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Descartes beyond Transcendental Phenomenology

Preliminary Comments on Heidegger's Critique of the Cartesian Project¹

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I

Most students of philosophy, at one time or another, have worked through Descartes' *Meditations* and witnessed this reduction of the world to the *res cogitans* and consequent attempt to recover the real, or extra-mental, world through proofs for God's existence and divine veracity. Whatever our final assessment of the validity and soundness of these proofs may be, there can be no doubt that the judgment of history is that they fail, leaving Descartes' conception of the self forever confined to the horizons of thought. Without the proofs for God's existence, Descartes becomes an idealist. Indeed, Kant labels him a "problematic idealist" for whom "there is only one empirical assertion that is indubitably certain, namely that 'I am'" (*Critique of Pure Reason* B274), suggesting that, as far as Kant is concerned, Descartes' attempt to prove the real existence of anything outside of his mind, including God, does not work. And Schopenhauer, just before claiming that "true philosophy must at all costs be *idealistic*," praises Descartes for finding the "only correct starting point ... of all philosophy" (*World as Will and Representation* II, 4). Husserl is so taken by this starting point that he will title one of his introductions to pure phenomenology, *Cartesian Meditations*, thus inviting his reader to repeat Descartes' *Meditations*, this time, without the proofs for God's existence and divine veracity. Due to the tradition in which he has been passed down to us, Descartes may be called not only the "father of modern philosophy," but also "the grandfather of transcendental phenomenology." Oddly enough, evidence for this claim is seen in the fact that, at least within contemporary continental circles, Heidegger's reworking of the Husserlian project gets conceived (wrongly, I think) as a simultaneous reworking of the Cartesian project.

But, for whatever reasons, transcendentalism has never taken hold in France. Yet, it is a Frenchman, Merleau-Ponty, who asks, "Are you or are you not a Cartesian?" only to answer, "The question does not make much sense, since those who reject this or that in Descartes do so only in terms of reasons which owe a lot to Descartes" (*Signs* 11). In fact,

¹ Originally subtitled, "Reconsidering Heidegger's Critique of the Cartesian Project." The subtitle was changed to reflect more accurately the cursory and preliminary nature of these comments. For a more detailed account of Descartes on the themes raised here, see my *Levinas beyond the Horizons of Cartesianism*, Chapter Two, where I suggest that Levinas's existential phenomenology follows more closely with the historical Descartes than transcendental readings will allow.

so many defining characteristics of Descartes' thought show up in other French philosophers, especially Sartre and Levinas, and to such an extent that one wonders how, if Descartes truly is the "grandfather of transcendental phenomenology," Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas manage to escape this legacy. Martial Guérout offers this explanation in his two-volume work, *Descartes' Philosophy Interpreted according to the Order of Reasons*:

If we need to seek why "transcendentalism did not take hold in France," we would perhaps find one of the reasons for this in the misunderstanding, and less in the influence, of Descartes' real thought. (Guérout, English Edition, II, 260)

At very least, Guérout's claim is bold. For France is the country of Descartes' birth, and the French are quite proud of their Cartesian heritage. Certainly, we cannot dismiss the Cartesian legacy in France as a misunderstanding "of Descartes' real thought."

While the reasons why transcendentalism did not take hold in France are more complicated than can be covered in this lecture—certainly an extensive analysis of the ethnological or, at least, cultural differences between Catholic and Protestant is necessary here—a partial explanation might be that the French are more familiar with the Cartesian corpus and that they take Descartes at his word when he maintains that one facet of the human being, its unity as a mind and body, is essentially and always beyond the scope of clear and distinct ideas. Descartes holds to a philosophy of embodiment and the sensual life as components of human existence not able to be grasped within the horizons of reason. Where the French tradition takes this philosophy of embodiment seriously as a proper articulation of part of what it means to be human, the German tradition tends to see it as peripheral. A possible explanation for this difference might lie in a German tendency to understand Descartes' "philosophy" almost exclusively on the basis of the *Meditations*—and its first six or seven pages at that. It may also be explained by different ideas of what constitutes philosophy in the two cultures. Indeed, a tradition of Catholic confessional autobiography, available to Descartes by way of Augustine, sees "philosophy" as something closer to home, as a personal, and not merely an intellectual, affair. This must be opposed to the objective and logical thinking that Heidegger praises so highly in his German heritage.

In any case, Guérout does take the mind/body composite into account and does so quite thoroughly. But, he nonetheless confines Descartes to a transcendental position. This may very well be a function of trying to understand him "according to the order of reasons." In so doing, that which is always essentially unknowable, the mind/body composite, is subordinated to the understanding. Even though Guérout points to the irrational in Descartes, his rational interpretation of it and his attempt to treat it as part of the structure of a Cartesian system of philosophy has already obscured its significance. As we shall see, by Descartes' own guidelines, this attempt consists of a category mistake, an attempt to submit to the understanding what is always beyond the understanding. Speaking on Descartes' behalf, Merleau-Ponty writes concerning the notion of the mind/body composite:

Being thought united with a body, it cannot, by definition, really be thought (conceived). One can practice it, and, so to speak, exist it; yet one can draw nothing from it which deserves to be called true ... The truth is that it is absurd to submit to *pure* understanding, the mixture of understanding and body. These would-be thoughts are the hallmarks of "ordinary usage," mere verbalizations of this union, and can be allowed only if they are not taken to be thoughts. They are indices of an order of existence—of man and world as existing—about which we do not have to think. ("Eye and Mind" 176)

My first goal in this paper is to present some remarks from Descartes' correspondence to show that Merleau-Ponty's statement above truly is a Cartesian statement. If I can show that Descartes will grant the existence of something other than his mind, and do so outside of the context of the rational method outlined in the *Meditations*, then I will also have shown that Descartes' understanding of the human being—can we call this his "philosophy"?—is not situated entirely within a transcendental viewpoint.

Secondly, but no less importantly, I wish to focus our attention, not on Guérout, but on a bigger catch, Martin Heidegger, who, in an often quoted passage, writes:

With the '*cogito sum*' Descartes had claimed that he was putting philosophy on a new and firm footing. But what he left undetermined when he began in this 'radical' way was the kind of Being which belongs to the *res cogitans*, or—more precisely—the *meaning of the Being of the sum*. (*Being and Time* 46)

It is true that Descartes does not question the meaning of the Being of the *sum*; it is not on these grounds that I disagree with Heidegger. Part of the project of *Being and Time* requires Heidegger to undertake an analysis of that Being which he himself is. This being, we are told, is the Being of the *cogito sum*. But as *Being and Time* progresses, the reader discovers that the mode of thinking is but one mode of human being. Thus, Dasein (Heidegger's "human being") is not merely the *sum* of *cogitationes*. It is equiprimordially that being who experiences moods and who engages in discourse. What I hope to show is that the same is true for Descartes, who never made the mistake of equating himself in the concreteness of his lived experience with the *ego cogito*, and that if Descartes were to "question the meaning of the Being of the *sum*," his investigation would come closer to Heidegger's existential phenomenology than to Husserl's transcendental variety.

Nevertheless, Heidegger continually criticizes Descartes for limiting the scope of the human being to the *cogito sum*, an object of thought that shows up as a necessary condition for representation. For Heidegger, the danger of this equation is that the human being is understood along the lines of an object, like any other object, and not as the privileged being who has its being as an issue for it. In the language of *Being and Time*, Descartes' understanding of the self is of an object present-at-hand, or so Heidegger claims.

In what follows, I hope to show that this characterization of Descartes' understanding of the self is mistaken. Descartes simply did not hold the view that Heidegger assigns to

him. To critics of Heidegger, such a charge might not seem at all surprising or worthy of our attention. It is commonly held that Heidegger made similar mistakes respecting many philosophers, including not only the early Greek ones, Anaximander, Parmenides and Heraclitus, but also the German ones, especially Kant and Nietzsche. What should it matter if we add Descartes to this long and distinguished list? But the error made here in this case is different. This is because, first of all, Heidegger rarely criticizes another philosopher with the force he wages against Descartes; generally he tries to show how right a philosopher is, promoting him to the level of a spokesman for his particular historical epoch, even if this philosopher does not understand the depth of his own philosophy with regard to the question of Being or the true implications of his own thinking. Secondly, and more importantly, the popular view of Descartes suggests that, at least in this one case, Heidegger was right.

I hope to show that if Descartes were to question that Being which he himself is, he would not start with the *ego cogito*; he would begin instead with an examination of the mind/body composite, something which, in essence, cannot be questioned in the context of the *Meditations*. What is surprising, as we shall see, is that, for Descartes, the mind/body composite is "understood" by us in everyday life, in our passions, and in conversation or discourse. The means to "understanding" this self of daily life is remarkably close to those suggested by Heidegger, though, to be sure, Descartes is far from developing a precise vocabulary to talk about such things.

What is at stake in this examination? If I am correct, then Heidegger's critique of Descartes is reduced to the charge that he did not take up the right (that is, Heidegger's) project. We may as well charge Kant for not working in systematic theology or Plato for not writing poetry instead of philosophy, though I suspect that, in a manner of speaking, Heidegger does make this charge against Plato. More to the point, however, if I am correct, then Heidegger's critique is misplaced; it should have been directed to other aspects of Descartes' thinking and, if it had been so, Descartes, like Kant and Hegel, might have been shown in a more positive light.

II

In a biography of Descartes, Jack Vrooman begins with a claim that might come as a little bit of a surprise to those who associate the *Meditations* with Descartes' philosophy *in toto*: "Descartes was no ivory-tower philosopher" (19). He continues by painting a picture of one who is, above all, concerned with practical life. Indeed, reflecting back on his days at La Fleche, Descartes criticized his teachers for instilling "an impression of life [that] was at odds with the life he was experiencing," (41) thereby expressing a disdain for the traditional science and philosophy he was taught. Thus, from the start, Descartes was concerned with establishing a science and philosophy that would be isomorphic to his experience and that would be able to have practical application for matters of everyday life. But rather than seeing the *Meditations* as a work on the way to the practical life, he

sees it as an exception, and he indicates in a letter to Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia that they must be read in this light:

I think that it is very necessary to have understood, once in a lifetime, the principles of metaphysics since it is by them that we come to the knowledge of God and of our soul. But I think also that it would be very harmful to occupy one's intellect frequently in meditating upon them, since this would impede it from devoting itself to the imagination and the senses. (*Philosophical Letters* 143)

When we recognize that the imagination and senses have the net result of situating the mind in the body, and by extension, the person in the world, as I will show later in this paper, the quote above takes on a new light. Excessive meditation on the principles of metaphysics is very harmful because it leads us away from practical life. We should see here a subtle suggestion that the human being is not pure thought and that the "practical life" is not a deficient mode of being. In the same letter quoted above, Descartes passes a word of advice to Princess Elizabeth:

I think the best thing is to content oneself with keeping in one's memory and one's belief the conclusions which one has drawn from [the principles of metaphysics, i.e., the *Meditations*], and then employ the rest of one's study time to thoughts in which the intellect co-operates with the imagination and the senses. (*Philosophical Letters* 143)

This word of advice catches Princess Elizabeth off guard as it should catch us off guard. The reason for this is that the "intellect" does not really "co-operate with the imagination and the senses." For the intellect, the human person is a mind/body duality; for the senses, the human person is a unity. Descartes indicates this by presenting "three primitive notions" that the soul possesses by nature. These notions are 1) the soul, 2) the body, and 3) the union of soul and body:

The soul can be conceived only by pure intellect: the body (i.e., extension, shape and movement) can likewise be known by pure intellect, but much better by the intellect aided by the imagination; and finally what belongs to the union of the soul and body can be known only obscurely by pure intellect or by the intellect aided by the imagination, but it can be known very clearly by the senses. That is why people who never philosophize and use only their senses *have no doubt* that the soul moves the body and the body acts on the soul. (*Philosophical Letters* 141)

We have already seen the first primitive notion at work in the *Meditations* and in the radical reduction of the world to ideas. The second primitive notion is a building block for a conceptual understanding of the world in the science of physics. The role of the third primitive notion, however, cannot be reduced to ideas since such a reduction makes the union of body and soul "known only obscurely." Any understanding arising from the senses is forever banished from the domain of clear and distinct ideas. But this cannot

mean that Descartes gives no credence to the understanding that arises from the senses, that is, the mind/body composite. As the advice to Elizabeth above indicates, not paying attention to the imagination and the senses is very harmful.

At first, it might seem that Descartes is up against a logical problem. From the vantage point of the first primitive notion, the human being is a mind/body duality; but from the third it is a unity. Elizabeth is perplexed, noting that by the law of non-contradiction the human being cannot be both a duality and a unity at the same time, and Descartes concurs:

It does not seem to me that the human mind is capable of conceiving at the same time the distinction and the union between body and soul, because for this it is necessary to conceive them as a single thing and at the same time to conceive them as two things: and this is absurd. (*Philosophical Letters* 138)

One might expect Descartes to back down from one of the points of view, but he doesn't, instead choosing to maintain the [apparent] absurdity of holding to both. Since the union of body and soul is known only obscurely by the intellect, the contradiction is not a concern. For the intellect, the human is a duality; for the senses, it is not; And so long as the primitive notions are not reduced to each other, there is no problem. To attempt to undertake an analysis of the mind/body composite from the viewpoint of the first primitive notion is to make a category mistake:

I observe ... that all human scientific knowledge consists solely in clearly distinguishing these [three primitive] notions and attaching each of them only to the things to which it applies. For if we try to solve a problem by means of a notion that does not apply, we cannot help go wrong. Similarly we go wrong if we try to explain one of these notions by another, for since they are primitive notions, each of them can only be understood by itself. (*Philosophical Letters* 138)

Several points follow from these observations, the first of which is that the being that Descartes himself is cannot be the being of the *ego cogito*, for the *ego cogito* falls only within the domain of the first primitive notion, while Descartes, the person, partakes of all three. Secondly, if the *ego cogito* is limited to the first primitive notion, then so too is the *ego sum*. Thus, if Descartes were to undertake an investigation into that being which he himself is, by his own division of the modes of inquiry, he could not proceed solely by way of the *Meditations*; he would have to consider the self under all three primitive notions. Furthermore, he would have to deal more specifically with the unity of human existence and how this existence is split or dualized when reduced to rationality. As it is, we should still be able to see that such a transformation was ontologically significant for him, even if he did not work out its full implications.

III

In the introductions to *Being and Time* Heidegger comes down hard on the ontological tradition for thematizing being into "substances" in the case of ancient and medieval philosophy, and into "objects" in the case of modern philosophy. The locus of this criticism is not so much directed against the tradition as it is against the structure of thought itself. Thought by nature objectifies and thematizes its contents. The fault of the philosophers within these traditions is that they have missed the ontological import of this fact.

Traditional ontology has proceeded by way of categories which condition and objectify their contents. In so doing, it has always been a theoretical investigation into entities. Heidegger calls this mode of investigation "ontical" which he distinguishes from "ontological" inquiry, which aims at the meaning of Being itself. Implicit in Heidegger's observations about "ontical" inquiry is an indication that where knowledge is concerned, Descartes, Kant, Hegel and Husserl must partly be correct. They all proceed along one way, albeit not the most primordial way, of doing philosophy. But they have failed to reach the depths that they should have, because understanding and judgment thematize, objectify, and reify their contents. Any investigation into the meaning of Being in general cannot, therefore, proceed by way of ontical inquiry. Being itself, though it is always the Being of an entity, is not itself an entity.

To get to a point where the meaning of Being can be disclosed—it must be disclosed now, because if it is known immediately or discursively in any rational sense, it is transformed into an entity—Heidegger appeals to the level of life. Fundamental ontology thus appears as a project which seeks to lay out structures located within human existence itself. These structures are called *existentialia* which are analogous, though dramatically opposed, to the categories of ontical investigation. He writes:

All *explicata* to which the analytic of Dasein gives rise are obtained by considering Dasein's existence-structure. Because Dasein's characters of Being are defined in terms of existentiality, we call them "existentialia". These are to be sharply distinguished from what we call "categories"—characteristics of Being for entities whose character is not that of Dasein. (*Being and Time* 70)

The significance of the *existentialia* is that they are the means by which Heidegger's investigation will proceed. Unlike the categories that belong to thought, because the *existentialia* belong to the level of life, they are not known so much as they are lived through. The first of these to be uncovered in *Being and Time* is the structure of "being-in," and in particular "being-in-the-world." World cannot be taken to be a domain of the totality of entities here because entities are ontical and "being-in-the-world" is ontological. The underlying presupposition is that Dasein does not, in the first instance, know the world, rather it lives in the world or together with it. Thus, world, in its ontological signification, must be taken as the world of involvements and connections.

Furthermore, as Heidegger says time and time again, Dasein is always already in-the-world. Thus, knowing, even though it proceeds by way of categories and reifies its contents, already occurs in the context of the world. But because it divides the fundamental unity of being-in-the-world into subjects and objects, the act of knowing always presents a false model the world. It has a parricidal structure, departing from a primordial unity that gets busted up as a result. So, the known world is not the world in which we live. Consequently, our knowledge of it must be "destroyed" or "deconstructed" to return it to its primordial signification. This fundamental difference between our ontological apprehension of the world as a unity and our ontical comprehension of it as a domain of subjects and objects allows Heidegger to claim that the scandal of philosophy is not, as Kant has suggested, that we have failed to find a proof for the real existence of the world, but that we have ever asked for one.

If it is scandalous that philosophy has asked for a proof for the existence of the world, this can only be because Dasein somehow already and always finds itself "there" in-the-world, thus making the need for a proof unnecessary. In a section of *Being and Time* titled "The Existential Constitution of the 'There'," we are told that the means by which Dasein finds itself "there" in the world is mood. Heidegger writes:

In having a mood, Dasein is always disclosed moodwise as that entity to which it has been delivered over in its Being; and in this way it has been delivered over to the Being which, in existing, it has to be. "To be disclosed" does not mean "to be known as this sort of thing." And even in the most indifferent and inoffensive everydayness the Being of Dasein can burst forth as a naked 'that it is and has to be'. (*Being and Time* 173)

Insofar as mood is a "fundamental existentielle," it is not a category of thought. Thus, if reason cannot touch mood without altering its character as something lived through, we should not be surprised. "Dasein cannot know anything of the sort because the possibilities of disclosure which belongs to cognition reach far too short a way compared with the primordial disclosure belonging to moods, in which Dasein is brought before its Being as "there" (*Being and Time* 173).

This means that what is disclosed by mood has an ontological significance that reason by itself does not have. It is mood that plants the person in the world, and it is by virtue of having a mood that Heidegger can claim that knowledge, and indeed all ontical inquiry, takes place in the world. On the level of life, mood and reason emerge together. But mood has something that reason does not, namely that it does not diversify the contents of consciousness into subjects and objects, thereby allowing us a unitary apprehension of self-in-world. And if philosophy has wandered away from the world, thereby problematizing it and allowing us to ask about its real existence, this is only because it has failed to find a legitimate place for the affects. It has become all-too-rational and discursive. On the basis of my reading, Descartes would agree with Heidegger on this point. Both seem to recognize the fundamental difference between the unity of self and world in daily life and their opposition in the rational world of thought, even though Descartes is typically

characterized as the fundamental proponent of "rationalism" and even though he is often a major target for Heidegger's critique of any reductionist use of reason within the Western tradition.

IV

The union of body and soul, the third primitive notion discussed above, is, for Descartes, known "only obscurely" by the intellect, but very clearly by the senses. Though Descartes talks of "understanding" and "conceiving" this primitive notion, he does not use these words in a theoretical employment to refer to understanding it through "pure thought." The union of body and soul remains always beyond the domain of clear and distinct ideas. But another characteristic pertains to this union: when the soul becomes incarnate in a body and is "understood" as a union, then the person emerges in the world, not a theoretical world that might become the object of scientific investigation, but a practical world of everyday involvements. Merleau-Ponty indicated this in a quote I presented earlier and which I will repeat here:

Being thought united with a body, it cannot, by definition, really be thought (conceived). One can practice it, and, so to speak, exist it; yet one can draw nothing from it which deserves to be called true ... The truth is that it is absurd to submit to *pure* understanding, the mixture of understanding and body. These would-be thoughts are the hallmarks of "ordinary usage," mere verbalizations of this union, and can be allowed only if they are not taken to be thoughts. *They are indices of an order of existence —of man and world as existing—about which we do not have to think.* ("Eye and Mind" 176. Emphasis is mine.)

This [Cartesian] observation that once the mind is incarnate in the body and lived as a unity it appears in the world of daily involvements has not only been picked up by Merleau-Ponty, it also appears in the works of Sartre and Levinas, who recognize a bodily intentionality that is directed towards an other person who exists outside of the horizons of reason or beyond the cabinet of consciousness. In all four cases—and here I am including Descartes—affectivity is an intimate feature of the embodiment that enables the practical connections that make up daily life. Descartes writes: "... as regards the soul and body together, we have only the notion of their union, on which depends our notion of the soul's power to move the body, and the body's power to act on the soul and cause its sensations and passions" (*Philosophical Writings of Descartes* III 218. Hereafter, *PWD*). So mood in Heidegger seems to be of a kin to passion in Descartes, at least respecting the way they belong to a human being living in-the-world.

But the similarity between Descartes and Heidegger does not stop here. The self of the *ego cogito* is but a representation, and, in this regard, it does fall on the level of ontical analysis as Heidegger suggests. But, the self which Descartes himself is falls beyond the domain of the first primitive notion. Keeping in mind Heidegger's claim that the disclosure of the self from cognition reaches "far too short a way compared with the primordial

disclosure belonging to moods," the priorities that govern Descartes' primitive notions are a concern for us. If the third primitive notion is a subset of the first, that is, if rationality is the defining factor of human being, then Heidegger is right about Descartes. But this turns out not to be the case.

Guérout provides us with a topology for understanding the inter-relation of the primitive notions. He speaks of "three concentric spheres" of operation present in Descartes' philosophy (*Guérout*, French Edition 207-208). The innermost sphere is the domain of pure ideas, the second sphere is the realm of physics, and the third is where the union of mind and body becomes available. This suggests that entering into the theoretical domain of pure thought is an act of retreat away from our involvements in a "world" outside of the horizons of thought. Such a view seems consonant with the way that Descartes talks about the *Meditations*. Speaking about the method of doubt used in this work, he writes: "Although the usefulness of such extensive doubt is not apparent at first sight, its greatest benefit lies in freeing us from all our preconceived opinions, and providing the easiest route by which the mind may be led away from the senses" (*PWD* II 9), and, in a Letter to Vatieer, Descartes blames the failures of the *Discourse* on the fact that he did not "say everything which is necessary to withdraw the mind from the senses" (*PWD* III 86). A similar concern about the necessity of withdrawing the mind from the senses to understand the *Meditations* is echoed in both the "Dedicatory Letter to the Sorbonne" and in the "Preface to the Reader." All of this suggests that the *Meditations* consist of a retreat into the cabinet of consciousness that has the net result of resituating the self in a world of pure ideas and redefining it as a transcendental ego. More to the point, it suggests in a rather straightforward way that Descartes was aware of this fact. We have already seen what dangers he assigned to spending too much time engaged in this kind of meditation, namely that it disrupts the unity of the practical life and distracts us from more pressing cares. In fact, Descartes writes that

It is the ordinary course of life and conversation, and abstention from meditation and from the study of things which exercise the imagination, that teaches us how to conceive the union of soul and body. (*Philosophical Letters* 141)

It is difficult not to notice how closely this remark rings with Heideggerian overtones. For not only does mood situate the human being in the world, Heidegger assigned a similar function to discourse. (See *Being and Time* 204.)

Descartes' apparent respect for what occurs beyond the interior sphere of pure thought seen in his advise to Elizabeth above, and his details concerning how we come to understand ourselves as mind/body unities, should be sufficient to place Descartes beyond transcendental phenomenology. His appeal to the third primitive notion, to conversation, to the ordinary course of life as the means by which, or the place where, such an understanding is found, should suggest a fundamental and operative difference between the unified world of involvements and the rational world of subjects and objects. While we can guess as to why Descartes did not analyze this difference further, a safe bet seems to be that it was not within his interests to do so. He writes to Elizabeth:

There are two facts about the human soul on which depend all the knowledge we can have of its nature. The first is that it thinks, the second is that, being united to the body, it can act and be acted upon along with it. *About the second I have said hardly anything: I have tried only to make the first well understood.* For my principal aim was to prove the distinction between the soul and the body, and to this end only the first was useful, and the second might have been harmful" (*PWD* III 217-218. Emphasis is mine.)

Yet, to restore some validity to Heidegger's critique, the fact that Descartes does not analyze the difference between these two positions further might indicate that he failed to understand its significance. Or quite simply history had not yet provided the language necessary to handle this fundamental difference in a philosophically profound manner. Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche will all help in this regard.

In any case, to bring this lecture to a conclusion, I am not suggesting in any way that Heidegger copied from Descartes; I am suggesting, however, that a very important contact between the two thinkers at precisely the point where Heidegger criticizes Descartes could have been (and should have been) examined by Heidegger. While it is true that Descartes did not analyze the meaning of the Being of the *sum*, neither did he leave the human being stranded in the cabinet of consciousness. There is plenty of room here for a Heideggerian "deconstruction" of Descartes' philosophical anthropology.

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