

# Cogito, Madness and Writing

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## Abstract

*This paper briefly examines the debate between Foucault and Derrida, which focuses on Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*, and copes with madness and reason through Descartes. Foucault maintains that modern reason has founded itself, historically, as a leading type of knowing through the orderly exclusion of its other: non-reason or madness. He argues that Descartes supported the philosophical instant in this exclusion. Derrida not only criticizes Foucault for having misconstrued Descartes' thoughts on madness, but also, in "Cogito and the History of Madness," objects to Foucault having periodised the exclusion of madness as something exacting to the modern period. This paper compares Foucault's response to Derrida in his article "My body, this paper, this fire" with Derrida's response to Foucault, delivered in a lecture titled "To Do Justice to Freud: The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis." I consider the oft-repeated view crediting Michel Foucault with the "destruction" of subjectivity. As stated by Foucault, we can talk about subjectivity merely with the meaning of that which is itself comprised by and through miscellaneous forces. I argue that attributing the destruction of subjectivity to Foucault needs some clarification. It is not all in all wrong given that Foucault places himself against the philosophical notion of a self-governing thinking subject. Neither is it altogether right since Foucault's scrutiny is still concerned with a variety of ways individuals are constituted. I suggest that Foucault sidestepped Derrida's accusations and instead went on the counter-offensive, hammering away at Derrida's method of public discourse. The peculiar thing about Derrida's position, however, is that it appears as though to repudiate the significance of the Cartesian idea of subjectivity simultaneously as it persists that we are not able to think without it.*

**Key words :** *Cogito, Subjectivity, Reason, Madness, Exclusion, Descartes, Philosophical shift.*

## I. Introduction

The ideas for this paper originated with my reading of the Foucault/Derrida debate on French philosopher Michel Foucault's 1961 book *Madness and Civilization*, which deals with madness and reason via Descartes. The argument *cogito ergo sum*, ("I think, therefore I am") comes from Descartes' *Discourse on Method*, first published in 1637 and *Meditations on First Philosophy*, published in 1641.<sup>1</sup>

For Foucault, it stands for a key transfer in the conception of madness. The cogito argument starts in doubt; Descartes endeavors to counter the position of severe skepticism concerning the world and his own existence. He asks, "How do I recognize that I exist?" (Descartes, 1999: 57) and speculates if he is not mad or being misinformed about his own existence. The response is basically that, albeit all other proof is discounted, Descartes knows that he doubts his existence; and since he doubts, he ought to be thinking. If he is thinking, he must exist and cannot be misleading himself. There are miscellaneous problems of interpretation that have an effect on this argument, but Foucault disregards them. What interests him is the way that Descartes discloses the assurance of reason in the classical period. Descartes believes he cannot be mad since he reasons: reason disputes itself utterly to madness

Foucault's interpretation of Descartes was seriously criticized by Jacques Derrida in his 1964 treatise "Cogito and the history of madness". Derrida quite fundamentally undermines Foucault's plan of writing a history of madness. Derrida views philosophy as an instrument in the keeping out of madness: "there had to be folly so that wisdom might overcome it" (Derrida, 1978: 45).

The argument between the two philosophers is very studious and I make plain herein only the tenets most significant for my argument in this paper, namely, just what each writer accepts or rejects and why.

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1- I am grateful to my mentor, Maureen Ford, for her support and insightful discussion, which have helped shape my thought. This paper would not have been possible without her support.

To do this, I first convey Foucault's basic argument in *Madness and Civilization*: that modern reason has founded itself, historically, as a leading type of knowing through the orderly exclusion of its other: non-reason or madness. In the next section, I argue that, Derrida not only criticizes Foucault for having misconstrued Descartes' thoughts on madness, but also, in "Cogito and the History of Madness," objects to Foucault having periodised the exclusion of madness as something particular to the modern period. Derrida sees the split between reason and madness as previously existing in Greek philosophy. He goes further than only amending historical mistake: he argues that reason itself, in the entire writing and the every part of Western philosophy, requires the exclusion of madness so as to be operational. For Derrida, the problem with Descartes is not so much that he is an awful philosopher, but that language itself betrays or fails him. In the middle section of my paper, I contrast Foucault's response to Derrida in his article "My body, this paper, this fire" with Derrida's response to Foucault, delivered seven years after Foucault's death in a 1991 lecture titled "To Do Justice to Freud: The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis." I suggest that Foucault sidestepped Derrida's accusations and instead went on the counter-offensive, hammering away at Derrida's method of public discourse. In my conclusion, I consider the oft-repeated view crediting Michel Foucault with the "destruction" of subjectivity. As stated by Foucault, we can talk about subjectivity merely with the meaning of that which is itself comprised by and through miscellaneous forces. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982: 143, 168) indicate that Foucault is interested in the power-knowledge relation and its insinuations for the genealogy of the individual both as an object and as a subject in *The History of Sexuality and Discipline and Punish* correspondingly.

I argue that attributing the destruction of subjectivity to Foucault needs some clarification. It is not all in all erroneous given that Foucault sets himself against the philosophical notion of a self-sufficient thinking subject. Neither is it altogether right since Foucault's scrutiny is still concerned with a variety of ways individuals are constituted. The peculiar thing about Derrida's position, however, is that it appears as though to repudiate the

significance of the Cartesian idea of subjectivity simultaneously as it persists that we are not able to think without it.

## **II. Foucault's Critique of Descartes**

Foucault sees the cogito as a key philosophical change in the formation of madness. In the first Meditation, Descartes reflects on whether he is certain of knowledge that is based on sensory observation and that regards large objects near at hand. As his certainty is undermined, he wonders, by the fact that "certain persons, devoid of sense, whose cerebella are so troubled and clouded by the violent vapors of black biles that they constantly assure us that . . . they are clothed in purple when they are really without covering. . . ?" (Descartes, 1999: 56). Descartes answers, "They are mad, and I should not be any less insane were I to follow examples so extravagant" (Ibid).

This is the channel that, Foucault says, demonstrates Descartes' barring madness by verdict. And this is the objection based on the possibility of madness that Derrida believes is later addressed by Descartes. The problem is, according to Descartes, that the very possibility of making a counter-argument depends upon the assumption that he is not mad. As American philosopher David Kelley put it, Descartes held that "the acceptance of a proposition *p* is justified in accordance with some epistemological rule *R* only if the subject has determined that accepting *p* does comply with *R*" (Kelley, 1994: 7). But this determination can be made only if the subject is rational. To be specific, Descartes' acceptance of the proposition "I am sane" is justified in accordance with some epistemological rule *R* only if Descartes has [rationally] determined that accepting "I am sane" complies with *R*.

On this basis, I think Foucault may have a reasonable argument, and perhaps this is why Descartes writes, in reply to the fourth set of Objections, "the power of thinking is asleep . . . in maniacs" (Descartes, 1999: 43). If the supremacy of thoughts itself is slumbering in madmen, the problem of arriving at definite knowledge does not occur for them. They could by no means make a long story

short of saying, “I possibly mad, but I have grasped (by reason) that ‘I think, therefore I exist.’” consequently, Descartes does not greeting their attendance in his argument. As a result, conceivably Foucault was on to something. Descartes, whether he completely recognized it or not, had no way of presenting an claim in an opposite position with the probability that he was mad. Having no grasp of the Objectivist axioms, he could rule out the possibility that he was mad only by decree. As Foucault articulates, “the analysis of statements operates therefore without reference to a *cogito* because it focuses on specific discursive formations at the level of what is actually said in particular statements” (Foucault, 1972: 122).

Foucault states ‘man’—what he calls the autonomous subject—did not exist for the period of the Classical age (or earlier than), since “there was no epistemological consciousness of man as such” (Foucault, 1973: 309). He notes that, as Hubert Dreyfus insightfully put it:

When man sees himself as involved in the world and also as a transcendental source of meaning, he enters into a strange relation with his own involvements. His use of language that he does not master, his inherence in a living organism he does not fully penetrate with thought, and the desires that he cannot control, must all be taken to be the basis of his ability to think and act. But if man is to be a lucid transcendental source of meaning, this unthought must, ultimately, be accessible to thought. If he is to be autonomous, this unthought must be dominated in action. Yet insofar as this unthought in its obscurity is precisely the condition of the possibility of thought and action, it can never be fully absorbed into the *cogito*. Thus the lucid subject is undermined by the realization that it is a construction of our modern discursive formation and so has no causal power; the Kantian autonomous agent is an internally contradictory ideal.” (Dreyfus, 2002, online)

Such considerations, according to Dreyfus, "support Foucault's famous claim that man is a recent invention and will soon pass away."

(Ibid) Foucault figures out the total his opinion on this subject in an interview:

The death of man is nothing to get particularly excited about. It's one of the visible forms of a much more general decease, if you like. I don't mean by it the death of god but the death of the subject, of the Subject in capital letters, of the subject as origin and foundation of Knowledge, of Liberty, of Language and History (Foucault, 1980: 171, quoted in Dreyfus, 2002, online).

### III. Derrida's Critique of Foucault

In this section, I comment on Jacques Derrida's lecture "Cogito and the History of Madness," beginning with an overview of the substance of that essay. "Cogito and the History of Madness" has two essential objectives, both of which identify with Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*. First, Derrida aims to disapprove a passage in that work that elucidates Descartes' dealing of madness in the cogito argument, as tackled in the doubts of the first Meditation. Second, and more commonly, Derrida wants to "interrogate certain presuppositions of this history of madness" (Derrida, 1978: 33), namely, he comments on underlying questions as they identify with Foucault's book.

The problem on which Derrida centers is the impact on the cogito of the possibility that the subject is insane. In Foucault's interpretation (as Derrida takes it), "Descartes is not interested in madness, he does not welcome it as a hypothesis, he does not consider it. He excludes it by decree. I would be insane if I thought that I had a body made of glass. But this is excluded, since I am thinking" (Derrida, 1978: 47). This shows that Descartes does not, in finding assurance of his existence in the fact that he thinks, contest the doubt that he might be insane. At some length, Derrida suggests an alternative reading of Descartes, one that is "banal," by his own agreement (Derrida, 1978: 33). Derrida elucidates that:

"The Cogito escapes madness only because at its own moment, under its own authority, it is valid even if I am mad, even if my thoughts are completely mad. There is a value and a meaning of

the Cogito, as of existence, which escape the alternative of a determined madness or a determined reason. Confronted with the critical experience of the Cogito, insanity, as stated in the Discourse on Method, is irremediably on a plane with skepticism. Thought no longer fears madness... The certainty thus attained need not be sheltered from an imprisoned madness, for it is attained and ascertained within madness itself... [and] seems to require neither the exclusion nor the circumventing of madness” (Derrida, 1978: 55).

To be precise, even though one was mad, one would still unquestionably be conscious of one’s own thoughts. This is the summation of Derrida’s “re-reading” of Descartes. The problem is, this still gives one no assurance in one’s reason. Derrida notes that Descartes appears aware of this issue, as he appeals to God to make certain his saneness.

Derrida is in fact concerned in a larger scheme: the plan that “there is a kind of wellspring of reason more profound than the reason of the classical age” (Derrida, 1978: 43). It seems that he is in agreement with Foucault’s categorization of madness as “silence.” He notes, “Madness is what by existence cannot be said” (Derrida, 1978: 36) and adds, “through his own language (the philosopher) reassures himself against any actual madness -- which may sometimes appear quite talkative, another problem” (Derrida, 1978: 54). This other issue gets no more consideration, so the fact that punctures the entire metaphor, the fact that mad people talk, besides, casts a heavy shadow over the whole discussion.

Derrida says in a nagging manner, that Foucault attempted “to write a history of madness *itself*. That is, by letting madness speak for itself” (Derrida, 1978: 33). Nevertheless, when Foucault asserts to inscribe about madness itself, previous to or exterior its capture by modern reason, he himself can’t assist but detain madness from his “rational” discussion, consequently re-creating the very omitting he is disapproving. His own argument on madness would be impracticable without a prior binarisation of “reason” and “madness.” This

binarisation is part of Foucault's hypostatization of structures of dissimilarity and distinctiveness as having being in and for themselves, unconventional, as essence in the actual world, as stabilized essences in a independent entirety, to be disclosed by writing.

at this instant, Foucault named his own historical study of madness "structural" and Derrida is more than happy to criticize Foucault on his "method for which everything within the structural totality is interdependent and circular in such a way that the classical problems of causality themselves would appear to stem from a misunderstanding" (Derrida 1978: 43-44). American philosopher Herbert Dreyfus suggests, however, that while Foucault came under the influence of French structuralism early on:

He was never, strictly speaking, a structuralist since the structures he studied were historical and changed abruptly from epoch to epoch, but he did share with structuralism a determined effort to eliminate the Cartesian subject. He did not deny that human beings were conscious and did things (Dreyfus: 2002).

Here, I want to comment on several features of Derrida's method as they leap out at me from the *Cogito and the History of Madness*. To begin with, it seems to me that Derrida is at pains to use representational language, to speak definitely or elliptically, or to classify an obscurity parenthetically, so as to spice up his writing. The consequence is that one often, as with Heidegger, can have no comprehensible idea what Derrida means. Madness is, for instance, "the obstinate murmur of a language that speaks by itself, without speaker or interlocutor" (Derrida 1978: 34). An idea must be "interrogated" (1978: 33).

One prolonged instance of this takes place as Derrida points out his plan for the speech. With much indistinct, complicated language, with parenthetical comments, and even with an aside about hermeneutics, he conceals the fact that his first item amounts to little more than a



substitutive explanation of a passage in Descartes. This device is needed, to some extent to give the impression of profundity, and partly to square this traditional form of investigation with his analytical doctrines as they come into view elsewhere. Hence the odd sentence: “When one attempts, in a general way, to pass from an obvious to a latent language, one must first be rigorously sure of the obvious meaning” (Derrida 1978: 32). An understandable meaning should be clear, one would think, and therefore need no rigor to be comprehended.

Next, we see in “Cogito and the History and Madness,” that Derrida states “there is no praise by essence, except of reason” because reason, ultimately is logos. Etymology is “essence,” to Derrida, it comes into sight. “Cogito and the History of Madness” is characteristic of Derrida’s pattern of not writing plain philosophical essays, but inserting philosophical remarks in the course of examining literature, frequently literature that is irrelevant to the broader issues he is thought to have raised. John Ellis in his comprehensible critique of Derrida, *Against Deconstruction*, comments on Derrida’s *On Grammatology* that:

Derrida’s choosing to develop his own ideas on language through an extensive critique of those of Rousseau must remain something of a puzzle; among linguistic theorists, Rousseau’s ideas scarcely count as a serious contribution to the field, and much of what Rousseau has to say would have to count as dismissably crack pot taken in the context of modern linguistic theory – much of what Rousseau has to say would have to count as dismissably crackpot in the context of modern linguistic theory... Derrida actually discusses, in all seriousness, precisely those aspects of Rousseau’s views that are most obviously so... (Ellis 1989: 25).

Yet *On Grammatology* is extensively considered by postmodernists as a influential work of literary theory and epistemology (Ellis 1989: 25).

Lastly, I would like to comment that Derrida appears to write in an odd isolation. For example, we see in “Cogito and the History of

Madness” that Derrida takes up Foucault’s keeping apart of Descartes with no the least reflection on Descartes’ impact on the theory of madness, nor on other interpreters of Descartes, nor certainly in contact with any literature that might improve our understanding of the problems. If the point is that the experience of madness is completely indescribable, that it is the kind of thing we have no terms to describe, then, all right, but I would think this point needs an argument. Why our regular complement of notions is inadequate for describing what madness is like? Of course, no explanation of madness will make the reader herself experience it. But we don’t wait for an appropriate explanation of anger to make us experience anger. Why should madness be any different? Derrida appears to presume that a description of madness would have to draw upon a language with very particular or unfeasible properties. He seems to think a real account of madness would necessitate a mad language. But does an account of anger need an angry language or an account of cats a catty language? I don’t presume it does. George Bennington writes:

The point of the Cogito is thus anterior to any *determined* relation between reason and madness: it is in this sense that the Cogito is valid even if the subject is mad: but communicating the sense of the Cogito involves a passage from its punctual truth to the *temporality* of discourse and the consequent *de facto* exclusion of madness which is a pre-condition of discourse. As soon as the Cogito becomes language it becomes the *oeuvre* which excludes madness in constituting itself (1979: 7).

#### **IV. Foucault / Derrida debate on Freud**

Foucault’s reply to Derrida (1972) is very detailed, but most analysts agree he doesn’t succeed in countering Derrida’s critique. However, I would like to say that Derrida’s “textualisation” of “discursive practices” likewise stands in the way of analyzing the historical events in which Foucault is interested. The causes and effects of keeping out and difference (of madness, of madmen, of psychiatric hospitals) do not reflect any basic structural totality, but neither are they unconnected to the way they are described in texts and subjectivities. As Foucault argues, discursive practices—like the writing of the

history of madness—aren't just "textualisations," but institutionally embedded activities constructing the very objects, relations between objects, and structures they converse or write about. "Constructing," here, does not specify just constructing in the realm of the "mind" or of "language." Differentiating by discourse has effectiveness in the further discursive reality of which it speaks (Foucault 1979: 27).

Derrida can reply:

It is a question today of the age to which the book itself belongs, it is a question of the age that is describing rather than the age that is described... Foucault regularly attempts to objectify psychoanalysis and to reduce it to that of which he speaks rather than that from or out of which he speaks... Were one to trust too readily in the opposition between subject and object, as well as in the category of objectification ... In a word, what is the situation of psychoanalysis at the moment of, and with respect to, Foucault's book? And how does this book situate its project with respect to psychoanalysis?" (Derrida 1996: 72)

At this point we reach the essential vagueness in *Madness and Civilization*, which, in addition to determining Foucault's ambivalence to Freud, continues to produce other orderly and continuous hesitation and incongruity all the way through his following work. Foucault's commendation of Freud agrees with one pole of his ambiguous position towards his offensive heroes. Which is to say, in the positive approach, Freud is seen as reopening the conversation with madness, thus undermining the self-satisfied of modern rationality. I cite the pertinent passage:

This is why we must do justice to Freud. [Unlike the other psychiatrists], Freud went back to madness at the level of its *language*, reconstituted one of the essential elements of an experience reduced to silence by positivism; he did not make a major addition to the list of psychological treatments for

madness; he restored, in medical thought, the possibility of a dialogue with unreason (Foucault 1965: 198).

In an indicative interpretation of this passage, Derrida notices a trace of antagonism even in Foucault's obvious admire for Freud. Derrida indicates that the phrase "one must do justice to" proposes the necessity of "correcting an impulse" to perform an unfairness. "One is . . . recommending resisting a temptation," in this case, to subsume Freud under standardizing psychiatry. Derrida writes that "since it is still necessary to call for vigilance . . . such a temptation must still be threatening [Foucault] and liable to reemerge." (Derrida 1996: 83)

When Foucault claps Freud for having permanently separated from hospital psychiatry, his applause is essentially doubtful. That is, while he admires Freud for having "demystified" most of the structures of the psychiatric asylum, he disputes that the one characteristic of the asylum Freud kept was indeed the most essential and destructive. In other words, though the psychoanalytic situation abandoned the external features of the asylum, it came to concentrate utterly on "the doctor-patient couple" (1965: 277). The investigative setting supported, in turn, to raise the "moralizing sadism" of the development. The analyst's situation following the couch turns him into a total unnoticed viewer, and his "pure and circumspect Silence" (1965: 278) converts him into an unapproachable Judge.

Consequently psychoanalysis's move forward therapeutic psychiatry has an essential feature in having accomplished "confinement without confinement" (1986: 81), which is an uncertain type of development undeniably – and which, for Foucault, came to characterize the kind of advancement fulfilled by the humanistic reformers. While former Foucault had admired Freud for having "restored, in medical thought, the possibility of a dialogue with unreason", - he ultimately disputes that "psychoanalysis has not been able, will not be able, to hear the voices of unreason, nor to decipher in themselves the signs of the madman. (Foucault, 1965: 278).

It is significant to realize how profound Foucault's criticisms of the doctor-patient affiliation go. They relate not just to the sermonizing substance of the beliefs the doctor apparently endeavors to instill in the patient but also to the very "Cartesian" pattern of the connection itself. Foucault holds that the curative affiliation between the physician and the patient embodies in outward form the association between Cogito and the prereflexive self: "The physician in relation to the madman, reproduces the moment of the Cogito in relation to the time of the dream, of illusion, and of madness. A completely exterior Cogito, alien to cogitation itself, and which be imposed upon it only in the form of an invasion"(1965: 179). Moreover, because the reflective understanding of the doctor represents "a completely exterior Cogito" which is "alien to cogitation itself," it "can be imposed upon it only in the form of an invasion." Foucault disputes that this exteriorization converts "the solitude of Cartesian courage into an authoritarian intervention, by the man awake and certain of his wakefulness," and strictly decreases Descartes' long road" into a healing "short cut" (1965: 184-185).

If Foucault's assertion that the doctor's insightful understanding is an entirely external Cogito were accurate, psychoanalysis would be unimaginable. In fact, it could by no means start functioning successfully, for it would be impracticable to set up a curative coalition between a psychoanalyst and a psychoanalyzed in either of its correlated features. First, the psychoanalyst would not be capable to expand and reveal the understanding of and sympathy for the patient's interior world – not important how strange or mad it might look – which is essential to succeed his or her faith and expand a working relationship. Second, the analyst's substantial ego would be incapable to shape an alliance and converse with the patient's watching ego – that piece of self-government outside the dispute, which is required for the work of analysis in the function of self-contemplation to carry on. (Freud 1995: 129)

For Foucault, nevertheless, the intensification of the watching ego is disagreeable in itself. This is why his admire for "Cartesian courage" and "Descartes' long road" in this circumstance includes an aspect of

bad faith. He wants to use the laboriousness of Cartesian meditation to punch the showiness and outwardness of the curative fix namely forced from the exterior. But he does not think as the first consideration in the goals of Cartesian meditation – that is to say, the development and enrichment of the reflecting self *vis-à-vis* the pre-contemplative self. Consequently, it is probably fair to say, as British philosopher Christopher Norris has observed, that:

At the heart of Foucault’s critique of Freud, is a protest against the notion of conscience. That is, Foucault objects to the notion of a moral agency in the psyche, which is created through the internalization of external authority, and through which, for Kant and Freud at least, the subject gains his or her autonomy. And the normative deficit in Foucault’s thinking results from the fact that although he repudiates the notion of conscience, he does not conceptualize an alternative moral agency to put in its place (Norris 1993: 67).

## V. Conclusion

Foucault believes that Descartes bring in madness in double-barreled antagonism to reason: the rational is the good and the rational leaves out what is mad. Outside the limits of integrity of reason, madness is then put beyond the aegis of rationality. The social classes that characterize what is rational will also describe what is mad and who is mad and thus who is leaved out from societal protection. This is, lastly, to identify what enumerates in history: what can be calculated, what can consequently be stored in the memory or be registered. Madness and the mad are leaved out from all this and leaved out by the judgment of the believer in the doctrine of rationalism that institutes and inflicts rationality.

Foucault argues that merely archaeology can move toward the subject matter of “man” with the appropriate critical approach. He writes: “One thing in any case is certain: man is neither the oldest nor the most constant problem that has been posed for human knowledge. . . . As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end” (1973: 386-387). The

probability and state of self-assurance of the subject of “man” is established upon a burst in the episteme of Western philosophy. The “end of man” announced by Foucault is principally his assertion that “man” is neither the superior groundwork of knowledge nor the first and most significant object of experimental knowledge. Archaeology subverts the autonomy of subjectivity by performing that subjectivity is purely the consequence of special irregularity in the history of western culture.

Foucault’s reading of Descartes was seriously criticized by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida in his “Cogito and the history of madness” in which he takes Foucault to task for assuming that for the period of medieval times there was no division between reason and insanity. For Derrida, Foucault demonstrates in his own reading of Descartes the very “structuralist” suppositions and approaches that Foucault considers as belonging to Descartes. Derrida connoted that an archaeology was in effect a logic, and as a result, that an archaeology of the stillness of madness was in fact a history of madness (Derrida 1978: 35).

Derrida argues that Foucault misinterprets Descartes to some extent that exhibits Foucault’s structuralist suppositions. Derrida understands Descartes’ comment on madness (being entirely free from sense) to be purely overstated: the main issue is that we do not usually doubt what’s up close to our view (unless we are sleeping and imagining, or are by mistake).

Boyne Roy writes, “...for Foucault, Derrida was a defender of the one form of understanding that would always ...produce holy wars in the name of truth, for Derrida, Foucault’s subtle defence of the established order was the false promise of Utopia” (1990: 4). Although Roy’s investigation is extensive, one thing that Foucault and Derrida visibly differ on is their antagonistic explanation of the Cartesian idea of a self-transparent subject and the connected Kantian ideal of autonomic agency. Yet neither denies the significance of human autonomy. Hubert Dreyfus (2002) argues that for Foucault, after *Madness and Civilization* through the period of *The Order of Things* and *The*

*Archeology of Knowledge*, “the subject is reduced to a function of discourse; he argued that the subject as a lucid, autonomous agent, was a product of particular practices and so could not have the causal agency our culture attributed to it.” in brief, while Foucault refuses the Enlightenment idea of an autonomic subject, he has a strong belief in freedom and action. It drives away for Foucault, that each person can adjust his or her cultural practices by accessibility to embeddedness in them.

Although the strange thing about Derrida’s viewpoint is that it looks to refute the meaningfulness of the Cartesian idea of subjectivity at the same time as it insists that we are unable of thinking without it, it is fair to state that this is possibly because of the heritage of a philosophical nomenclature that he takes to be inherently significant, an inheritance that appropriates the cautious investigation of the sense or senses in which it could be meaningful. For Derrida, all claims to sureness or definiteness must bring in the Cartesian *cogito* secretly, without which knowledge is unattainable. Concerning philosophical discourse, one can state that Derrida’s analysis is both applicable and accurate. The complicatedness with his viewpoint is that he makes optimistic claims about what is probable or improbable in non-speculative life founded upon of what is probable or improbable within philosophy. Concerning the problem of what it intends for an individual to identify something, it is apparent that Derrida recognizes the “self” with the philosophical principle of subjectivity. Consequently, having deconstructed the philosophical principle of the *cogito*, he considers himself therewith to have disassembled the everyday ideas of self-centeredness and certainty.



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