

*From the Centrality of the Western Cogito to the Diversity of Creative Cogitos
Beyond the Cartesian Cogito*

من كوجيتو المركزية الغربية إلى تنوع الكوجيتوات الخلاقة ما بعد الكوجيتو الديكارتي

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Abstract:

This study investigates the reconfiguration of the Cartesian cogito and its transformation from a foundational concept of subjectivity in Western metaphysics to a pluralistic and dialogical array of cogitos—including Western, Eastern, European, African, and postcolonial iterations—in contemporary philosophical discourse. Through an analysis of scholarly and popular discussions, the paper explores how the cogito has evolved into competing, converging, and diverging interpretations across different cultures and intellectual traditions. Drawing on philosophical developments from phenomenology and hermeneutics to postmodern, neurocognitive, African, and postcolonial thought, the study examines the cogito's resilience and adaptability in engaging with themes of identity, reason, desire, media, and decolonial critique. The paper is structured in four main sections: (1) the phenomenological and hermeneutical cogito, (2) the postmodern cogito, (3) the African cogito, and (4) the postcolonial cogito. By analyzing these diverse reinterpretations, the study aims to understand the dynamics of philosophical pluralism, epistemic transformation, and the conditions for coexistence and dialogue in a post-Cartesian world.

Keywords: Cartesian cogito; Subjectivity; Phenomenology; Postmodernism; Epistemology.

ملخص باللغة العربية:

تبحث هذه الدراسة في إعادة تشكيل الكوجيتو الديكارتي وتحوله من مفهوم أساسي للذاتية في الميتافيزيقا الغربية إلى منظومة متعددة وحوارية من الكوجيتو - بما في ذلك التكرارات الغربية والشرقية والأوروبية والأفريقية وما بعد الاستعمارية - في الخطاب الفلسفي المعاصر. من خلال تحليل النقاشات الأكاديمية والشعبية، تستكشف الورقة كيف تطور الكوجيتو إلى تفسيرات متنافسة ومتقاربة ومتباينة عبر مختلف الثقافات والتقاليد الفكرية. بالاعتماد على التطورات الفلسفية من الظاهراتية والتأويلية إلى الفكر ما بعد الحدائي والعصبي المعرفي والأفريقي وما بعد الاستعماري، تدرس الدراسة مرونة الكوجيتو وقدرته على التكيف في التعامل مع مواضيع الهوية والعقل والرغبة والإعلام والنقد للاستعماري. تنقسم هذه الورقة إلى أربعة أقسام رئيسية: (1) الكوجيتو الظاهراتي والتأويلي، (2) الكوجيتو ما بعد الحدائي، (3) الكوجيتو الأفريقي، و(4) الكوجيتو ما بعد الاستعماري. من خلال تحليل هذه التفسيرات المتنوعة، تهدف الدراسة إلى فهم ديناميكيات التعددية الفلسفية، والتحول المعرفي، وشروط التعايش والحوار في عالم ما بعد ديكارت.

كلمات مفتاحية: الكوجيتو الديكارتي، الذاتية، الظاهراتية؛ ما بعد الحدائية؛ الإبستمولوجيا.

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Introduction

This study examines the reconsideration of the Cartesian cogito, or the transition from the Cartesian cogito as the foundation of subjectivity in Western philosophy and the modern Western metaphysical project to a diverse and dialectical array of cogitos - Western, Eastern, European, or African - and transformations in contemporary philosophical thought. Thus, through an analysis of various academic philosophical studies that seek to examine the cogito epistemologically as the essence of subjectivity in Cartesian philosophy, our goal is to understand contemporary scholarly works on the Cartesian legacy and the self, as well as popular media discussions on the cogito. These writings, whether academic or media-based, appear scattered, diverse, modified, developed, dialogical, argumentative, interpretive, and exegetical regarding the cogito. In fact, the years following the cogito have produced a vast number of studies, transforming it into competing, conflicting, debating, dialoguing, converging, and diverging cogitos. To clarify, our primary task here is to address the cogitos that have occupied philosophical thought in the post-Cartesian period, focusing on contemporary studies and subsequent general cultural writings prevalent in social media in order to understand their divergence and convergence, and how to comprehend and coexist with them. This will be explored across four sections examining the phenomenological and hermeneutical cogito, the postmodern cogito, the African cogito, and finally, the postcolonial cogito.

Three viewpoints on the cogito from researchers in Europe, Africa, and Asia are discussed in the introduction. Before moving on to Portuguese scientist Antonio Damasio's neurocognitive cogito, the first section explores the evolution of the phenomenological cogito in Husserl, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Ricoeur, and Jean Greisch. Before talking about the present digital cogito and the self in media, the second section examines the postmodern cogito, which includes the cogito of madness, unreason, will, desire, and archeological critique of the self in Nietzsche, Freud, Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan. Comparing the European cogito with the African concept of Ubuntu, the third section explores the African cogito. It focuses on Anton Wilhelm Amo's critique of Descartes in "Critique of Descartes: The Apatheia of the Human Mind," published in the 18th century, as well as viewpoints from Marcel Mukad, Michael Kpakala (1931–2013), and Benezet Bujo. Enrique Dussel and Ramón Grosfoguel's postcolonial cogito is the subject of the fourth segment.

It is now incumbent upon us to elucidate the genesis, emergence, evolution, proliferation, and dialogic interaction of these cogitos as follows:

1. Critique of the Cogito in Modern Philosophy

The author of "The Cogito from the Age of Reason to the Age of Virtual Reality" begins his analysis by outlining the cogito's cartography at the beginning of his investigation. He clarifies the role of Nietzsche and Heidegger in this regard, describing how each might be understood as going beyond the cogito and its predecessor criticisms. This is accomplished by carefully analyzing the most important points of this criticism.

The author starts off by criticizing Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), who penned the third objection to Descartes' objections and provided an empirical materialist critique of the cogito. Hobbes notes that as only corporeal creatures are capable of carrying out acts, the thing engaging in the act of thinking, or *res cogitans*, must inevitably be sensible. The author then describes how David Hume (1711–1776) developed an empirical

critique of Descartes' cogito by building on the deconstruction of the theory of concepts. As Descartes puts it, "I am certain that I possess no knowledge of what is external except through the ideas within me." This perspective holds that knowledge of objects in the outer world can only be obtained through concepts in the psyche.

In the fifth objection, the study goes on to explain Pierre Gassendi's (1592-1655) criticism, according to which the Cartesian cogito does not amount to a syllogism with a conclusion outside of its premises, but rather only leads to the conviction that the ego exists as an intuition similar to faith. The second group of Descartes' detractors, the idealists who came after him, are next covered in detail by Karim El-Sayed. They include Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1716), Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677), Leibniz, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), and finally Hegel.

2.Re-examining the Cartesian Cogito

Current studies of the Cartesian cogito show that Descartes' ideas have been criticized philosophically in a number of ways, from Ryle's current attack on the "ghost in the machine" to scholastic criticism. By focusing on what seem to be flaws in Descartes' theory, his true contribution—the "cogito"—becomes less appreciated. The philosophical significance of the "cogito" is rarely fully understood, but, as Robert N. Beck (1953) notes, with many misunderstandings of Descartes' intended meaning. Therefore, it is necessary to revisit the core characteristics of the "cogito," clarify some of the well-known objections to it, and strive for a more objective assessment of Descartes' contribution(pp. 212-220).

While Descartes maintained that the cogito proposition is intuitive, many of his critics insisted that, despite his intention, the cogito is actually a mental process. Huet, for instance, wrote that "I think, therefore I am" is revealed to us through simple awareness, not through a mental process. Since learning is "a movement, a journey from thought to existence," Hamelin views the cogito as "the truth of the doctrine rather than a judgment." According to Segond, "the deductive character of the cogito cannot be overlooked." Koyré((1922) also said that "the issue is no longer an immediate existential intuition, but a mental event of rational inference - in order to think, it is necessary to exist" (p. 59). Robert N. Beck(1953) claims that the following conclusions can be drawn from this view of Descartes' doctrine's logical structure: First, the cogito cannot be sufficiently based on any foundation other than thinking or consciousness. Second, the cogito is not an argument based on a universal hypothesis or a syllogism.Third, the Cartesian argument is neither wholly analytical or sophistry. Fourth, the cogito is best described as direct inference, which is a synthetic judgment based on experience rather than the law of identity which would make it analytic. After assessing these analyses of Descartes' cogito, Beck(1953) comes to the conclusion that it is important to acknowledge that they are based on incorrect interpretations of Cartesian principles.

According to R.N Beck(1953), these incorrect interpretations result from Descartes' doctrine's disregard for the empirical component and from not following the methodical process he chose. The real nature of Cartesian deduction can be used to settle the question of whether the Cogito is an intuition or a deduction.

The Cartesian Cogito is critically examined by John Igbogo, a Nigerian professor at Kogi State University in Anyigba, in his work, "A Logical Attempt to Refute the Cartesian Cogito." Descartes' reasoning, according to Igbogo, is inadequate and needs more logical examination. On closer inspection, Igbogo finds the Cartesian argument to be unpersuasive, despite its initial attraction. In order to achieve Descartes' goal, he suggests an

alternative formulation: "I know that I am a being since my existence in reality precedes my thought, and my thoughts ultimately prove my existence but do not bring me into existence." "I exist in order to think; I think; therefore, I know that I exist" is how Igbo proposes to rephrase the Cogito.

According to Husain Sarkar(2003), the fundamental framework of the Cartesian method is revealed by the Cogito, which is the first principle. He claims that the Cogito and Descartes' method are inextricably linked and that one cannot be comprehended without the other. Finding the right approach, according to Sarkar(2003), was a prerequisite for the Cogito's legitimacy. The relationship between logic and skepticism, will and memory, discovery and explanation, reason and experience, eternal truths and universal laws, and other philosophical concerns in Descartes' work are also highlighted by his study(pp. IX-XII).

In his book "Descartes' Cogito: Saved from the Great Shipwreck," Sarkar (2003) argues that the Cartesian Cogito should not be considered an argument but rather an intuition arising from the process of methodical doubt. He highlights the Cogito's function as the cornerstone of Cartesian philosophy and the source of all other knowledge. In the *Meditations*, Descartes sought to achieve certainty, or at least validate the lack of certainty, which he refers to as the epistemological issue, according to Sarkar. He also asserts that the Cogito is the only complete solution to this issue.

After examining Descartes' writings on method, principles, and the pursuit of truth, Sarkar comes to the conclusion that his methodological principle needs to be unique, unambiguous, most certain, straightforward, easily defined, and obvious. Although it is necessary to know all of these conditions before developing the Cogito, he points out that Descartes discovered some of them before and others subsequently. According to Sarkar(2003), the Cogito is the original "epistemological truth" and the "mark of truth," having first been a "existential truth" and the source of the principle of clarity and distinctness.

Sarkar(2003) also criticizes five ways that the Cogito might be interpreted: as an enthymematic syllogism, as a fully developed syllogism, as an argument in quantification theory, and as an argument that applies the rule "Whatever thinks, exists" and makes use of a presuppositional relationship. He also discusses the performative interpretation of Hintikka. Sarkar hopes to show through this analysis that the Cogito's function as Descartes' guiding principle is incompatible with its interpretation as an argument. Rather than being a logical argument, he suggests that the Cogito should be viewed as an intuition that emerges from the process of doubt.

According to Mihali (2004), Sarkar explains that the Cogito would not serve as a first principle if it were to be interpreted as an argument. He thus challenges five common readings of the Cogito: (1) as a syllogism that is fully expressed, (2) as an enthymematic syllogism, (3) as an argument in quantification theory, (4) as an argument that uses "Whatever thinks, exists" as a principle of inference rather than as a missing premise, and (5) as an inference that is not syllogistic but involves a presuppositional relationship. Sarkar also discusses the performative interpretation, which holds that the Cogito is the process of thought that allows the claim "I exist" to be claimed to validate itself. Sarkar hopes to establish the Cogito's standing as an intuitive basis in Cartesian philosophy and show how inadequate it is to comprehend it as an argument through this critical analysis (pp. 220-222).

3.Descartes' Cogito Hypothesis and the Characteristics of His Theory of the Self

Fumitaka Suzuki, a Japanese scholar, presents a compelling analysis of the origins and variations of Descartes' famous Cogito principle. Suzuki(2021) contends that Descartes did not truly write the well-known Latin formulation "Cogito ergo sum" ("I think, therefore I am").The Latin version of Descartes' French dictum "je pense, donc je suis" ("I think, therefore I am") is where it originated instead. This line was translated as "Ego cogito, ergo sum, sive existo" ("I think, therefore I am, or I exist") by Etienne de Courcelles, who translated Descartes' "Discourse on Method" into Latin. According to Suzuki(2021), Descartes did not use the precise line "I think, therefore I am" in any of his works, save for "The Search for Truth." Furthermore, Descartes's fundamental philosophical book, "Meditations on First Philosophy," only contains the sentence "I am" (ego sum), not "I think, therefore I am" or "I am thinking, therefore I am." It's interesting to note that Descartes states the idea clearly in "Principles of Philosophy" as "I think, therefore I am" (Ego cogito, ergo sum). This examination shows how Descartes' fundamental idea changed and evolved in his several writings, bringing to light the difficulties in determining its precise wording and Cartesian philosophical roots.

Fumitaka Suzuki (2021) clarifies the subtle differences between "I think" and "I exist" in Descartes' well-known claim. To shed light on these distinctions, Suzuki investigates the Cartesian systematic doubt and the philosophical idea that underlies the Cartesian claim "I think, therefore I am." This statement, he suggests, has two parts: "I think" and "I exist." The former conveys the "I"'s self-consciousness, whereas the latter indicates the "I"'s actual existence. The phrase "I am, I exist" assumes that "I am" and "I exist" are equivalent, according to Suzuki. Nevertheless, as stated subtly in the "Second Meditation," "I am, I exist" is closely related to "think" or "I think."

Suzuki (2021) argues that without the application of methodical doubt, Descartes would not have succeeded in formulating the proposition "I am." So, this analysis underscores the critical role of Cartesian doubt in establishing the foundational certainty of self-existence through the act of thinking.

The existential statement "I am, I exist" clearly stems from the fundamental truth "I think" or "I am thinking," which the self reaches through the application of methodical doubt. Suzuki (2021) interprets Descartes' main goal in the "Second Meditation" as clarifying the nature of the mental substance and emphasizing the real distinction between the mind and the body. In this context, Descartes' efforts were focused on deriving the existential assertion of the thinking self, specifically the proposition "I am, I exist." Through the application of methodical doubt, Descartes formulated the only certain truth he could ascertain: "I am, I exist."

The Cartesian claim that "I think, therefore I am" is examined by Fumitaka Suzuki (2021) as an intuitive hypothesis. He suggests that this Cartesian assumption can be construed as having been built through intuition, but it can equally be read as having been formulated through deduction. In fact, Descartes himself expressed conflicting opinions on this issue, which is one of the conundrums in his philosophy. As a self-evident thesis, Descartes developed "I think, therefore I am" in his "Discourse on Method," however "I think" might be replaced with "I doubt." By using methodical doubt, Descartes was able to identify the Cogito as an obvious truth and express it as "I think, therefore I am," which in turn established the fundamental premise of his philosophy. More interestingly, Suzuki (n.d) explains that the expression "I am" essentially indicates that the thinking self exists or is real. The "I" expressing methodical skepticism is incapable of questioning its own existence For the

self, the existence or truth of the thinking self is unquestionably established by intuition and cannot be questioned. Thus, in the "Second Meditation," Descartes maintains that "the simple intuition of our mind" is the sole way to construct the idea that "I think, therefore I am"(pp.21-38).

In his conclusion, Suzuki (n.d)stresses the importance of understanding the existential self. According to him, one of the main goals of Descartes' Meditations on First Philosophy is to define the nature of mind and body and so make clear the essential differences between them. But Suzuki (2021) wisely notes that the process of clarifying this distinction also functions as a way to decouple mind and body, so freeing the mind from physical restraints. According to Descartes, this procedure also serves as a means of releasing our thoughts from preconceived notions(pp.21-38)

Additionally, Suzuki (n.d)contends that Descartes' conception of the self established the foundation for contemporary philosophical ideas, even if it is essentially substantive. Descartes stresses the truth (presence) of the thinking self in addition to the self's substance. The statement, "I think, therefore I am," is essentially Descartes' affirmation that he has found the self that thinks—that is, that the thinking self exists. Suzuki's perspective highlights how crucial Descartes' Cogito was in creating a new framework for contemporary philosophy's concept of existence and self-awareness(pp.21-38)

Building on this perspective,the Japanese researcher, Suzuki(n.d), comes to the conclusion that the phrase "I think, therefore I am" has two characteristics. It is possible to characterize one of the aspects as an existential declaration and the other as an intuitive proposition. The scholar concludes that "I think, therefore I am" is essentially an existential claim after carefully examining Descartes' texts. Naturally, Descartes' primary goal is to prove the true separation between the mind and body and to deduce the nature of the mind from the self-evident truth "I think, therefore I am." The work has shed light on the characteristics of Descartes' Cogito hypothesis and its close relationship to his methodological doubts by concentrating on its metaphysical meaning. Accordingly, the aforementioned findings from this inquiry highlight the Cogito's complexity and crucial position in Cartesian philosophy. In addition to clarifying the Cogito's dual nature, the researcher's examination highlights the Cogito's fundamental role in Descartes' metaphysical framework and its ongoing impact on later philosophical discussions(pp. 21-38)

4.In the translation of the Cogito

Some scholars compare the Arabic rendering of "Cogito, ergo sum" to "al-Kujito," a term coined by Mahmoud El-Khodairy() when he translated the "Discourse on Method" into Arabic in the 1930s. This translation has remained the predominant terminology in most Arabic writings since the 1930s. As it appears in the fourth section of the "Discourse on Method," the line, which translates to "I think, therefore I am," is equivalent to Descartes' original French version, "Je pense, donc je suis." In addition to being a typical point of reference for discussions of Descartes' fundamental idea in Arabic philosophical discourse, El-Khodairy's translation has been instrumental in bringing Cartesian philosophy to the Arabic-speaking world.

The Cogito, as rendered in various English translations, has been consistently presented as "I think, therefore I am." This translation was employed by Paul J. Alscamo (1965), Elizabeth Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (2003), Richard Kennington (2007), and John Veitch in the same year.In order to prevent mistakes or a betrayal of the original intent, some translators choose to interpret the text literally. This literal translation pattern is also used

in other languages. For instance, "Ich denke, also bin ich" is a German translation of the sentence that means "I think, therefore I am" in Arabic. This consistent approach across multiple languages and translators highlights the desire for staying true to the original phrase when translating this significant philosophical statement.

According to Arafa Iman Bou Al-Marqa (2018), a thorough examination of the motive behind Descartes' well-known claim must be done in order to perform an accurate translation study. Because "Je suis" is used instead of "J'existe" (I exist) in Descartes' original French statement "Je pense, donc je suis," ambiguity results. According to Bou El-Marqa(2018), Descartes might have wanted to express something deeper than existence. He might have sought to prove his existence as a conscious being or to show his nature as a thinking person. On the other hand, Descartes may have purposefully left this uncertainty in his assertion. For translators, this delicate delicacy and extremely particular meaning in the original French present formidable obstacles. Efforts to clarify or offer substitute translations run the risk of departing from Descartes' original meaning, which could result in interpretations that significantly depart from his original philosophical intention.

Descartes had more in mind than just establishing his existence. "I think, therefore I must exist," was not Descartes's only claim; he sought to prove his own human being. Although many things exist without thought, Descartes aimed to demonstrate that he was a thinking, doubting, perceiving, feeling being. Descartes' intended meaning is restricted to mere existence, albeit, as the Arabic translation of the Cogito, "I think, I exist," ignores the nature of this being.

According to Bou El-Marqa(2018) Moreover, Descartes goes on to explain that "I am, I exist" is true every time I say it aloud or think about it. What am I, though? Something that can imagine and feel, as well as think, doubt, understand, conceive, affirm, deny, will, and refuse. The idea behind "je pense, donc je suis" is not just to prove existence; it is to show that there is a thinking being, even while you're asleep, , and to differentiate this thinking being from inanimate objects or animals. Additionally, it establishes René Descartes as the identity of this thinking human.

Lastly, as stated by Bou Al-Marqa(2018), the translation has lost a great deal of Descartes' intended meaning by concentrating only on existence, undermining a claim that has generated much philosophical discussion. She contends that literal translation—the strategy used by the majority of translators of other languages—is the most effective way to overcome this "dilemma": "I think, therefore I am." A more comprehensive understanding of Descartes' answer to the query, "What is this existing thing that thinks?" is made possible by maintaining the ambiguity of "I am" (je suis). Who is it? "I" is the word.

Firstly: The Cogito Tree

1- From the Cartesian Cogito to the Phenomenological Cogito

This section deals with the philosophical viewpoints that have attempted to understand and clarify the nature of the cogito, which forms the basis of Cartesian philosophy. It investigates the subsequent intellectual advances that have modified, expanded, interpreted, and reinterpreted the cogito within the context of Western philosophy. Starting with phenomenology and hermeneutics, the analysis examines them as fresh interpretations in the context of new developments in Western philosophy. Husserl's phenomenology and Ricoeur's hermeneutics are especially linked to these new methods since they have provided new perspectives on the cogito and its philosophical ramifications.

However, a study of the development of the Cartesian cogito must start with Husserl, whose critique of the 17th and 18th-century philosophers evolved into a reformulation, development, and reinterpretation of the cogito. By recognizing several variations of the cogito since Husserl, we can imagine a Husserlian cogito tree that is comparable to the Cartesian philosophical tree. The phenomenological cogito of the phenomenological pioneer, the existential or corporeal cogito in its different forms as put forth by Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Nietzsche, as well as the hermeneutic cogito of Ricoeur and hermeneutic philosophers, are all included in this. The determined ego and the passage from the individual, concordant self to the transcendental, universal self were two topics of concern for these thinkers.

There is no need to underline the philosophical and historical value that the Cartesian cogito has enjoyed; rather, our attention should be on evaluating the trajectory of the philosophy of subjectivity following the emergence of positivist thought and many attempts to transcend metaphysics. The value of the cogito is no longer evaluated by the fundamental revolution it produced in the path of philosophical thought, but by its fractures and reverberations within the holes left by the sciences. From this vantage point, Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, sought to retake Cartesian meditations, or more precisely, to reestablish philosophy's dominion and extend its authority over diverse epistemological systems.

In this regard, to examine the connection between Husserl and the Cartesian cogito, Naja Bou Haja Ben Ali (2002) asks the following questions: What is the reason behind Husserl's return to Descartes? What did Husserl see as an alternative to the Cartesian cogito, and how might one go about investigating it?

Ben Ali (2002) sustains that Phenomenological philosophy is centered on the subject, and this focus led Husserl to recognize that his examination of Descartes played a key role in the development of transcendental philosophy, or phenomenology, which was still taking shape and could be viewed as a form of neo-Cartesianism. However, unlike Descartes, who aimed to build a system of established truths grounded in the cogito, Husserl sought to probe deeper into its nature and structure. While the "I think" is considered the most certain and straightforward starting point—something we easily accept—the way to fully grasp or achieve it remains less clear. (pp.104-114).

According to Descartes, the statement "I think" refers to a fact about an actual being or a substantial object that serves as the ultimate subject in connection with the quality of thought. Descartes was pulled into a series of conclusions instead of stopping at the "I think," turning the cogito into the beginning of a series of inferences. This approach erected a barrier between him and the "pure ego," whose richness Descartes failed to fully comprehend and distinguish from the "worldly ego" (*Le moi Mondain*). This supports Husserl's conclusion that Descartes had, in a way, made the most important discovery but had fallen short of crossing the threshold to true transcendental philosophy since he was unable to understand the precise meaning of transcendental subjectivity.

This particular path led to the ego becoming detached from itself. As a result, Husserl's critique of the Cartesian cogito was not merely a logical one. He didn't simply reconsider the statement "I think, therefore I am" as a logical proposition or in light of previous philosophical objections. Instead, Husserl focused on Descartes' failure to recognize a crucial truth: the ego can reveal itself fully and infinitely through transcendental experience, without relying on external validation or divine assurance. As Ben Ali (2002) points out, Husserl

aimed to move beyond the "human ego" to inhabit the "transcendental ego," rejecting all the preconceived notions that had reemerged. This approach sought to shift the understanding of the self towards a more genuine and thorough comprehension of subjectivity.

The Cartesian method and the phenomenological approach are essentially different. The goal of reviving meditations is to give them a critical dimension rather than to infer the ultimate principle of the sciences or the existence of the world as an object. The meditations of Husserl were "a critique of transcendental inner experience, a critique concerning the specific individual forms of this experience." The focus of meditations, according to Husserl, is transcendental phenomenology, which exposes us to "a science of absolute subjectivity where the ego appears as the sole subject of this science, which begins as a pure science of the ego or pure egology," *Egologie Pure* (Ben Ali, 2002, p.107).

Because of his political views, Sartre became a focus point for philosophers, critics, and intellectuals. He also received a lot of attention in philosophical writings, particularly in Arab culture throughout the 1950s and 1960s. He was considered a well-known French philosopher and an extension of René Descartes, whose ideas and methodology had fascinated Egypt since the 1920s when the Egyptian University adopted them and Taha Hussein began promoting them. Sartre's theories on existence, image, and imagination gained popularity in the 1960s, and his visit to Egypt was accompanied by translations of his works.

Husserl argued that Descartes' use of God as one of our innate representations in a paradoxical proof of the world's existence for the interiority of consciousness was a non-phenomenological move that went against the Cartesian principle, which is the principle of absolute foundation of knowledge. Descartes' resolve to carry out the first significant reform of philosophy in history, with the goal of turning it into a science with unshakeable foundations, is what Husserl believes to be the Cartesian notion. The idea of this reform, which is inherent in the reconstruction of the structure of knowledge, is important, according to Husserl, because it is based on Descartes' return to human subjectivity for the establishment and expansion of knowledge. "I think, therefore I am."

As the author of "The Transcendence of the Ego" argues in "Existentialism is a Humanism," any theory that attempts to explain human nature outside of the cogito is only probabilistic, and any doctrine based on probability will eventually fall apart. He contends that in order for there to be any truth, there must be an absolute truth, which is people's direct and unfiltered self-awareness. J. P. Sartre, (n.d.), however, opposes idealistic substantialism, especially as advocated by Descartes, by viewing consciousness as an act rather than a substance. (p. 44) Sartre's distinctive contribution to existentialist theory is highlighted by this fundamental divergence in how consciousness is understood, which represents a substantial break from Cartesian philosophy.

2-From the Correct Cogito to the Wounded Cogito

Thouria Al-Abqaa 2013) views that Philosophical interest during this time was not limited to Sartre; Merleau-Ponty, who is well-known for his idea of the corporeal cogito, which was the topic of multiple researches, was also there. However, particularly in Paul Ricoeur's work, there was a greater emphasis on the hermeneutic cogito. Ricoeur's "*Oneself as Another*" holds a unique place in his body of work, tackling the issue of the self and the acting self—an issue that French structuralists had previously dismissed. Ricoeur explains that the

confident Cartesian cogito, which once viewed itself as firmly grounded and self-sustaining, was ultimately humbled by Nietzsche and revealed to be nothing more than an illusion, a point we will explore in our discussion of the postmodern cogito. P. Ricoeur(2005) clarifies that the foundational ambition of the Cartesian cogito can be primarily understood through the extreme doubt that initiates Descartes' inquiry in the *Meditations*. Descartes' doubt gives rise to the hypothesis of universal deception. If the cogito can emerge from such profound doubt, it suggests that there is someone who is engaging in that doubt. The "I" that directs this doubt and is reflected in the cogito is just as metaphysical and exaggerated as the doubt itself, with respect to everything it questions.

According to Ricoeur(2005), this finding is essential to comprehending the Second Meditation's reversal of doubt into the certainty of the cogito. The ontological purpose of doubt holds that the certain thing is the certainty of my existence, which is implied in my own process of considering the premises of the great deceiver's hypothesis. "There is no doubt that I exist if he deceives me; let him deceive me as much as he likes, he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I think that I am something." Here, we are presented with an existential claim: "I am, I exist." The act of being is not just a copula; rather, it is grasped in its absolute sense.

The idea is that Ricoeur (2005) begins to emerge from the renewal of the "ontological resolve that inhabits the cogito and that had been forgotten in Descartes' formulation." While acknowledging the "demolition of the epistemological cogito," this renewal seeks to "reinstat[e] it within the ontological schema in the name of 'I exist'." "Probe the positive interpretation of the 'I exist' that replaces the cogito" is Ricoeur's intention, as Meskini explains (ibid.). The end goal is to promote "the possibility of a new philosophy of the self."

3-Variations of the Hermeneutic Cogito:

In Jean Greisch's "The Hermeneutic Cogito: Philosophical Hermeneutics and the Cartesian Legacy," Paul Ricoeur's idea of the injured, marginalized, or shattered cogito is extended. This investigation identifies several post-Cartesian cogito styles that are common in post-modern philosophical currents in Europe today, such as genealogical, deconstructive, and hermeneutic approaches. These offer historical, cultural, and civilizational viewpoints that deviate from the European models and convey a reality different from the Cartesian cogito. They also present new cogitos that displace the Cartesian cogito, as do philosophical critiques from Africa and Latin America.

Our analysis goes beyond simply tracing and evaluating these various cogitos and their philosophical critiques of the Cartesian cogito. We explore their arguments for critiquing, challenging, and displacing the Cartesian cogito, whether by affirming and continuing its legacy or by rejecting it and asserting their own positions within or alongside its framework. We ask whether these debates have escalated into a philosophical conflict, similar to what Ricoeur refers to as the "conflict of interpretations," or whether these European cogitos that critique and transcend the Cartesian cogito can coexist. Among these are the Lacanian cogito, which builds on Nietzschean and Freudian critiques of the Cartesian "I think," and Derrida's deconstructive cogito in his discussions with Foucault on the Cartesian self—both of which have attracted attention from Arab scholars. There is also the hermeneutic cogito found in the works of Paul Ricoeur and Jean Greisch. These postmodern approaches, developed by French philosophers, can collectively be referred to as the post-Cartesian, post-Husserlian, post-Ricoeurian, or postmodern Nietzschean, Heideggerian, Foucauldian, and Lacanian cogito.

Jean Greisch (2020) makes a distinction between two opposing ideas of hermeneutics: the French method, which has its roots in the Cartesian underpinnings of contemplative philosophy, and the German approach. Greisch has declared his plan to produce a book with the title "wounded cogito," indicating his fascination with the concept. The idea of the damaged cogito has developed into a crucial comprehension requirement within the last 25 years. This project has benefited greatly from fresh perspectives on Descartes and Cartesianism. By developing their own Cartesian meditation and providing a distinct understanding of the cogito, philosophers like Michel Henry, Jean-Luc Marion, Paul Ricoeur, and Emmanuel Levinas have shed light on the issues highlighted by the idea of the injured cogito.

These authors highlight the issues raised by the title "The Wounded Cogito," each offering their own interpretation through a "Cartesian meditation." For each thinker, the concept revolves around a "wounded cogito," though the nature of this wound differs. It ranges from Michel Henry's notion of self-affection (auto-affection), to Levinas' idea of other-affection (hétéro-affection), through Ricoeur's "primordial ego," and finally to what Marion refers to as the "adonné" (the gifted). Exploring these variations provides a strong impetus for hermeneutics to clarify its own relationship with Descartes and its understanding of the wounded cogito.

Meyer accepts the Cartesian view of the cogito as the "master and possessor" of its thoughts (cogitationes). This is reflected in how Descartes sees himself as the primary interpreter of the three visions that were pivotal in his philosophical development. A series of studies by Jean-Luc Marion, focused on these three visions—Descartes as the interpreter, decoding Descartes the dreamer, and proposing a project for Descartes the philosopher—illustrates this idea (Greisch, 2020).

Greisch (2020) suggests that considering the particular example of phenomenology, it seems significant and deserving of attention to examine the recuperation techniques applied to Descartes' "Metaphysical Meditations" by writers like Husserl, Heidegger, Levinas, Michel Henry, and, of course, Jean-Luc Marion[3]. These various retellings and reinterpretations of Descartes' writings show how Cartesian ideas are still relevant and influential in modern philosophy, especially in the phenomenological school.

4.The Neuronal-Mental Cogito of Damasio

The 1990s saw the emergence and growth of embodied approaches to cognition in the cognitive sciences, a trend that is still going strong today. Despite the tremendous efforts of philosophers like Ryle and Dennett, among others, the Cartesian dualism (mind/body) continued to exert its influence on cognitive sciences. However, it was challenged by scientists and philosophers like Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, Eleanor Rosch (1991), Antonio Damasio (1994), and Andy Clark (Zahavi, 2019).

The tremendous advancements made in neuroscience were a noteworthy achievement in the field of cognitive sciences. We now know a great deal more about the workings of the brain than we did twenty years ago. New experimental paradigms have been made possible by methods like brain imaging (functional magnetic resonance imaging, or fMRI). Experimenters frequently try to comprehend the nature of the subject's unique experience in order to properly design experiments and interpret their findings.

Damasio rejects the Cartesian divide between mind and body, asserting the unity of the embodied self. He challenges Descartes' passive, mechanical view of bodily processes, arguing instead that the body actively engages with and even shapes its world. In medicine, adopting this view aims to integrate and work with the

body's internal processes, paying attention to how patients perceive and relate to their bodies. Some question how theoretical knowledge can be effectively applied to real, embodied individuals in a way that produces therapeutic results. From this perspective, physicians should respect an individual's body before implementing any therapeutic procedures. In contrast, the Cartesian approach, which treats medical knowledge as an objective, unambiguous truth, creates the impression that "value-neutral" medical indicators hold more validity than the patient's personal values and experiences (Cosans, 2001).

In his influential work *Descartes' Error* (1994), the Portuguese neuroscientist Antonio Damasio offers a powerful critique of Cartesian philosophy, drawing on insights from neuroscience to challenge Descartes' views on the self and self-awareness. Damasio's exploration centers on the question: How did the father of rationalism go astray? (El-Fahim, 2018).

To support his arguments, Damasio examines the fascinating case of Phineas Gage, a 19th-century American railroad worker who survived a bizarre accident. A metal rod pierced Gage's skull, causing damage to his prefrontal cortex. This case becomes a key example in Damasio's neurological critique of Cartesian dualism. Through this and other neurological evidence, Damasio questions the traditional mind-body separation, advocating for a more integrated understanding of consciousness and cognition.

In his book, Damasio explores the case of Phineas Gage, a 19th-century American railroad worker who experienced a bizarre accident when a metal rod pierced his skull, damaging his anterior frontal lobe. Gage's case serves as a concrete example of the brain's role in shaping personality. The significant changes in Gage's cognitive abilities and behavior are linked to his loss of emotions, which are essential for social adaptation. Damasio uses this case to argue that emotions are foundational to our cognitive and logical processes, directly contradicting Descartes' assertions.

Gage's experience highlights the vital role emotions play in human adaptation to the environment, suggesting that emotions are essential for accurate perception, in stark contrast to Descartes' view of emotions as opposing reason. Additionally, Damasio challenges Descartes' dismissal of the body as merely an extended substance, arguing instead that the body significantly influences our mental representations. Through interaction with the world, the body provides a stable spatial and temporal framework upon which perceptual representations are built.

This perspective upends traditional notions of self-awareness. While Descartes separated the mind and emotions, asserting that the mind operates independently and is immune to external influence, Damasio links them together. He argues that emotions are crucial for rational decision-making, as demonstrated by the impaired cognitive functions and decision-making abilities in individuals with brain damage affecting emotional processing. As a result, Damasio contends that the Cartesian cogito is disconnected from reality, as consciousness is inseparable from the body. While Descartes derived existence from thinking, Damasio reverses this proposition, asserting that our very existence in the world is what enables thought (El-Fahim, 2018).

Damasio's thesis represents a paradigm shift in our understanding of self-awareness, arguing that all philosophical inquiries into consciousness and the self, traditionally considered metaphysical issues, can be addressed and resolved through biology, especially neuroscience. He suggests that consciousness can be

reduced to formal relationships and algorithmic structures, asserting that all cerebral activity is rooted in mechanical biological processes, which he describes in *The Feeling of What Happens* as the biological foundation of the mind. However, one might question whether this reductionist, mechanistic view oversimplifies the fundamental complexity of human subjectivity, self-awareness, and free will.

Consciousness has now become a phenomenon that can be measured, quantified, and analyzed, raising the question: Can neuroscience succeed in decoding this "innate light" as Descartes called it and solve the mystery of human subjectivity? These are, after all, the future goals of neuroscience (El-Fahim, 2018).

Secondly: The Postmodern Cogito

1-The Cogito of Life and Will: "I exist, therefore I think"

Nietzsche's critique of the Cartesian cogito offers an alternative framework for understanding the self, one that radically challenges the idea of a unified, conscious subject. For Nietzsche, the "I" or the unity of sensations and perceptions is simply a grammatical convention, arising from our linguistic tendency to assign an agent to every action. According to Nietzsche, we impose unity and identity onto our psychological states and behaviors. He argues that Descartes' statement "I think, therefore I am" rests on unprovable assumptions: the belief that "I" am the one who thinks, that there must be something that thinks, and that thought is an activity originating from an entity viewed as the cause of it. Nietzsche suggests that Descartes' conviction—that thinking requires a thinking entity—is just a product of the habitual grammatical practice that pairs every verb with a subject, as mentioned by J. Monts (2015). This view represents a complete reversal of the Cartesian cogito, which elevates consciousness or the "I think." In Nietzsche's view, consciousness is not the source of thought, but rather a marginal and illusory entity.

Monts (2015) asserts that Nietzsche's aphorism 276 in "The Gay Science" is explained by Jonas Monte as addressing Descartes' epistemological schema: "I still think and I still have to live because I still have to think." Cogito, ergo sum: sum, ergo cogito. Ironically, Nietzsche uses Descartes' well-known axiom "I think, therefore I am" to support his argument by inverting the logic of that statement. Then, putting his own interpretation ahead of Descartes' assertion, he begins his critique.

Additionally, beyond its use to show the certainty of human existence, Nietzsche's involvement with Descartes' cogito goes beyond its metaphysical foundations. He is particularly interested in Descartes' idea of a subject whose thought seems to be independent of the Will to Power rather than a result of it. A thought "comes" when "it" wills, not when "I" wills, as Jonas clarifies in his examination of Nietzsche's philosophy, casting doubt on the idea that the thinking subject is a necessary condition for cognition. The conclusion of Descartes' argument, however, does not appear to be immediately addressed by this criticism.

In "The Gay Science" and "Beyond Good and Evil," Jonas Monte evaluates Nietzsche's critique of the Cartesian cogito. He starts by examining Nietzsche's criticisms of Descartes' "Meditations on First Philosophy," with a particular emphasis on ideas of reason, consciousness, truth, and self. Because of this interpretation, it is possible to see Nietzsche's inversion—"I exist, therefore I think"—as a forerunner of Descartes' "I think, therefore I am," acknowledging the assumptions that underlie Descartes' conception of the cogito. After assessing Nietzsche's criticisms, Monte discusses whether the Cartesian cogito eventually falls victim to these criticisms.

According to Nietzsche's argument in his seminal book "Beyond Good and Evil," Descartes' cogito is only feasible since it requires the ideas of "I" and "think." Descartes' idea of an "I" that is distinct from "thinking" and endowed with the capacity for self-determination is criticized by Nietzsche. He comes to the conclusion that because Descartes views the "I" as the source of thought, it is self-evident rather than the product of the will to power. As Nietzsche explains in "Daybreak," unlike Descartes' subject, his idea of the "I" is governed by the will to power rather than being a main cause. Furthermore, Descartes appears to take as his starting point the concept of a self-determined "I," a conception that contradicts with Nietzsche's ontology. So, Nietzsche believed that mankind is always subject to the will to power, which is determined by the struggles between various forces in a process of constant change (Monts, 2015).

Nietzsche challenges the idea that there is a thinking entity with a faculty that can cause and control mental states. He argues that the concept of the "self" is a fictional construct, shaped by societal influences like words, concepts, and structures. This fictional "self" is just a surface-level expression of the larger being. As Katsafanas explains, Nietzsche believes that only conscious states have a clear, conceptual structure, while unconscious states lack this and must have some nonconceptual form. Therefore, just because certain unconscious states cannot be clearly conceptualized doesn't mean they don't exist or are subordinate to conscious ones. It also doesn't mean that conscious states alone define the self, independent of unconscious ones. This leads to the conclusion that Descartes' famous "cogito" only captures one part of the self, and it requires a concept to understand it.

This viewpoint is seen in Freud's writings, where he challenges the conventional wisdom that all mental life is conscious and aware. According to Freud, every conscious phenomenon has an unconscious prelude, and the unconscious controls a person's psychic existence. From the Cartesian paradigm, where everything may be questioned except awareness itself, this is a dramatic departure. According to Freud, people are no longer in control of their own thoughts or choices; the unconscious and unaware, which dominate human existence in spite of conscious intentions, reside behind consciousness and awareness, respectively (Freud, S. (n.d.), p.189).

As mentioned by Farah Ali (2023), Ricoeur noted that the self is formed at the instinctual level of being before it is consciously and voluntarily chosen, which is consistent with Freud's concept on the importance of fundamental desire in reformulating the cogito. This emphasis on instinct over will and consciousness suggests that "I exist" is more important than "I think," leading to a less idealistic and more existentially based understanding of the cogito. According to Ricoeur, the philosophical purpose of Freudian theory is to create a separation between the recovery of the concrete reality of the self and the abstract certainty of the cogito. A critique of the false cogito takes place inside this gap, destroying the ego's idols that stand between the "I" and the authentic self.

Indeed, when Freud asserted that consciousness is controlled by the unconscious and Nietzsche argued that the ego is an illusion, its importance started to wane. The critique of the self and the assertion of its decentralization emerged as one of postmodernism's key principles. This can be seen in the work of Jacques Derrida, who introduced what is known as the postmodern cogito with Jacques Lacan. Derrida's argument with Michel Foucault demonstrates how he dismantled the Cartesian cogito.

Regarding the Cartesian cogito, some scholars study the stance taken by postmodern philosophers, especially Derrida and Foucault. In fact, Deconstructing the importance that Descartes' cogito had held in Western philosophical thought was a logical step for Derrida, whose philosophy was essentially opposed to centrism. Michel Foucault's understanding of the Cartesian cogito is intimately related to Derrida's reading of it; "his discussion of Descartes' critique in the book 'Cogito and the History of Madness' is inseparable from the context of Derrida's discussion regarding the Cartesian cogito "(Anwar, 2016).

2 -The Cogito and the Irrational, An Archaeological Critique of the Self:

Foucault's lectures on Descartes at the University of Tunis (1966-1968) provided an opportunity to explore Cartesian philosophy, the discovery of the cogito, and to highlight certain ambiguities in Descartes' works, especially in the *Discourse on Method* and *Meditations*. In these lectures, Foucault took on the role of an interpreter of Descartes' philosophy rather than a critic, as he had been in his earlier work, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. While his Tunisian lectures aimed to present Descartes' philosophy as a groundbreaking approach that led to the discovery of the cogito, God, and the world—marking the end of scholasticism and the beginning of an era of "representation"—Foucault did not address the exclusion of madness in favor of reason. This exclusion reflects the thinking subject's pride and its transcendence over history, the body, power, exile, and prisons. For Foucault, the contrast between reason and madness becomes central to his critique of the Cartesian cogito, which he challenges in favor of a more irrational version of it (Abdullah, (n.d.).

Following the assumptions and orientations of science, philosophy, history, and theology that ultimately lead to Cartesian thought establishing the first truth—the cogito, which Foucault defines as "the rigorous, decisive, and stable foundation" of the sciences—he examines Cartesian thought. Accordingly, Foucault must assert the importance of the cogito, which consists of three interconnected problematics, because the stake of the "Meditations" is fundamental. First, the discovery of the mysterious connection between the soul and body, and the question of the soul or rational psychology in contrast to spiritual eschatology. The second issue is the existence of God or rational theology, which goes beyond scholastic theology grounded in sacred scriptures. Lastly, the world issue, which pits Aristotelian cosmology against rational-physical physics. The cogito as the primary truth is the essential idea that unites several interrelated problems.

More interestingly, Descartes' work exhibits a noticeable oscillation between emphasizing essence over existence and vice versa, according to Foucault. For example, the cogito seems to imply that essence comes before being and that knowledge of thinking comes before existence. Descartes, however, first confirms the presence of the "I" in the *Meditations* before defining its essence as thinking, asserting that it is "necessarily true whenever I express it or conceive it in my mind." This implies that existence comes before essence. By viewing existence as the existence of thought itself, Foucault contends that this text's seeming contradiction can be resolved and that existence is a component of the thinking self. Essence and existence so meet at the center of the "I." For Descartes, existence is based on the self-evidence of thinking, and Foucault argues that the *Meditations* stay true to these metaphysical underpinnings. Cartesian metaphysics is thus described as "idealistic," because it is based on the cogito (Abdullah, (n.d.)).

Based on Sofiane Abdallah's examination of Foucault's position on the Cartesian cogito, Foucault criticizes Descartes' indecisiveness between establishing God as the guarantor of all truth and viewing the cogito, or "I," as the basis of existence. Abdallah points out that the cogito itself and its ontological and cosmological ramifications are included in the "gap" that lies at the heart of the Cartesian question "Who am I?" in the *Meditations*. The ambiguity in the link between the cogito and the evidence for God's existence is this "gap" or insufficiency, which Foucault highlights in his interpretation of Descartes' philosophy. Therefore, the correlation between the discovery of the cogito and the proof of God's existence is a characteristic of Cartesian ontology. As a result, the concept of God as the guardian of our thoughts takes the place of the cogito, which no longer has its essential position as the main fact inside the system of ideas. So, the discovery of the cogito, or first truth, and then God are necessary for the world to exist.

3 -The Cogito between Archaeological Critique and Deconstructive Critique

According to Michel Foucault, the Cartesian cogito confronts the complex link between existence, thinking, and the mystery of the human being rather than leading to an affirmation of existence. Madness, according to Foucault, is the antithesis of reason, and the cogito is a true exclusion and rejection of it: "I who think cannot be mad." NaimaAl-Riahi, (2017) views that this inability to be insane is essential to both the thinking subject and the subject of thought. As stated by Foucault, Descartes used uncertainty to build the cogito—an undeniable truth—as the foundation for reason's absolute power. Madness has always been seen as the "other" or the "antithesis" of logical discourse in contemporary philosophy, ever since Descartes' definition of the cogito.

While Descartes set aside the question of madness in his pursuit of truth and self-understanding, Foucault made it central to his philosophical investigation in his doctoral thesis, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. For Foucault, the self is no longer seen as separate from madness but is instead shaped within the context of power structures like exile, prison, and the clinic. The subject is no longer viewed as sovereign, centered in the world, and capable of clearly understanding things, as Descartes imagined. Indeed, human practices seem far removed from the idea of self-evidence. Unlike Descartes, Foucault does not aim to uncover self-evident truths; instead, he calls for their deconstruction, particularly challenging the "self-evidence of the prison." So, this shift marks a significant change in how we understand the relationship between rationality, madness, and the formation of the self, offering a challenge to Descartes' notion of a unified, rational subject.

Furthermore, Riahi (2017) clarifies that we must take into account Foucault's particular interaction with Descartes in two crucial circumstances if we want to investigate the relationship between the two thinkers or the Foucauldian interpretation of Cartesian philosophy. First, Foucault discussed Descartes in the second chapter of the first section of his groundbreaking book "Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason." Second, when Foucault examined the episteme of representation as a classical episteme—which he defined as the episteme of Cartesian modernity—he focused especially on Descartes. Foucault argues that this episteme is essentially based on the idea of the mathematical and artistic tableau, which reflects the methodical, ordered character of Cartesian thought and its impact on the epistemological framework of the classical age.

According to Riahi (2017), the status of the rational subject in philosophy, the worth of the truths it establishes, and the significance of history as a place for all cognitive and non-cognitive actions are the main topics of the two philosophers' interaction. These are the several ways that Foucault pierced Descartes' thinking in order to critique it and show how flimsy and inconsistent it was.

"Cogito and the History of Madness" was written by Jacques Derrida in order to discuss the cogito with Foucault. The center is sought after by Derrida in Foucault's "Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason." While the Cartesian cogito asserts that "I think, therefore I am," and Foucault's cogito asserts that "As long as I think, I cannot be mad," Derrida argues that "madness in all its meanings is just one state of thought, and whether I am mad or not, the cogito remains (Derrida, 1988, pp. 65-75).

Whereas the Cartesian cogito gives itself the quality of infinity as an alternative to theology, Derrida believes that "the absolute discourse of Descartes has ended its reign, and at this moment we must say something different and do different work." The subject affirms itself and attains itself as a present truth, and the presence of the object becomes derived from the presence of the subject. Other than transcending the self's reality and presence, the subject does not affirm the object, its existence, or its significance.

In the context of Foucault's archaeological method, it is evident that the Cartesian cogito signifies a historical period in which reason and madness were violently separated. However, it is clear that the Cartesian cogito reflects a moment in which the self ascends to a central, sacred position if we are to describe it in the context of Derrida's deconstructive technique. Thus, it is a time when the cogito, the basis of certainty and truth, is centralized and dominated. Derrida showed that the cogito cannot be regarded as the foundation for truth and certainty since it lacks a definitive presence (Faraq, (n.d.), p. 91, as cited in Anwar, 1968, p. 556).

4-The Cogito between "I Think" and "I Exist"

Based on the linguistic turn that has influenced modern philosophy, the contrast between Descartes' famous claim that "I think, therefore I am" and Jacques Lacan's claim that "I think where I am not, and I am where I do not think" clarifies the deconstruction of the Cartesian cogito in favor of diversity and difference. From the standpoint of pure reflecting presence, the Cartesian cogito approaches thought. The forms of existence proposed by Descartes when his "I" thinks in an absolute way are evacuated by Lacan's conception of the lack of existence in thinking ("I think where I am not..."). On the other hand, the Lacanian "I"'s existence is emptied out by the Cartesian concept of plenitude ("I think..."). This conflict highlights Cartesian rationalism's shortcomings in light of Lacanian psychoanalysis's understanding of the complexity of human existence.

According to Sami Abdel-Aal (2021), the problematic character of these two claims arises from the marginalization of language in Descartes' thinking relative to abstract cognition and its recession in the face of the existence of the ego in the world. Descartes came to assert the pure existence of thinking as a result of this marginalization. But according to Jacques Derrida, the economy of imagination, story, rhetoric, and philosophy of language are inextricably related to abstraction and pure thought because any expression of them invariably involves these elements. On the other hand, considering the importance of language in Lacanian theory, his claim explains how language is established inside thought as opposed to outside of it (p. 2193).

Moreover, Descartes' key problem is his conviction that the ego is impervious to hesitancy and doubt as long as other topics converse and challenge his own stance. According to Lacan, this is completely untrue

because being cognizant of opposing viewpoints is a fundamental aspect of one's constitution, exposing the unconscious that speaks for him in his innermost ideas. Therefore, the ego is always the Other rather than the first-person pronoun or the presence that exists within the human. The ego is made up of entangled, braided, and interwoven threads of life's unconscious and consciousness, which all manifest as a system known as language (Abdel-Aal, 2021, p. 2193 ; Mladen, 1998, p. 14).

Even though it did not mean to challenge the Cartesian cogito, the discovery of the unconscious was directly directed at it since it shows that the ego's self-evident presence is absent. Additionally, it questions the idea of transparent subjectivity, which is the cornerstone of many contemporary ideologies. As a result, even if they work in separate directions, it seems that the analysis of the unconscious and the analysis of the ego both challenge the concept of the cogito itself.

The aforementioned suggests that although Descartes' ego is pure in and of itself, there is no Lacanian ego in the same sense that there is a subject. The topic moves from the personal sphere to the group "we." The Lacanian subject is open, signifying the unrestricted space for the Other within all of us, whereas the Cartesian ego is an essence folded onto itself. According to Lacan's view, the unconscious is not the same as Descartes' awareness because the former encompasses the latter, which is unable to hide or lessen it.

As stated by Abdel-Aal, Lacan's cogito reinterprets Descartes' cogito, upending its fundamental presumptions in both its theory of language and its semantic structure. Both Descartes' and Lacan's writings present the meaning of existence with fresh implications. Lacan, aware of the suppressed and repressed parts of thinking, presented it in terms of non-existence, while Descartes believed its meaning to be consistent with the contents of mind during self-reflection. Lacan permitted language to open itself to the Other, refine its sedimentation, and purify its space. The ego could not have accepted the openness of freedom, democracy, liberalism, and emancipation from all forms of hegemony and centrality without the Other, which Descartes condemned. Moreover, The Western subject, which had historically been defined by the heritage of the Cartesian cogito, was effectively being mobilized by Lacan (Abdel Aal, 2021, p. 2270).

5-The Post-Digital Cogito

1-Zajdovar (2019), a French scholar, uses portraiture to trace the development of the idea of self and subjectivity, emphasizing the human face as a mirror of the soul and self. She traces the development of subjectivity from traditional portraiture to digital selfies and, eventually, to AI-generated images and avatars, and links this artistic progression to the rise of the cogito. So, Godard's analysis illuminates the intricate relationship between visual representation and the philosophical understanding of selfhood, demonstrating how technological advancements in image-making have paralleled and influenced our conceptualization of identity and self-expression.

Sara El-Ghobashi (n.d.) notes that the European Renaissance represents a pivotal period in the history of portraiture, often seen as its golden age. However, it was during the time of Leonardo da Vinci, particularly with his exploration of the human psyche in the *Mona Lisa*, that portraiture began to intertwine with the modern concept of selfhood. This shift transformed portraiture from a simple representation of physical features into a deeper exploration of the complexities of the self. As Sarah El-Ghobashi (n.d.) argues, portraiture became a revolutionary practice in modernity, closely linked to the broader cultural movement of liberation from

religious authority. This shift in focus moved from the religious realm to a more humanistic perspective. Philosophically, this change is echoed in Descartes' development of the "cogito," which further influenced ideas of individualism. El-Ghobashi (n.d.) also observes that the concept of the "individualistic self" has undergone multiple transformations, with each new version of the self reflecting the values and ideas of its time. This ongoing evolution highlights the importance of examining how these shifts have shaped the ways in which we depict and understand our own identities, especially in light of contemporary advancements in technology that allow for new forms of self-imaging.

2-Despite researchers' attention on the digital cogito, the digital revolution has limited the existence of the modern self within the framework of the image, especially the selfie. Technically speaking, shooting a selfie is straightforward, and its main requirement is endless repetition: taking a picture of oneself at anytime and anywhere in order to save special moments. Indeed, the idea that stopping to take self-portraits indicates vanishing or, at the very least, raises questions about one's existence is what gives it its significance and quick spread. As a result, the dread of digital "cancellation" and metaphorical extinction turns into an obsession that compels people to "share" numerous selfies of themselves. This sharing, however, strangely suggests self-forgetting rather than self-remembering, as El-Ghobashi(n.d.) confirms. Existence is now verified by other people's interactions and "likes" on the network rather than by reasoning or reasoning. As opposed to Descartes' period, the self is no longer an ontological center, leading to a new cogito that Godard refers to as "I selfie, therefore I am."

According to Zajdovar (2019), the selfie serves as a tool for generating isolation through distorted self-representations, despite its outward appearance as a tool for artistic and aesthetic expression. Self-portraiture has historically been used as a way to take pleasure in one's appearance. On the other hand, modern people are at risk of "ghosting" and digital moral destruction. According to Godard, if people are excluded from talks and aren't acknowledged with likes and encouraging remarks, they won't have much left in a world they're afraid of. The unstable character of identity and existence in the contemporary, interconnected world is highlighted by this analysis, which emphasizes the significant shift in self-representation and validation from traditional portraiture to the digital sphere.

3- However, the selfie is not the ultimate culmination of this trend, as more contemporary phenomena, such as avatar images and AI-generated portraits, have since emerged. In this current phase, individuals often fail to recognize the underlying motivations for transforming their physical features into these unconventional images. They also do not critically consider the implications of providing vast amounts of personal data to these technologies, nor do they reflect on whether this process undermines their own humanity or that of others. As a matter of fact, El-Ghobashi(n.d.) suggests that by revisiting the "cogito," we can observe that the mind has shifted from being a central intellectual faculty to simply functioning as a tool for achieving specific goals. She raises an important question: Since the face has traditionally been the primary medium through which dialogue occurs between the Self and the Other, can effective communication still occur in an era dominated by avatars and AI-generated identities?

The observation of the Other's face, recreated via selfies, avatars, and artificial intelligence, arouses a strange fear and anxiety because it is inconsistent with its digital embodiment, and because of the resulting

ramifications. This intensifies the confusion of our perception: Is it hyperreal or illusory? Are we similar or different from one another? Is it misleading or does it fit my mental picture?(El-Ghobashi(n.d.)

Although the Cartesian cogito is based on liberation from everyday beliefs, assumptions, and common judgments, the digital revolution has not freed the mind and "thinking self" from emotional representations and judgments linked to pre-packaged content and various communicative states, such as intimate fantasies and desires.

From this viewpoint, the Cartesian *cogito* has evolved from a real, subjective, and cognitive existence into a virtual one, particularly evident in self-referential forms of imagery like selfies, self-presentation photos, and live videos that capture individuals' engagement with various subjects. This transformation signifies a broadening of the self, suggesting freedom from traditional limitations and a transcendence of existential, cognitive, and ethical boundaries. As Elsa Godard discusses in her book *I Selfie, Therefore I Am*, the self has shifted from possessing self-awareness to becoming acutely aware of others. No longer rooted in essence or deriving value from itself, the self now gains meaning from the extent of its "consumption" as an image. In this framework, the selfie emerges as an inevitable and fixed element in the virtual world, confining the self to the superficiality of a screen. This shift fundamentally alters the interpretation of Descartes' famous dictum "I think, therefore I am," replacing it with a new axiom: "I see, I am seen, therefore I am." In this context, existence becomes contingent upon being visible and engaged in continuous acts of self-production, expression, and communication, all aimed at receiving recognition from others. The core challenge lies in the dominance of visual representation: to exist in today's world, one must be embodied through images that are produced rapidly and circulated widely. (Shawoush & Hadouth, 2022).

Furthermore, in her talk on selfies, Elsa Godart claims that people who take a lot of pictures of themselves and post them on social media are narcissistic and have serious psychological problems. According to her, these quick self-representations are just a new mask, based on the expenditure of energy on conspicuous presence and boastfulness, separated from sound and deliberate sensory awareness. Moreover, Godart argues that this phenomenon is an example of self-beauty delusion, which is based on the instantaneous and narcissistic exaggeration of the apparent self and its deification through exaggerated emotional expression modality (Shawoush & Hadouth, 2022).

The Cartesian cogito's strength and Morpheus's current resuscitation of it are rooted in both its absolute subjectivity and its mathematical form and simplicity. Given that history has advanced to the cybernetic stage, where words have separated from the body and all bodies are on the verge of becoming words, Karim El-Sayyad (2021) observes that it partially symbolizes a retreat from the outside world to the self. Our ideas of the mind, body, creativity, memory, history, human freedom, and nature are all profoundly impacted by this, which is tangibly demonstrated in the transfer of brain data to data transfer chips and storage.

According to El-Sayyad (2021), the cogito has been revived in the virtual world, but it is being revived for a different reason than Descartes intended. Descartes sought to move the world by locating the Archimedean point. However, El-Sayyad (2021) argues that the cybernetic cogito does not aim to show the reality of the world; rather, it merely helps to demonstrate the existence of individual consciousness. Since Bostrom's arguments also depend on admitting the presence of the self for the thought that doubts the reality of

everything, the Cartesian cogito in the context of the digital world can be seen as a principle for dismantling the reality of reality(p. 50).

Indeed, Bostrom has made a strong case that challenges the veracity of our existence. But, as El-Sayyad (2021) notes, this same logic may be used to dismantle the very mind whose existence is established by the Cartesian cogito, which forms the basis of Bostrom's argument. Bostrom's theory, according to El-Sayyad(2021), ignores the notion that the consciousness that is fully aware of a simulated digital environment might be a digital consciousness that exists inside a digital reality. This assumption gives rise to the theory that we could all be one mind, or a group of mindless digital minds. This argument essentially erodes the Cartesian cogito principle, which technology had the potential to overcome but philosophy had failed to do so(p. 50).

Thirdly: Post-European Cogito

1- The African Cogito in Search of Ubuntu

When Descartes introduced the *cogito*, the self that recognizes itself through thought, it represented a subjectivity confined to the rational, conscious European self. As a result, non-European identities were marginalized and excluded, portrayed as being closer to nature and sensation, and distant from reason, thought, and historical development. Africa was considered to be more aligned with nature, while China and India were seen as detached from history. Thus, the Cartesian *cogito* reflected a specifically French, European, and Western notion of the "I," embodying Western subjectivity and selfhood, while excluding Eastern, African, and Arab perspectives. Additionally, as scholars have reexamined cultural mindsets, critiqued the archaeology of Western centrality, and rejected its Eurocentric view of others, the notion of alternative subjectivities and multiple identities has gained prominence, revealing a non-Western *cogito*. This has brought to light various Eastern, African, and Arab *cogitos* that were once disregarded by Descartes and other Western philosophers, and dismissed by Hegel as outside the realm of history. Today, we stand at a pivotal moment, one that demands a new philosophy of history—one that embraces an alternative *cogito*, and more importantly, multiple *cogitos*. In particular, the Eastern, Arab, and African *cogitos* are of significant interest, as they form part of a shared and interconnected world.

Indeed, the discussion of the African cogito has its origins among a number of African philosophers dating back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it is neither a new phenomenon nor a byproduct of postmodernism. There are, of course, several cogitos in the East, the Arab world, and Latin America; the closest cogitos are in Africa and the East. Some people define the African cogito as the quest for a sense of self-belonging to this region of the world, beginning with the "I think" to ask some ancient questions in light of modern circumstances or to generate new ones motivated by the state of affairs in Africa. (Wakidi, 2006).

The unique essence of the African *cogito*, in contrast to the Cartesian *cogito*, can be explored through a comparison with the African concept of "Ubuntu." So, to fully grasp Ubuntu, one of the most profound African philosophical ideas, it is essential to delve into various myths, stories, folk proverbs, and traditional African beliefs. However, a simple anecdote from a European anthropologist working in southern Africa can offer an initial illustration. In fact, the anthropologist observed a group of children playing in basic huts and, curious about their behavior, proposed a race with a basket of apples as the prize for the winner. To the anthropologist's surprise, the children lined up together, approached the basket hand in hand, and then sat down to share the

apples. When the anthropologist suggested that one of them could have claimed the entire prize by outrunning the others, the children responded with a single word: "Ubuntu," which translates to "I am because we are." This expression reflects the idea that one's identity is inherently connected to others (Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu), Kamal, 2019, p. 112), underscoring a profound distinction between the individualistic Cartesian view and the collective, communal African worldview with its origins in African humanist philosophy, "Ubuntu" sheds light on the idea of community presence within the collective self, which is summed up in the saying "We are, therefore I am." This emphasizes a shared life by implying that one's existence is closely linked to that of others. Because the portion and the whole are intertwined in the oneness of being, which is necessary for the continuation of existence, existence itself becomes a condition for existence, and the exclusion of any existence is equivalent to the exclusion of all existence.

In contrast to Descartes' individualistic cogito, which he refers to as the cogito of the isolated person, Steve Biko clarifies what Ubuntu means. According to him, the idea of a solitary human being is a contradiction in terms and is incompatible with Ubuntu. According to Biko, this word's resonance in his consciousness as a human recognizes our interdependence and our duty to one another, which extends to all other living things. Steve Biko came to believe that Descartes made a profound philosophical shift some hundred years ago from which Western philosophy has not yet fully recovered as a result of his grasp of Ubuntu (Song, (n.d.)).

In Ubuntu thought, the division between "self" and "other," which is regarded as basic in Western philosophy, is less obvious. In "African Religions and Philosophy" (1975), Kenyan philosopher John Mbiti stated: "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am." According to Abeba Birhana (n.d.), the idea of a changeable and unclear self might be unsettling. René Descartes, who proposed in the 17th century that people were basically self-sufficient, is largely responsible for this unease. The challenge is whether these African and Cartesian views on selfhood—the independent, internal view of the Cogito and the relational version adopted by the Ubuntu world—can be reconciled. Thus, the solution is communication; we need other people to assess our life and create a logical self-image.

According to Abeba Birhana (n.d.), dialogical theories of the self are now being taken seriously by new disciplines of embodied and active cognition. Indeed, the Zulu term "Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" states that "a person is a person through other persons," despite scientific psychology's tendency to embrace Cartesian individualistic notions that break the bond between self and others. This assertion is thought to be much deeper and more profound than Descartes' "I think, therefore I am."

Additionally, in accordance to this notion, to exist is to be in communion with other people. In Zulu, "Umuntu ngabantu" means "a person is a person through other people," which reflects the same idea. Theoretical and philosophical concepts are thus developed from collective activities and thought. So, in African philosophy and theology, the concepts of solidarity, togetherness, harmony, hospitality, respect, responsiveness, care, humanity, compassion, openness, self-confidence, reciprocity, generosity, collective wisdom, cooperation, and community are all prevalent. In African proverbs that stress collectivity, ubuntu is prominent, as seen by the following examples:

1. When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion (Amharic - Ethiopia).
2. Hands wash each other (Akan, Runyankore - Uganda; Zulu - South Africa).

3. Two eyes are better than one (Haya - Tanzania).
4. Two fingernails kill a louse (Luo - Kenya).
5. Teeth that work together break the bone (Rukiga Runyankore).
6. One child does not prevent birds from reaching the garden (Rukiga Runyankore).
7. The person who refuses advice sails in hearts of clay(The Routledge Handbook of African Theology).

These proverbs underscore the importance of collective effort, mutual support, and communal wisdom in African thought, contrasting with the individualistic emphasis of Cartesian philosophy.

Indeed, the African *cogito*, which encompasses both linguistic and rational aspects, has its origins in the works of several African philosophers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who engaged with the concept of thought and self-awareness. A key figure in this tradition is the Ghanaian philosopher Zera Yacob (1599-1692), born in Axum. Yacob's education took place across various schools, where he studied for several years, eventually dedicating ten years to Bible study alongside Catholic, Coptic, and Orthodox teachings. His rational philosophy is most clearly expressed in his influential work *Hatata* (Investigation), written in 1667 at the request of his student Walda Heywat. In this text, Yacob critiques his contemporaries not only for their lack of independent reasoning but also for their reliance on fortune-tellers and astrologers. Accordingly, he promotes rational thinking, arguing that all humans are born with equal intelligence and intrinsic value—an idea that echoes Descartes' claim that "good sense is the most evenly distributed thing in the world." While both philosophers grapple with similar themes, Yacob's perspective diverges from Descartes', particularly in the latter's condemnation of infidels and atheists as more arrogant than the learned, as seen in *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Yacob, by contrast, adopts a more secular and agnostic stance, positioning himself differently within the broader philosophical tradition (Nsrou, 2018).

In an effort to put these principles into reality, Yacob included a number of social equality and women's rights-related subjects into his philosophical reasoning. He proposed marriage to Hirut, a humble servant who worked for a wealthy family, after abandoning his existence in the desert and caves. Yacob was able to convince her master that an uneducated woman and an educated man could not be equals in a marriage. Yacob quickly told Hirut that she was no longer a servant but rather a life partner after she joyfully accepted the marriage proposal, claiming that men and women are equal in marriage. In this sense, Yacob seems more progressive than his peers, especially when it comes to slavery. (Nsrou, 2018).

The African *cogito* is further developed and affirmed in the work of Anton Wilhelm Amo, an Enlightenment philosopher who lived in Germany during the same period as Kant and made notable philosophical contributions that challenge many of the assumptions we hold about Kant and the nature of German philosophy. Amo's advocacy for equality, human rights, and enlightenment extended beyond the confines of Western humanity, exemplified by his first thesis on the rights of Africans in Europe, which argued that, according to Roman law, Africans were entitled to equality (Wiredu, 2004, pp. 200-206). Amo's philosophical critique of Descartes, particularly his rejection of Cartesian dualism and the mind-body relationship, is articulated in his second thesis on *apathia*—the inactivity or passivity of the human mind. This critique has sparked renewed conversations about the role of African philosophers, not only within the context of African philosophy but also in the broader history of philosophy itself.

2-Anton Wilhelm Amo's Critique of Descartes' Philosophy of Mind

In the early 1700s, Ghanaian philosopher Anton Wilhelm Amo was taken from his hometown of Axim, Ghana, to Holland when he was around three years old. He was sponsored by a German prince. Amo pursued studies in history, law, medicine, physiology, and philosophy. After graduating, he became a philosophy professor and wrote a number of books, such as "The Rights of Africans in Europe." "On the Impassivity of the Human Mind," his main philosophical premise, offered a thorough critique of Descartes.

According to Amo(1968), the body serves as both a medium and an instrument for the human mind, which is an immaterial essence that "resides" in the body as its subject. Ideas are "the instantaneous action of our mind, through which it represents things to itself." This makes it an embodied spirit, as opposed to disembodied spirits that have knowledge through ideas. So, their conceptions of mind-body interaction represent the main area of disagreement between Amo and Descartes. Furthermore, Descartes recognizes the reciprocal connections between physiological and mental processes. Explaining how an immaterial substance might interact with a material substance in a bilateral or even unilateral manner presents a hurdle. The question of how material existence may be dependent on the non-substantial in any manner is raised by this.

Another perspective on the totally passive nature of "sensation" and the exclusively active nature of the intellect is offered by Amo's argument. Amo believes that a material entity has an impact on the mind (spirit), as is clear from several quotes. It is passive to be impacted in this way. He argues that the mind cannot be claimed to sense since no spiritual being can be embodied in the human form and no spiritual entity can be linked to a material body. A large portion of Western metaphysics revolves around this conceptual problem. Nonetheless, some conclusions about the philosophy of mind can be drawn, especially in light of Akan language and ideas.

Additionally, Kwasi Wiredu's inquiry explores Amo's role in shaping an African *cogito* by questioning why Amo so strongly opposed attributing sensations to the mind, even though he accepted the core principles of dualism in the philosophy of mind. He also raises the possibility that Amo's consciousness may have been influenced by the Akan concept of mind, a framework rooted in the language and thought of the Akan people, among whom Amo was born and initially raised before moving to Europe in early childhood. In fact, the Akan worldview, as understood through their language and societal beliefs, separates sensation from the mind; the mind is regarded as intellectual rather than sensory. The question is not whether the Akan concept is right or wrong, but whether it played a role in shaping Amo's theory of *apatheia*, the passivity of the mind. Moreover, Wiredu acknowledges that Amo was deeply influenced by the dualistic philosophy prevalent in his time and environment. As both an African and a philosopher, Amo's critique of Descartes sets the stage for broader discussions on the African *cogito* and the concept of Ubuntu (2004, pp. 200-203).

3-The African Cogito Dialectic between Africanity and Universality

Marcel Mukadi (2022) offers four important observations regarding the cogito: First, Descartes claims certainty only of his own existence, and solely from the standpoint of the speaking subject-he does not establish the existence of other minds. According to Mucadi, this existential claim stands in marked contrast to the African way of thinking, as expressed in the maxim *Sumus ergo sum* ("We are, therefore I am"). Second, indeed, Descartes does not assert that his existence is necessary; rather, he maintains that if he thinks, then he

necessarily exists. Third, his argument is intended as a form of methodological doubt, which is fundamentally different from the skepticism of the ancient philosophers. Fourth, and finally, the proposition "I think, therefore I am" is considered true not by means of deduction or empirical induction, but rather on account of its clarity and self-evidence. Descartes did not use this initial certainty—the cogito—as a foundation upon which to construct further knowledge, but rather as a firm ground on which he could rely while seeking to recover his beliefs.

As reported by Marcel Mukadi, in 1994, Archbishop Kpakala said in Rome that the African concept of "Cogito ergo sum" had changed to "We are, therefore I am." The essence of African mind is encapsulated in this cogito. The same idea is clarified by the well-known Kenyan scholar John Mbiti in his writings, especially in his book "African Religions and Philosophy," where he states: "A person can only become aware of his or her own identity, obligations, privileges, and responsibilities toward both others and oneself in terms of other people. "I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am," he can say. "Introduction to African Religion and Philosophy" by Mbiti further highlights that: "This is a cardinal element in the comprehension of the African view of man." (Michael. K. F. 1981.)

Indeed, African individuals are intrinsically "present with others" by nature. This concept suggests that, from birth, they are immersed in a cultural understanding—shaped through proverbs and sayings—that a person is powerless without community and social interaction. African proverbs such as "MTU ni Watu" (a person is people) and "Kidole kimoja hakivunji chawa" (a single finger cannot pick up an insect) illustrate this collective ethos, underscoring the importance of social interconnectedness. These expressions highlight that the family is the primary space for human education and formation, and that individual existence, outside of a societal framework, is essentially meaningless. Thus, life itself is inseparable from social engagement; to live fully is to be "with another." When this connection is broken, the individual loses their integrity, energy, and vitality (Mukadi, 2022, pp. 1272-1277).

Mukadi (2022) presents a significant shift in formulating an African cogito on a universal scale, offering three additional observations on John Mbiti and, by extension, on Archbishop Kabakala:

First, the African principle is not rooted in epistemology but rather in anthropology and existentialism. It is based on collectivity, belonging, and coexistence with others. African solidarity stands in stark contrast to Western individualism and relativism. This solidarity perspective sees the world as an interconnected network, where Africa has valuable contributions to make to the global community. In an increasingly globalized world, our shared humanity unites us. The African concept of Ubuntu reflects the idea that one cannot exist as a human being in isolation; humanity requires connection with others. Too often, we view ourselves as isolated individuals, but in reality, our actions affect all of humanity. Africa's holistic values, emphasizing interconnectedness, should be shared with the world, which has become a global village. The African *cogito* is collective, ethical, and communicative, focusing not on the individual "I" but on the collective "we," which fosters solidarity and compassion, offering a stark contrast to the individualistic *cogito* that centers only on self-perception.

Secondly, the principle of collectivity also serves as a reminder of its potential dangers when applied within African societies. This is illustrated by the saying, "Blood is thicker than water" (*Damu ni nzito kuliko maji*), which reflects the complexities and sometimes exclusionary nature of familial and communal bonds.

Thirdly, within this framework, the role of the "I" appears to be destabilized, existing only in the shadow of the "we." The principle of *Sum ergo sumus*—derived from the original African principle *Sumus ergo sum*—raises a compelling question: Is *Sum ergo sumus* possible in Africa? This challenges us to reconsider the balance between individual and collective existence within African philosophy.

Mukadi (2022) explains how Archbishop Kabakala's African proclamation can be regarded and understood as follows: Kabakala was a gifted communicator who knew how to interact with his audience when he used the expression "Cogito ergo sum." Every participant understood what he meant. After reading Kabakala's statement, the question gets even more confusing: "What makes a person exist?" The collective "we" or being with (others) is Kabakala's personal reaction, whereas Descartes' answer is the thinking "I," according to Kabakala. According to Mukadi, "Sumus ergo sum," which translates to "We are, therefore I am," is a basic tone and piece of evidence in our anthropological philosophy. As a result, He challenges the viability of "Sum ergo sumus" in Africa.

"When can one say 'I exist'?" is the central question in Africa. Being a thinking being is only possible when one is in peace with society. The "I" has a meaning limited to this totality as Kabakala seems to validate this idea of belonging: "We exist because I exist, therefore we exist." Given this, it appears that Kabakala wants to highlight the statement's existential significance rather than set the West against Africa or Africa against the West. This is due to the fact that, from an existential perspective, Descartes is not interested in other people's existence, even though he is interested in his own because he thinks (Mukadi, 2022).

We respect the African collectivist concept, but there is still a pressing need to give the African "I" more room in society. Establishing a space for teaching the African "I" to be confident is crucial. Mukadi's unique knowledge and interpretation of the African cogito is evident here, as he highlights that the collectivist concept shouldn't be the justification for hiding the "I." Thus, emancipation from society and freedom for society are very different; being free from being part of society is not the same as being free for society. It is not enough to say that one lives in society like an inert stone or that one exists because one can (Mukadi, 2022).

Mukadi (2022) goes on to say that Africa must wake up from its sleep, which prevents people from thinking "I." "A person exists because of the existence of others, not in isolation. They must so fulfill their job in the context of life's interconnectivity. The African "I" that has been hidden must become a conscious, thinking being. By acknowledging that they are a living, thinking entity, one can demonstrate their existence. Accordingly, the wellbeing of the society in which one's identity develops must be taken into account in order to justify the fact that one lives and thinks.

However, Descartes' cogito (I think, therefore I am) is transformed into "I exist because we exist" (*sumus ergo sum*). In my view, I tried to show that this statement is confusing because, on the one hand, it can result in a particular denial of African epistemology. On the other hand, Kabakala's perspective looked at the individual principle, which is founded on an existence that, in practice, pays attention to one's own existence by thinking without regard or concern for others (Mukadi, 2022).

Additionally, Mukadi (2022) makes a distinction between the African and Western Cartesian cogitos, highlighting the necessity for Ubuntu in Africa as opposed to personal ego. However, Kabakala's definition of the cogito—which is regarded as a collective African cogito—offers us a humanistic reading and interpretation that is universal rather than just collectively African. It unites the local and the global, paving the way for human existence as a whole.

This suggests that people have to face the divisions and inconsistencies between the private and the public, the I and the we, the universal and the local, and the individual and society. Furthermore, Mukadi(2022) put out this socio-epistemological stance, which can be defined as follows: Think locally and act worldwide, or think locally and act globally. Every genuine thought has social ramifications. Mukadi(2022) consequently proposes that Kabakala's phrase be changed to: "The Westerners' cogito is insufficient for us Africans; it must be Sumus ergo sum (We are, therefore I am)." In order for Sumus ergo sumus and Sumus ergo sumus to eventually become a reality for Africa.

Moreover, Benezet Bujo engages comprehensively with the concept of African ethics and how it differs from Western ethics. In a satirical response to the Cartesian cogito, Bujo formulates the phrase "I am related, therefore we are," to highlight the distinctiveness of African anthropology and to emphasize an ethical framework rooted in social integration and communal influence. In fact, this idea is closely linked to the widely recognized concept of Ubuntu: "I am because we are." According to this perspective, a person becomes truly human only in relationship with the lives of others (Nel, 2008, p. 41). Bujo also challenges Tempels' notion of "vital force," arguing that it may carry overly individualistic connotations, and maintains that vital force should be seen as the result and aim of moral behavior, not its foundation. At the same time, he recognizes the importance of not adopting a form of collectivism as the sole principle of African ethics. The maxim "I am related, therefore we are" serves to protect the individual from being subsumed by a purely communal morality, ensuring that the individual remains an integral part of the ethical structure rather than merely subject to it (Nel, 2008, p. 41). Hence, this approach underscores the African ethical emphasis on community and mutual interdependence, while also safeguarding the value and agency of the individual within the collective. So, the result is a nuanced moral vision that stands in contrast to the more individual-centered framework of Western ethics and the Cartesian tradition (Nel, 2008, p. 41).

Fourthly: The post-colonial cogito

Both the sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel and Enrique Dussel are credited with developing the post-colonial concept. The former was inspired by Dussel's critique of Cartesian philosophy and his global historical work about the protracted 16th-century occupation of the Americas, which resulted in knowledge structures founded on epistemic sexism and racism. Indeed, Dussel talks about how racism and sexism came to be in the modern world and how they relate to the long-term evolution of contemporary knowledge structures(Grosfoguel, (n.d.).

Given the profound impact of the Cartesian tradition on Western knowledge frameworks, Dussel's inquiry begins by examining Cartesian philosophy, then moves on to the occupation of El-Andalus, followed by an analysis of the colonization of the Americas and its consequences for indigenous

Muslim and Jewish populations in 16th-century Spain, as well as the Africans who were forcibly taken from their homeland and enslaved in the Americas. The fourth focus addresses the human and epistemic genocide faced by Indo-European women, who were burned alive by the Christian church on charges of witchcraft. The fifth and final axis explores Enrique Dussel's "Transmodernity" project, which aims to end the colonization of Westernized knowledge systems within the non-Western world. Therefore, what Grosfoguel and Enrique Dussel present is often referred to as the post-colonial *cogito*(Grosfoguel, (n.d.).

The condition of possibility for the Cartesian proposition "I think, therefore I am" from the middle of the 17th century, according to Dussel, is based on 150 years of using the idea "I conquer, therefore I am," which was historically mediated by the human and epistemic genocide represented in the statement "I exterminate, therefore I am." In socio-historical terms, "I exterminate" acts as a structural mediator between "I think" and "I conquer." This feature of Descartes' *cogito* has gone unnoticed from the time we first encountered it, some 150 years ago, until now, but it is clearly evident in other African and Latin American cultures(Grosfoguel, (n.d.).

Accordingly, it is compelling to view Cartesian philosophy as central to the foundation of knowledge structures in Westernized universities, built upon the assumption that modern philosophy began with René Descartes. His statement, "I think, therefore I am," established a novel basis for knowledge that challenged the epistemological authority of the Christian worldview, which had dominated since the Roman Empire. As a result, the new epistemological framework introduced by Cartesian philosophy shifted the source of knowledge from the Christian deity to the "*cogito*." Although Descartes never explicitly defined the "*cogito*," it is clear in his philosophy that this concept replaces God as the new cornerstone of knowledge, taking on anthropomorphic traits associated with the Christian God. In Descartes' view, the "*cogito*" is capable of generating genuine knowledge that is timeless, universal, unbound by particularities, and objective—attributes that align it with the neutrality and divine knowledge of the Christian deity. Moreover, Grosfoguel discusses how the Cartesian *cogito* became the dominant epistemological argument in the West, not only shaping knowledge but also asserting existential dominance, evolving into a singular, governing authority that dismisses the Other. In this way, it represents not just subjectivity but solipsism(Grosfoguel, (n.d.)).

In reference to the second (epistemological) argument, Descartes asserts that the solipsistic technique is the only way the "*cogito*" may produce knowledge with certainty. How can the "*cogito*" overcome doubt and achieve certainty in the creation of knowledge? According to Descartes, this can be achieved by having the subject speak to itself internally. One can ask questions and then respond to them in this way until they are certain of their knowledge. What might happen, though, if people created knowledge through conversation—that is, through social interactions with other people? Descartes' assertion that the "*cogito*" may generate assurance in knowing apart from social

relationships with other people would be the main effect. In the absence of the epistemological notion of the self, the "cogito" would only exist in particular historical and social circumstances and social interactions. In the absence of the epistemological notion of the self, the "cogito" would only exist in particular historical and social circumstances and social interactions (Grosfoguel, (n.d.)).

Additionally, Dussel addresses these inquiries by arguing that Descartes' *cogito*—"I think, therefore I am"—was preceded by a more foundational statement: "I conquer, therefore I am." This latter declaration, according to Dussel, serves as the necessary precondition for Descartes' philosophical proposition. The audacious and idolatrous claim in Cartesian philosophy, which asserts that the mind produces knowledge on par with divine knowledge, originates from the perspective of an individual who sees himself as the center of the world, a position attained through prior conquest. This individual, Dussel argues, is the Imperial Being. Grosfoguel supports this idea, contending that the "I conquer" statement, which emerged with European colonial expansion in 1492, forms the basis for the "I think" statement. In this way, the conquest of the world allowed for the secularization of attributes once ascribed to the Christian God, replacing God as the foundational source of knowledge. Thus, following their global conquests, European men began to see themselves as possessing a "likeness" to God in their traits, granting them epistemic privilege (Grosfoguel, (n.d.)).

While some argue that there is no intrinsic need to infer idolatrous universalism, epistemic racism, and epistemic sexism from Descartes' cogito "I think, therefore I am," and the statements "I conquer, therefore I am" (Ego Conquiro), postcolonial critics suggest that there is a connection between Ego Conquiro and the idolatrous knowledge equated with divine knowledge expressed in "I think, therefore I am" (Ego Cogito). "I exterminate, therefore I am" (Ego Extermino) encapsulates the logic of human and epistemic genocide/epistemicide, which mediates this relationship. The biosociological-historical state known as the Ego Extermino makes it possible to connect Ego Conquiro with the sexism and racism that are intrinsic to Ego Cogito, which acts as a new basis for knowledge in the modern colonial world (Grosfoguel, (n.d.)).

Besides, Grosfoguel (n.d.) addresses an important topic, suggesting that the four human and epistemic genocides of the sixteenth century serve as the socio-historical precondition for the potential shift from the mindset of "I conquer, therefore I am" to the epistemic sexism and racism of "I think, therefore I am."

Under the pretext of blood purity, these genocides were committed against Muslims and Jews during the occupation of El-Andalus. They were also committed against indigenous peoples in the Americas and later in Asia. They also had an impact on Indo-European women who practiced and passed on knowledge in Europe, who were burned alive on charges of witchcraft, and Africans who suffered from slavery and the slave trade in the Americas. According to Grosfoguel, these mass

murders established an epistemic privilege for Western men and constituted epistemic genocide. So, it is not enough to simply study history to support this assertion; rather, one must explain how racism came to be and determine when it first appeared (Grosfoguel, (n.d.)).

The four human and epistemic genocides contributed to the rise of a patriarchal and racist authority, with epistemic structures deeply intertwined with the processes of global capitalist accumulation. When Descartes wrote his famous phrase, "I think, therefore I am," in seventeenth-century Amsterdam, the "I" in that statement did not represent an African, an indigenous person, a Muslim, a Jew, or a woman—whether Western or non-Western. Instead, these groups were considered inferior as long as the global racist masculine power structure prevailed, and their knowledge was similarly regarded as inferior due to the impact of these genocides. In contrast, the only epistemically superior "I" was the Western man, and in the dominant worldview of that time, this *cogito* represented the Western male. Therefore, the opposite of "I think, therefore I am" is the racial and sexual structure of the *cogito*: "I do not think, therefore I am not." This statement reflects the colonization of being, where these marginalized groups were seen as inferior, non-thinking, and unworthy of existence, their humanity being questioned. They were relegated to the zone of "non-being," as Fanon describes it, or "exteriority," as Dussel terms it (Grosfoguel, (n.d.)).

The post-colonial critic promotes a goal known as "transmodernity," which, in contrast to popular belief, is a mission that emerges from things that were once considered irrelevant, unworthy, or unimportant in world cultures, such as marginalized or colonized ideologies. However, given that the new world is pluralistic and necessitates a variety of cogitos, this idea might be explained as a project that promotes internal political-philosophical discussions to produce multiple meanings. Furthermore, Grosfoguel claims that this idea recognizes epistemic diversity without epistemic relativism, even though it does not correspond to the liberal multicultural celebration of global epistemic diversity in terms of the places and subjects that colonial power systems have preserved. In contrast to epistemic universalism, the call for epistemic pluralism is not the same as a relativist position. In fact, the "transmodernity" movement rejects the universality of solutions in which one entity determines the solution for all others while acknowledging the need for a shared, circulating global endeavor that challenges capitalism, sexism, imperialism, and colonialism (Afaya, 2024).

The works of African thinkers and philosophers emphasize the need to reconstruct a new conceptualization of Africa's presence and the African body in order to elevate African philosophical thought and genuinely celebrate the continent's rich and diverse intellectual traditions. This is crucial because colonialism has degraded the body, subjecting it to desecration, violation, and destruction. To restore its dignity and vitality, Moroccan philosopher Nouredine Affaya argues that this body must be revitalized and infused with spirit to regain movement. In his view, African philosophers, reflecting on both past and present events, recognize that this is not simply a matter of wishful thinking or

illusion, but that the African reality is deeply complex. The philosopher also acknowledges the responsibility to think from within this challenging and intricate context. As a result, African philosophers have engaged in an intellectual struggle to forge a new representation of Africa, beginning with confronting the legacies of colonialism and the distortions that have shaped the political experiences of the post-independence era. The ultimate goal is to liberate minds from the enduring effects of colonialism and inspire young people to approach the world with openness, while embracing the central principle that Africa must master its own destiny and not remain subjugated or indebted to anyone.

In this regard, we must take into account Jean-Godefroy Bidima, a philosopher who has been battling the intellectual challenges facing Africa since the early 1990s. He argues that in order to analyze African and universal truths, the African thinker must challenge "the unsaid," the margins, false illusions, and the causes of violence imposed by the "mentality of domination."

Five axes that Bidima felt needed attention were covered in his 1995 book "African Negro Philosophy": the history of Negro philosophy and its discussions, its connections to world philosophy, its areas and methodology, its critical evaluation, and its openness to the future (Afaya, 2024).

In his conclusion, Bidima discusses what he refers to as the horizons of African mind, which are symbolized by the following: In the first place, a new relationship with time is woven into the job of transforming the agony of the Negro person into a deafening cry that is not ashamed to reveal itself, thereby opposing the fundamentalist reading of history. Second, embracing the silence of self-representation, distancing the self from its limited identity-based rootedness, and allowing it to be open to a true relationship with the Other as the primary prerequisite for salvation—all while incorporating feminist discourse into philosophical treatments—are all components of an artistic reading of reality. Thirdly, rebuilding our knowledge of the relationship with time; he believes that it is essential to try to understand the position that controls the past in order to tame the future (Afaya, 2024).

***- Conclusion**

In conclusion, this article demonstrates that the Cartesian cogito—once the central pillar of Western philosophy's understanding of subjectivity—has been extensively critiqued, reinterpreted, and transformed across diverse philosophical traditions. Indeed, from phenomenological and hermeneutic revisions emphasizing the complexity and vulnerability of the self, to postmodern, neuroscientific, and digital critiques that decenter and reconfigure the cogito, the legacy of Descartes has become plural and contested. Notably, African and postcolonial perspectives, such as Ubuntu and the critiques of Amo and Dussel, expose the Eurocentric and exclusionary underpinnings of the original cogito, advocating for relational, communal, and dialogical models of selfhood and

knowledge. Ultimately, the article argues for the necessity of embracing epistemic diversity and intercultural dialogue, recognizing that contemporary philosophy must move beyond a singular, universal cogito to engage with multiple, creative Cogito's that reflect the complexities of global human experience.

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