

The Rational Foundation of The Self Between Descartes and Hegel.

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Abstract:

Philosophical thought, both ancient and modern, has been concerned with the subject of the self and has given it great attention because of its relevance to human behavior. The subject of the self has dominated the entire history of philosophical thought since the Greek era, and its concepts have been defined, and philosophical theories have been established around it in the modern era; this is a desire to define the self in order to understand existence. The history of philosophy has always emphasized that interest in the self and its relationship to truth began with the aristocratic question: 'Before Heraclitus' question, "How can I discover myself for myself?" and before Descartes' question, "How can I discover myself for myself?" 'I doubt, therefore I think, I exist. Hegel said: 'Enter deeply into yourself, how to know yourself'. After that, philosophical questions continued, raising recurring questions about the self and its relationship with the other, and this is what we find embedded in any philosophical theory as long as philosophy is an intellectual interface for every human discourse and constant human questioning.

Keywords: Self, Other, Ego, Hegel, Descartes, Philosophy, Thought.

Introduction:

The history of philosophy carries with it a constant picture of the constant questioning of the self, which has its roots at the beginning of ancient Greek thought, a thought that dominated with its philosophical and epistemological theories the entire history of philosophical thought after it, starting with the Socratic question known as: 'Heraclitus 'question "How can I discover myself for

myself?" was followed by Protagoras' question 'Man is the measure of all things', and then the philosophical questions about the human self were followed by modern and contemporary philosophers, which raised many philosophical questions about self-knowledge based on itself or mediated through the other. We find that the question of the self and its relationship with the other has not settled on a single definition since its inception because the evolution that took place expressed itself in the development of the content of the question of the self throughout the history of philosophy, and because philosophy is the daughter of its time, as Hegel says. Descartes' question of the self-started from the cogito, i.e., the knowing self or the thinking being. On this basis, Cartesianism paved the way for the development of the base of the philosophical, scientific enlightenment using the process of doubt through the famous cogito, through which Descartes attributed thinking to the individual self and made it a proof of existence. In this way, Descartes separated the self from the external world, and that consciousness is the one that is composed between the knowing self and the perceived objects, while Hegel embodies the relationship between the self and the other through his famous 'slave and master' dialectic to prove that self-consciousness requires awareness of the other. In this paper, we will ask about Descartes' project and the position of the self in it, or simple terms, what the concept of the self is in Cartesian thought. Is the relationship of the self contingent on the other in his philosophy?

1. The Cartesian project and the position of the self in it:

Cartesianism paved the way for the development of the base of the philosophical, scientific enlightenment, using the process of skepticism through the famous Cogito, through which Descartes attributed thinking to the individual self and made it a proof of existence, thus separating the self from the external world, and hence the internal thinking process cannot be transferred to establish individual subjectivity so that the self or ego in modern Western thought represents a person as a 'self' versus the 'world', and as a set of conscious perceptual acts, that is, consciousness is what combines it with perceptual objects. While the medieval era was an individual in a congregation, following in its footsteps, working with its revelations and imbued with scholastic thought with a personal theological orientation in a self-denying thought that refuses to recognize its being, Philosophy in its modern form inaugurated a new consciousness in which the self is no longer represented only as a metaphysical dimension, but as

a set of structures that constitute the existential and moral reality of the founding meanings of humanity.

Whereas scholastic thought used to start from existence to thought, prioritizing the world of things over the world of persons and viewing man as a being like other living beings, the Cartesian project established the transcendence of human existence and the human self, the primacy of thought over existence, and the primacy of being over other beings, starting from thinking as a principle after separating it from theology and making it the basis of existence and the fundamental characteristic that distinguishes man from all other beings, starting from thinking as a principle after separating it from theology and making it the basis of existence and the fundamental characteristic that distinguishes man from other beings, he wanted to establish modern rationality free from Aristotelian philosophy, rebelling against the scholastic philosophy he had learned in Christian schools and heralding the birth of something new in the field of science, thought and civilization as he reconnected the ego to the world and the self to the Absolute, of which he said: 'The self is not so much an endpoint as it is a starting point, and not so much a destination as a starting point, so it is necessary to think about it and pay attention to it in order to define it truly and to prove it with certainty in order to reveal it, as one can reveal a new land or an unknown country.' The Cartesian self did not depart from the general definition of the self, i.e., it was not displaced as an essence that possesses a set of characteristics that express what it is, but Descartes would add to this essence another philosophy, namely the experience of skepticism: 'Some time ago I realized that from my earliest years, I had received a large number of private opinions which I considered to be true.' (روني ديكارت، حديث الطريقة، ص27) The Cartesian self did not depart from the general definition of the self, i.e., it was not displaced as an essence that possesses a set of characteristics that express what it is, but Descartes would add to this essence another philosophy, namely the experience of skepticism: 'Some time ago I realized that from my earliest years, I had received a large number of private opinions which I considered to be true.' (بول ريكور، 2005، ص75) Who is this skeptical ego? Is this ego uprooted from all parameters of time and space and attached to the private body?

2. The self is an epistemological approach and an ontological reality :

Descartes' self-understanding is founded on the idea of the cogito, based on his famous saying, "I think, therefore I am." Through his famous skeptical process,

he concluded that we should not trust the senses. They do not lead us to true knowledge because they are deceptive and prone to illusions and misconceptions; in this, he says: 'Thus, just as I saw that our senses sometimes deceive us, I wanted to postulate that nothing, in reality, is the way our senses perceive it.' (روني ديكارت، (حديث الطريقة، ص27). He rejects the testimony of the senses because they are always mistaken and subject to illusions or false beliefs. He argues that it is wise not to trust the one who has deceived us even once. If the senses are proven to be unreliable at times, how can we trust them at all times? Another reason Descartes gives for distrusting the senses is that if we do not recognize that the senses are deceiving us and acknowledge this, how do we know that we are not dreaming? This is because in a dream, one sees things as if they are real when they are not, and therefore, it is possible that everything we see and feel is a big dream and the dreamer often does not know that he is dreaming, and therefore it is possible that we are in a dream and we do not know it. (Descartes, 1975, P : 219). Descartes rejects all sensory perceptions and rejects sensory perception itself as a cognitive tool. This includes everything we know about the external world as well as about ourselves as bodies. Descartes found his refuge in reason, and his philosophy was known as idealism because it locked truth (meaning) inside an impenetrable wall known as the prison of reason.

Descartes arrived at the certainty of his existence from his doubt, for he believes that we cannot doubt doubt itself, or we cannot doubt our existence during the process of doubt so that the intellect returns to its pure self away from all representations of natural objects until it was lost and thus opens the intuitive truth that 'it exists as long as something is thinking'. (ديكارت، تأملات ميتافيزيقية، ص43)

The thinking ego, after the process of eliminating everything that raises suspicion, retains only itself as the self behind these thinking processes (doubt, contemplation), an ego whose existence cannot be denied even if we deny the existence of the external world itself. At this level of reduction, the ego will resort to a form of philosophizing based on egoism. It will set out to search in its interior for an objective external world by starting or concluding the existence of Allah. Then, the existence of objective nature, all these results are generated by relying on the principles that are innate to the thinking ego and are inherent in us.

The Cartesian Cogito is the starting point from which Descartes built the edifice of his philosophy and arranged his theories on the proof of the self or ego. He concluded that the search for truth stems from within the self and not from the

outside. Recognizing our self starts with thinking about our existence, from doubt to truth. Je pense donc je suis is the first certainty available to the human being to know his existence as a thinking being. (فرنسوا غريغوار، ص55). He says: 'I have been convinced before that there is absolutely nothing in the world, no sky or earth, no soul or bodies, but I am certain that I exist, and no one, no matter how strong, can overshadow me and make me nothing as long as I think). (ديكارت، ص53). Here, he 'emphasizes that man as a thinker does not recognize unless he recognizes himself.'

Descartes started from the ego as a true and pure beginning to reach knowledge and understanding of existence. The philosopher wanted to break the taboo in Western civilization, which was torn by wars and full of sectarian gaps and ethnic differences at that period, and reconnect the ego with the world and the self. The primacy of knowledge by thought made him find that there is a self that is aware of itself as it practices thinking and that thoughts are not directly in consciousness or attached to it but are the product of the thinking self that pulsates in the mind. He found that there is a self-aware self that practices thinking and that ideas are not directly in consciousness or attached to it but are the product of the thinking self that beats with the mind. Knowledge of other things remains incomplete and lacks certainty if the cogito is absent from it because it is pure and self-sufficient, as it can exist, function and perform its tasks even in the absence of the body and in the absence of the other. The statement that the human being is only a mind was a tremor that shook the pillars of Scholastic thought because they said that the human being is a medium between matter and image, so the Cartesian Cogito became the Copernican revolution that transcended the scholastic and Aristotelian concepts and freed from the grip of the Church, it is the decisive exit for the birth of modern subjectivity and its liberation from the authority of the ancients. Descartes' search for truth and knowledge of the world was not limited to proving the truth of the self, but he also focused his topics on divinity and the extent of its existence, so is knowledge of the understanding contingent on knowledge of the divine?

3. From the idea of proving oneself to the idea of proving God:

Descartes linked the knowledge of the Creator, and thus the knowledge of His creatures, to the self (نجيب الحصادي، 1966، ص49), and he believed that this knowledge is not considered certain unless it is founded on self-knowledge, as it is the only legitimate and stable starting point and solid ground on which the lost

can stand in this open and infinite universe. (محمد عثمان خشت، 1998، ص8)، He affirms with certainty that 'whoever is ignorant of Allah cannot know anything else with certainty' (محمد عثمان خشت، 1998، ص18). The divine assurance is a central fulcrum of Descartes' doctrine and even of his methodological skepticism because the way out of this skepticism was not by intellect alone; the thought is not enough; it always needs a divine guarantee of its correctness in order to realize itself, but Allah has also become the guarantor of the correctness of the thought's perception of the world and things in the world, and it is only through Allah alone that the thought can cross this chasm.

In Descartes' epistemological system, Allah has a fundamental and key role. This is because, for Descartes, certain knowledge is characterized by clarity and distinction, and these two qualities can only be achieved through the knowledge of Allah. At the end of the thirteenth chapter of the first section of the Origins of Philosophy, Descartes says: 'Our reasoning will not reach any certain knowledge until we reach the knowledge of our Creator.' Descartes relied on God in the hope of establishing the objective world through which the subject can attain secondary certainty in this external world. (روني ديكارت، مقال في المنهج، 1985، ص10)

For Descartes, the ego is an independent antecedent of the existence of the world and any other existence, and hence every existence other than the existence of the ego is other for it, and thus the ego's awareness of its existence as a thinking being does not depend on any external element, but is purely self-reflective, which confirms the role of the third party in the ego's knowledge of itself, Descartes believes that it is enough to be able to perceive something independently of the other to be certain that one of us is different from the other.

The notion of the self-led to a campaign of questions for philosophers after him because the idea of the transcendent, self-sufficient cogito, as much as it was considered an important achievement in Descartes' time because it established a theory of knowledge based on the self as the guarantee of true knowledge, which in turn is surrounded by the care of Allah, the creator of this self and this world. It created a clear-cut dichotomy in that it awakened several questions about the concept of the self, including: Is subjective experience an internal, individual and private experience, or is it a general external experience? Is there another role in the emergence of our consciousness, and if so, what is it?

The Cartesian conception of the self has come under severe opposition as modern philosophical thought has expanded, with Hegel saying, 'Descartes is the founder

of modern philosophy, a hero who was able to take things back to their beginning and reclaim the land of philosophy after a thousand years of loss (عبد الوهاب جعفر، 1990، ص120). His philosophy lost its resonance and became rejected in contemporary thought because it created a conflict after him and absorbed opponents who had different goals, conflicting interests, backgrounds, affiliations and names, including Hegel. How did Hegel view the self? Would he, in turn, exclude the other, or would the other have a role in understanding his concept of the self?

4. **The Hegelian foundation of the concept of the self:**

'In order for a human being to philosophize, it is not enough to have a consciousness, but (consciousness) must be transformed into (self-consciousness), for in the stage of consciousness, man trusts in direct existence and affirms and proves its existence, (يوسف سلامة، 2001، ص85) Hegel explains in his 'Phenomenology of the Spirit' that in the first stage the spirit is a single individual self, "and by single we mean that which exists purely for itself, that which relates only to itself, and excludes any relation to the other, a self-contained being. (ولتر ترس يتس، ميشل سيتاس، 1998، ص11) Hegel

likens individuality to a newborn baby coming into its own and the self that has not yet fully conceptualized the whole. Hegel: 'He must experience these things as often as a child experiences life in its fullness.' (محمد الشيخ، 2008، ص167) After the ego looks at its individuality, 'every ego is individual,' and consciousness reaches the realization of the gaze of the subconscious, i.e., the realization of awareness of itself, consciousness develops in Hegel's Phenomenology after getting rid of the 'soul and spirit stage' whose position was one and the other to the second stage in which the soul becomes capable of awareness, and here the relationship between subject and object appears, and this of course leads to a new level of subjectivity that includes the existence of the other, and therefore the triangle of the relationship with the other for Hegel is an important stage in his philosophy: What is the relationship between the ego and the other in Hegel's philosophy? Is the existence of the other necessary for the ego, and if it is necessary, can the ego define it?

'Self-consciousness is the existence of a simple and equal self that denies to the self all that is other, and its absolute subject and object are for it the ego.' (ميخائيل، 2000، ص237) Hegel analyzed the ego's relationship with the other, starting from the ego's first position and considering that consciousness that is pure,

unique and different from the other is a naive and narcissistic consciousness because the self, at this stage, is centered on itself and does not pay attention to the other. However, how can the ego seek a different path through the other?

The existence of the Other is essential to the self-awareness of the self and its perception of the external world. The existence of the ego can only be realized through the existence of its opposite, the Other or the Other, as consciousness can only know itself through its openness to all that is other to it.

Consciousness is searching for a mediation between itself and its self-knowledge, and this can only be achieved by the recognition of the ego by the other. According to Hegel, "Self-consciousness is in itself and for itself.... it is not unless it is recognized by the other." (ألكسندر كوجاييف، ص49) In other words, self-recognition is the prerequisite for self-consciousness, without which the process of ego consciousness is incomplete. However, this recognition is achieved through conflict between the ego and the other in order to prove the self and maintain its freedom. What is the nature of the relationship between master and slave? Can the enslaved person, at some point, resign and achieve self-consciousness? Can an openness to the world based on participation be built according to Hegel or not?

5. Self-concept through the dialectic of enslaved person and enslaver:

The dialectic of enslaved person and enslaver is not at all a dialectic of consciousness, as the bet lies in the birth of the self, which in Hegelian language means moving from desire as a desire for the other to the recognition of the other (بول ريكور، 2005، ص145) however, recognition does not come easily as long as both species risk their lives and seek the death of the other. However, it is a struggle that does not end with actual death but with a victor and a vanquished; the first is a consciousness for its own sake, and the second is a consciousness for the sake of the other. "The two consciousnesses of self and other are opposites; the consciousness of the self is first of all opposed to itself because the drama has no equality between slave and enslaver, and for him, this struggle is for life and death." (ألكسندر كوجاييف، ص54) The enslaved person and the enslaver are inseparable, but the inevitability of the conflict forces one of them to risk his life, enabling him to triumph over the other, who was accustomed to a life of slavery. According to Hegel, the first social relationship that arose from a conflict between two parties was that of master and slave, which appeared in its strongest form in the system of slavery 'where the master is the only one with independent

existence, while the slave is reduced to the level of an object" (محمد فرحة، بتول) (366 ص، 2017، حكمة محمد). The more the enslaved person submits to force, deprivation and obedience, the more the master consumes the enslaved person's product and demonstrates his superiority and control over him. The result of this recognition is that the master gives the enslaved person the opportunity for self-awareness and the enslaved person's loss of self-awareness and deprives him of his freedom, 'self-awareness does not reach the state of satisfaction except in another self-awareness. (هاربرت ماركيوز، 1960، ص126)'

Despite the master's self-consciousness, it is not a real self-consciousness, according to Hegel. However, it is an illusory one because the one who recognized it was not an enslaved person and an enslaved person, according to Hegel, cannot be a human being, as Aristotle says. For there to be a real self-consciousness, it must be recognized by a master like himself. The master transforms the other into a structure that meets all the master's requirements by subjugating nature to his master through labor to satisfy his master's desires. Here, the true creator of history from Hegel's perspective becomes not the enslaver but the enslaved person, as the master is the one who commands and enjoys victories. In contrast, the enslaved person works to change the world with his labor because labor is the only way to true emancipation.

Hegel tried to show the nature of the relationship between different selves through stages in which he identified the levels of intersubjectivity that establish openness to the world, using an important historical event: the dominance of slavery, which made the stronger master and the weaker slave, but this state was not permanent because the slave was able to liberate himself and reach his self-awareness through the stages of his development when he turned from a mere follower to another corresponding self capable of exploring himself and the other corresponding self.

Hegel has been criticized for his treatment of the question of the self and its relation to the other for not being free from his idealism. Paul Ricoeur tends to consider that Hegel, despite his great superiority in his approach based on the strategy of productive contradictions, did not succeed in building his intersubjectivity because he fell into idealism, which relied on the consideration of collective entities as absolute truths, and this gives those entities a sacred character, which may lead to their tyranny and acceptance of tyranny. Through dialectic, Hegel shows that awareness of the self requires awareness of the other,

and in the absence of the other, there can be no real awareness of the self, but Hegel did not exclude conflict as a mode of defining the relationship between the ego and the other.

Conclusion:

In light of Descartes and Hegel's questioning of the concept of the self, it is imperative for the self not to remain imprisoned in itself but to be open to the world and to know how to deal with everything that connects the two in all spheres of life. Although Descartes is considered the true founder of subjective philosophy from the Cogito, his subjectivity remains purely speculative, closed in on itself, rejecting the other, while Hegel embodied the relationship between the self and the other through the dialectic of the slave and the master, and demonstrated that awareness of the self requires awareness of the other, he did not exclude conflict as a pattern to determine the relationship between the ego and the other, and what is flawed with his theory is that although it is based on freedom, he could not localize it within the lived world.

The self has been torn apart, the understanding has been disrupted, and the cogito has been wounded by the blows directed at the relationship between the self and existence, and the self no longer plays a central role in the universe or draws a starting point on which the truth of I think. Therefore, I exist is based. Descartes did not realize that the experience of skepticism adopted by Descartes would be the starting point for his undermining and that it would be the ground from which a new concept would emerge, not about the self but about consciousness, a critical experience that would be adopted by philosophers known as the philosophers of doubt and skepticism, Freud, Nietzsche and Marx.

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