



**Overcoming Cartesian Dualism in Light of Mulla Sadra's
Philosophy**

Received date: 2019.6.23 Accepted date: 2020.12.14
PP.95-108

DOI: [10.22034/jpiut.2020.43014.2723](https://doi.org/10.22034/jpiut.2020.43014.2723)

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Abstract

This article tries to find a way out of the epistemological problem and the self-body question in Cartesian dualism in light of Mulla Sadra Shirazi's philosophy. There are possibilities in Sadra's thought which make achieving this objective possible. The argument develops in three steps to bring into focus the subject, the object, and knowledge. Concerning the subject, Mulla Sadra's philosophy demonstrates that self/soul and body are unified through modal boundedness (*taqyid-i al-sha'ni*) which is called existential objectivity in which the self-body duality makes no sense. In his discussion on the object, Shirazi points out that philosophical truths such as necessity, causality, oneness, and so on are unified to the external being and the objective reality in an integrative way (*taqyid-i al-indimadji*) having existential objectivity. Regarding knowledge, Mulla Sadra emphasizes the existential character of knowledge rather than its essentiality. Therefore, the existence or the existential unity between the knower, the known, and the knowledge overcome the self-body and self-external world cleavages. Because of its unity with the body, the self is present in the external world and perceives the world or the external facts, and then some ideas of the external worlds will appear in mind.

Keywords: dualism, self and body relation, the unity of self and body, modal boundedness, integrated boundedness

Introduction

Cartesian dualism was a turning point in the history of Western philosophy. The problems of knowledge, as well as the justification of the relationship between self and body, raised different objections to Descartes. These critiques can be divided into two groups. The first group was idealists who focused on the self or the mind leaving the physical aspect aside, and the second group were the materialists who preferred the physical world. The first view led to subjectivism in which reality cannot exist independent of mind or subject. This article tries to demonstrate how Sadra's arguments about subject, object, and the formation of knowledge can propose a new perspective in which preserving man's self-body without recourse to the idealistic or the materialistic interpretations and just relying on Sadra's existentialism, the Western subjectivism would be overcome. First, we define dualism and subjectivism then develop the argumentation according to Sadra philosophy.

Cartesian Dualism

Dualism starts with Plato and with Descartes dualism appears as the ground of modern knowledge or philosophy. Descartes conceived self and body as two distinct substances. For him, self and body are not only separate but also different kinds of substances. Cartesian self or mind is considered to be a mere reason or intellect, while the body without self would only serve as a mechanical entity.

The thought is characterized by having no dimension or occupying no place. Therefore, the thinking part or the mind can exist without space. On the other hand, the material thing, like a man's body, has a dimension and occupies space. Moreover, the body can exist without thought, as the man's corpse remains a body although it has no consciousness. Thus, "I" or the self by which I am what I am is something entirely distinct.

Descartes chose the term substance, the well-known term used by Aristotle, referring to an independent thing. He conceived self and body as two separate and different things, as well, to emphasize the independence of each one. What is usually called Cartesian dualism asserts that our intellectual life is in progress thoroughly distinct from that of the material life. Thus, the intellectual life, which has man's ego as the foundation, can remain active devoid of the solid substance. The man is constituted of the two separate parts of mind and body (Matthews, 2005, pp. 9-12). Descartes's understanding of human beings' nature was a turning point because if a man is constituted by two distinct substances, her/his life is exposed to dissemination rather than unity. Therefore, it will be difficult to account for the mutuality of self and body (Copleston, 2008: 24).

Accordingly, the Cartesian dualism has raised the significant question of the interrelation of the two distinct substances. This is the critical problem which Descartes tried to resolve with the unsuccessful argument of the pineal gland. Descartes' successors were preoccupied with this issue. Diverse responses to the Cartesian problematic have appeared in Spinoza's naturalism, Malebranche's occasionalism, Leibnitz's parallelism, Kant's transcendental idealism, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel's objective idealism, Husserl's phenomenology of

consciousness, as well as analytical philosophy of mind with different branches of behaviorism, functionalism, instrumentalism, and reductionism. Dualism has always been the target of criticism in history philosophy. Godfrey of Fontaines, the medieval philosopher, and theologian rejected the duality of soul and body as a Hellenistic and Platonic tradition. He maintained that the mind and body are different but opposed. They do not belong to two distinct worlds but unified (Ilkhani, 2011: 278).

Overcoming the duality has been crucial to Western philosophy so that Hegel thinks the need for philosophy is a response to dichotomies (Beiser, 2012: 95). Moreover, Cartesian dualism and his focus on the subject was the point of departure in Western thought. We will come back to this point again.

Subjectivism

In Objectivism, the objects are free things presented to the knower through sense data. Thus the known things are in correspondence with the sense data, while, in subjectivism, it is impossible to move towards the ideas to access the objective material reality independent of the subject because the knowledge is confined to one's mind. Therefore, the world is located within the subject or belongs to it. Even if the ideas represent an independent fact (as realists claim) no one can understand them at all. If the physical objects existed whenever no one can observe them, there would be no reason to claim that they exist. Because it is impossible to have any idea of observation unless something was observed. So, the world is a combination of the perceivers and perceived things, or minds and ideas (Hunnex, 1986, p 9). According to Husserl, too, philosophy should start with the meditations of an ego. It is Descartes who begins exactly with the phenomena tied to the ego suspending being (Copleston, 2008: 190-191).

Nowadays, many philosophers are preoccupied with the critique of the Cogito and Cartesian dualism. Modern civilization and systems rely upon the subjectivity. Thus, the interrogation of subjectivism means interrogating modernity as a whole (Davari, 2007:138, 149). According to Heidegger, modern time is characterized by subjectivism that leaves the meaning to the "mind" instead of considering the "world" as the place of meaning. For Heidegger, skepticism, which has roots in these epistemological distinctions, would be overcome if the difference between the internal and external along with other epistemological differences were refuted. The only way to escape the duality of subject-object in different schools is to abolish the mind-body distinction (Khatami, 2005:156, 326). A part of contemporary philosophers' efforts is devoted to the critique of subjectivism which has dominated continental philosophy from Descartes to Nietzsche (White, 2011:218). Accordingly, if we can give an account of the self-body relation which rejects the Cartesian duality, we will contribute to this critical tradition. Our contribution comes from the work of Iranian Muslim philosopher, Mulla Sadra Shirazi (1572-1640).

The Question of Dualism in Sadra's Philosophy

The Islamic philosophers did not pose the question of dualism and self-body explicitly, but there are implicit indications to this issue in Sadra's texts. In *al-Asfar al-*

arba'a (*The Four Journeys*), Sadra asks how the abstract soul can associate with the material body and result in a unified natural being in which these two substances intermingled. He raises questions such as: "What the form of the corporeal body can do with the form which is intelligible in itself?" (Shirazi, 2002:Vol. 9, 75). What is the relationship between the physical body and abstract intellectual self? According to Sadra, the problem occurs whenever the combination of the self and body results in a bodily species while it is impossible for the mixture of the abstract and the material to bring a natural material species (Shirazi, 2002: Vol 8, 14).

Sadra's answer lies in the co-relation of the selfhood and body which entails the appropriation of the body as well. He insists that such co-relation is internal to any individual (self) and constitutive to the self. Shirazi asserts that such a relationship only makes the soul no longer an intellectual entity while it remains a substance (Ibid, 13-15). Thus, we should concentrate on the essence of the self and the co-relation of self-body to overcome the Cartesian dualism in light of Mulla Sadra's philosophy. Let us first have a look at the definition of the self then come to the self-body relation to present another account of this problem which ultimately diverges with the Cartesian one.

Definition of the Self / Soul

For Avicenna self is the first entelechy (*kamal 'anma*) for the natural body possessing organs (*jism tabi'i 'ali*), not the artificial or pedagogical one, which contains all the characteristics of living such as nourishment, growth, reproduction, perception, Voluntary movement and logos (Avicenna, 1997:22). This Aristotelian general definition encompasses vegetable and animal souls too. To complete the description, Avicenna adds that the human self is the first entelechy for the natural body possessing organs because it does the existential tasks deliberately, makes an inference, and understands the universals (Ibid, 14). He also points out that such a definition does not express the essence of the self. It only affirms the relation between self and body. The self is governing the body; however, to be the first entelechy cannot clarify whether the self is a substance or an accident. That is why Avicenna proposes another definition to express the essence of the soul or self.

Avicenna first treats the soul as it is without bringing in the body through introspection and the subjective perception then concludes that the human's self is an independent substance not inscribed in body but a separate abstract entity (Ibid, 212). To make these two definitions compatible it should be mentioned that the first definition considers the self when related to the natural body, while the second one considers the self in itself. The comprehensive account can be found in Sadra's philosophy.

Self-body relation in Mulla Sadra's Philosophy

Shirazi, too, asserts that the self can be observed from two perspectives. (1) The rational soul is the form and the governing part of it. In other words, the object's existence for itself is in congruence with the existing for the other. Here, the self is the first entelechy of the natural body possessing organs. (2) The essence of the human's self is taken into consideration dispensing with its relation to the body. It

means that the existence in itself is the same as the existence for itself. In this way, the self is a separate abstract substance despite being the governing part according to the first definition (Shirazi, 2002: Vol 2, 37-38). He summarizes the discussion asserting that "Human soul has an abstract intellectual character while it is simultaneously dependent" (Ibid, Vol. 8, 12).

This point is so important that makes Avicenna determine the subject matter of the first philosophy. The natural sciences study the dependence of the self or soul, as a governing part, while the divine philosopher discusses the soul in itself as the subject matter of the first philosophy (Ibn Sina, 1992:237). This paper brings into focus the self which is related to the body. Before explaining Sadra's views on the soul-body relation, it is worth mentioning the similarities and differences between Sadra's transcendental philosophy and the Peripatetic School.

Their similar views about the soul include:

- 1- The existence of the soul (Shirazi, 2002: Vol 8, 9)
- 2- Substantiality of the soul (pp. 29-41)
- 3- The abstractness of the human's self (Ibid, 225-281). It should be noticed that Sadra, contrary to the peripatetic philosophers, believes that there is no abstractness at the beginning. The soul becomes abstract through substantial movement.
- 4- The materiality of the self as action (Ibid 12, 18)
- 5- The simplicity of the self (Ibid 118-120)
- 6- The impossibility of the priority of the self to the body (Ibid 288-298)
- 7- The natural combination of the human's soul and the physical body (Ibid 13-15)
- 8- The ethereal soul is the real body that is capable of originating the self (Ibid, Vol. 9, 66-68).

The disagreements concern Shirazi's objections to Avicenna:

- 1- The impossibility of the priority of the body for the origination of the abstract existent out of matter (Ibid, Vol. 8, 345-348)
- 2- The impossibility of the transformation of the abstract substance into a substance attached to the matter (Ibid, Vol. 8, 14)
- 3- The impossibility of the unity of the physical body and the self if the soul was intellectual and abstract in both origination and survival (Ibid).

Mulla Sadra's Solutions for the Problem of the Duality

There are three fundamental shifts in Mulla Sadra's philosophy which enables it for overcoming dualism. These shifts concern Shirazi's new conceptions of the subject, the object, and knowledge.

a) Sadra's Exposition of the Subject

The most significant issues regarding the self-body relation consist of:

1. The origination of the self is a physical event while the survival remains spiritual (Ibid, Vol. 9, 75)

Descartes' idea, that thinking constitutes the essence of thought which occupies no space, shows that the self is immaterial in both origination and survival

(Descartes, 2002: 203). Unlike Descartes, Sadra thinks that the soul originates from a physical body, but survives and thinks as an intellectual existent. The self is the immediate cause of the particular movements and perceptions (Shirazi, 2002: Vol 8, 302). If the substance of the soul belongs to the body, it will be a gradated event in origination and substantiality, like the other sense forms. Although the self in itself does not belong to the body, it is attached to it as a concrete existent. The soul becomes abstract over time so that finally it does not even belong to the body just attaching it for actions. Hence, the soul is corporeal in origination while spiritual and abstract as it survives (Ibid, 193).

2. The unification of the self and physical body or the spirit and matter (Ibid, Vol. 7, 210)

Although Descartes asserts that the self and body are inseparable, he cannot give a plausible account of the self-body relation because of conceiving the self and body as two distinct substances which are in some aspects opposed to each other (Descartes, 2005: 24, 26). In a letter to Princess Elizabeth, he refers to the three issues of the self, body, and their unity (Urmson and Jonathan, 1991: 75,76). In contrast with Descartes, Sadra's assumptions not only allow for self and body reconciliation but also make this unity appear as sheer objectivity. This conviction arises out of the following assumptions:

1- It is the being which really exists in everything (ontological primacy of existence or *asalat al-wujud*).

2- Existence is a singular truth that is modulated and gradated (*tashkik al-wujud*).

3- The movement and modulation are inherent to a substance (substantial motion or *haraka jam'ariyya*).

4- The reason behind the debilitation of being (*tadha'uf*) is the matter which is the cause of intensification of being of the thing as well (the inseparable combination of matter and form).

5- Some of the physical forms, like the self, are capable of becoming a matter for an abstract form despite their physical nature. So they would appear as the very forms while they were a body before. The self is "corporeal in its origination and spiritual in its survival" (*jismaniyyat al-buduth wa-ruhaniyyat al-baqa'*) (Shirazi, 2002: Vol. 5, 231).

6- The abstract can be the same as the various essences which turned into new existents by the abstract. Without the abstract, they would be inferior existents in themselves. This is the doctrine of simplicity and unity of the soul as it contains many faculties or potentialities (Ibid, 231).

According to these assumptions, the self and body are existentially unified, and the faculty of the self is flowing within all parts of the body (Ibid, Vol. 8, 69). In other words, the human's self is a continuum gradated between the two poles of the intellect and nature or the sense. This gradation indicates that the soul has got different positions regarding the hierarchy of the world with three main divisions of nature, reason, and imagination. Shirazi goes one step further to claim that the self is identical to all faculties and any higher position is also identical to the lower faculties which it appropriates (Ibid, 48). "Since we believe that every self is constituted by the nature of the body which is specified to it, the body is a part of the lower grades of the self's existence" (Ibid, Vol. 9, 12, 46).

For Sadra, the soul embraces the body and not vice versa (Ibid, 43). Since the self is more extensive than the body, it is not the self that exists within the body, but vice versa. Moreover, the soul constitutes the body as a whole. The combination of the corporeal self and body results in a perfect corporeal species (Ibid, 14). The soul contains the elements of the body combining them regarding their capacities to become an appropriate body for the self (Ibid, 49).

Thus, man is a hierarchical existent with different levels. The existence of the soul starts with the lowest stages gradually proceeding towards the higher levels of rational abstractness. The relationship between self and body is the relation of the unification, rather than the enthusiastic relation which may lead to a real concrete combination. Therefore, the body becomes one of the levels in the hierarchy of the soul. If the soul descended to the degree of nature or sense, it would be identical to nature or senses. It means that it would act as the touch organ in touching or as the olfactory organ in smell. That is why Mulla Sadra concludes that the self is the natural moving sensitive body (Ibid, Vol. 9, 51).

3. Consciousness and awareness are circulated all over the matter or body.

Rejecting the existence of any kind of awareness or knowledge in matters or bodies which are characterized by extension, Descartes attributes the awareness to the self, whereas Sadra maintains that the awareness is circulating at every level of existence.

As existence is a single reality that is in progress in all existents through different degrees of intensity moving from the simple levels to perfect ones, the true attributes concerning knowledge, power, will, and life also represents the stream of existence through the living beings. As a result, every being even the inanimate objects are living, knowing and perceiving (Ibid, Vol. 6, 102).

Existence is a singular truth identical to the knowledge, power, and life. As we cannot conceive a being without the essence of being, it would be impossible to imagine a being devoid of knowledge and agency. In this way, all beings share a sense of awareness. Such statements return to Sadra's assumptions about knowledge. Knowledge is a kind of existence or identical to existence. The material form possesses a lower degree of perception which is not called knowledge because the knowledge is defined as an abstract entity free of matter.

The argument of the unity between self and body can also come to such a result. Since the corpse and soul are unified, the body can enjoy knowledge and life actually, and not virtually. Here, Sadra distinguishes between the body as a matter and the body as a genus. The latter is a genus unified with its *differentia* and becomes concrete through the form which is specified to that *differentia*. With such unity and concreteness, the body can enjoy life and awareness (Vol 7, p. 210). In other words, to state that the genus is considered as an accident in comparison with the *differentia* does not mean that the genus is among the external accidents which can be conceived as a separate element in reality. Here, the genus is among the analytical accidents in which the division of the substances and accidents can be only conceived through the rational operation of the mind (*i'tibar al-ʿahmi*) (Ibid, Vol. 8, 300). In this way, the body itself is qualified to enjoy knowledge and awareness. The awareness is identical to the body leaving no room for duality.

4. Affected by the worldly affairs, the self, as the governing component, belongs to the body. The soul comes under the rule of the natural world through the body.

In his account of self and body, Descartes could not resolve the problem of interrelation while Sadra can give a plausible account of this issue. "Although the self, as an abstract entity, is not affected by the body, it can be under the influence of the body; another sphere in which the soul belongs to the body doing the role of the governing part" (Ibid, 43).

For Sadra, the mutual influence does not mean that the two sides share a common feature. One is affected while the other hand is influencing. These are two different functions. So, the influenced part should have a physical aspect. For any change in the internal states of the self, there must be a material aspect to be affected when the self is influenced by receiving a subjective state. If the soul did not belong to the body, the self would not develop in its way to perfection. In this way, the body is affected by the self too; "the self is what makes the body move" (Ibid, Vol. 1, 368).

It seems that Shirazi sees even the lower levels can affect the higher ones as the higher levels affect the lower ones (Mahmoudi and Yousefi, 2015: 133). In other words, the states of the body, which constitute the lower aspect of the self, elevate to the higher levels, as the upper states of the self also descend to the lower levels. In this way, both self and body are interrelated. Any physical attribute, concerned with perception or action, can promote to the abstract realm of the soul after taking a rational form, while all soul attributes become corporeal and physical as descend to the realm of the body (129). Now, we can answer the famous question of how the abstract substance of the self can make the body move. The body is indeed the lower form of the self which is naturally flowing (Hassanzadeh Amuli, 400-401).

This issue can be pursued through the relationship between the self and its faculties. Islamic philosophers were concerned with the faculties of the self. There are two received views regarding the faculties of the self, the relation between the faculties and the way they are involved in undertaking the tasks of the self. Peripatetic philosophers consider the faculties as the tools of the self by which it performs its tasks. Mulla Sadra is not interested in this peripatetic doctrine. So, in the second view, the faculties cannot be considered as the tools of the self. For Sadra, the self is a unity constituted of all of its faculties. This is not the faculties through which the tasks are performed, but this is the self that performs the tasks on a specific occasion. For instance, when one touches a thing he does not only perceive it through the sense, but this is the self that descends to the location of the touching sense for undertaking a specific task. The touching faculty is just a passage through which the task is done. According to Sadra's theory, the faculties are not the tools of the self but different modes of the soul regarded as the passage for the emanation which paves the way for the self to perform its tasks (Shirazi, Vol. 8, 118-121).

As we pointed out, the faculties of the soul came into existence using the self. In addition to the causal relationship between the self and its faculties, they have interconnected through modality, not depletive or integrated boundedness. Here, three kinds of relations can be identified:

1. Causality: When something is attributed to the subject and the cause of the prediction cannot ground in the subject. For example, in propositions like "man's existence is an existent" the attribution of the existential to the subject or man, is an inherent instance of the predicate. However, the cause of such attributions is something other than man's existence which has created the man and mediated attribution of the existentialism to man's existence. This mediator, which is not the subject, can be called the causality factor of attributing the predicate to the subject.

1. Boundedness: Sometimes in a proposition something inherent to the subject is attributed to it. Here, the predicate is a mediator, and due to the relationship between the subject and the mediator that characteristic is attributed to it in a secondary level. In propositions like "This thing is white," the subject (this thing) is not inherently white. What can be actually called white is very whiteness. So, the mediator, the whiteness, is bounded to the thing.

2. The absoluteness: In propositions like "God exists," the subject, God, exists without any cause or bind. On the one hand, the "other" cannot be the cause of God. On the other, existence is attributed to God without reserve. Because God is the origin and absolute necessary being.

Some of the contemporary commentators have divided boundedness into three kinds. Although Sadra did not present such classification, it can be recognized in his commentators' texts.

1) The exhaustive or depletive boundedness (*taqyid-i nefadi*): In Sadra's system, this kind of boundedness is used to account for the relationship between *essentia* and *existentia*. In "man's essence exists under man's existence," the mediator is depletive boundedness.

2) Modal boundedness (*taqyid-i sha'ni*): It can account for the relationship between the self and its faculties. According to Sadra, the self is a unitary concept simultaneously accompanied by various faculties. However, the multiplicity of the faculties does not hurt the unity of the self. How the self can be one and many at once? The answer lies in this kind of boundedness. The existence of the self's faculties is bounded by the expanding nature of the self. Conceiving the faculties in a hierarchical form can resolve the problem. The self is present at each level in the shape of that particular position. Thus, the rational faculty, for example, is internal to the self as one of the higher levels of it. All faculties are gathered in the self. We can conceive them distinctively in different modes while they are various forms of a single entity that is the self. By mode, we mean that a single truth, characterized by expansion and absoluteness, can present itself in a different form through various modes. In this way, it can keep its high position even when descends to the lower levels. Leaving its pure state, in each level, it entirely takes the form of that position. Self is the absolute truth that is present in/bounded to different occasions. Determinations of the soul occur in the time of demotion. The determinations are the demoted forms of the absolute bounded to different positions. In other words, the bounded states are manifestations of the absolute self. Mode or *sha'n* appears whenever the absolute comes down. That is why the faculties of the soul are regarded as different modes or manifestations of the self.

3) Integrated boundedness: This kind of boundedness is tied to the second inelible (*ma'qul al-thani*). Concepts of causality, unity, contingency, actuality, and

so forth, which have roots in the external world, are not products of the self. Since the idea of existence must represent the objective world in existentialism, the philosophical concepts, which are abstracted from the external world, cannot represent the real world. Thus, philosophers are compelled to regard these concepts as some characteristics or attributes of the external objects. The mind is passive during the abstraction while it is active in the classification of the concepts. These philosophical truths are not distinct in the outer world. They are integrated, and our mind tries to take them apart. In comparison to the notion of "existence," such concepts convey the subjective aspects of the objective truth not the authentic aspect of it. It should be noticed that the location of the second intelligible concepts like causality, unity, actuality, and so on, is the external world and there is a difference between these concepts and the notions of "existence" and "essence." Moreover, the outer origin of the second intelligible does not entail their authenticity or multiplicity as concepts integrated into objects (Yazdan panah, 1388: 169-196). Therefore, the soul watches, hears, wants, and appears as an essence in which the faculties start to work and take the form of particular tasks. The self, as a unique reconciliatory essence, is the origin of the tasks performed by discrete faculties (Shirazi, Vol. 9, 54-57).

Every human being has got a single essence or self which is rational, alive, productive, perceiver, listener, observer, feeding and growing (p. 51). The man has a single identity with various modes or levels. The soul starts with the lower levels, then gradually ascends to the higher positions. Moreover, the self is a reconciliatory unit because it is a sacred or divine essence whose oneness emerges in light of divine oneness. The self is an intellectual faculty – intends to return to the original land – while descended to lower animalistic levels, with the different stages of sense and imagination, along with the plant life and the moving potentiality of the body. As Aristotle said, the soul consists of three vegetating, animalistic, and intellectual parts. The self is not a combination of these parts. Since the self is an existentially pure entity, it serves as the perfection and completion of these formal terms and all of these faculties are present in the self with their various meanings and functions. However, they are found in the soul compatible with the simplicity and ethereal nature of the self (Shirazi, 2002: Vol. 8, 119-121). As a result, even though the self is existentially one and the same, it appears in different degrees varying between reason and nature or sense. There is a mode for the self in the realm of reason, a mode in the realm of imagination, and another mode in nature (Ibid, Vol. 7, 227).

Some of the Transcendental Philosophy commentators have explained Sadra's conception of the soul-body relationship referring to some of the probable problems in this respect. They believe that Sadra has given the most convincing account of man, as a spiritual-material being. Mulla Sadra has discovered the substantial movement of nature. This movement bridges the gap between matter and spirit. The matter continues its substantial movement getting complete in itself until abstracted from the matter to transform into a spiritual being. There is no distinctive border between the material and the spiritual because they are supposed to be different degrees of existence. We cannot state that the spirit, despite its opposition to the matter, has nothing to do with the matter, because the spirit is the excellent result of the completion of the matter. Thus, the relationship between self and body should be understood in this way. The reason is not a separate and

different substance as Descartes maintained. The reason is the material form has been elevated to the higher levels of being and the only discrepancy returns to the degree of the intensification of existence as we compare different levels of temperature. It does not indicate that the soul is the effect of the matter. The soul, spirit, or self should be conceived as the result of the substantial movement which does not stem from the matter. Every movement is defined as the gradual move from the potentiality to the actuality, and the former is neither the cause of the latter nor the condition of possibility of it. The substantial movement must have an external cause out of the material framework and the spirit, as the immaterial aspect of human beings, should be conceived as the result of this movement which bridges the gap between the material and the spiritual (Ibid, 335-336).

B) Sadra's Conception of Object

Descartes has dissociated the self from the body completely, which resulted in a deep cleavage between subject and object in the history of modern philosophy. His invocation of the innate ideas, which exist in the mind, was an attempt at resolving the problem. Nonetheless, according to the Cartesian assumptions, the cognition of the external world seems impossible. For Descartes, the perception is not a piece of certain knowledge. This is a sort of skepticism, while Descartes' primary concern was getting out the Skepticism. Sadra's existentialism and modulate unity of being, in which the external world and the objective reality is nothing but various modes of existence, can resolve this problem. Referring to the three kinds of boundedness, we can demonstrate that the philosophical truths such as causality, unity, necessity, and so forth, come into existence as a single existent through existence. In other words, all the characteristics of the objective reality are united with the existence or bounded to it as they are integrated into the external world. Since everything returns to existence, any reality or concept is a specific mode of being. Man's self which is united with the body as two aspects of one objective reality is linked to the external world through existence perceiving it immediately and then understands it. Sadra insists that existence is not one of the second intelligible concepts or the abstract things having no parallels externally. Existence is an objective essence having no subjective parallels and cannot be referred to except by intuition (Ibid, Vol. 9, 161). The intellectual intuition understands causality and the other philosophical concepts like contingency, necessity, one and many, which are different modes of being. Because, the cause and creation return to the existence and ways of being rather than essence (Ibid Vol. 2, 235-236).

We can summarize Sadra's contribution to the theories of objects in his presentation of the object as a mode of existence. Second intelligible concepts are also existentially associated with external objects. When the objects, which are ways of existence, meet the subject or self, as another mode of existence, the cleavage between subject and object is overcome, because no gap can be detected between existence and existence. Sadra's assumptions lead to the rejection of Descartes' doctrines that perception cannot show the truth content of the objects except by chance (Descartes, 1985: 95). Shirazi thinks that the self is itself present during perception and perceives the external object as it is.

C) Sadra's Account of Knowledge

The other fundamental contribution of Sadra concerns the question of knowledge. He defines knowledge as a mode of existence rather than the emphasis of existing definitions of the knowledge as the essence of a subjective quality (*kayf-i nafsani*) (Shirazi, 2002: Vol. 1, 313-314). Sadra's final positions show that knowledge is one of the analytical accidents of the existence or identical to it (Ibid, Vol. 6, 144). For him, knowledge is neither a subjective quality nor a kind of addendum or attachment (*edhafah*), but a mode of existence (Ibid, Vol. 3, 226-227). The truth of knowledge is identical to the truth of existence if the matter is negated, of course. Thus, knowledge, in the form of existence, is a single truth with different degrees of intensification through strength and weakness, perfection and loss, a prior and posterior, and so on. The knowledge, thus, appears in the necessary as the necessary, in reason as reason, in self as self, and so forth (Ibid, Vol. 1, 621).

These three doctrines in Sadra's existentialism can pave the way for resolving the problems of dualism and subjectivism. If the subject and object were both modes of existence, taking account of their relationship would not be as difficult as it is raised in Cartesian philosophy. In the subject, the soul is united to the body and the faculties constituting an objective reality, and in objects, the philosophical truths are associated with existence forming existential objectivity. So, there is no gap or duality, and finally, knowledge is also a mode of existence that reconcile the knower and the known. Therefore, knowledge is the product of the knower's presence in the world and his/her immediate access to the known.

Conclusion

One of the methods in doing comparative philosophy would be finding solutions for philosophical questions of the other side. It would be an appropriate option for critical reading of other philosophies. Some Islamic philosophers believe that Western philosophy is idealistic or even sophistry. On the other side, Western philosophers may find Islamic philosophy dogmatic, a sort of naive realism or even a naturalistic pre-philosophical approach. Emphasizing the postulates and fundamental assumptions may not result in productive comparative studies because it always highlights the incommensurability of the two sides while starting with the particular problems like the self-body relation can pave the way for doing "comparative philosophy" in a more productive manner. In this way, comparative philosophy can contribute to examining questions from new perspectives. The philosopher's task is cognition and taking conceptual account of the world rather than trying to change it. So, philosophical discrepancies return to their different conceptual account of the world instead of the amount of the change they have made in the world. That is why one philosopher takes the world and knowledge for granted, whereas the other one might suspect everything and starts giving an account of the world, man, and knowledge from the very beginning through a methodic skepticism. This article tries to concentrate on one of the critical questions in the history of philosophy instead of making a fundamental comparison to both make the dialogue between Western and Islamic philosophy possible, and provide an argument for overcoming subjectivism. Mulla Sadra's philosophy can

make such an argument possible by re-examining the notions of the subject, object, and knowledge.

The primary goal of the article was to demonstrate that Sadra's different account of the subject, object, and knowledge relations can offer new perspectives in theories of perception, knowledge, and self-body relation that make overcoming subjectivism and dualism possible. Instead of putting the world in mind, Sadra puts a human being in the world showing how a man can access the world immediately or even be in an objective unity with the world.

Obviously, there is no ultimate word in philosophy; however, we can talk about the most consistent theory to describe the self-body relation and the question of perception. Shirazi's doctrine of the origination of the self corporeally and surviving spiritually takes man's self so extensive that covers both physical and abstract realms (including imaginary, intellectual, and even divine levels). This extensive plane can absorb both tangible and intangible aspects. According to Mulla Sadra man is an extensive corporeal-spiritual reality that starts with the divine commandment and ends with mundane creation. Although man is constituted of the two substances of self and body, these two are in an objective unity making a single concrete entity which is at once a natural, ideal, intellectual, and divine being enjoying a true ultimate oneness in light of the first necessary existent. This is true unity, not something attached to / imposed on the self and body. Shirazi's conception of the self is indeed a combination of different theories that can absorb various theories under a comprehensive theory of existence. As a comprehensive thought, it can intriguingly contribute to resolving philosophical problems that deserve more consideration.

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