as it constitutes the meaning of *from*, is not viewed independently, is not regarded for its own sake. It is viewed rather as a means for apprehending the « condition » of other ideas. In the sentence *Zayd travelled from Baṣra, from*, like the other words in the sentence, stands for an idea, namely that of « commencement »; but unlike the ideas signified by the other words this idea is « in » the ideas signified by the words surrounding *from*. *From* does not signify « commencement » merely; it signifies « commencement » as a state of affairs existing between the idea of Baṣra and the idea of travelling — or, to be more specific, of Zayd's travelling, since Zayd is the subject of the verb. By itself *from* signifies nothing precise; in conjunction with the other words it signifies something about the ideas signified by those words, i.e. that they are related to each other as elements within a particular state of affairs. Consequently its meaning is « in » the meanings of the other expressions. Remove the other expressions and *from* ceases to have real significance.

Thus what distinguishes the particle from the noun is not the kind of meaning which it conveys, but the aspect under which a meaning is viewed. The particle entails an angle of vision or perspective different from that of the noun. It has no meanings which are peculiarly its own. The idea of « commencement » might just as well be conveyed by a noun, i.e. *commencement* (*ibtidā'*), as by the particle *from*. If the noun is used, then the attention is fixed directly upon the idea of « commencement ». (Note that in referring to the idea in the last sentence I was obliged to use the noun; it would be odd of me to use the particle.) If the particle is used, the attention is fixed upon other ideas, e.g. « travelling » and « Baṣra », and the idea of « commencement » is, as it were, in the corner of the eye. In the case of the noun, the idea of « commencement » is, to use the language of Qušǧī, *malḥūẓ^{un}*

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1. In their discussions of the particle the '*ilm al-waḍ*' writers almost always make use of prepositions as examples. We are left to assume that points exemplified by means of prepositions hold true also of all other particles. It may be noted that the medieval Muslim philologists considered all particles to be bearers of meaning, even if the meaning was qualified as « in something else ». The notion that some particles function as pure markers, having no semantic value at all, was apparently never seriously considered.

$qaṣd^{an}$ wa-bi-l-$\underline{d}āt$, whereas in the case of the particle it is $malḫūẓ^{un}$ $ṭaba^{c}an$ $ġayr^{u}$ $maqṣūd^{in}$ bi-$\underline{d}ātih$ [1].

Ǧurǧānī attempts to make the point clear by means of a simile. An idea which is « in something else » is like a mirror. One may look either at a mirror or into a mirror. In the former case, one makes the mirror the object of one's attention, and only incidentally notices what is reflected in the mirror. (Such would be the case, for example, if one were cleaning the surface of the mirror.) In the latter case, one is using the mirror as a means of viewing something other than the mirror itself; the attention is fixed upon that which is reflected in the mirror, not upon the mirror itself, and the viewer is only incidentally aware of the mirror. Similarly, one may, so to speak, look either at or into an idea which is « in something else »; one may either contemplate the idea itself or use the idea as a means of contemplating the « something else ». The noun entails the former attitude, the particle the latter.

The case of the verb is complex. The notion that the verb signifies « parts » ($aġzā'$) of its meaning differently must be understood against the background of Arabic morphological theory. According to the Baṣrite theory of the derivation of forms [2], which became standard, the verb belongs to the class of derived words. The fact that the term $mu\check{s}taqq$ (« derived ») is generally reserved for derived nouns [3] as opposed to verbs should not be taken to mean that the verb is excluded from this class. The source from which all derived words emanate is the verbal noun, called by the Arab grammarians the $maṣdar$ (« source »). Words are derived from a $maṣdar$ by virtue of an additional meaning which is superimposed upon the base meaning of the $maṣdar$ itself. The underlying principle implicit in this theory of derivation is that words whose meanings are composite are derived from words whose meanings are simple by virtue of additional

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1. AL-Qušǧī, *Šarḥ 'ala al-risala al-'aḍudiyya* (Cairo, 1911), p. 81. (This edition, published by al-Maṭba'a al-Ǧamāliyya, attributes Qušǧī's *šarḥ* to Abu l-Layṯ al-Samarqandī. That Qušǧī was the more likely author was pointed out to me some years ago by Professor Rudolph Mach of Princeton.)

2. Abu l-Barakāt IBN AL-ANBĀRĪ, *Kitāb al-inṣāf fī masā'il al-ḫilāf* (Leiden, 1913), pp. 103-5.

3. Derived nouns are subdivided by Arab grammarians into *ism al-fā'il*, *al-ṣifa al-mušbiha b-ism al-fā'il*, *ism al-maf'ūl*, *ism al-āla*, *ism al-makān*, *ism al-zamān*, and *ism al-tafḍīl*. See Qušǧī, pp. 66-7.

meanings, or meaning-components, superimposed upon the latter. The base meaning is carried over from the *maṣdar* by the radicals, i.e. the « matter » (*mādda*), of the derived word ; the additional meaning is expressed by the form (*hay'a, ṣīġa,* i.e. vowels and « extraneous » consonants) of the word. Thus the total meaning of derived words is composite, and radicals and form are separate units of significance.

Verbs differ from (cognate) derived nouns by virtue of the meaning conveyed by their form ; the meaning of the radicals is the same for both verbs and derived nouns—it is identical with the meaning of the *maṣdar* from which both are derived. The meaning of the form of the verb embraces, for the *'ilm al-waḍ'* writers, the following components : a time determination (*zamān*), i.e. past, present or future, and a relationship (*nisba*). The relationship is between two terms : a *ḏāt* (pl. *ḏawāt*) and a *ḥadaṯ* (pl. *aḥdāṯ*). (In order to avoid misleading connotations of possible English translations we will retain in the present discussion the Arabic terminology.) The *ḏāt* is *mansūb ilayhi* (that to which something is related), while the *ḥadaṯ* is *mansūb* (that which is related). The *ḥadaṯ* is signified by the radicals ; the *ḏāt* is not signified by any part of the verb. Thus the total meaning of the verb, taking form and radicals together, embraces three components in all : a time determination, a relationship, and one (but not both) of the terms of the relationship, namely a *ḥadaṯ*. In the case of the derived noun, the meaning of the form embraces a relationship and the *mansūb ilayhi* (i.e. a *ḏāt*), while the radicals signify the *mansūb* (i.e. a *ḥadaṯ*) [1] ; the time element is absent from the meaning of the derived noun.

The foregoing may thus be represented by means of the following diagram :

$$
\text{The verb signifies}
\begin{cases}
\text{by means of its form :} \begin{cases} \text{a relationship} \\ \text{a time determination} \end{cases} \\
\text{by means of its radicals : a } \textit{ḥadaṯ}
\end{cases}
$$

$$
\text{The derived noun signifies}
\begin{cases}
\text{by means of its form :} \begin{cases} \text{a relationship} \\ \text{a } \textit{ḏāt} \end{cases} \\
\text{by means of its radicals : a } \textit{ḥadaṯ}
\end{cases}
$$

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1. These three components are presumably present in the meanings of all the sub-classes of the derived noun mentioned above in footnote no. 3, p. [6]. There are of course

It is to be noted that relationship is regarded as a distinct element of meaning on a par with *ḏāt* and *ḥadaṯ*. Since it is possible to conceive of a *ḏāt* and a *ḥadaṯ* without conceiving of the two as related, a relationship between them thus has a separate status. A relationship between any two terms is, it appears, extrinsic to the terms themselves.

The terms *ḏāt* and *ḥadaṯ* both appear in Īǧī's *Risāla*, and accordingly the commentators attempt to explain them. Samarqandī [1] defines *ḥadaṯ* as « that which subsists through something else » (*qā'im bi-l-ġayr*), whether it proceeds from that thing, as do actions such as striking and running, or not, as with qualities such as tall and short. Qušǧī [2] adds a further qualification : a *ḥadaṯ* is that which subsists through something else *and is expressed in Persian by means of the endings* -dan *and* -tan (as in *kardan* and *kuštan*). This reference to the Persian verbal noun is intended to exclude colors from the definition, since color-nouns (e.g. *bayāḍ*, *sawād*) are not considered to be *maṣdar*s. Both Samarqandī and Qušǧī cite two alternative explanations of the phrase « subsists through something else ». A thing is said to subsist through something else when it stands in a qualifying relation to that other thing such that from it may be derived a noun which refers to the thing qualified, as, for example, *ḍārib* is derived from *ḍarb*. (This explanation obviously reflects morphological interests.) Alternately, a thing is said to subsist through something else if it coexists uniquely with that thing in such a way that to refer to one of the two things is to refer to the other : the two things are, in other words, inseparable as objects of reference. As for *ḏāt*, Qušǧī is satisfied with a negative definition : it is that which is not *ḥadaṯ*. Isfarā'inī [3], following Samarqandī's lead, tries to formulate a more positive definition, but admits that the result is rather forced.

However abstruse the above definitions of *ḥadaṯ* and *ḏāt* may

obvious differences in meaning between these subclasses. See, for example, Qušǧī, pp. 66-7. However, these differences do not, for the *'ilm al-waḍ'* writers, cancel out the underlying unity of meaning running throughout all derived nouns, setting them apart from verbs. Examples given in their discussions of the derived noun tend to be *asmā' al-fā'ilīn*, but the points thus exemplified are theoretically applicable to the other subclasses as well.

1. AL-SAMARQANDĪ, *Šarḥ al-Risāla al-waḍ'iyya* (Princeton University Library : Yehuda Ms. no. 5997), fol. 14a-b.

2. Qušǧī, pp. 60ff.

3. AL-ISFARĀ'INĪ, *Šarḥ 'alā al-Risāla al-waḍ'iyya* (Princeton University Library : Yehuda Ms. no. 5352), fol. 28a-29b.

appear to be, the importance of these terms for Arabic morphology
is clear. The term *ḥadaṯ* represents an attempt to find for the *maṣdar*
an appropriate category of meaning. Since the *maṣdar* is the basis
of all derivation, its meaning must be morphologically productive.
The concept of *ḥadaṯ*, it would appear, meets this requirement because
it represents something which by its nature does not subsist inde-
pendently : this is what the above attempts at definition seem to
tell us. Striking, running, tallness, shortness, etc.—these are not
self-subsisting; we cannot imagine them as occurring or existing
apart from strikers, runners, tall things, short things, etc. — in
short, *ḏawāt*. Thus it would seem that from a word which names a
ḥadaṯ it should be possible to derive other words which signify, in
addition to the *ḥadaṯ*, that which is implied in the *ḥadaṯ*, i.e. a *ḏāt*
and — to complete the picture — a relationship between the *ḏāt*
and the *ḥadaṯ*. A *ḏāt*, on the other hand, is not, if our interpretation
is correct, suitable as a basis of derivation because it *is* self-subsisting
and therefore does not engender those additional meanings upon
which the process of derivation depends : one can imagine a man or
horse or tree apart from other things. All nouns other than *maṣdar*s
and derived nouns serve simply to name *ḏawāt*. Īǧī places such nouns
under the category of the generic noun (*ism al-ǧins*).

The importance of these two terms seems to extend also to the
realm of syntax. The sentence embodies a judgment (*ḥukm*). A
judgment, according to the Muslim logicians, is an affirmation
(or denial) of a relationship (*nisba*) between two terms, a subject
term (*mansūb ilayhi, musnad ilayhi, maḥkūm ʿalayhi*) and a predicate
term (*mansūb, musnad, maḥkūm bihi*) [1]. A *ḏāt* would seem to constitute
a natural subject term, and a *ḥadaṯ* — which, we must remember,
represents « that which subsists through something else » — a natural
predicate term [2]. There are of course sentences which do not express
a *ḏāt-ḥadaṯ* relationship, for example the sentences *Zayd is the brother
of ʿAmr, Zayd is a man, Zayd is in the house*. However, it is difficult,
at least when reading the *ʿilm al-waḍʿ* literature, to resist the impres-
sion that sentences which do express this relationship, e.g. *Zayd*

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1. See, for example, Quṭb al-Dīn AL-RĀZĪ, *Taḥrīr al-qawāʿid al-manṭiqiyya* (Cairo,
1948), pp. 86-7.

2. It is of course possible for a *ḥadaṯ* to be the subject of a judgment (*maḥkūm
ʿalayhi*), in which case a *maṣdar* is used to name the *ḥadaṯ*. However, this does not
contradict our contention that the *ḥadaṯ* is a natural predicate term. Sentences which
have *maṣdar*s as their subjects would appear to be exceptional. Cf. ISFARĀʾĪNĪ, fol. 61b.

stood (*qāma Zayd*) and *Zayd is standing* (*Zayd qā'im*), are more typical and fundamental than those which do not. It should be noted that such sentences make use of either the verb or the derived noun, i.e. words which include the *dāt-ḥadat* relationship within their meaning. We shall consider later the role of the verb and derived noun within the sentence.

To return for the moment to the verb. The verb, as we have noted, stands midway between the noun and the particle. Like the particle it cannot stand alone; it lacks the full semantic independence of the noun. If one hears the word *stood* uttered out of context, one casts about for something else, for some other word which will complete its meaning; one looks beyond the verb itself. Yet there is a sense in which *stood* names something. *From* names nothing; it draws one's attention entirely away from itself. *Stood*, however, draws attention to an action, that of standing. It does more than that, however, and for this reason cannot be classified on the basis of its naming function alone, i.e. cannot be classified as a noun. In addition to naming an action, i.e. a *ḥadat*, it also signifies a relationship between that action and some *dāt*; the *dāt*, however, is not named [1]. (The signification of a time determination is in this context disregarded by our authors.) The naming function of the verb is, according to the morphological theory just described, carried over from the *maṣdar* by the radicals of the verb. The pure naming function of the *maṣdar* is thus retained by its derivative, the verb. It is the form of the verb which introduces a further meaning-component which detracts from the naming function.

That meaning-component is the relationship (*nisba*) of the *ḥadat* named to an unnamed *dāt*. In its signification of the *ḥadat* the verb resembles the noun; in its signification of the relationship it resembles the particle. A relationship, we are told, is a meaning which is « in something else ». Here again perspective plays a decisive role. One

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1. It should be remembered that according to the Arab grammarians when a verb is not accompanied by a subject, as is frequently the case in Arabic, then the subject must be considered to be represented by a « hidden pronoun » (*ḍamīr mustatir*). This hidden pronoun is not part of the verb; it represents a suppressed element of the sentence, and the sentence is in effect elliptical. Thus when a verb appears without its subject the *dāt* can be said to be named, not by the verb itself, but by a hidden pronoun. Samarqandī clearly states : *inna l-fiʿla la yufhamu minhu fāʿiluhu*. SAMAR-QANDĪ, fol. 16a. Cf. ISFARĀ'INĪ, fol. 36a. The prefixes of verbs (as in *yafʿalu, tafʿalu*, etc.) are not given any pronominal value. Suffixes (as in *faʿaltu, faʿalta*, etc.) are treated as attached (*muttaṣil*) pronouns and are not considered part of the verb as such. See IBN 'AQĪL, Vol. I, p. 410.

can refer to a relationship as an object to be considered for its own sake. One could say, « There is a relationship between x and y », thus naming the relationship by means of the noun *relationship*. In this case the attention is focused upon the relationship [1]. However, when a verb is used this is not the case; the relationship is viewed as a state of affairs (*ḥāla*) existing between two entities, a *ḏāt* and a *ḥadaṯ*, and therefore as a means of apprehending the condition (*ḥāl*) of those entities [2]. It is true that one of those entities is named by the verb, whereas in the case of the particle none of the entities involved in the state of affairs are named : they are all extraneous to the meaning of the particle. However, the absence of one of the two entities is sufficient to render the verb, like the particle, semantically deficient and therefore dependent on its context. *Stood*, no less than *from*, must be joined to other words [3].

We are now in a position to examine some syntactical ramifications of the theory of the three parts of speech outlined above. A word may be the subject or the predicate of a sentence only if it has a naming function, that is to say, only if it draws the attention toward some object or idea, some meaning. A sentence, we have said, embodies a judgement. Obviously a judgment can be made concerning something only if the attention is focused on that thing [4]. Therefore the subject of the sentence (*al-maḥkūm ʿalayhi*) must have a naming function. The same is true of the predicate : that which is predicated of a subject (*al-maḥkūm bihi*) must be the object of one's attention [5]. In general a noun may serve either as a subject or predicate since it has a pure naming function [6]. The particle may

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1. Qušǧī, pp. 81-2.
2. SAMARQANDĪ, fol. 15b.
3. Qušǧī, pp. 85-7; SAMARQANDĪ, fol. 16a.
4. Ǧurǧānī's simile of the mirror is again a propos. When one is concentrating on what is reflected in a mirror, one cannot make judgments about the mirror itself. ǦURǦĀNĪ, fol. 107b. Isfarā'īnī states that « it is not proper to predicate something of that which is not viewed independently (*malḥūẓ bi-l-istiqlāl*) ». ISFARĀ'INĪ, fol. 60b. This latter phrase seems to be roughly synonymous with *malḥūẓ qaṣdᵃⁿ*. That which is viewed « intentionally » is also viewed « independently », i.e. is singled out from all other things as the object of attention.
5. Thus Qušǧī correlates the phrase *malḥūẓ qaṣdᵃⁿ* with *ṣāliḥ li-an yuḥkama ʿalayhi wa-bihi*. QUŠǦĪ, p. 81.
6. In the case of the derived noun, whose meaning, as we have seen, is complex, there is, according to Qušǧī, a variation of emphasis. When the word functions as a

serve as neither subject nor predicate since it names nothing : one
does not make a judgment concerning matters which are on the
periphery of one's field of vision. The verb may serve as a predicate
only, but not as subject. The reason for this is that the verb, as we
have seen, demands to be joined to a word which names the missing
term of the relationship included in its meaning. Such a word will
obviously be the subject (*fāʿil*) of the verb, leaving to the verb itself
the status of predicate and that alone [1].

The commentaries on the *Risālat al-waḍʿ* display a special interest
in the syntactical workings of the verb and the derived noun (i.e. the
two classes of derived words), and one can make out between the
lines the elements of a theory of syntax, even though the theory is
nowhere formally stated. We have suggested earlier that sentences
which express a relationship between a *ḏāt* and a *ḥadaṯ* seem, judging
at least from the *ʿilm al-waḍʿ* literature, to be more fundamental
than those which do not. And we have noted, furthermore, that
such sentences contain words which themselves include that relation-
ship within their meaning, i.e. verbs or derived nouns. Thus the
relationship contained within the meaning of verbs and derived nouns is
one and the same as the relationship expressed by means of the
sentences of which verbs and derived nouns are a part [2]. This being
so, the following formulation, though found nowhere in the literature
in the form here stated, seems to fall readily into place. Sentences
which express a *ḏāt-ḥadaṯ* relationship do so by incorporating a word,
i.e. either a verb or a derived noun, which itself expresses that
relationship. The underlying principle here would seem to be that
the signification of the whole (the sentence) is derived from the
signification of one of the parts (the verb or derived noun). A sentence
which expresses a *ḏāt-ḥadaṯ* relationship is thus not a mere combi-

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subject, the emphasis is on the *ḏāt*, whereas when it functions as a predicate, the
emphasis shifts to the *ḥadaṯ*. Qūšǧī, p. 89.

1. Qūšǧī, p. 87. Īǧī himself appears to have aroused interest in these syntactical
peculiarities of the three parts of speech by attempting in his *Risāla* (eighth and ninth
tanbīhāt) to account for the fact that while the verb, like the particle, cannot serve
as the subject of a sentence it can, unlike the particle, serve as the predicate of a
sentence.

2. It is significant that Qūšǧī and Samarqandī refer to the *ḏāt-ḥadaṯ* relationship
contained within the meaning of the verb as a « judgmental relationship » (*nisba
ḥukmiyya*). This phrase thus identifies this relationship with the relationship expressed
by means of the sentence as a whole. Qūšǧī, p. 86; SAMARQANDĪ, fol. 15b. For use of
the term *nisba ḥukmiyya* among the logicians, see RĀZĪ, p. 86.

nation of two co-equal parts. In order to express such a relationship one does not choose a word which names a *ḏāt* and another which names a *ḥadaṯ* and simply combine the two in order to have the desired relationship. One must, of course, combine words, but it is not the combination as such which expresses the relationship. *Zayd qiyām* is a combination of a word which signifies a *ḏāt* and a word which signifies a *ḥadaṯ*, but this combination is not a sentence; it is, if anything, a list. It does not express a relationship. On the other hand, the combination *qāma Zayd* and *Zayd qā'im* are sentences because they include words, i.e. *qāma* and *qā'im*, which themselves express a relationship between a *ḏāt* and a *ḥadaṯ*. There is thus a complementarity between the parts of such sentences which does not exist between *Zayd* and *qiyām*.

In the case of verbal sentences such as *qāma Zayd* this complementarity is, it would seem, to be explained as follows. The verb contains within its meaning two of the ingredients necessary for a complete judgment, i.e. a relationship and one of the terms (*mansūb*) of the relationship; it lacks only the third ingredient, namely the other term (*mansūb ilayhi*) of the relationship. The subject of a verbal sentence therefore *completes* the meaning of the verb by supplying the missing term. Without the subject, the verb is not, as a whole, comprehensible. A relationship cannot be grasped if one of the terms is missing. Therefore a verb is semantically dependent on a grammatical subject and cannot function except as the predicate of a sentence.

With nominal sentences of the type *Zayd qā'im*, the complementarity of subject and predicate is to be explained somewhat differently. In contrast to the verb *qāma*, the derived noun *qā'im* contains all the principal meaning-components required for a complete judgment : a relationship together with both of its terms. Here there is no missing part which must be supplied by another word. Despite the complexity of its meaning, the derived noun enjoys full semantic independence; as a true noun, it draws the attention to its own proper meaning and that alone. However, the derived noun lacks definiteness. This is because the *ḏāt* included in its meaning is undetermined (*mubham*) [1]. In the sentence *Zayd qā'im* the word *qā'im* — which may in keeping

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1. Isfarā'īnī quotes Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī as noting that in the case of some derived nouns, i.e. *asmā' al-makān*, *asmā' al-zamān* and *asmā' al-āla*, the *ḏāt* is subject to a degree of determination, though it is still not wholly determined. ISFARĀ'ĪNĪ, fol. 34a.

with its essentially substantival character be translated « standing one » — signifies that a *ḥadaṯ* (standing) is related to a *ḏāt* which, though included in the meaning of the word, is not determined; the word Zayd, on the other hand, identifies the *ḏāt*, thus giving it determinacy. The result is a complete judgment [1].

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1. The relationship (*nisba*) embodied in a complete judgment is said to be perfect (*tāmma*). A *ḏāt-ḥadaṯ* relationship is perfect only if the *ḏāt* is fully determined. The relationship expressed by means of a derived noun such as *qāʾim* is therefore not perfect; it is described rather as a « qualifying » (*taqyīdiyya*) relationship. See Qušǧī, p. 88.