I expect that all of us who teach and write want to be heard in our teaching and writing before we are questioned. We want to know that when something is asked of what we say and write the one who asks has already heard us, or at least that the asking is in the service of hearing. I expect that none of us is pleased when we find that our words and thoughts are skewed and appropriated by another person’s values, insight, or systems of interpretation when they come back to us in the other person’s words and thoughts. I expect that most of us have long since worn out the novelty of arguments structured by offensive and defensive strategies, by the goal of winning for the sake of maintaining a firmly held position, and I imagine that most of us are peeved with ourselves when we hear ourselves trying to score points in the hearing of those whom we wish to think well of us. Many of us—I expect most of us—have formed friendships and have spent some of our most pleasant times with people whom we have learned to hear in their differences and whom we know know us in our differences. I expect that the trust born of hearing and being heard composes one of the most valued parts of the texture of our professional as well as personal lives. Agreement is always nice. But hearing and being heard are nicer.

In David’s and Ed’s remarks I feel heard. Few people hear as well as they do, and I am unaware of colleagues who give more energy and attention or who take more pleasure than they in establishing and allowing resonance to eventuate in philosophical conversation. So I find myself in a situation of
welcomed responsibility: that of hearing them well and encouraging that remarkable event of thought when words and concepts are exceeded in their happening by an understanding in which agreement is secondary to what I believe we can all experience as *philosophia*. This responsibility composes, I believe, an instance of what David named “a deeper, broader, more open sense of responsibility.” One that has less to do with law and that in the present context has more to do with hearing. By that observation I begin to address his question of whether we are “rejoining the broken project of humanism.” I believe that David and I are together in seeing that *break* is never quite lost, no matter how much departed, never unjoined, and we might also find agreement in wishing not to break from the break, in wishing to think and write in the break with humanism that seems to have happened without our consultation. For *responsibility* and *humanism* are contingently connected, and in the present context we can say that responsibility has more to do with hearing than it has to do with speculations about universal human nature or the transcendental condition for hearing. People can indeed speak of such nature or conditions, but they do not have to—given the immense diversity in our tradition, there is no law requiring it. And while the ability to respond would appear to be truncated if I do not hear your interests and values and ideas, your lineage and allegiances, when you speak that way, there is no requirement that in hearing you I conclude as you conclude or that I adopt your values. And simply because you find that you are well heard by me, you are under no obligation to adopt my differences from you. We certainly cannot form a well functioning society or avoid many of the ills that we wish to avoid solely on the basis of such a limited kind of responsibility like this one that I am suggesting. But we might find in this instance an opening to a group of attitudes and a predisposition that hold in question the powerful inclination that I believe most of us experience toward expectations and principles that are intended to legislate in all circumstances. The *ism* of *humanism*, when it is lived as one form of a predisposition toward universalization, usually suggests the desirability of knowing what all people need if they are to thrive. And while I think that David is right in suggesting that I—and he—often would like to find a universal basis for applying our culture’s deepest, broadest, and best values in all human situations, I would indeed like to join in at least some of the strategies that hold that inclination in check—and *not* for the sake of a higher humanism, but for the sake of allowing radically unexpected and unpredictable eventuations as well as radically different ways of living, whose very radicality exposes the limits of what we judge to be human and to be supportive of humanism.

My reference to the other than human opens onto two of the preoccupations in David’s remarks, that of the religious and quasi-theological, on the one hand, and that of a firm basis for ethical responsibility on the other. In connecting