Divine Necessity and Human Freedom in Seventeenth-Century Metaphysics: Spinoza's *causa sui* and Mullā Sadrā's *wājib al-wujād*

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This article compares Spinoza's causa sui with Mullā Sadrā's wājib al-wujād to examine how divine necessity coexists with human freedom. Through a non-genealogical analysis, it distinguishes modal necessity from graded ontological dependence. The result is two distinct compatibilist models of agency, each grounded in a different metaphysical architecture of divine causality.

Keywords: Freedom, Metaphysical, Mullā Sadrā, Necessity, Spinoza

1. Introduction

The seventeenth century refines one of the core questions that early modernity raises: if God is necessarily existing and founding the intelligibility of everything that is, what understanding of human freedom remains coherent? This question is often posed in the European canon as a conflict between rational grounds and moral agency within a non-contingent order. Spinoza pushes the problem to its end by identifying God as *causa sui* (self-caused) and holds that whatever exists is "in God" and a derivative of the necessity of the divine nature[1]. On such a framework, contingency is not a metaphysical condition of reality but a correlate of insufficient cognition, and freedom will have to be redefined in the absence of an undetermined power of choice[2].

Yet a supernatural project of the seventeenth century – Mullā Sadrā's systematic formulation of God as *wājib al-wujād* (the Necessary Existent) – structures another design of dependence, which cannot be reduced either to voluntarist creationism or to a thesis of "God-or-Nature" identity. Sadrā's existence-based metaphysics (as commonly formulated through the priority of *wujād* and hierarchical dependence of finite realities) provides the means to answer how divine necessity can be maximal and also how finite agency is meaningful as a graded and dependent power and not an illusion[3].

Although chronologically contemporaneous and thematically overlapping, the early modern discussions of "God, necessity, and freedom" remain principally intra-European, and how particular models of necessity in the seventeenth century should be used to hone the conceptual resources one may bring to bear on interpreting Spinoza's compatibilism remains largely unexplored. The article fills that gap using a non-genealogical, controlled comparison: following a methodological clarification, it reconstructs (i) the account of freedom based on necessity proposed by Spinoza and (ii) the account of dependent agency based on necessity proposed by Sadrā and then compares the divergent explanatory logic of each and its implications for the early modern metaphysics of God.

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1 - B. de Spinoza, *Ethics*, public domain text (Latin/English), Ethics I, D1; P11; P15-P18; P29. https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3800

2 - M. Della Rocca, *Spinoza*, Routledge, London/New York 2008, pp. 75-76; 187-92; Y.Y. Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, in M. Della Rocca (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Spinoza*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2017, pp. xx-xx, here pp. 139-1ee52.

3 - S.H. Rizvi, *Mullā Sadrāδand Metaphysics: Modulation of Being*, Routledge, London 2009, pp. 15-9; S.H. Rizvi, *Mullā Sadrā*, in «The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy», rev. 2021.

2. Methodological note

The comparison suggested here is correlational, not genealogical. It does not purport to draw historical lines of transmission between Spinoza and Mullā Sadrā; instead, it treats "divine necessity" as an identical problem-space in the metaphysics of the seventeenth century and inquires how two quite different conceptual systems respond to the same pressure: intervening an ultimately necessary divisional divine basis with an intelligible sense of human freedom4. To prevent anachronism and false equivalence, I apply two controls highly suggested in contextual and comparative methodology. First, I bracket explanatory narratives of "influence" and reconstruct each stance from its own argumentative environment – a methodology that resonates with the warning that introducing alien questions can corrupt the author's work5. Second, I do indicate a tertium comparationis on the level of functionality: what "necessity" does in either system (grounding, dependence, agency), rather than presuming that there is semantic identity between *causa sui* and *wājib al-wujād.*

Operationally, the paper will take the following steps: (i) text-anchored implementation of each account by each framework of necessity being; (ii) extraction of each framework's freedom concept as a reaction to necessity; (iii) synthesis through a systematic comparison (tables and figure) that brings out explicitly where the two architectures of dependence are convergent and divergent. This provides a disciplined "correlation of knowledge" whilst rendering the comparison philosophically fruitful and historically accountable.

3. Spinoza: divine necessity as *causa sui* and freedom as rational self-determination

Spinoza approaches the problem of God and of freedom by metaphysical necessity intelligibility: that which is intelligible must be explainable in itself and in terms of what it relies upon. In *Ethics* I, it acquires a strictly anti-contingent form. God is characterized as *causa sui* – "that whose essence involves existence"[6] – and as absolutely infinite substance[7]. It is not that God creates himself in time, but rather that the existence of God is rooted in (identical with) the very nature that the definition describes. This is why, according to numerous commentators, Spinoza's

4 - B. de Spinoza, *Ethics*, cit., E I D1, D7; I P11, P29.

5 - Q. Skinner, *Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas*, in «History and Theory», 8 (1969), pp. 3-53, here pp. 23-5.

6 - B. de Spinoza, *Ethics*, cit., E I D1.

7 - *Ibid.* E I D6.

causa sui is not a story of individual activity but rather a thesis concerning the priority of explanation and ontological autonomy[8].

Based on this, Spinoza asserts that God is necessarily existent[9] *and that nothing* other than God can exist or be imagined[10]. Finite beings are therefore not substances but *modes* – ways in which the attributes of God are manifested[11]. The "necessitarianism" of Spinoza is a consequence: out of the necessity of the divine nature, there are, in infinitely many ways, infinitely many things[12], and nothing in nature is contingent[13]. The seeming contingency is insoluble; however, we know nothing of the overarching causality and its sensible dependence[14]*;* Divine necessity in this sense is not the assertion that God exists but the assertion that the order of nature is the effect of the existence of God.

This metaphysical image appears at first to eradicate freedom. Instead, Spinoza aims to reformulate freedom so that it becomes consistent with universal necessity. A thing is "free," he says, because it "exists solely from the necessity of its own nature and is determined to act by itself alone"[15]. No finite thing could be free in the sense of being not dependent on external causes since only God is absolutely self-determined. They may be free in another, to be more exact, ethical and intellectual sense: to be free is to be *active* and not *passive* – to act out of proper knowledge of oneself and of one's causes, and not to be forced by external influences poorly understood. That is why Spinoza sees human bondage as a state of thought-action: while we are controlled by passions, which are the results of insufficient ideas, we are determined; when our ideas become sufficient, we are the sufficient causes of our deeds[16].

The dynamics of this liberty are Spinoza's psychology of conatus: everything struggles to continue its existence[17], and the human agency is a systematic

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8 - E. Curley, *Behind the Geometrical Method: A Reading of Spinoza's Ethics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1988, pp. 51-86; B. Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics: An Edinburgh Philosophical Guide*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2010, p. 49-82.

9 - B. de Spinoza, *Ethics*, cit., E I P11.

10 - *Ibid.* E I P14.

11 - *Ibid.* E I D5; I P15.

12 - *Ibid.* E I P16.

13 - *Ibid.* E I P29.

14 - *Ibid.* E I P33; B.D. Dutton, *Benedict De Spinoza (1632-1677)*, in «Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy», University of Tennessee at Martin, accessed 18 February 2026; S. Nadler, *Baruch Spinoza*, in «The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy», edd. E.N. Zalta - U. Nodelman, Fall 2025 Edition..

15 - *Ibid.* E I D7.

16 - *Ibid.* E III D1-D3; E III P1-P3; E IV Preface.

17 - *Ibid.* E III P6-P7.

manifestation of that struggle with thought and extension as its qualities. The increase of rationality does not change whether we are in the causal order or not (we always are), but it does change the way in which the order appears to us. Sufficient ideas make us more powerful to act; insufficient ideas make us more vulnerable to outer determination. Therefore, the distinctive Spinozist postulate is that true autonomy is rational self-determination in necessity – the accomplishment of understanding, not a metaphysical capacity to disrupt the nexus of causality[18].

Ethics V completes this account by connecting freedom with a stable form of self-governance based on reason's grasp of necessity. The effectiveness of the mind over the affects rests on the establishment of pleasant ideas and the arranging of affects by the understanding[19]. The ultimate manifestation of freedom is not arbitrariness but the "intellectual love of God," a rational joy following adequate cognition of God/Nature in the mind and hence in the necessity of things[20]. In modern terminology, Spinoza presents a comprehensive compatibilism: determinism does not oppose freedom since freedom is not the ability to act in one or two more different ways; freedom is the ability to act by one's own nature under the supervision of sufficient cognition[21].

This reconstruction is critical to the comparative purpose of this article. Spinoza offers a maximalist version of divine necessity where dependence is manifested through the modal framework of substance-attribute-mode. Human freedom is thus redefined as rational self-determination, a progressive accomplishment of agency that becomes more sufficient with higher cognition that is adequate to the desired order. The following section examines the conceptual approach to this redefinition by juxtaposing it with one of the contemporaneous accounts of necessary being in the seventeenth century – Mullā Sadrā's *wājib al-wujād* – whose structure of dependence exists in other metaphysical words.

18 - M.J. Kisner, *Spinoza on Human Freedom: Reason, Autonomy and the Good Life*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2011, pp. 17-45; 46-56; 57-71.

19 - *Ibid.* E V P3-P10.

20 - *Ibid.* E V P32-P36.

21 - B. Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics*, cit., pp. 136-58; D. Garrett, *Spinoza's Ethical Theory*, in *Necessity and Nature in Spinoza's Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2018, pp. 312-15.

Table 1 - Spinoza (*Ethics*): primary-text anchors for divine necessity and rational freedom

Ethics locus (Curley tr.)	Key term(s)	Minimal textual claim	Function in this article's argument	Interpretive note (for precision)
I D1	*causa sui*	God's essence involves existence (self-grounding).	Fixes "divine necessity" as ontological/explanatory independence, not a contingent fact.	Not temporal self-production; it marks non-derivative being and ultimate explanation.
I P11	necessary existence	God necessarily exists.	Establishes necessity as the starting-point of the metaphysical system, not a conclusion from cosmological premises.	The proof relies on Spinoza's substance/essence framework; avoid importing a Thomist-style "real distinction" reading.
I P16	"follows from the necessity of the divine nature"	Infinitely many things follow from God's nature in infinitely many ways.	Grounds Spinoza's necessitarian order: nature's intelligibility is an expression of divine nature.	"Following" indicates internal intelligibility (expression), not an external decree or purposive choice.
I P18	immanent cause	God is the immanent (not transient) cause of all things.	Specifies the dependence relation: finite beings depend on God without God standing outside nature as a separate efficient cause.	Immanence here is a causal-ontological thesis; it does not by itself settle debates about "pantheism" unless further argued.
I P29	no contingency in nature	Nothing in nature is contingent; all is determined to exist and act.	Provides the determinist backdrop that motivates a revisionary account of freedom.	Contingency becomes epistemic (a feature of inadequate knowledge), not metaphysical chance.

I D7	freedom	Free = determined to act solely from the necessity of one's nature.	Supplies Spinoza's compatibilist definition of freedom: autonomy as self-determination within necessity.	Freedom ≠ alternative possibilities; it is graded in finite beings via the active/passive distinction developed in Ethics III–V.

Table 1 summarizes the precise *Ethics loci* that are doing the principal philosophical job in §3 so that the prose can be interpretative. It also demonstrates how Spinoza presents his assertions about necessity[22] and freedom[23] as one argument structure and not two distinct subjects. The interpretative notes anticipate typical errors of category (e.g., temporal self-causal; freedom as indeterminism) and do not make any new assertions that would need more space.

4. Mullā Sadrā: *wājib al-wujād* and freedom under ontological dependence

If Spinoza rebuilds freedom on the basis of a modal metaphysics of substance, attributes, and modes, Mullā Sadrā (Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, d. 1640) treats the same problem – how a necessary divine ground can be compatible with finite agency – through an ontology of dependence, expressed in terms of existence (*wujūd*). The central point is God as *wājib al-wujād* (the Necessary Existent): something necessary "in itself," without another. Although Sadrā adopts the w*ā*jib/mumkin (necessary/possible) distinction of the Avicennan tradition, his unique point of contribution is to radicalize the sense of what it means for non-divine beings to be a mere "possible": their contingency is not just an epistemic predicate but a structural reliance of their very existence on the Necessary[24].

One of the key Sadrian gestures (as it appears in modern scholarly work as the "primacy of existence") is that the explanatory burden lies on *existence*, as opposed to quiddities/essences (*māhiyyāt*). According to such a perspective, finite objects are not autonomous objects that then get existence; their reality is wholly bound to a given and received act of being. This gives a metaphysical grammar for divine

22 - B. de Spinoza, *Ethics*, cit., E I D1, P11, P16, P18, P29.

23 - *Ibid.*, E I D7.

24 - I. Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mulla Sadra on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2010, pp. 45-55; 122-25; M. Kamal, *Mulla Sadra's Transcendent Philosophy*, Routledge, London 2006, pp. 24-42.

necessity: the God's necessity is not just one property among others, but it is the absolutely non-borrowed reality, upon which all other realities owe their ontological status[25].

This dependency is usually described as the univocation (*tashkīk*) that Sadrā describes as existence: existence is not lax in all beings in the same manner; rather, the existence comes in degrees or intensities. What now becomes related to the God-world relation is of philosophical importance to the current comparison: the dependence of finite beings may be extensive without identity collapsing. In other words, it is possible to hold to a maximal divine necessity and have some sort of intimate divine "presence" (in the sense of ontological dependence) and remain opposed to the equation "God = Nature" as the mere identity statement. The reality of the world is real-yet-derived: it is neither an independent world beyond the Necessary nor a mere subjective illusion[26].

Then, how will such ontological dependence survive the fact of "freedom"? Sadrā 's response to this question does not lie in the adding of pockets of metaphysical inconclusivity but in the re-conceptualization of agency as a gradual perfection of a dependent entity. Human action is not defined as an independent origination; it is a construed power that is exercised in its own ontological position and which can be enhanced through knowledge and self-transformation. That is, dependence does not eliminate agency; it identifies in which terms agency will be intelligible. This helps to understand why Sadrā's debates on moral psychology and epistemology often associate human well-being with the augmenting actuality – being more of what one is as an intellectual and spiritual being – rather than with an abstract power of opposite determination[27].

Another doctrine, frequently highlighted in the secondary literature, renders this compatibilist course particularly salient, that is, substantial motion (al-Saraka al-jawhariyya*).* Though the development of its complete statement would overstep the bounds of this article, its applicability can be concisely expressed thus: assuming that the soul (and more generally substances) is not given in a static manner in any case but is dynamically perfected, then insofar as human agency can be conceived as self-formation within an ordered metaphysical dependence even on the Necessary. Within this paradigm, freedom is not the absence of causality or

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25 - I. Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*, cit., pp. 65-68; M. Kamal, *Mulla Sadra's Transcendent Philosophy*, cit., pp. 24-42; K. El-Rouayheb - S. Schmidtke (edd.), *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016, pp. 465-488.

26 - S.H. Rizvi, *Mullā Sadrā*, cit.; I. Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*, cit., pp. 305-314.

27 - M. Kamal, *Mulla Sadra's Transcendent Philosophy*, cit., pp. 64-87.

metaphysical autonomy but a self-actualization position, progressively more "one's own" as the cognitive and existential capacities of the agent become stronger[28].

This Sadrian model thus establishes a definite comparison with Spinoza. Both philosophers criticize freedom as a mindless contingency and treat freedom as a refined, transformed agency within necessity. Yet they locate the corresponding dependence relationship differently: Spinoza defines dependence by articulating the modal framework of a single substance (modes being derivatives of the divine nature), whereas Sadrā defines dependence as ontological derivation in transcendences of existence through the Necessary. The subsequent blurring uses this juxtaposition to describe two "architectures of dependence" and to explain how different metaphysical accounts of necessary being yield distinct reconstructions of human freedom.

Table 2 - Mullā Sadrā: core doctrinal elements used in the comparison (necessity dependence agency)

Doctrinal element	Technical term(s)	Minimal claim (as used here)	Role in grounding divine necessity	Direct relevance to human freedom (in this paper's sense)
Necessary Existent	*wājib al-wujād*	God is necessary "in itself," non-derivative, and the ultimate ontological ground.	Fixes the absolute pole of being: only God is necessary without dependence.	Rules out freedom as absolute independence; motivates a reconstructed, compatibilist freedom.
Dependent/ possible being	*mumkin al-wujād*	Finite beings are possible "in themselves" and exist through dependence on the Necessary.	Explains why created reality is not self-explanatory; being is received/ derivative.	Human agency can be real yet non-independent: actions are "one's own" within dependence.

28 - K. El-Rouayheb - S. Schmidtke, *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, cit., pp. 472-475.

Primacy/ explanatory priority of existence	(commonly) *alat al-wujūd*	Existence, not quiddity, carries explanatory weight in metaphysics.	Makes dependence ontological (about *being*), not merely mechanical or epistemic.	Freedom can be framed as increased actuality/power through knowledge (not as chance).
Gradation/ modulation of being	*tashkīk al-wujūd*	Existence is manifested in degrees/intensities rather than a flat univocal distribution.	Allows pervasive dependence without identity: creatures participate derivatively without collapsing into "God = world".	Agency becomes a graded capacity: more "free" as one's existential-cognitive power intensifies.
Essence/ quiddity and existence	*māhiyya* / *wujūd*	What a thing is does not itself secure that it is; existence is not self-contained in quiddity.	Blocks treating finite entities as ontologically autonomous "units" alongside God.	Undercuts libertarian "uncaused choice" models; supports freedom as perfected dependent agency.

This table includes only the Sadrian doctrines that are strictly required to compare "necessary being" and "freedom". It maintains the non-redundancy of the comparison by still connecting each doctrine to a given argumentative position (how necessity grounds dependence and how dependence allows agency). It also clarifies which component (substantial motion) is optional.

5. Comparative synthesis: two architectures of necessity, two reconstructions of freedom

Sections 3 and 4 reconstruct two seventeenth-century strategies for holding together: the maximal divine necessity and a non-illusory account of human agency. In the synthesis, it is now possible to put it more accurately: Spinoza and Mullā Sadrā meet on the denial of contingency as an essential metaphysical characteristic, yet they diverge from each other in the structure of reliance within which the necessity is expressed – and this deviation produces distinct reconstructions of "freedom".

In the case of Spinoza, necessity presents itself in the modal form of a single substance; God as *causa sui*[29] exists necessarily[30], and the whole order of nature is a result of the necessity of the divine nature[31]. Dependent is thus mainly modal: finite states are modes the intelligibility of which belongs to the immanent order of causation[32]. It is against the usual assumption that determinism is merely a denial of freedom to discover that the freedom is to be found in the opposition between passivity and activity: we are "free" insofar as we act under the necessity of our nature[33] – insofar as we are the adequate causes of our actions[34]. It is rational self-determination within necessity – under a graded agent dependence, that is, in agency via understanding that renders freedom[35].

Sadrā also confirms that the divine ground is necessary in itself (*wājib al-wujūd),* but he expresses reliance within an existence-oriented ontology. The non-divine realities are possible by themselves (*mumkin*) and even dependent on their own existence; dependence is therefore not only epistemic but also ontological. Moreover, gradational descriptions of being (*tashkīk*) make possible a pervasive dependency without needing to reduce to a univocated identity between God and the world: creatures are real as derivative, ranked manifestations of being and not independent entities along with the Necessary[36]. In this architecture, freedom is unrealistically understood as independence; rather, it can be intelligible as a refined working of dependent agency – self-formation, and self-governance in the measure of enhanced actuality and knowledge[37].

The key compensation is that compatibilism with a necessary God is not one-pointed. Spinoza's compatibilism lies in explanatory closure within a single substance and describes liberation as a rational adequacy. Sadrā's compatibilism is based on graded ontological dependence and models liberation as enhanced perfection of a dependent agent. These are not simply variant vocabularies for the

29 - B. de Spinoza, *Ethics*, cit., E I D1.

30 - *Ibid.*, E I P11.

31 - *Ibid.*, E I P16, P29.

32 - *Ibid*, E I P18.

33 - *Ibid*, E I D7.

34 - *Ibid*, E III D1-D3; E V.

35 - M.J. Kisner, *Spinoza on Human Freedom*, cit., pp. 17-45; 46-56; 57-71; O. Koistinen (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2009, 167-87.

36 - I. Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*, cit., pp. 223-9; 301-5; F. Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Sadrā (Sadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī)*, SUNY Press, Albany 1975, pp. 27-40; 47-58.

37 - M. Kamal, *Mulla Sadra's Transcendent Philosophy*, cit., pp. 64-87; 88-105; J.W. Morris (trans.), *The Wisdom of the Throne: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mullā Sadrā*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2003, pp. 60-64.

same view: they represent variant dependence relations (modal expression vs. graded derivation) and consequently variant meanings in which an action may be seen as "one's own". This contrast becomes expressible (and graphically expressible in *Figure 1*) to make the conceptual map of early modern deliberations of God and freedom clearer: that the necessity of divine origin can give rise to greater than a single consistent reconstruction of human agency.

Table 3 - Comparative synthesis matrix

Dimension	Spinoza (modal architecture)	Mullā Sadrā (ontological architecture)	Point of convergence	Divergence / payoff for "freedom under necessity"
What "divine necessity" primarily means	God is *causa sui*, existence follows from essence[a]	*God is wājib al-wujūd; uniquely necessary "in itself"*	God is not contingent; divine necessity is foundational	Spinoza: necessity is built into one-substance explanatory closure; Sadrā: necessity grounds a hierarchy of dependent being
Structure of dependence	Finite things are modes of the one substance[b]	Finite things are possible/dependent beings (*mumkin*) receiving being from the Necessary	Dependence is not optional or merely moral; it is metaphysical	Spinoza: dependence is modal-expression within one substance; Sadrā: dependence is ontological derivation across degrees of being
Status of contingency	Nothing is contingent in nature[c]; contingency = epistemic (linked to inadequate cognition)	Contingency is real-as-dependent: beings are possible in themselves, dependent in existence	Both reject brute chance as ultimate	Different diagnoses of "could have been otherwise": Spinoza explains via ignorance; Sadrā via genuine creaturely possibility-with-dependence

Definition of freedom	Free = determined by necessity of one's nature alone[d]; becomes *active* via adequate ideas[e]	Freedom = meaningful agency as perfected operation within dependence (often tied to intensification/ perfection)	Freedom ≠ uncaused choice	Spinoza: freedom is rational self-determination (adequacy); Sadrā: freedom is graded perfection/ actualization within ontological hierarchy
Ethical "mechanism" of liberation	Liberation through understanding necessity; re-ordering affects via reason[f]	Liberation through ascent/ intensification of being/knowledge (perfectionist trajectory)	Both yield a transformative ethics grounded in metaphysics	Two different compatibilisms: "cognitive-therapeutic" (Spinoza) vs "ontological-perfectionist" (Sadrā)

Table 3 compresses the argument into five comparison-dimensions.

a - *B. de Spinoza, Ethics, cit., E I D1; I P11.*
b - *Ibid., E I D5; I P15.*
c - *Ibid., E I P29.*
d - *Ibid., E I D7.*
e - *Ibid., E III-V.*
f - *Ibid., E IV-V.*

These sets of nodes/edges capture precisely the synthesis-claim: Spinoza models dependence as modal expression in one substance only; Sadrā models dependence as graded ontological derivation from the Necessary. The compatibilist difference could be seen in the fact that the nodes of "Freedom" are the results of various mechanisms (adequacy vs. perfected dependence).

6. Conclusion

This article claimed that "divine necessity" in seventeenth-century metaphysics does not entail a standardized, constant outcome for human freedom. By matching the doctrine of God as *causa sui* with Mullā Sadrā's account of God as *wājib al-wujūd* – without any presumption of historical influence – the paper explains two different orders of dependence and the different reconstructions of agency they authorize. In Spinoza, necessity is expressed in the modal form of one substance

and its immanent inner order: freedom is redefined as self-determination of rationality, obtained as a result of progressing adequacy and activity within a necessary nexus of causation. In Sadrā, necessity can be described by ontological dependence, which must be expressed in terms of existence and gradation: freedom is understandable as a perfected dependent agency, a graded power of self-formation that does not need the metaphysical independence.

Such comparative payoff is conceptual and not ecumenical: it perfects what is meant by "compatibilism under a necessary God" by indicating that one dependence-relation (modal expression versus graded ontological derivation) yields different criteria for what counts as an action "one's own". More broadly, the outcome confuses linear narratives that correlate early modern necessity with the decline of agency. The extension of the framework to providence and theodicy in future work, or to the theological-political applications of necessity to the issue of authority and secularization in early modern thought, is possible.

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