Research Monograph Series

The Generative Cogito “I Feel Reality; That Is, I Become”: Self-Ground, Worldness, Workhood, Language Derivatives, Soku, and Topological Lock

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Abstract

This paper proposes the generative cogito, “I feel reality; that is, I become,” as a reconstruction of the Cartesian cogito from the standpoint of Generative Topological Ontology. Its central task is to distinguish six concepts that are often treated as if they belonged to the same conceptual level: Self-Ground, Worldness, Workhood, Language Derivatives, Soku, and Topological Lock.

Self-Ground is the local ground through which the self comes into being in the connection between self-feeling and felt reality. Worldness is the openness through which a worldview can be seen as a worldview rather than as the world itself. Workhood is the openness through which a view of the work can be seen as a view rather than as the work itself. Language Derivatives are linguistic structures derived from local grounds that project, circulate, and amplify meanings, values, institutions, and future possibilities. Soku is the mode of connection through which different terms retain their difference while generating a new phase. Topological Lock is the condition in which a local ground and its derivative configuration are fixed as the only necessary structure, causing derivatives to occupy the place of their ground.

Their relation can be summarized as follows:

> self-feeling x felt reality —Soku—> Self-Ground
> world x worldview —openness—> Worldness
> work x view of the work —openness—> Workhood
> local ground —derivation and amplification—> Language Derivatives
> forgetting derivation and fixing the configuration —> Topological Lock

The paper argues that Soku is not another name for Self-Ground, Worldness, or Workhood. It is the generative relation that connects differences and produces new phases. Nor is Topological Lock another type of ground. It is a condition in which the openness of generation is lost. Art is therefore understood as an interface that restores the fluctuation of ground and topology, unsettles fixed self-images, worldviews, and views of the work, and regenerates the connection between self and reality.

Keywords

generative cogito, Generative Topological Ontology, Self-Ground, Worldness, Workhood, Language Derivatives, Soku, Topological Lock, co-being

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1. Introduction

In modern philosophy, Descartes's cogito identifies the act of thinking that remains after radical doubt as the certain ground of self-existence. Its significance lies in grounding the existence of the self in the self-certainty of the thinking subject rather than in the external world, tradition, or authority. Yet this certainty begins from a subject that is already thinking. It does not fully explain how that subject has been generated through embodiment, others, environment, language, and time.

Generative Topological Ontology understands being not as a fixed substance but as an open relational structure of connectability. Being appears through generation; generation occurs through relation; and relation is structured as topology. From this standpoint, the self is not a completed subject given in advance. It is locally constituted through connections between the self and what is other than the self, and it is regenerated whenever those connections change.

The central proposition of this paper is:

> I feel reality; that is, I become.

This proposition does not simply replace "I think" with "I feel." If subjective feeling were made into a new absolute ground, the subject-centered structure of the cogito would remain intact. The issue is not the certainty of a subject who feels, but how the self comes into being through the connection between self-feeling and felt reality.

To clarify this structure, the paper distinguishes six concepts:
• Self-Ground is the local ground generated through the connection between self and reality.
• Worldness is the openness that prevents a worldview from becoming the world itself.
• Workhood is the openness that prevents a view of the work from becoming the work itself.
• Language Derivatives are linguistic structures derived from grounds and amplified through circulation.
• Soku is the mode of connection through which differences generate a new phase.
• Topological Lock is the fixation of a derivative configuration as the only necessary structure.

These concepts do not occupy the same level. Self-Ground is a local generative ground; Worldness and Workhood are forms of openness; Language Derivatives are derivative mediating structures; Soku is a mode of connection; and Topological Lock is a condition of fixation.

2. The Conceptual Architecture

The conceptual architecture of the paper can be stated as the following generative sequence:

> co-being
> ↓
> local connection
> ↓
> Soku
> ↓
> Self-Ground, Worldness, and Workhood
> ↓
> linguistic articulation, institutionalization, and evaluation
> ↓
> Language Derivatives
> ↓
> forgetting the ground and fixing the configuration
> ↓
> Topological Lock

These concepts must not be treated as interchangeable. Self-Ground, Worldness, and Workhood are related but distinct. Language Derivatives are not a fourth form of openness; they are derivative structures that mediate and amplify what has been generated. Soku is not the result of generation but the relation through which generation occurs. Topological Lock is not a ground but the loss of openness through which a derivative configuration becomes fixed.

The distinctions can be stated in conceptual prose. Self-Ground is the local ground through which the self comes into being in relation to reality, and it distinguishes the self from its self-image. When the connection to Self-Ground is lost, the self-image begins to operate as the self itself.

Worldness is the openness through which a worldview can be seen as a worldview rather than as the world itself. It prevents the world from being closed by one view. When Worldness is lost, a particular worldview is inverted into the world itself. Workhood is the openness through which a view of the work can be seen as a view rather than as the work itself. It prevents the work from

being closed by institutional or conceptual definition. When Workhood is lost, a particular view of the work is absolutized as the work itself.

Language Derivatives are linguistic structures derived from local grounds that construct and circulate meanings, values, institutions, and future possibilities. When their derivative status is forgotten, linguistic representations conceal their generative ground and become autonomous. Soku is the relation that connects different terms without erasing their difference and generates a new phase through that connection. When Soku is lost, connection is reduced to external inference or fixed identity.

Topological Lock is the condition in which a local ground and its derivative configuration are fixed as the only possible structure. It is not an independent ground but the result of a loss of generative openness, through which derivatives occupy the position of their ground.

The overall relation is therefore:

> Soku enables connection; Self-Ground, Worldness, and Workhood sustain open generation; Language Derivatives mediate and amplify that generation; and Topological Lock occurs when derivatives forget their derivation and occupy the place of their ground.

3. Method and Theoretical Position

This paper situates Generative Studies as the study of the conditions through which being, subject, object, relation, meaning, and value are generated, maintained, and transformed as reality through difference, connection, force, embodiment, environment, and time. Generative Topological Ontology provides its foundational ontology.

Three distinctions guide the analysis. First, being must be distinguished from its representation. Second, Self-Ground must be distinguished from self-images derived from it. Third, reality must be distinguished from a reality-view constructed through language, institutions, and evaluation.

These are not absolutely separate pairs. The latter is generated from the former. The problem arises when the conditions of generation are forgotten and the derivative occupies the place of its ground. This reversal is called the inversion of ground.

The minimal structure of generation can be written as:

> A x B -> C

C is neither a simple aggregate of A and B nor the subsumption of one by the other. It is an asymmetrical and irreducible third term generated through the connection of A and B while their difference is retained. If A is self-feeling and B is felt reality, then Self-Ground C cannot be reduced to either one.

4. The Limit of the Cogito and Self-Precedence

The cogito treats the act of doubting as evidence of thought and thought as evidence of self-existence. Before thinking begins, however, the body is already breathing, subject to gravity, situated in an environment, inheriting language, and addressed by others. “Pre-” here does not designate only a chronological past. It names an ontological anteriority that continues to generate the present self.

Pre-Humanity refers to the general conditions that precede the concept, signification, institution, and objectification of the human while continuing to generate human existence as embodiment, matter, nature, environment, seasonality, growth, decay, and death.

Self-Precedence refers to the conditions that continue to generate the self as singular-concrete sensation, orientation, judgment, and creative possibility before it is stabilized as social attributes, evaluations, affiliations, occupations, and self-images.

The self is therefore not its own exclusive origin. Before it can say “I think,” relations with what is other than the self are already operative. The cogito is not thereby false. It is a secondary self-confirmation performed by a self that has already been generated. The generative cogito moves toward the pre-objective, pre-reflective, and co-existential conditions that make such confirmation possible.

5. Self-Ground

5.1 Definition of Self-Ground

Self-Ground is not the logical proof by which the self establishes itself. Nor is it a self-image recognized by others or institutions.

Self-Ground is the event in which the self comes into being locally through the connection between self-feeling and felt reality.

> self-feeling x felt reality -> Self-Ground

Self-Ground is not an essence already contained within the self. It arises when the connection between the self and what is other than the self becomes manifest as reality within this self.

The “self” in Self-Ground is not an isolated ego. Embodiment, others, place, memory, culture, language, and time are already operative within it. Self-Ground is therefore a local manifestation of co-existing reality rather than the possession of an autonomous subject.

5.2 Self-Ground and Self-Image

A self-image is a representation derived from Self-Ground. It is formed through language, memory, evaluation, institutions, and the gaze of others.

Self-images are necessary. Without them, the self could not speak, remember, act socially, or relate to others. Yet when a self-image loses its connection to Self-Ground, it begins to operate as the self itself.

The self then no longer generates its self-image from felt reality. Instead, it adjusts its feeling to conform to circulating self-images.

6. Soku and the Generative Cogito

6.1 “Therefore” and Soku

“Therefore” indicates an inference from premise to conclusion:

> A, therefore B

Soku names a different relation:

> A, Soku B

Soku does not mean that A and B are identical. It means that A and B retain their difference while becoming directly connected, and that the connection itself generates a third phase.

Self-feeling does not function as a cause from which self-existence is subsequently inferred. When self-feeling and felt reality are connected through Soku, the self comes into being as that connection.

6.2 Definition of Soku

Soku is a mode of relation in which different terms are neither identified nor connected merely by external inference. Their difference is retained, but they are directly connected in such a way that a new phase is generated from the connection itself.

Soku has three characteristics:

1. It does not erase difference.
2. It does not reduce connection to external inference.
3. It generates a third term or phase from the connection.

Soku is therefore not another name for Self-Ground, Worldness, Workhood, or Language Derivatives. It is the generative relation through which these structures can arise, connect, and transform.

6.3 The Generative Cogito

> When self-feeling and felt reality are connected through Soku, co-existing reality is localized as self, and I come into being.

“I become” does not reject self-identity. It treats self-identity not as a fixed premise but as a generative achievement provisionally sustained across different times, relations, and responses.

7. Worldness

7.1 Worldview and Worldness

A worldview is a way in which the self objectifies the world and organizes it as meaning and order.

Worldness is not a particular worldview. It is the openness through which multiple worldviews may be generated and through which the world is not exhausted by any single view.

The distinction is therefore:

• A worldview is a particular way of seeing the world.
• Worldness is the openness through which worldviews can be generated, compared, and transformed.

When Worldness is retained, a worldview is recognized as one way of seeing the world. When Worldness is lost, the worldview becomes the world itself.

7.2 Worldness and Self-Ground

Self-Ground locally establishes the self in relation to reality. Worldness prevents the reality-view generated from that local relation from becoming the only possible world.

Self-Ground answers the question, “How does the self come into being in relation to reality?” Worldness answers the question, “How can the world generated through a local relation remain open to other ways of appearing?”

Self-Ground is therefore a local generative ground, while Worldness is the openness that prevents the resulting worldview from becoming absolute.

8. Workhood

8.1 View of the Work and Workhood

A view of the work is a historically, institutionally, and individually formed way of deciding what counts as a work and what meaning and value it bears.

Workhood is the openness through which an object, action, life, place, or relation may become a work before being reduced to an established concept of art, and through which it continues to generate relations beyond authorial intention and ownership.

The distinction is therefore:

• A view of the work is a particular way of seeing or defining a work.
• Workhood is the openness through which works can emerge, transform, and exceed their definitions.

When Workhood is retained, a view of the work is recognized as one way of seeing the work. When Workhood is lost, the view of the work becomes the work itself.

8.2 Workhood and Worldness

Worldness and Workhood are not identical.

Worldness is the openness that prevents a worldview from becoming the world itself. Workhood is the openness that prevents a view of the work from becoming the work itself.

Their objects differ, but their structures are homologous:

> Worldness: openness beyond any single worldview
> Workhood: openness beyond any single view of the work

Worldness opens the generativity of the world. Workhood opens the generativity of the work.

9. The Homology of Self-Ground, Worldness, and Workhood

The three structures can be summarized as follows:

> When Self-Ground is forgotten, the self-image becomes the self itself.
> When Worldness is lost, the worldview becomes the world itself.
> When Workhood is lost, the view of the work becomes the work itself.

They are not the same concept.

• Self-Ground is the local ground generated through the connection between self and reality.
• Worldness is the openness that prevents a worldview from becoming absolute.
• Workhood is the openness that prevents a view of the work from becoming absolute.

Self-Ground supports the generation of the self. Worldness and Workhood keep the views of the world and the work open to further generation.

10. Language Derivatives

10.1 Definition of Language Derivatives

A Language Derivative is not language that merely represents an existing fact. It is a linguistic structure derived from a local ground that projects and amplifies unrealized meanings, relations, values, and future possibilities in the present.

Language Derivatives are not false in themselves. Language has the generative capacity to construct possibilities that do not yet exist, share them, and orient action toward their realization.

Language Derivatives form a sequence such as:

> local ground
> ↓
> name
> ↓
> concept
> ↓
> discourse
> ↓
> evaluation and institution
> ↓
> reality-view

10.2 Language Derivatives and Self-Ground

Self-Ground arises from the connection between self and reality. Language Derivatives circulate meanings and representations derived from that connection.

They must therefore be distinguished:

• Self-Ground is the connection through which the self comes into being in relation to reality.
• Language Derivatives are linguistic and institutional structures derived from that connection.

Language Derivatives can express, share, and extend Self-Ground. Yet when their derivative status is forgotten, they conceal Self-Ground and begin to operate in its place.

10.3 Language Derivatives, Worldness, and Workhood

Language Derivatives form worldviews and views of the work:

> Self-Ground -> Language Derivatives -> worldview
> Self-Ground -> Language Derivatives -> view of the work

Worldness and Workhood keep these linguistic and institutional derivatives from becoming absolute.

When Worldness is retained, a worldview can be seen as a linguistic and historical construction. When Workhood is retained, a view of the work can be seen as an institutional and historical construction.

11. Topological Lock

11.1 Definition of Topological Lock

Topological Lock occurs when a local ground and the configuration derived from it are fixed as the only necessary structure.

Under Topological Lock, derivatives forget their derivation and occupy the place of their ground:

> ground -> derivative -> fixation -> forgetting derivation -> Topological Lock

Topological Lock is not merely a psychological belief. It is a condition in which the relations among self, world, work, language, institution, and evaluation lose their capacity to be connected otherwise.

11.2 Topological Lock and Inversion

Topological Lock appears through three inversions:

> The self-image becomes the self itself.
> The worldview becomes the world itself.
> The view of the work becomes the work itself.

At this point, Self-Ground, Worldness, and Workhood are lost.

• The loss of Self-Ground fixes the self-image as the self.
• The loss of Worldness fixes the worldview as the world.
• The loss of Workhood fixes the view of the work as the work.

Language Derivatives amplify these fixations because names, concepts, evaluations, and institutions circulate in self-reinforcing loops.

11.3 Topological Lock and Fluctuation

Self-Ground, Worldness, and Workhood retain both the fluctuation of ground and the fluctuation of topology.

The fluctuation of ground means that the ground of being is not self-enclosed but continuously renewed through connections with what is other than itself.

The fluctuation of topology is the manifestation of this non-closure as transformations in boundaries and relations: self and other, subject and object, world and worldview, work and non-work.

Fluctuation does not mean groundlessness or disorder. It names structural non-closure: grounds and structures exist, but they do not reach final closure and remain receptive to other connections.

Topological Lock is the loss of this non-closure.

12. From Co-Being to a Single Ground

Human beings do not initially exist under one single ground. They inhabit co-being in which multiple grounds can be generated through bodies, nature, others, matter, place, culture, language, past, future, and death.

More precisely, human beings do not possess multiple grounds. They are situated within a relational field prior to the articulation of those grounds.

Objectification extracts a local outline from co-being and determines it as something. Objectification is not to be rejected as such. Without it, cognition, language, action, institutions, and artworks could not arise.

The problem begins when the local ground that made objectification possible becomes unconscious and the resulting objectification is absolutized.

The process can be stated as follows:

> co-being -> local ground -> Soku -> objectification -> linguistic articulation -> worldview and view of the work -> reality-view

The reality-view produced through this sequence is originally one local result generated from co-being. Once its path of generation is forgotten, however, the reality-view begins to operate as reality itself.

13. The Generative Cogito and Self-Verification

The generative cogito releases self-verification from the opposition between logical identity and external recognition.

“I am I” is circular because it presupposes the self it claims to verify. Recognition by others, institutions, markets, evaluations, and information, by contrast, verifies the self through what is other than the self.

A third possibility arises when a concrete interaction between the self and what is other than the self returns through time as an irreducible response, and the self becomes present as itself through awareness of that response.

The self is neither unilaterally determined by what is other nor self-sufficient. Its connection with what is other generates reality, and that reality responds to the self.

Within this structure, feeling is not an inferior or merely vague form of cognition. It is the capacity to receive, prior to objectification and conceptualization, that the self is being affected by reality.

This feeling, however, is not an infallible private truth. It remains open to what is other than the self and can be modified by response, time, practice, and others. Through this openness, the generative cogito avoids both subjectivism and solipsism.

14. Art and the Generative Cogito

Art is not an illustration of the generative cogito. It is a practice that constructs conditions under which self-feeling and felt reality may be reconnected.

Art does not merely produce objects compatible with an established view of the work. It unsettles the grounds supporting what counts as a work, what counts as reality, and who counts as the self.

Workhood means that a work does not close upon the self-expression of its author but leaves a Seki for what is other than the self to arrive and generate a different response. The work is not a container of completed meaning but an interface that mobilizes the boundary between self and other.

The fluctuation of ground produced by art is not destruction for its own sake. It is a force that opens closed necessity to contingent connection and regenerates singular-concrete necessity from that connection.

Web Installation generates the existence of the work on each occasion through the access of screens, communication, bodies, places, and viewers rather than treating it as a fixed object.

Sayama Aesthetics School connects living, lodging, education, production, locality, and visitors and functions as a reality display that repeatedly generates the boundary between “there” and “here.”

In these practices, the work is not a representation separated from reality. It is an interface through which the connection between self and reality can be felt again, through which a view of the work can open into Workhood, and through which Topological Lock can be interrupted.

15. Discussion

The first theoretical significance of the generative cogito is that it understands the being of the self through generation rather than certainty. The self does not begin to exist only after it has been proven. It is already being generated through connections with co-existing reality, and feeling is a pre-objective awareness of that generation.

Second, the proposition does not subordinate thought to sensation. Thought and language are important phases generated through the connection between self and reality. The problem arises when they forget their derivative status and replace the very ground from which they were generated.

The task is therefore not to abandon thought and return to feeling, but to reconnect thought and language to Reality-Grounding.

Third, the generative cogito distinguishes pluralism from relativism. The possibility that multiple grounds and worldviews can be generated does not imply that all have equal validity.

Validity must be examined not only against abstract universal criteria but also through the capacity to receive responses from embodiment, others, environment, time, and practice and to renew its connections accordingly.

Worldness does not suspend judgment. It prevents the ground of judgment from becoming closed. Workhood likewise does not suspend judgment about works. It prevents one view of the work from becoming the only possible definition of the work.

Fourth, the generative cogito interprets contemporary emptiness not merely as an inner deficiency but as the monopolization of self-verification by one topology.

When evaluation, metrics, visibility, affiliation, capital, and information monopolize self-verification, responses from embodiment, place, matter, others, and time become difficult to feel. The self-image becomes increasingly clear while the feeling of Self-Ground diminishes.

The loss of self is not the absence of a self-image but the loss of connection to Self-Ground through which a self-image can be seen as a self-image.

16. Conclusion

This paper has proposed the generative cogito, “I feel reality; that is, I become,” in response to the Cartesian cogito.

It does not establish a feeling subject as a new absolute ground. It articulates how co-existing reality is localized as self and how the self comes into being through the Soku of self-feeling and felt reality.

Self-Ground is not objective knowledge about the self. It is the event in which the connection between self and reality is felt within the self.

Worldness is the openness through which a worldview can be seen as a worldview rather than as the world itself. Workhood is the openness through which a view of the work can be seen as a view rather than as the work itself. Language Derivatives are linguistic structures derived from local grounds that amplify meanings, values, institutions, and future possibilities.

Soku is the mode of connection through which differences generate a new phase. Topological Lock is the condition in which a derivative configuration is fixed as the ground itself, causing self-image, worldview, and view of the work to become self, world, and work.

Their relation can be summarized as follows:

> Soku connects differences without erasing them.
> Through that connection, Self-Ground localizes co-existing reality as self.
> Worldness opens the worldview beyond itself.
> Workhood opens the view of the work beyond itself.
> Language Derivatives amplify meanings and institutions derived from local grounds.
> When derivation is forgotten, Topological Lock occurs.

The contemporary space of Language Derivatives amplifies these inversions. Linguistic representations derived from a local ground proliferate while concealing their conditions of generation and construct a reality-view as reality itself.

Art responds not by providing another absolute worldview but by restoring the fluctuation of ground and topology and regenerating the connection between self and reality.

The final meaning of the generative cogito is therefore not a declaration of self-certainty. It is the acceptance of the structural non-closure of being: the self is with what is other than itself and comes into being as itself whenever that connection is felt.

> I feel reality; that is, I become.

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Research Method

This text is published as a Research Memorandum within the continuing development of Generative Topological Ontology.

The concepts, definitions, hypotheses, and arguments presented here record the theoretical position reached at the time of writing and publication. They should not be understood as a finally established theoretical system. They may be expanded, revised, redefined, or reorganized through future research, artistic practice, interaction with reality, academic dialogue, and peer review.

This research does not regard only completed theories as legitimate research outcomes. It also treats the processes through which concepts emerge, become interconnected, undergo transformation, and are integrated into a theoretical structure as significant objects of inquiry. Accordingly, this memorandum should be understood not merely as an incomplete draft, but as a record of a particular phase in the generation of the theory.

The public release of a Research Memorandum is not intended to present a developing theory prematurely as a completed one. Rather, it is a method of documenting the generative processes of thought and practice, enabling their subsequent examination and reconstruction, and opening them to academic and artistic dialogue from different perspectives.

If the contents of this memorandum are subsequently developed into a peer-reviewed article, scholarly monograph, or other formal research output, the finalized work will be identified as a separate and fixed document.

When citing or referring to this memorandum, please include the title, author, version number, and date of the most recent update. Different versions may contain substantive differences in concepts, definitions, and lines of argument.

This Research Memorandum is not a final conclusion. It is one theoretical position reached within the continuing formation of Generative Topological Ontology and, at the same time, an interface open to further generation.