

Cartesian Dualism and its Historical Critiques: A Philosophical Analysis

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Abstract: This paper is a study of Cartesian dualism and evolving critiques of dualist philosophy in the course of history. Descartes' dualism begins with answering the fundamental nature of reality (substance). The metaphysical debate about the nature of substance is centuries old, starting with Aristotle and going to Speculative Materialism. Descartes argues that the world is made of two substances: mind and matter. These two substances are separated by an abyss. Each substance possesses its own unique essence. The mind is non-corporeal, and it is a thinking thing. Body is corporeal, and it is extended in three dimensional spaces. Mind and matter, interact with each other through pineal gland. Cartesian philosophical system has been facing critique for centuries. Almost all great philosophers have responded and critiqued it. The evolving nature of criticism has revealed the essence of Cartesian dualism as well as it has initiated a new ontological paradigm shift in modern philosophy i.e. monistic nature of reality. This critical study of Cartesian philosophy shows logical inconsistency in dualism, and it also reveals that it has historical roots in Gnosticism. These critiques are robust indicators of end of dualism in contemporary metaphysics. This paper shows Cartesian dualism suffered decline in western philosophy as a result of a collective labor of critique and no individual philosopher is responsible for its demise. Today Cartesianism is of historical importance rather than a viable paradigm of philosophical inquiry.

Keywords: Dualism, Substance, Critique of Cartesianism, Gnosticism, Mind and Body Problem

Introduction

Cartesian dualism has a great influence on modern philosophy, and, consequently, it faced a great deal of critique in the course of history. Descartes' philosophy has a love-hate relationship with medieval philosophical tradition. Since Cartesianism is responsible for the epistemic break with medieval thought and, at the same time, it infused elements of Thomism into modern metaphysics. By developing a new method of philosophizing, Descartes steps forward from medieval thought, but he was determined to appreciate the genuine elements of Aristotelianism blended in Thomism. This situation gave him the opportunity to pick and choose in medieval philosophy. Therefore, the structure of Cartesianism is not logically determined. The structure of Cartesian thought has its typical nature, and it cannot be criticized in a traditional logical critique. Cartesian 'castle of thought' was a product of historical evolution, and it requires a critique evolving in course of the history. My fundamental concern in this paper is to show the main arguments of the philosophy of Descartes got its refutation in historical dialogue among different philosophers. No individual philosopher is completely responsible for the decline of Cartesianism. To achieve this goal, I employ historical-comparative research method in this paper. This qualitative research method has no hard and fast rules rather you will find it here in a historical sequence of critiques over Descartes' philosophy. The critique of Cartesianism becomes complicated because of intertwined epistemology and metaphysics in Descartes' philosophy. However, I do not completely confine myself to assess the critique of different philosopher over Descartes rather I go further to continue this tradition of criticism towards Cartesian philosophy by arguing Cartesianism is Gnosticism in scientific and philosophical language of the day.

Cartesianism: Metaphysics and Epistemology Intertwined

Before going to state Descartes' definition of substance and its relationship with attributes, I would like to quote the definition of substance by Edward Fesser, a dualist philosopher of mind. "A substance in metaphysical sense, is an independently existing thing, and usually contrasted with a property, which typically exists as an attribute or characteristic of a substance. For example, a red ball is a substance; the redness of it is a property" (Fesser 2009, 256). Descartes defined substance in scholastic manners because when Descartes left for Holland, he had only two books with him *The Bible* and *Summa Theologica*, this shows the deep influence of St Thomas Aquinas on him. The definition of substance and debate about substance became

very popular among continental rationalist philosophers. Cartesian definition of substance was adopted by the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677). According to Spinoza, “By *substance* I mean that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself: in other words, that of which a conception can be formed independently of any other conception” (Spinoza, 1901, 45). There is a little modification in this definition of substance. He amended that substance can be conceived only through itself. Substance is itself perceived and the perceiver. This amendment in the definition pushed Spinoza toward pantheistic metaphysics. He was the first great philosopher who departed Cartesian dualism.

Leibniz had an opportunity to have a meeting with Spinoza and he read his philosophical works too. Leibniz's thought of substance as something that contains attributes. The primary nature of a substance is its subsistence in itself. Leibniz explains his conception of substance in *Discourse on Metaphysics*. “This being promised, we can say it is the nature of an individual substance or complete being to have a concept so complete that it is sufficient to make us understand and deduce from it all the predicates of the subject to which the concept is attributed” (Bunnin 2004, 666).

Substance cannot be captured in things through the five senses. We can only approach substance by speculative thinking. Thus, rationalist philosophers have been interested in discerning the nature of substance. However, they are not able to develop a consensus on the nature of the substance. They rejected the definition of substance given by each other or amended it. These philosophers were not clear on the relation of the substance with its properties.

For Descartes the given definition of the substance in *Principles of Philosophy* shows that there is only one substance. (But mind and matter fulfill the partial criteria of the definition of substance. Therefore, mind and matter are created substances.) From an empiricist standpoint the definition of substance has been under threat since the age of Berkeley. John Locke is the only philosopher in the empiricist tradition who theorized about substance. “But it is by a complication of many simple ideas together because, not imagining how these simple ideas can subsist by themselves, we accustom ourselves to suppose some substratum, wherein they do subsist, and from whence they do result: which therefore we call substance” (Locke 1908, 423). I would call this an empiricist definition of substance. Since Locke does not affirm the very

existence of substance as rationalists do. However, other empiricists do not believe in substance. If the source of knowledge is sense perception, then substance cannot be perceived. Thus, they conclude that substance cannot exist. The things are only the composition of properties. A thing does not possess any substance beyond the grasp of experience. The appearance of an object constitutes its existence. This is called phenomenalism. The criticism of substance from the empiricist point of view continued till the 20th century. In the twentieth century, analytic philosopher W. V. Quine is a phenomenalist. He famously argued, there is a no first philosophy. The epistemological grounds change the opinions of philosophers regarding substance. A rationalist philosopher, like Descartes, thinks that the truth about the objective world can be discovered through intellect. I may go beyond our sense perception. This is why they have been involved in metaphysical discussions of the nature of substance. But empiricists do not believe in speculative metaphysics and substance cannot be perceived. This hurdle prevented empiricists to accommodate the theory of substance in their systems rather a critique of substance flourished in English-speaking countries.

Let us return to Descartes' notion of substance. Descartes believed that fundamental substance is one. But he also thought that there are two other substances, these do not fulfill the criteria of substance that is why they can be called created substances. The created substances are mind and matter. They meet the definition of substance partially. Mind and matter are utterly different by nature from one another. They can be created separately, and they can exist in isolation. Because God created them this is the reason, they are created substances. Descartes becomes a dualist when he proves the existence of two substances the world is made of. Dualism, the school of thought Descartes is most eminent for, is the doctrine of the exclusive existence of two substances. Now I shall examine the nature of both created substances. With reconnaissance into the nature of mind and matter it will be clearer how these two substances are separate and distinct.

Descartes argues mind is spiritual and it is a thinking thing, one (created) substance is a mind and it can think because being conscious is its essence and it is non-corporeal (That is why it cannot be perceived). The existence of mental substance can only be demonstrated. Descartes sets forth the existence of mind through methodic doubt. Even he discerns the fundamental nature of the substance again with the succor of methodical doubt. Descartes thinks that he shall not accept anything without passing it from the procedure of doubt. He doubts anything in

the world and he rejects them because he gives example of dreaming. He says that I dream at night I am reading a book near to the stove but I am actually sleeping in the bed. Things and facts that seem to me real, those may be an illusion. These should be rejected. When he doubts upon doubting, he knows that doubting cannot be rejected. Otherwise, it would be a contradiction. It is crystal clear that there is something that doubts. If I reject the existence of doubting, it will be a contradiction. Therefore, there does exist the process of doubting that is at least beyond doubt. The process of doubting is the process of thinking. There is, so to speak, something that thinks. Descartes calls it "I". He arrives at the "I" or self by methodic doubt and he maintains the existence of "I" is certain for him. As a result, he keeps it as a foundation for all other knowledge. In the second Meditation Descartes argues the mind can be known easily rather than matter. He has direct access to the mental states than the world out there. He cannot be deceived regarding the knowledge of his own mind (here arises the problem of the knowledge of other minds which was tackled by J.S. Mill) but it is not possible when I know the material world, I should get such direct knowledge as I have of my mind.

Through methodic doubt Descartes has illustrated that the mind is a thinking thing. The mind can think. This is a fundamental characteristic of the mind. "That of every substance there is a principal attribute, as thinking of the mind"(Descartes 1901, 320) (I shall, later on, throw light on the properties of mind with contrast to the properties of matter.)

The central concern of the second Meditation is that it investigates into natures of mind and body. Descartes starts the debate with a story from Archimedes' life. He claims if he were to have some certain foundations for knowledge he could hope for great things. Regarding mind, he sums up, that is a thinking thing and it is itself not imaginable. The ontological status of the mind is incorporeal or mental. In the second Meditation the second topic of inquiry is nature and knowledge of matter. To explore the nature of matter Descartes too analyzes the perceptual judgments. And he, finally, arrives at the well-known thesis of his philosophy that the mind can be known easily rather than matter. To study the nature of mind Descartes gives the example of a piece of wax. He says that takes a piece of wax you will see it has some color, taste, smell, shape etc. And you listen sound when you struck it. There may be some degree of hardness. After melting it you will see that it has changed its color, it has no shape, it has changed its taste and smell. There is now no sound when you struck it. It seems all attributes have been changed but one remains

constant: extension. The piece of wax before melting was extended in three-dimensional space and after melting it is still extended in the space. This quality of wax never changes. You can observe that extension is present in all material things. Descartes narrates this wax argument as: "Take, for example, this piece of wax; it is quite fresh. Having been but recently taken from the beehive; it has not yet lost the sweetness of the honey it contained; it still retains somewhat of the odor of the flowers from which it was gathered: its color, figure, size, are apparent (to the sight); it is hard, cold, easily handled: and sounds when struck upon with the finger. In fine, all that contributes to make a body as distinctly known as possible, is found in the one before us. But while I am speaking, let it be placed near the fire--what remained of the taste exhales, the smell evaporates. The color changes, its figure is destroyed, its size increases, it becomes liquid, it grows hot, it can hardly be handled, and, although struck upon, it emits no sound. Does the same wax still remain after this change? It must be admitted that it does remain; no one doubts it, or judges otherwise. What, then, was it I knew with so much distinctness in the piece of wax? Assuredly, it could be nothing of all that I observed by means of the senses, since all the things that fell under taste, smell, sight, touch, and hearing are changed, and yet the same wax remains. It was perhaps what I now think, viz, that this wax was neither the sweetness of honey, the pleasant odor of flowers, the whiteness, the figure, nor the sound. But only a body that a little before appeared to me conspicuous under these forms, and which is now perceived under others. But, to speak precisely, what is it that I imagine when I think of it in this way? Let it be attentively considered, and, retrenching all that does not belong to the wax, let us see what remains. There certainly remains nothing. Except something extended, flexible, and movable" (Descartes 1901, 230-1).

Descartes thinks that the extension is the fundamental characteristic of matter. This is contrary characteristic to the mind. The mind can think and matter is extended. These are the primary characteristics of two substances that give them their separable identity. We should see that their other qualities are also different from one another.

Being extended, the primary quality of the matter, it has depth, length and width. Matter was created by God while it can neither be increased nor can be decreased in quantity. The quantity of matter remains the same. When we see that matter is expanding, particles of matter are, actually, going far from each other. The increment or decrement in the bulk of matter is deception. It should be noticed that the motion in

nature remains constant. So, matter and motion cannot be created or destroyed. Descartes' concept of matter is different from the modern atomic concept of matter in physics. According to atomic theory of matter that goes back to the Greek philosopher Democritus, matter can be divided into tiny particles called atoms. These atoms are not further divisible. (Scientists broke down an atom and its nucleus in the twentieth century.) Descartes' concept of matter is not so. He proved matter is extended in space. If something is extended it should be infinitely divisible. Descartes saw, like Anaxagoras, matter infinitely divisible and extended in space.

There is no vacuum, matter exists everywhere. We have come to know that matter is extended, and mind is not extended. Matter is infinitely divisible, but the mind is not divisible. This comparison makes us show that matter and mind are wholly different and can survive without the aid of each other.

We can grasp this in a better way the dichotomy of mind and matter is essential to Cartesian substantial dualism. This dichotomy plays a vital role and it is being debated by contemporary philosophers of mind. (The second most influential element in the philosophy of Descartes is his rationalist theory of knowledge.)

To express the de facto distinction between mind and matter a comparative study should be made. This will help a reader to grasp the true nature of substantial dualism (in metaphysics and philosophy of mind.)

Historically Evolving Critiques of Cartesiannism

One of the major purposes of this paper is to look at the evolving critique of Descartes' dualism and his solution for the mind-body problem. This critique can be divided into two parts: the first one is historical critique developed by various philosophers and the second one is a critique in line with historic one developed by myself. The second part of the criticism is not part of any philosophical system because it reflects my own thoughts. Cartesian dualism was the main cause of many deviations in modern philosophy and, particularly, in the philosophy of mind. Whenever it gets some space in the philosophy of mind it is possible only through scientific or philosophical gaps. The Dualist paradigm in the philosophy of mind resurrects when materialist philosophers fail to solve any problem regarding mental phenomenon.

Today dualism, I believe, does not have any solid argument for its validity.

Descartes had no bleak to the criticism of his philosophy. He used to circulate manuscripts for criticism among his contemporary philosophers. He defended his theories honestly and passionately. I think it was unfortunate that no great philosopher of historical significance was, perhaps, living in the age of Descartes. The valuable criticism of the philosophy of Descartes was produced after his death. First serious critic, I consider, was Baruch Spinoza. He had no opportunity of the discussion with Descartes.

There were many critics and adherents of Descartes in his own life. Descartes faced criticism from the scientific community and conservative thinkers. He never enjoyed full acceptance in any creed of thinkers. (For example, St Thomas Aquinas, contrary to Descartes' case, was very much popular among the catholic thinkers. It is some time possible to get complete acceptance.) Secular thinkers blamed Descartes promoting conservatism and religious scholars accused him of atheism.

When Descartes completed *Meditations on First Philosophy* in 1641, he circulated its manuscript among the leading philosophers of his era. Descartes responded to genuine criticism in *Meditations of First Philosophy's* section of objections and replies.

One of the critics of Descartes was the French philosopher Pierre Gassandi (1592-1655), a materialist. Gassandi criticized Descartes' conception of matter and he believed matter is not indivisible but this is composed of little particles called atoms. He followed Descartes' mechanistic view of the universe. John Locke is also a major critic of Descartes' rationalism. Locke argued that we do not have any innate ideas; all genuine knowledge is produced by sense experience. The Aristotelians were associates of Locke regarding criticism of Cartesian rationalism. Although the Aristotelians set forth intellect can discover the nature of objective reality, but it was Cartesianism that replaced Aristotelianism. Locke also criticized Descartes' thesis that there is a vacuum out there. He argued for the existence of matter and space.

Spinoza is another major critic of Descartes. He criticized Cartesianism in *The Principles of Descartes' Philosophy* and *Ethics*. Spinoza rejected Descartes' notion of two substances in the favor of one substance. In

addition, he demonstrated that the substance is only one and mind and body are its properties. He refused Descartes' interactionism and introduced psycho-physical parallelism, a doctrine in agreement with pantheism.

German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Leibniz accused Descartes of heresy and he condemned Descartes' interactionism by replacing it with the pre-established harmony "As to the Philosophy of Descartes, of which you ask my opinion, I do not hesitate to say absolutely that it leads to atheism. It is true that there are some things very suspicious to me who have considered it attentively: for example, these two passages, that final cause ought not to be considered in physics, and that matter takes successively all the forms of which it is capable. There is an admirable passage in the *Phaedo* of Plato which justly blames Anaxagoras for the very thing which displeases me in Descartes. For myself, I believe that the laws of mechanics which serve as a basis for the whole system depend on final causes; that is to say, on the will of God determined to make what is most perfect, and that matter does not take all possible forms but only the most perfect; otherwise it would be necessary to say that there will be a time when all will be evil in turn, which is far removed from the perfection of the author of things. As for the rest, if Descartes had been less given to imaginary hypotheses and if he had been more attached to experiments, I think that his physics would have been worthy of being followed. For it must be admitted that he had great penetration. As for his geometry and analyses they are far from being as perfect as those pretend who are given but to the investigation of minor problems. There are several errors in his metaphysics, and he has not known the true source of truths nor that general analysis of notions which Jung, in my opinion, has better understood than him. Nevertheless, I confess that the reading of Descartes is very useful and very instructive, and that I like incomparably more to have to do with a Cartesian than with a man from some other school. Finally, I consider this philosophy as the ante-chamber of the true philosophy" (Leibniz 1980, 1).

English common sense philosopher Thomas Reid criticized Descartes being spreading skepticism. Reid differed with Descartes that mind can be known easily and we have a veil of perception. We only know ideas which represent objects out there.

David Hume disagrees with Descartes that our ideas of reason tell us about things as these exist in the objective world. Kant criticized

Descartes' ontological argument. He proved that existence is not a predicate and Descartes was wrong that I have ideas of perfection and infinity there must be such Being in reality. After one century Descartes' physics disappeared from intellectual circles and universities. Newtonian physics succeeded it.

In the twentieth century, Descartes' epistemology and particularly philosophy of mind became the topic of discussion. The central point of debate was mind-body interactionism. This theory was rejected in the favor of Spinozian property dualism.

Hegel, the German absolute idealist, had a critical appraisal of Descartes. "Thus, in his *History of Philosophy* Hegel salutes Descartes as the real originator of modern philosophy, whose chief merit is to have started from thought without presuppositions. For Hegel Cartesianism is certainly inadequate. For one thing, Descartes, while starting with thought or consciousness, does not deduce the contents of consciousness from thought or reason itself, but accepts them empirically. Again, the ego of Descartes is only the empirical ego. In other words, Cartesianism forms only a stage in the development of philosophy towards absolute idealism"(Leibniz 1980, 11).

In Edmund Husserl's *Phenomenology* Descartes' philosophy saw renaissance. Husserl is following Descartes' footprints in *Cartesian Meditations*. "In short.....Descartes became the father of transcendental realism, an absurd position. If we remain true to the radicalness of our meditative self-examination and therefore to the principle of pure 'intuition' or evidence that is to say, if we accept nothing here but what we find actually given.....in the field of the ego cogito, which has been opened up to us by epoche, and if accordingly, we assert nothing we ourselves do not "see". Descartes erred in this respect..... so, he does not pass through the gateway that leads into genuine transcendental philosophy"(Copleston 1990, 222).

On Cartesian Dualism, one of the great attacks came from Behaviorism. The leading philosopher of behaviorism Gilbert Ryle (1900-76) criticized Descartes' myth of "Ghost in the machine". Pointing to Descartes' mind-body dualism he writes: "I shall often speak of it, with deliberate abusiveness, as 'the dogma of the Ghost in the machine.' I hope to prove that it is entirely false, and false not in detail but in principle. It is, namely category mistake. It represents the facts of mental

life as if they belonged to one logical type or category” (Husserl 1960, 24).

After equating Descartes' dualism with category mistake, he goes on. "That this assumption was at the heart of the doctrine is shown by the fact that there was.....a major theoretical difficulty in explaining how minds can and be influenced by bodies. How can a mental process, such as willing, cause spatial movements like the movements of the tongue?.....This notorious crux by itself shows the logical mould into which Descartes pressed his theory of the mind.....The working of minds had to be described by the mere negatives of the specific descriptions given to bodies; they are not in space; they are not motions.....Minds are not bits of clockwork; they are just bits of not-clockwork." (Ryle 1949, 17).

Ryle points out the second crux in Descartes' theory. “Since, according to the doctrine, minds belong to the same category as bodies and since bodies are rigidly governed by mechanical laws, it seems to many theorists to follow that minds must be similarly governed by rigid non-mechanical laws. The physical world is a deterministic system, so the mental world must be a deterministic system”(Ryle 1949, 21). Before giving my own criticism, it is necessary to mention that dualism has been defended by U.S. analytic philosopher Saul Kripke in *Naming and Necessity*. Kripke's dualism is called neo-dualism and I do not see any scientific support for neo-dualism that emerged from Kripke's analysis of pain.

Cartesiannism: Cartesian Dualism as Gnosticism

One aspect of critique of Cartesianism was ever overlooked, I believe. I think Descartes' dualism is a re-narration of the dualism of Gnosticism. I have never read such criticism about Descartes before. Gnosticism originates in the Greek word Gnosis meaning knowledge. Gnosticism is a variety of mysticism. It was popular in the early history of Christianity, but later it spread in Persia and Syria. This sect seeks salvation through intuitive knowledge. The metaphysical system of Gnosticism resembles with Cartesian dualism. “Man in his nature is essentially akin to the divine, with a spark of heavenly light imprisoned in a material body.....for by means of that knowledge they awaken to the recognition of their true origin and nature and can hence be liberated from the bondage of the material world” (Bunnin 2004, 284-5).

Gnosticism is a wider set of doctrines, but Cartesianism extracts its central themes from it. Descartes' philosophy is a restatement of Gnostic

metaphysics in the scientific language of the day. This Gnostic metaphysics may have entered from a scholastic philosophy of the medieval age¹ because Descartes never completely departs with scholasticism, or it may be a chance. He attempted to rationalize Gnosticism, but he utterly failed. It is not possible to interpret dualism rationally and it does not have solid empirical grounds. Thus, following Descartes' thought in rational philosophy and scientific research is not only misleading but also it is harmful. Descartes' philosophy stands on the duality of mind and matter and the interaction between both. He also firmly believes in rational inquiry to attain certain knowledge of nature. His philosophical system influenced generations of philosophers as well as faced criticism produced by them. I believe, the Gnostic origin of Cartesian dualism is a new dimension of critique, and it completes the missing part of historical critiques on Cartesianism.

Conclusion

In Cartesian metaphysics substance plays vital role. Substance is an entity that exists independently. There are two primary substances in the created world: mind is a non-corporeal substance and it is a possessor of thought, and matter is a corporeal substance and it is extended in three dimensional spaces. (This central thesis of Cartesian dualism in metaphysics). This is true that mind and matter meet some criteria of the Aristotelian definition of a substance but they are ultimately created substances. This difference plays a vital role to develop the framework for Cartesian dualism, in which these two substances exist in distinct realms but always interact. Through methodic doubt, Descartes arrives at his foundational certainty: cogito, ergo sum. By doubting everything in the physical world, Descartes successfully proves that the act of doubting itself proves the existence of the self which he knows directly. He says that the mind is better known than the body because knowledge of mental states is direct and certain, on the one hand. Knowledge of the physical world is indirect (through five senses) and is uncertain, on the other hand. This ontological moment in Cartesianism creates opportunity to validate the philosophical problem of mind-body interaction. Descartes maintains that the mind and body interact via the pineal gland. The pineal gland is, according to neuroscientists, explained as the pivotal point where mental processes (e.g., the will to act) affect our physical movements and, of course, vice versa. Mind-body interactionism is bitterly criticized notion in Cartesian dualism. Critics of Descartes set forth that it violates fundamental principle of duality in

¹Philosophers have studied in detail the influences of medieval philosophy on Descartes' philosophy. But this discourse is, here, out of the scope of this paper.

Cartesianism for how a non-physical mind can influence a physical substance. Hence, Descartes fails to provide a consistent mechanism for how the interaction between mind and body occurs. This point is, for most of the philosophers, departure of historical critiques of Cartesianism. Spinoza argued against Descartes' dualism, elaborating that mind and body are not separate substances but two attributes of a single, unified substance. In his magnum opus *Ethica*, Spinoza proposed a psychophysical parallelism. Pantheism of Spinoza fundamentally denied the Cartesian separation of mind and matter by developing a metaphysics of a holistic view of reality. German philosopher Leibniz also criticized Cartesian interactionism, arguing for pre-established harmony as an alternative. In metaphysics of Leibniz, mind and body do not interact but they are synchronized at the time of creation in a predetermined manner. Descartes' metaphysics is inseparable from epistemology. Critics of Cartesian epistemology are in continuation of historical critique upon Cartesian philosophy. Founder of empiricism Locke criticized Descartes' rationalist epistemology by arguing that genuine knowledge comes from sensory perception rather than innate ideas. Arch-empiricist Hume criticized Descartes' thesis that reason can solely shed light on the true nature of ultimate reality. He said that the idea of the substantial self is merely a combination of perceptions without possessing internal unity. Hume's skeptic philosophy shacked the foundations of Cartesianism, through showing limitations of rational inquiry. Attacks on Cartesian dualism came from both camps: empiricism and common sense philosophy. Common sense philosopher Thomas Reid rejected Descartes' epistemology for encouraging skepticism about the continuous existence of external world. He maintains direct perception of the external world by opposing Cartesian methodic doubt.

With the emergence of Kantian transcendental idealism, a new era of philosophizing began. Kant challenged Descartes' ontological argument. He also rejected Descartes' thorough dependence on rationalism and ignoring the necessary role of empirical content and the antinomies of pure reason. At the dawn of 20th century, Cartesian philosophy because of historical critique had become least appealing to academic philosophers. Yet it remained a point of departure in different schools of continental and analytic philosophies.

Analytical behaviorist G. Ryle criticized Cartesian dualism from a new perspective. He, in *The Concept of Mind*, said Descartes of making a category error by treating mental processes as if they belonged to the

same ontological category as physical entities. He introduced the term "mind in the machine" to describe Descartes' dualism, and emphasized its absurdity. He set forth that mental phenomenon was not separate entity but an aspect of a brain (material) process. Therefore, he challenged the mind-body dichotomy, the soul of Cartesian dualism. Ryle's critique diminished the relevance of dualism in contemporary philosophy altogether. Through the course of historical critique, I clearly see a missing point. Cartesian dualism is a re-narration of Gnostic metaphysics in scientific and philosophical jargon of the day. Both system shares a fundamental ontological category of duality: mind and body, relying on common sense approach to the world. Descartes reargued with a refined reasoning loaded with terminology of sophisticated metaphysics and well-informed scientific theories as a foundation of Gnostic dualism. I believe my investigation about the missing root of Cartesian dualism to Gnostic dualism completes the story of historical critiques. These critiques collectively took apart Cartesian dualist metaphysics. This paper tried to argue Cartesianism has become obsolete as a result of historical critiques and no individual philosopher is responsible for decline of Cartesian philosophy. Today, Cartesianism as a system has historical significance rather than a viable philosophical metanarrative. This is a fact materialist and monist paradigms are dominating in academia, while contemporary philosophy of mind focuses on emergent phenomena and physical explanations of consciousness. However, Cartesian philosophy no longer possess central position in academia but it raised fundamental questions in the philosophy of mind and it definitely led to discussions about the essential nature of consciousness and the self.

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