

A Comparative Study of Casual Relation of Mind and Body from the Perspectives of Mulla Sadra and John Foster

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Submitted: 2021/7/23 **Abstract** Explaining how the soul and body relate is one of the

Accepted: 2021/10/24 issues that is raised after accepting the duality of the two. One type of relationship between the soul and the body is the acceptance of causality between the two and the impact between them. Mulla Sadra considers the body as the material cause of the soul and then refers to the interaction of the soul and the body, while Foster only deals with the second aspect. Foster, a follower of Cartesian dualism, offers a way for the problem of casual pairing and explains how a mind and a body are united. This problem of casual pairing of a specific soul to a specific body is eliminated in Sadra's philosophy with principles of corporal contingency and the unity of soul and body. According to Sadra, soul and body are two sides of the same being; Foster, however, introduces psychophysical arrangement for the unity of them. The way of this connection in Sadra's philosophy leads to a kind of unity that can better explain their interaction; but this will remain unanswered for Foster. Mulla Sadra explores the problem ontologically, and Foster offers an epistemological explanation. Examining the effectiveness of the solutions presented by the two scholars is one of the aims of this article.

Keywords:

Mulla Sadra,
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Introduction: Dualism is a view in philosophical anthropology that considers man to have two different realms: physical and non-physical. One of the first questions facing the dualist is to analyze how the two different dimensions relate. Mulla Sadra has pursued this issue meticulously and tried to provide a new horizon with the new principles he presented in the transcendent wisdom (*Hikmat Mutaaliye*). This has been the case in Western philosophy since the time of Descartes. He believed that the nature of the soul is thought, and the nature of the body is dimension. But the problem is, how can these two completely different substances relate to each other? Philosophers after Descartes offered solutions to this problem, and the analysis of such interaction is still one of the problems of the philosophy of mind. The inability to explain this has led many philosophers deny dualism and try to explain

human actions solely on the basis of its physical dimension. This view is known as Materialism.

In contrast to materialism, John Foster, a contemporary philosopher and follower of Descartes, is among those who seek to explain the causal relationship and union of mind and body. Since Mulla Sadra and Foster have both accepted the duality of the soul and the body and made attempts to express the causal relationship as well as the union of the soul and the body, comparing the methods and arguments of these two philosophers on this subject can be useful. In this article, we intend to examine the following questions: First; what is the relationship between the soul and the body from the point of view of Mulla Sadra and Foster? And second, since the soul and the body interact with each other, what do Mulla Sadra and Foster consider to guarantee the union of a particular soul with a particular body?

Methodology: We review Mulla Sadra and John Foster's views in their works including books and essays, as well as works written by their commentators. Given the topic under study, a descriptive-analytical method was used in this article. Moreover, information was collected through library research.

Findings: Foster epistemologically explains the harmony and the casual pairing of a particular mind to a particular body. He recognizes the three systems of perception, behavior and belief for this functional appropriateness. His discussion is not ontological and does not mention what and how this connection exists. This is while Mulla Sadra ontologically proposes the discussion of corporal

contingency as a solution and expands it and ultimately achieves the unity of soul and body (organic composition). In other words, Foster answers the question, "How do we know this mind is united with that body?" And Mulla Sadra answers the question: "How this soul is united with that body?" For Mulla Sadra, the cause of the soul and the body is the existential cause; that is, the body is the material cause (partner of cause) for the soul, and the soul is emerged from the body; But for Foster, this is not the case. When Foster talks about the causality of mind and body, he only considers the relationship between affect and effect, which is the weakest type of causality for Mulla Sadra and is raised after the emerging of soul and body. Mulla Sadra has considered the causality of soul and body in two ways: one in terms of their origin and the other in terms of

the effect that the soul and the body have on each other after creation; yet Foster only covers the second part of the relationship.

Discussion and Conclusion:

A comparison of Mulla Sadra's psychological view and new dualistic positions in the field of philosophy of mind shows that Mulla Sadra's philosophical foundations are organized in such a way that they can be used directly and indirectly in solving some important philosophical problems and questions. It seems that the method of the two philosophers in explaining the issues related to the causal relationship and union of soul and body, is different in some cases. Foster legislates through analytical philosophy, but Mulla Sadra, who belongs to the Islamic logical and philosophical tradition, tries to use mere deduction and

rational reasoning in his arguments about the soul.

Another important consequence is that dualism, in the way followed by Foster, i.e., the Cartesian method, cannot solve the fundamental problems that are taken into account. The solution to this dilemma is to somehow equate these two inherently distinct essences and move on to Monoism. The unity of these two essences can solve the interaction of soul and body. The soul and the body are two essences that, although inherently distinct, they are externally one thing.

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