ABSTRACT. There is a certain ambiguity in Descartes' Meditations, as there is any great sphere of endeavor. How, after all, does one bridge the gap between the autobiographical "I" of the Discourse and the Meditations, and the world of learned scholarship; the "guardians of tradition", both religious and temporal? How does one mediate the way in which one is received by the tradition which has so eloquently been put out of play in the pursuit of one's personal project? In short, how can Descartes ensure that his pioneering work is not misunderstood; that it is not viewed as a threat to religious and national institutions?

In reflecting on these questions, I believe Descartes arrived at a concept of community which sought to balance personal autonomy with institutional obligation in such a way that the scientist's ultimate judgment was preserved, while proximately acknowledgement was made of the prevailing scientific and religious "world picture", and only challenged obliquely.

Thus, there is a certain tension in Descartes' theorizing about community, a tension which was quite naturally carried over into his practical community relationships. Furthermore, I will argue that Descartes' "tool" for getting around in these tension filled community situations is what I shall call his doctrine of "order and intention". Ultimately, it is this reliance upon intentionality which throws his "balance" out of balance, and gives rise to repeated charges of "dissimulation". How this situation came to pass, and Descartes' tortuous attempts at resolving the emerging problems, is largely the subject of the following pages.
This paper is concerned with the first and second sets of Objections and Replies to Descartes' Meditationes de Prima Philosophia. Inasmuch as Descartes desired the "approbation of the learned", (and in particular the approbation of the Dean and the Faculty at the Sorbonne), he charged his good friend Mersenne with the task of circulating the manuscript, soliciting the objections and collating the objections and Descartes' replies before submitting them to the printer.

The first set of objections has been credited to Caterus (Johann de Kater), the arch-priest of Alkmaar, a Dutch theologian. As Beck points out, it is quite probable that Descartes showed his manuscript to two canons of the chapter of Harlem, Bannius and Bloemaert ("de si brave gens"), who, finding their theological acumen somewhat rusty, passed the manuscript to their colleague Caterus. Caterus, who was well versed in Thomas, Scotus and Suarez, was puzzled over the Cartesian usage of term "idea". He provoked from Descartes, in addition, a discussion of a se and a further elaboration of the ontological argument.

The second set of objections was "collected by the Reverend Father Mersenne from the utterances of divers Theologians and Philosophers". There is evidence that Descartes was surprised to receive these objections so soon after the manuscript was delivered, and took this speed to be the result of a too-hasty consideration of the work. It is likely that Mersenne was not only the editor but also the secret author of some of these objections. The tone of the Objections is mild and conciliatory, as might be expected from the pen of Mersenne.

Some of the objections raised are similar to those of Caterus, in that they are concerned with the use (or misuse) of scholastic terminology. It is probably fair to say that many of these difficulties can be attributed to Descartes' novel method. As a consequence, the Reply took the form of a prolix account of the twofold method of proof and distinction between analysis and synthesis.

I have chosen to handle the Objections and Replies (O & R) in solidarity with the whole of the Meditationes, meaning no sequential treatment. There are both advantages and disadvantages to such an approach. The disadvantage is that in such a treatment we tend to lose sight of the genetic aspect of each set of Objections and Replies. That is to say, it is possible to lose sight of the Objections qua historical objections, as we focus instead on the meta-level significance of the O & R. The advantage is that this perspective affords us a stance "above the fray of battle" in the O & R as we seek to uncover the grounds of the possibility of there being Objections and Replies, and as we target our attention on such larger questions as "status" and "role" of the O & R.

Conceived in this way, our own aim is "purity", in the sense that we are attempting to free the Objections and Replies, affording them an opportunity to throw themselves against (Gegenstand) a pure discovering; that is to say, they become for us peculiar objects of our own thematicization. Our account, therefore, seeks to avoid all positivistic determinations, which render the Objections and Replies static, thesis "data"; so much fodder for the insatiable appetite of the "researcher"--and aims instead at intertextual interrogation of the Objections and Replies as possibility (that is, we seek to uncover possible ways of there being Objections and Replies in vital community situations).
CONCERNING THE ORDER OF THE MEDITATIONS

As might be guessed from what has been said, I do not intend to follow the sequential ordering of the Meditations, I through VI. Here again, my approach will be meta-critical, exploring the "glue" which binds the various Meditations with the Objections and Replies, seeking to uncover their solidarity—i.e., how they "hang together".

There are many objections to such an approach, most of them centering on the problem of the "order of the Meditations" and the violations of the intention of the author when such an approach is followed. Beck refers to something like this when he speaks of the dangers of "switchback argumentation", which has been a source of great misunderstanding with respect to Descartes' philosophy. It is clearly this "switchback argumentation" which annoys Descartes with respect to certain of the objectors. The objectors characteristically argue that if God is the sole warrant for relying on clear and distinct perceptions (as Descartes seemingly argues in both the third and fifth Meditations, HR 1: 159, 183, 5), then everything will be vitiated that relies on the truth of such perceptions without God's existence having already been established. Thus, the authors of the Second Objections can say,

It follows that you cannot clearly and distinctly know that you are a thinking thing, since according to you that knowledge depends on the clear knowledge of the existence of God, the proof of which you have not reached at that point where you draw the conclusion that you have a clear knowledge of what you are.

It is largely around this question of order (and measure, as we shall see) that the seemingly endless problem of the "Cartesian Circle" revolves (and revolves) in the secondary literature. When texts from the third and fifth Meditations are set side by side with texts from the second, enormous difficulties arise which "vanish" (or so it is claimed by some) when the texts are read in their proper order. Many so-called "circular theories" have been short-circuited in precisely this manner.

Nevertheless, the question remains whether I myself am guilty of something like the neglect of order in treating the Meditations non-sequentially, i.e., out of order. Presumably, the Descartes of the Meditations would want to accuse me of such a notion on the basis of texts like these:

And in order that I may have an opportunity of inquiring into this in an orderly way, (without interrupting the order of meditation which I have proposed to myself, and which is little by little to pass from the notions which I find first of all in my mind to those which I shall later on discover in it) it is requisite that I should here divide my thoughts into certain kinds, and that I should consider in which of these kinds there is, properly speaking, truth or error to be found.

One should not be deceived here by the language of "order of meditation which I have proposed to myself", thinking this to be a
quaint autobiographical note intended for the reader's edification. In fact, Descartes proposes that his ordering is to be normative and that violation of his order and intentions would disqualify the reader from understanding him aright. Furthermore, it would certainly keep such a one from becoming a formal Objector:

But for those who, without caring to comprehend the order and connections of my reasonings, form their criticisms on detached portions arbitrarily selected, as is the custom of many, these, I say, will not obtain much profit from reading this Treatise. And although they perhaps in several parts find occasion of cavilling, they can for all their pains make no objection which is urgent or deserving of reply.12

In fact, as Beck observes,13 Descartes was quite liberal with his advice and counsel on how he wished his work to be read. To cite yet another instance, Huygens is informed that, although the task may in fact be tiring, he should nevertheless "take days and even whole weeks" to meditate on the work, taking each Meditation in order. As an alternative, Descartes suggests that the first five Meditations be read at one sitting, together with the reply to the first set of Objections. "But in the last resort he must begin at the beginning and repeat his reading, taking a day for each meditation".14

In light of all this, we are faced with a problem. How can our own procedure be justified, without necessarily doing violence to the intentions of the author? Are we not ourselves guilty of just the sort of thing about which Descartes has spoken, namely an "arbitrary selection of texts" chosen for the sake of cavilling, which neglects the proper order of meditation?

I think not. The question of intentions is certainly a delicate matter, and one which must be systematically addressed in the course of this study. But I want to argue that there is a difference between getting the order of meditations confused, and prescinding from questions of order altogether. The former amounts to something like a category mistake; the latter is a deliberate attempt to "step back" from questions of order and circularity, in order to uncover the ground upon which such questions are posed. As such, it leaves the architectonic perfectly intact, and refuses to engage in "switchback argumentation", preferring instead to use the terminology of order and circularity, but at another level. Thus we might say that we are engaging in a "teleological suspension" of questions of order and circularity: one which is targeted upon the theme of community, and (because of its suspension of all proximal questions concerning order and circularity) is free to interrogate these same problems at the meta-level.

Seen in this light, it is clear that the treatment of community is determinative of one's procedure via a vis the order of meditations. It remains to be seen whether my handling of community justifies such an approach. But that is a judgment best left to the reader.

CONCERNING THE TREATMENT OF COMMUNITY HEREBIN ANNOUNCED

This report concerns itself with various modes of community-situations and their peculiar problems. That is to say, we are here concerned
with the various ways in which community is thematized, in concrete historical situations.

This treatment has a strange ring to it, for those who have been trained to think of Descartes' concern for the "worldless ego", and the "real distinction" between material, extended substance and immaterial thinking substance.

Viewed from this perspective, a challenge issues forth from the pages of the Meditations: to rethink Descartes and the Meditationes de Prima Philosophia in terms of a man practicing science in a vital, vibrant interpreting community. As such, our investigation is at once ontological and hermeneutical, uncovering a "socially available Descartes".

We shall therefore consider a wide-range of community-situations, in accordance with Descartes' own shifting emphases. We shall see him in turn wishing to be protected from the community, wishing the correction of the community, dealing with community expectations, determining grounds for the severance from community, and the like.

COMMUNITY OR IMMUNITY?: THE PRACTITIONER OF SCIENCE AND THE READING PUBLIC

It is customary in the twentieth century to think of the scientist practicing techniques of exploration and discovery in an insulated environment, surrounded on all sides by only scientific colleagues and those qualified to read the technical scientific journals. Indeed, as Kuhn points out, the community structure of science is a topic which has only recently come into its own in the literature. The common notion today with respect to the scientific community is that the practitioners of a scientific speciality comprise a social network; a network of individuals who have received remarkably similar education and professional initiations, who see themselves as the men and women responsible for the pursuit of a set of shared goals, who hold a shared conceptual paradigm, and who are furthermore responsible for the training of their successors.

Such a model presumes that the scientist is working only for an audience of colleagues that share his own set of values and beliefs. It is just this unitive standard, or paradigm, Kuhn argues, that makes possible the advance of "normal science", as we know it. "Normal science" in this context means research which is firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements, achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its future practice.

Such a conception is surely foreign to the mind of Descartes. Descartes the scientist is acutely aware that he labors on behalf of the community-at-large, a notion which undermines the possibility of viewing the scientific community in a purely instrumental way. There is, in the Discourse particularly, this tendency in Descartes to wish to relieve himself of all the accumulation of tradition which had been transmitted from the ancient world—to "once in his life" put out of play the whole network of opinion and tradition which until that time he had been receiving, and to make a new start, armed only with the method of radical doubt; to find within himself the whole of the sciences.
And yet there is some ambiguity in Descartes, as there is ambiguity in any great sphere of endeavor. How, after all, does one bridge the gap between the autobiographical "I" of the Discourse and the Meditations and the world of learned scholarship, the "guardians of tradition", both religious and temporal? How does one mediate the way in which one is received by the tradition which has so eloquently been put out of play, in the pursuit of one's personal project? How can Descartes ensure that his pioneering work is not misunderstood, that it is not viewed as a threat to the religious and national institutions?

In reflecting on these questions, I believe, Descartes arrived at a conception of community which sought to balance personal autonomy with institutional obligation, in such a way that the scientist's ultimate judgment was preserved, while proximally (and for the most part) acknowledgment was made of the prevailing scientific and religious "world picture", and only challenged obliquely. Thus, there is a certain tension in Descartes' theorizing about community, a tension which was quite naturally carried over into his practical community relationships. Furthermore, I will argue that Descartes' "tool" for getting around in these tension-filled community-situations is what I shall call his doctrine of "order and intention". Ultimately, it is this reliance upon intentionality which throws his "balance" out of balance, and gives rise to repeated charges of "dissimulation". How this situation came to pass, and Descartes' tortuous attempts at resolving the emerging problems, is largely the subject of the following pages.

Descartes is sensitive in his writing to at least three different groups: the sovereign of France, the religious authorities, and more broadly, his readership in general. Each group places specific demands upon him, and his "role-playing" is structured accordingly. For the sovereign he seeks protection; to the church he shows deference, and his writings often take the form of an apologia; from his readership he demands attentiveness, and is open to informed criticism.

A. THE PLEA FOR PROTECTION

After the condemnation of Galileo in 1633, Descartes decided not to publish his treatise on physics, Le Monde. In the Discourse on Method Descartes summarizes the reasons for this decision, saying, "Certain considerations prevented me from publishing". The "consideration" of which he spoke was the "disapproval" of a certain physical theory by "certain persons, to whose opinion I defer..."17 Although these persons are not mentioned by name, and the Copernican theory is not explicitly spoken of, there is no doubt that Descartes was alluding to the recantation of Galileo that same year.

As Caton points out,18 it is reasonable to ask after the cause of this deference. One might ask whether Descartes' deferral in this text is due to an "intellectual scruple" about the truth of the (Copernican) theory, as Laporte maintains,19 or to prudential regard for his own welfare and reputation? The problem is compounded in this passage from the Discourse in that Descartes seemingly embraces the former alternative, emphasizing "the great care which I have always taken not to accept any new beliefs unless I had very certain proof of their truth..."20 This comment, taken by itself, would seem to support Laporte's conten-
tion that Descartes was exercising an intellectual scruple, and felt less than confident with the evidence for the new theory. Yet the textual support even in the letters would seem to indicate that Descartes was fully convinced that Galileo and Copernicus were quite right, and he himself was hopeful that the Council would rule in favor of the theory.21

This aporia can perhaps be resolved by the fact that Descartes continues on to say in the last part of this sentence, "...and not to give expression to what could tend to the disadvantage of any person".22 As Caton rightly observes, "anyone" includes himself, suggesting that perhaps it is the latter motivation which is crucial to understanding his deference. Consider now both text and context:

It is three years since I arrived at the end of the Treatise which contained all these things; and I was commencing to revise it in order to place it in the hands of a printer, when I learned that certain persons, to whose opinions I defer, and whose authority cannot have less weight with my actions than my own reason has over my thoughts, had disapproved of a physical theory published a little while before by another person. I will not say that I agreed with this opinion, but only that before their censure I observed in it nothing which I could possibly imagine to be prejudicial either to Religion or the State, or consequently which could have prevented me from giving expression to it in writing, if my reason had persuaded me to do so: and this made me fear that among my own opinions one might be found which should be misunderstood, notwithstanding the great care which I have always taken not to accept any new beliefs unless I had very certain proof of their truth, and not to give expression to what could tend to the disadvantage of any person.23

Stepping back from this passage, it is clear that Descartes is suggesting that it is the authority of the clergy, as well as the State, which caused him to refrain from publicly embracing the Copernican theory (an act which would have been performed had Le Monde been published as planned). There is no doubt the recognition on the part of the philosopher that his own "local" autonomy runs up against a more "global" autonomy, in the form of State and Church. In his personal deliberations, Descartes does not fail to take into account the way in which his work will be received, not only by the community-at-large, but also (and more importantly, for various reasons) by the "powers that be"—those "certain persons"..."whose authority cannot have less weight with my actions than my own reason has over my thoughts". This is Descartes' acknowledging that the State and Church do in fact have a measure or "weight", which must be placed in the balance—a weight equal to or greater than the weight of his own thought. This raises the thorny question of exactly how much weight Descartes at any time reserved to himself, since, in the end, he "alters his resolution to publish". Apparently (and not only on this particular occasion) the scales were tipped against his own inclinations. (The larger question, of course, is whether or not the State and the Church have received a "false measure", i.e., whether Descartes dissembled his opinions on the Copernican issue, as well as in the Meditations, for prudential reasons, or for other reasons which go unnamed.)
With this in mind, it is easy to see why Descartes was so inclined to cultivate the "protection" of those in authority, although admittedly it is less clear precisely what is meant by "protection" in this case. Consider these texts:

The motive which induces me to present to you this Treatise is so excellent, and, when you have become acquainted with its design, I am convinced that you will have so excellent a motive for taking it under your protection, that I feel that I cannot do better, in order to render it in some sort acceptable to you, than in a few words to state what I have set myself to do.24

That is why, whatever force there may be in my reasonings, seeing they belong to philosophy, I cannot hope that they will have much effect on the minds of men, unless you extend to them your protection.25

What is striking about our first text is that Descartes is concerned not for the protection of his person, but for the protection of his Treatise. His reasoning is that if his manuscript is embraced by the authorities at the Sorbonne, he shall have no fear for his prudential welfare.

He asks that the Dean and Doctors at the Sorbonne extend protection to his reasonings, in the recognition that unless this protection is afforded them, they shall have no force in the community-at-large. Now, one might well ask, why should Descartes ask for such a thing? Is his reasoning so weak that it cannot stand on its own? Why does he make his Treatise in this way consequent upon the approval and approbation of the clergy?

The answer, I think, lies in the nature of the philosophy which he is attempting to write. In a word, it lies in the peculiar content and "design of the Treatise". As in the case of geometry, where few have actually struggled with the complexity of the ancient geometer's reasoning, so in philosophy there are those who "are not fitted for metaphysical speculation". Despite the fact that the Meditations have a greater certainty than even geometry, Descartes confesses that it is likely that his work will be understood by a "very limited number of persons".26 The problem is compounded by the fact that the Meditations "are a little lengthy" and "dependent the one on the other". Furthermore, they demand a mind which is wholly free of prejudice, "and one which can be easily detached from the affairs of the sense".27 The problem is compounded still further by the fact that most persons think they are adept at philosophy, and give the impression that they understand it, whereas in truth they believe that the nature of philosophy is to render "all problematical", leaving few who are actually concerned with the search after truth. What Descartes is driving at here, I think, is that most persons are more concerned with "finding the error", than in finding out the truth, and this kind of hasty generalization and faulty inference would be disastrous if applied to the Meditations, where the subtlety of the argument and the order and intention of the design combine to make study of it extraordinarily difficult. Such a Treatise must be somehow protected against the legions of those who would abuse its intent, and stumble over its peculiar design.
Still, one might ask, what is the price one pays for such "protection"? The answer is clear: one must show deference. But how much deference must be shown? This depends upon the type and amount of protection which is sought. The higher the authority, the more protection afforded, and consequently the more deference to be shown. In the case of Descartes, he was appealing to the Faculty and Dean of a most prestigious theological institution, and his tone in requesting their assistance is worthy of their high office:

But the estimation in which your Company is universally held is so great, and the name of Sorbonne carries with it so much authority, that, next to the Sacred Councils, never has such deference been paid to the judgment of any Body, not only in what concerns the faith, but also in what regards human philosophy as well; everyone indeed believes that it is not possible to discover elsewhere more perspicacity and solidity, or more integrity and wisdom in pronouncing judgment. ²⁸

Is this dissembling writing on the part of Descartes, or is it the simple recognition on the part of a philosopher that his work is doomed to misunderstanding and distortion unless a "benefactor" is found? Perhaps Descartes reasoned that, short of a special Council convening, as in the case of Galileo, the best way to ensure that a Council would be unnecessary is to show deference to the Sorbonne, and attempt to get one's work approved. (Presumably, if Descartes had been addressing a Sacred Council, his tone would show more deference yet!) Perhaps a case could be made for Descartes' being an overtly cautious and pragmatic man, who recognized the sensitive spirit of the times, and the problematic character of his work, and was simply taking the logical steps necessary to get his work "off the ground". If that involved showing deference to the State, and to religious authorities, that was the price to be paid. On the contrary, perhaps Laporte was right, and Descartes really did have "intellectual and moral scruples" with respect to the work of Copernicus and Galileo, and merely wants the religious authorities to know that his "motives are pure", and he is a friend to the State and an ally to revealed religion?

The reference to motives is not accidental. It is an issue which Descartes himself raises, and one which is fraught with difficulties. From what has been said above, it would seem that if Descartes reasonably expected to have his writing protected, he needed to "come clean" and be forthright with respect to his motives. He tacitly acknowledges this requirement when he says "that I feel I cannot do better, in order to render it in some sort acceptable to you, than in a few words to state what I have set myself to do".²⁹ Thus we might say, in order to gain protection one must divulge motive. Furthermore, Descartes is hopeful that there might be a "transference of motive" from himself to the authorities at the Sorbonne. This is the significance of the very first sentence of the Dedication, where Descartes confesses that his motive is so excellent in presenting the Treatise that he is certain that (once its design is comprehended) they also will have an excellent motive for taking it under their protection.

But here we are on slippery ground. Are motives the kind of things which can be univocally determined and gauged, let alone trans-
ferred? Or do motives (Lat. motus, from movere, to move) like animal drives and desires, constantly pass over to more comfortable haunts? I am standing in the company of a jilted lover, who is not mine, whom nevertheless I have long desired. She stammers, she shakes, she beckons my sympathies. I offer her my "objective counsel". What are my "motivators" here; how shall I univocally designate the totality of motives in this one act of volition? Can I make this one motive mine, or is it a "subject split twice over, doubly perverse"?

We often speak about "duplicity of motive". What is meant by duplicity here? Is there some keeper of the gate, rationing out motive two to a customer? Or is this tacit recognition on our part that our motives slip away from us, they pass over into nothing, leaving but a trace, a residue, signifying the absence of a presence?

Here at least (seemingly) is the evidence for the much discussed "dissimulation thesis". Presumably, the defenders of the thesis would locate in texts like this a concealment or irony on the part of Descartes, where he intimates to the "knowing" reader that his motives are not so pure after all, that he has a "hidden agenda" not readily seen. Opponents of the thesis argue eloquently that such a thesis is subversive of the text, and that all hermeneutics operates within an environment of prior trust and commitment.

Both the opponents and the defenders of the "dissimulation thesis" imagine that motives are the kinds of things which can be isolated and interrogated; that the issues of what Descartes' motive really was can be decided once and for all time. Both positions are equally wrong, and for the same reason: motives are simply not that kind of a thing. The question of motive is first and foremost a question of the text. And all questions of the text (the genitive of possession is thinkable here) which are authentic questions will not decree that the text must be foreclosed. Such a thing would be destructive of discourse, and would signify the loss of verbal desire. In short, it ignores the pleasure of the text.

In our discussion therefore of "order and intention", we must bear in mind that the path is littered with theories and suppositions about "author's intentions"; theories which have preyed on each other for hundreds of years. The most prudent approach to these questions is therefore one of respect; respect not so much for the theories which have been mercifully laid to rest, but for the text, which is in principle inexhaustible and playfully erotic.

1. THE DOCTRINE OF AUTHOR'S INTENTIONS ANNOUNCED.

Right from the start, in the opening pages of the Meditations, we sense a special sensitivity on the part of Descartes that his work is in danger of being misunderstood. His remedy is one which most authors do not hesitate to rely on: the insertion of a deliberate statement laying out the "author's intentions". But such statements often do not have the desired effect of rendering the author's statements on an issue entirely unequivocal. On the contrary, they often have an undesired (enthetic) effect of obscuring the issue, and introducing into the discussion a whole nest of hermeneutical problems. This is the case in the following text, which is the first passage in a whole series in which we first
glimpse the problem of what I have called the "hermeneutic order", i.e., a statement by Descartes regarding the way in which he expected his work to subsequently be interpreted. Note the connection in the following section (in which the text is cited) between "intention" and "order"—the first explicit mention of what has become a perennial problem in Cartesian scholarship, namely the question of circularity.

2. THE PROBLEM OF HERMENEUTIC ORDER

The first objection is that it does not follow from the fact that the human mind reflecting on itself does not perceive itself to be other than a thing that thinks, in the sense that this word only excludes all other things which might also be supposed to pertain to the nature of the soul. To this objection I reply that it was not my intention in that place to exclude these in accordance with the order that looks to the truth of the matter (as to which I was not then dealing), but only in accordance with the order of my thought (perception); thus my meaning was that so far as I was aware, I knew nothing clearly as belonging to my essence, excepting that I was a thing that thinks, or a thing that has in itself the faculty of thinking. But I shall show hereafter how from the fact that I know no other thing which pertains to my essence, it follows that there is no other thing which really does belong to it.31

Notice first of all the spatial terminology applied to the statement of intention: "in that place". Here is the localized statement of place, the deliberate "freezing" of text for the sake of exegetical clarity. Notice secondly the temporal language which follows: "But I shall show hereafter". Let us take up in turn both the spatialized terminology, as well as the temporal.

In the first place, then, Descartes wishes to specify his intention at this place in the Meditations, a specific this here, marking off this section of the Treatise from that section. Here the word intention seemingly is most appropriate; for instance, I quite commonly say, "My intention in that place was x. No, I do not mean that place; I mean here, where I have placed my finger, where you observe the red underlining. My intention here is x, it is not y, and you have confused y with x in this place. The giving of evidence waits upon (and anticipates) the proper moment. Descartes must first prepare his readers, and only when they have been suitably prepared can we move on to consider new evidence. This is the recognition on the part of the authors that there are further worlds of evidence; the "not yet" and "hereafter" which must be temporally deferred.

The problem arises when readers fail to differentiate the two orders spoken of, and ignore the spacing and deferral of the text. There is first of all "the order that looks to the truth of the matter". Here is Williams' "project of pure inquiry", the discovery of timeless, incorrigible truth which calls for tenseless language.32 The truth of the matter is omnitemporal; it waits for no man. On the other hand, the "order of my thought" signifies the genetic aspect of intention, the psychological, historical intent. This order signifies the order of my awareness or perception of the truth, and necessarily requires tensed discourse.
Descartes is suggesting that every meditation has a double consideration—a double parentage. In every meditation (to which he attaches his name) there is a twofold intention: (1) to set forth the truth of the matter, and (2) to divulge the order of his thought. The first intention is formal and methodic; we are asked to consider the possibility abstractly, as a possibility for thought. The second intention is more personal, even autobiographical, employing what James Collins calls "the artful I". The style of writing is tailored to these intentions: thus, in a meditation the author is free to represent the autonomous give and take of his own reflections. The second intention keeps us from severing completely the author from his "offspring". Frankfort hails Descartes on precisely this point, crediting him with solving one of the touchiest problems of philosophical writing—"to protect the vital individuality of philosophic inquiry without betraying the anonymity of reason".

There is of course a danger in emphasizing the second intention at the expense of the first. Such a neglect of secondary intention would produce a reading of the Meditations as "colloquial autobiographical narrative". This reading leads to the assumption that Descartes is concerned only with the facts of his own intellectual development, his own private mental history.

To guard against just this misunderstanding, Descartes proposes the two levels of intention. His response to the first objection in Preface therefore is to point out of his readers that it was not his intention (read: first level intention) in that place (spatial delimitation) to exclude x (in this case certain considerations pertaining to the nature of the soul) in accordance with the order that looks to the truth of the matter (read methodic order; project of pure inquiry unaffected by idiosyncratic autobiography) as to which he was not then dealing (temporal deferral of consideration)—but it was his intention (secondary intention) to exclude x in accordance with the order of his thought (read autobiographical history; the genetic aspect, stressing the order of his personal discovery).

Here then is Descartes' masterly effort to preserve the anonymity of Reason which is necessary to his project of pure inquiry, while protecting the "vital individuality" of philosophical investigation. As we have seen, this attempt turns on the appeal to author's intentions, and the discriminating use of spatial and temporal language to signify difference of order. What can be said of such an attempt?

Descartes, it is argued, avoids the trap of rendering his Meditations nothing more than a "solipsistic soliloquy" by placing the order of discovery in the service of the order that looks to the truth of the matter. Thus, in the Meditations, that interpretation and criticism is to be favored (i.e., is sanctioned by the author) which recognizes that the order of personal discovery is always already targeted upon the (prior) order that looks purely to the truth—the pure order, unmoved by time and flux and human contingency.

The second level intention must, therefore, give way to and be directed by the pure methodic intention. At this point, one might reasonably ask whether the methodic intent (with its corresponding purity) can escape the ebb and flow of the text? Asked in Platonic terms, the question becomes how one can bridge the chasm (Gk. chorismos, cleft).
between Being and Becoming? In Cartesian terms, is it reasonable to assume that a reader of the text can (even if this should be his wish) imitate or somehow participate in the methodic intent, when the very vehicle of participation is itself a part of the temporal flux? Or is it possible that the intention itself becomes displaced by its medium—language—so that the pure, methodic pristine clarity of intent is de-centered by the chaotic madness of the text, which subverts and destroys the secondary intentions of the author, thus throwing the problem into the lap of the reader? In the words of Barthes, "We are now beginning to let ourselves be fooled no longer by the arrogant antiphrastical recrimination of good society in favor of the very thing it sets aside, ignores, smothers, or destroys; we know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at cost of death of the author."  

Descartes can rightly be viewed as a pioneer, in his enunciation of the Ego, first in itself, which requires that philosophy be understood as sagesse—as the philosopher's quite personal affair. Thus Husserl rightly points to Descartes as "having the serious will to free himself radically from prejudices", although he ultimately fails to make the "transcendental turn". Descartes saw quite clearly that philosophy must first arise as my wisdom, as my self-acquired knowledge tending towards universality, a knowledge for which I can answer from the very start, by virtue of my own absolute insights. What I seek in my poverty, without any knowledge whatsoever, is a method for going on—some ways of regulating my mind, to keep it on the right path, and rescue me when I stray. What must be established as method therefore, is the order of my cognitions, which shall proceed from intrinsically earlier to intrinsically later cognitions. So then we need a beginning, in which the affairs of the world are first suspended and a methodic line of advance which ideally is not chosen arbitrarily, but conforms to the nature of the things themselves.

This method, first announced in the Regulae ad Directionem Ingenii, and developed and applied to metaphysics in the Meditations emphasizes first and foremost the need for order and measure. The order we follow is the systematic and continual line of advance, from evidence which is first in itself and apodictic, to evidence which is "adequate", and mediate (mediated for instance by memory). Stretched further and further, we measure our distance from the first self-evident truth which we embraced—the certainty that I am a thing that thinks. From this initial starting place, however, we soon find ourselves further and further. What is to keep us on the right track? Adherence to the regulated order. This is why Descartes gets so upset if the order is discovery is neglected or distorted by a too-hasty reader. When such a thing happens, the truth of the matter will never be known—we must go back and retrace our steps, as it were, remembering to accept as true that which does not admit of doubt, and has adequate evidence. Consequently, in presenting his system of metaphysics, Descartes is very careful to prepare his readers for what is to come next. Without this preparation, they might hastily embrace something which appeared to be so, but for which they lacked evidence. Thus, the order of discovery is more than strictly personal after all. It is in principle repeatable, for those who have the patience to abide by the regulation of the method. Disorderly, premature questions get us into trouble, and must be avoided at all costs. Hence the stress on what was said in this place, at this time.
The question remains, however, whether this order of meditation stressed in the *Meditations* can be carried over to the participating reader through the medium of language? Put in another way, we ask whether consciousness can discipline itself to the task of such a reading. Carried over to the realm of the text, the question becomes, "Will my statement of intentions, and clarification of statements about intention be able to arrest the change and flux and playfulness of the very language in which my intentions are announced"?

Perhaps if Descartes were insisting here only upon the first order, and stressing the necessity of the pure project, we could understand him. He would thus be insisting on the purity of his project, the nobleness of his resolve, and indubitability of the truth which is gained and... the tenselessness of the discourse used to express it. Here once again, the problem confronts us, and incites us to examine the structures of our language anew.

Descartes is buttressed by the assumption that his text was a linear assemblage of words which released a single "theological" meaning (the message of the Author-God). The critic, on this model, was that individual who then attempted to impose a limit on the text; but more than that, the critic furnished the "final signified", the theological discourse which declared with the "intent" of the author has been found, and the text has been closed. "When the Author has been found, the text is "explained"—victory to the critic!"

Such a model presupposes that the text is spatially one-dimensional. It fails to recognize that there is an interval, a distance between elements in that space wherein the signs are playing, differing from each other and from themselves. The space becomes a multi-dimensional space, wherein we witness the free-play of differences. Similarly, the language of temporality alerts us to the fact that the text itself is a tissue of signs, an impure imitation of the pure project of thought that is lost, infinitely deferred.

What becomes of intentions on this model, one might well ask? Language knows a subject, not person. The Author, far from "owning" his text, and "nourishing it" with announcements of privileged intentions, is born with the text, and is ultimately destroyed by it. Here is the impossibility of a one-dimensional space, with intention decreed in this place, at this time; The Author is simply not the subject with the book as predicate.

Our own work, therefore, attempts to point to a "clearing"—the dismantling to the now-familiar constellations of critical assumptions with respect to the *Meditations*, and a clearing away of a new space, without the nostalgia for origins which obliges us to retain telic remembrances of the author's intentions.

3. THE QUESTION OF VERACITY, AND THE CONCEIVABILITY OF "DISSEMBLING WRITING"

In Caton's discussion of Descartes' veracity and intention, there is a distinction made between two "versions" of the dissimulation thesis. The first version, advanced by such scholars as Balz, Beck, Rod and
Heidegger proposes that "the exigencies of exposition" forced Descartes to distort his teaching by expounding his untraditional thought in traditional concepts. This is Heidegger's contention when he observes that Descartes' "repeated efforts to make the novelty of the foundations of metaphysics understandable to his contemporaries forced (him) to speak on the level of tradition, and thus to explicate his position extrinsically, i.e., inappropriately". Heidegger is claiming, therefore, says Caton, that precisely what is new and essential in Descartes is necessarily misrepresented, because of the necessity of speaking on the level of the tradition. Caton goes on to point out that all of the above named authors agree that it is the central conception of mind as res cogitans which is distorted by the exposition of it as a substance. To their number we might also add Russell, who notes the discoveries of Gilson and Koyré concerning the scholasticism which lies hidden as an unclarified prejudice in the Meditations, and makes this observation:

Unfortunately these prejudices were at work when Descartes introduced the apparently insignificant but actually fateful change whereby the ego becomes a substantia cogitans, a separate human "mens sive animus", and the point of departure for inferences according to the principle of causality—in short, the change by virtue of which Descartes became the father of transcendental realism, an absurd position.

In my judgment, the language of intention necessitates something like a dissimulation thesis. Because the philosopher Descartes was a temporal, historical creature, he was subject to serious pressures, especially from the religious authorities. The incident in 1633-34 involving the voluntary suppression of Le Monde is a prime instance where Descartes' deference and spirit of conciliation towards authority is most evident. What Heidegger and others are saying, therefore, is that in these times certain opinions and philosophies must be deferred—the revolution of "world-picture" for which Descartes hoped must be postponed, or at any rate, it must not be flaunted. This deference and conciliation leaves its trace in Descartes' writings. The "new wine" of his revolutionary physics must somehow be packaged in the outdated "old wineskins" of Catholic scholasticism. Consequently, Descartes must find some way to assure knowledgeable readers that he has not abandoned his quest; on the other hand, he must constantly assuage the fears of the scholastics, many of whom were given over to "the excitation of passions".

Such a view of the matter quite naturally leads one to the second version of the dissimulation thesis, which, as Caton says, "lives a somewhat fugitive existence in Cartesian scholarship". This theory has been advanced by such men as Charles Adam and Leibniz, as well as Maxime Leroy, and claims that Descartes' misrepresentations are deliberate. The co-editor of the Œuvres, Adam, went so far as to say, "His (Descartes') protestations of respect for the religion of his country, sincere as they are, should not impose upon us"; and Descartes' metaphysics is "a flag to cover the goods", namely his physics. Claims like these, as Caton points out, imply that in reality Descartes adhered exclusively to the first rule of the method, i.e., to give credence only to reason, and that he therefore rejected the claims of religion and Aristotelian physics as well as everything in the tradition "upon which a rational theology might be developed replacing traditional theologico-meta-
physical principles by mathematical principles as the foundations of the sciences". Descartes, it is argued, foresees a new life for mankind made possible by the conquest of nature through his technological physics. Of course, these views are stated rather openly in the correspondence, but muted considerably, even obscured, in the major writings.

I have no desire to become embroiled in the continuing controversy surrounding the dissimulation thesis. I wish to make two observations:

(1) The first observation is that despite the evidence which can be accumulated in support of a "dissimulation thesis", the fact remains that Descartes did in fact engage (at times) in a spirited defense of his views, as well as his person. Even when he opts to show deference to authority, he lets the authorities know he reserves the ultimate judgment concerning controversial matters to himself. That is to say, Descartes often mounts a spirited defense in support of the "freedom of philosophy", and of the philosopher, who is often at the mercy of people whose motives are to be suspected, and whose passions must be feared. I will return to this theme in the discussion which is to following concerning "Grounds for the Possibility of Severance From Community".

(2) The second observation to be made is that Descartes was not interested merely in the toleration of his person. We saw this in the Dedication to the Meditations, where he asks not for the protection of his person, but for the protection of his writing. This is not an insignificant point. The plain fact of the matter is that Descartes ardently desired that his philosophy become publicly acceptable. Note how careful he is in that Dedication: one gets the impression of a man who is bent on certainty, who wants nothing more than to pre-dispose his audience for what he is about to impart to them. The motif of "protection" is thus nothing but the "extra-philosophical" motivation for setting up an agreeable philosophical atmosphere. Descartes is saying to the community that one needn't commit oneself to the program of the Meditations right off—given the program and design of the work that would probably be unreasonable. It is, however, Descartes' intention to declare his good intentions in the work by showing deference to the reading public, in order to pre-dispose men of ability to his work.

When Descartes states in that place that he is concerned to "render his work in some way acceptable to you", what follows is not explicitly a philosophical argument. Descartes is not here trying to engender philosophical assent, but rather extrinsic social assent. He is aiming at a kind of non-philosophical acceptability: to look at the "surrounding traits" of a manuscript with a conditional attitude. If what I say is the case (he seemingly argues) then people and society at large will be benefited, as well as theology and, yes, even philosophy.

Descartes was a man who was concerned with the impressions that his writing would have on society, and in particular non-philosophers. He saw (rightly) that his method had a broader range of application
than just philosophy, and this becomes the guiding motivation for the expansion of the applicability of the method.\textsuperscript{56} There is, of course, a certain danger in venturing outside of the reaches of philosophy proper. For instance, men and women not trained in philosophy often lack the patience to attend diligently to the order of the text; they are always rushing to look at the end of the work to see the author's "conclusions", i.e., where one "winds up" if such and such a position is adopted. Nevertheless, Descartes recognizes this danger, and is prepared to take the risk, providing he can retain the right to instruct the reader "at second hand". That is to say, Descartes realizes that he must find a policy for dealing with people who "lose their way" in the Meditations.

With full recognition that there is tension in the air (as there must be when world-consciousness experiences that peculiar "shift" which renders all received opinions problematic, and throws a people up against the boundaries), Descartes find at his disposal an age-old tool—a tool which is as old as writing itself. The tool is, of course, the language of intentionality, except in the hands of Descartes it becomes radicalized, personalized. With this tool Descartes gropes his way toward a policy; a way of dealing with community-expectations, that perverse blend of ancient opinion and radical excitation of revolutionary fever which can destroy a philosopher (or any artist or politician for that matter). In Descartes' skilled hands the language of intentionality is exploited for its fully possibility. Is the church uneasy? No matter, we can deal with them by stoking the churchman's pious ego. Are one's professional colleagues uneasy with the snail's pace of progress in the revolution? Here again, one invokes the privilege of the author to soothe nerves, calm passions, and above all, stick to the program! The language of intention allows Descartes to play one group off against the other, while he himself held the reins, and sought to keep the whole project from running away with itself into certain disaster.

All of which brings us back to my fundamental assertion in this section, that the language of intention necessarily involves us in questions of dissimulation. Let us focus our attention for the duration of this section with the following passage:

But I think that there are many other things in them (besides their theological themes); and I tell you, between ourselves, that these six Meditations contain all the foundations of my physics. But that must not be spread abroad, if you please, for those who follow Aristotle will find it more difficult to approve them. I hope that (my readers) will accustom themselves insensibly to my principles, and will come to recognize their truth, before perceiving that they destroy those of Aristotle.\textsuperscript{57}

Caton remarks that it appears that Descartes is here pursuing a certain rhetorical strategy to secure the approval of the scholastic philosophers of his day who adhere to a philosophy "buried under the ruins of antiquity"; and that the success of this strategy requires prudent silence about its character and aims.\textsuperscript{58} Caton goes on to point out that actually Descartes was quite voluble about the strategy in the Discourse, going so far as to "spell out his entire battle plan to potential recruits to his army".\textsuperscript{59}
Put in its simplest terms, the question of dissimulation hinges upon the question of whether Descartes, (deliberately or otherwise) misrepresented his actual views. If he did in fact misrepresent his views, one might accuse him of a "vile and dishonest act", a charge that sticks even if one defends oneself under the banner of "prudence".

On the other hand, such an act of misrepresentation may be excusable under certain circumstances, it is argued—especially when one is under strong pressure. "Presumably strong pressures, or the corruption of morals, might excuse a man for professing opinions he does not believe." There are those who have tried to show, however, that Descartes had no cause to take refuge in this "exceptional clause", inasmuch as Descartes was (historically speaking) not in danger of persecution after all. Indeed, many have argued, quite persuasively, that in those views which Descartes publicly and unambiguously espoused, such as the "animal-machine hypothesis, the mechanistic universe", and so forth, Descartes was remaining well within the limits of the tolerance of his day. Even if we grant that this is the case, as Caton points out, this still has no bearing on what remains as the principle question, which is only whether Descartes believed that he was under strong pressure. That Descartes believed he was under such pressure can be seen readily in the following letter to Mersenne:

I allow myself to say that the Jesuits have assisted in the condemnation of Galileo; and the whole book of Father Sheiner (the Rosa Ursinus) shows very well that they are not his friends. But as several observations in this book furnish sufficient proof against the motives usually attributed to the sun, I cannot believe that Father Sheiner himself in his soul disbelieves the Copernican theory. This so astonishes me that I dare not write my own opinion. For I seek only repose and tranquility of spirit which are goods that cannot be possessed by those moved by animosity and ambition... I think that I am little able to instruct others, principally those who, desiring to acquire some credit by false opinion, would perhaps be destroyed, if the truth were discovered.

In this same context Descartes reiterates his motto, bene vixit, bene qui latuit, "He lives well who is well hidden". This is a fairly young Descartes who says this, and it may rightly be taken as a good prudential maxim for hard times. Perhaps we in our own age might render the motto, "Keep a low profile", or "Live low and last longer!" Certainly one must admit that attempting a shift in the time encrusted world-picture is a dangerous enterprise, particularly when the prevailing world-picture has endured as long as the Aristotelian astronomical model had. In such a situation, maxims of self-prudence are clearly acceptable, are they not?

Nonetheless, historians continue to conclude after weighing all of the evidence that Descartes exaggerated the extent of the plots against his life, an opinion which was voiced by Baillet, Descartes' first biographer, and the man who is chiefly responsible for Descartes' reputation as a somewhat timid man. Another source, of course, is Descartes himself, who wrote that he "made no other profession that cowardice", and who said in the Passions of the Soul that "in a very unequal match, it
is better to withdraw honorably or ask quarter, than to expose oneself bluntly to certain death: 12.

Nevertheless, I wish to return now to consider again that famous passage about the "foundations of my physics", in order to clarify exactly how the maxims of self-prudence converge with the strategy of long-range displacement of tradition, by means of the language of intentionality.

On the one hand, as we examine this text, we can be certain that Descartes understood (however dimly) the revolutionary character of his thought, especially with respect to his physics, and the corresponding technological advance which is tied to it. Understanding all of this, he could foresee difficulties if the full impact of the revolution which he had ignited should take hold during his very lifetime. That is to say, we can be sure that Descartes understood that the first rule of his method, to give credence only to reason, conforming to the twofold criteria of clarity and distinctness, was in direction opposition to the teachings of the Church and the scholastic theologians; and he understood further that the new life which he anticipated through his technological physics was destructive of Aristotle and the entire tradition of natural theology embraced in the schools. Thus, there emerges in the writings of Descartes a peculiar strategy, to adopt a "long-range plan" to displace Aristotle, by (a) muting the extent of his rupture with the past (and the Church) even as (b) he cautiously emphasizes the novelty of his views.

At this point, it may be helpful to make reference to Caton's study of Descartes' Notae in programma, wherein Descartes lays out certain interpretive principles which (according to Caton) may comprise for us what may be called a "Cartesian hermeneutic". I list all five of these principles as found in Caton, 20:

1. Dissembling writing is literally "double talk", because it presupposes that the author addresses two audiences simultaneously, one of which is mollified by the repetition of familiar prejudices, while the other are the "keen-witted" or "strong minds" for whom the truth is intended.

2. The domain in which dissimulation can be expected is determined by the received opinion of the day enjoying the authority of force or ostracism, namely politics, religion, and scholastic philosophy.

3. Contradictions that arise from a class between propositions drawn from reason and faith, respectively, are to be resolved in favor of reason. Contradictions that arise from a clash between traditional philosophic opinions and untraditional opinions are to be resolved in favor of the latter. Traditional philosophic terminology is suspect as being familiar bottles for new wine.

4. Contrary tendencies in Descartes' writing are produced by his intention to conciliate the Aristotelians while at the same time "destroying" the foundations of Aristotle's philosophy.
5. The authentic addressee is the man who "joins good sense with study".67

Principles number 1 and 4 in particular illustrate the problems that emerge hermeneutically when the language of intention is employed. Principle number 1 would seem to indicate that Descartes has differing intentions for different groups of readers. The fourth principle suggests that contradictions which may appear in Descartes' writings are the result of these shifting intentions.

Thinking back to the "physics" text, one might say that Descartes was concerned for those readers of his work in metaphysics, who knew that he was critical of Ptolemaic astronomy, thinking that this pre-disposition might prejudice them. His physics does have metaphysical foundations, he reasons, and thus he will not hide them from the community, his intention being to start with metaphysics and shift to physics, while his readers gradually got accustomed to his method. The point is, he does not want his Meditations to be dismissed on wholly extrinsic grounds, e.g., because his physics does not agree with the received world picture. Descartes is arguing that his Meditations must be studied foundationally, a fact that will not go unheeded by those who unite good sense with study; who furthermore merge the esprit geometrique with the esprit de finesse.

It is Descartes' "hope" that his readers will not prejudge his Meditations because of the prevailing world-picture, and its opposition to what Descartes perceives to be the "emerging" world-picture. In addition, he hopes that they will "accustom themselves insensibly" to his principles. Here is clearly a hope expressed for the new community, i.e., the reading public. The "custom language" here is particularly interesting, as much for what it excludes as for what it includes. This text is only one of many (the third rule of the Regulae is another) where Descartes speaks in terms of ancient (past) customs and opinions in a pejorative way, i.e., as if there were a danger in adhering too closely to the testimony of the ancients; namely, the danger that we might become "infected with their errors", (even as we try to guard against it).

There is, however, a more positive connotation attached to the word custom for Descartes, which involves the sound habituation of mind. In stressing his own order and intention to be rigorously followed in the Meditations Descartes is exercising his hope that a sound philosophical habituation will replace an uncritical handing over of customs to self evidence—the bane of the time-encrusted scholastic tradition. Seen in this perspective, methodic doubt (the project of pure inquiry) is intended to clear the air of the type of "memory assent" which is tradition generated. Thus, one might say that Descartes' goal in the formation of a new community was to transfer the grounds of assent from memory-generated quotations from the past to the evidential accustoming of mind. Once again we find here the themes of order and measure, inasmuch as Descartes recognizes that such "insensible accustoming" comes very gradually. That is to say, there is a gradual consolidation of the evidence. Here again one is reminded of the temporal and spatial language, whereby the philosopher must discipline himself to "wait upon" the giving of evidence, being always conscious of the "not yet", i.e., the temporally postponed evidence.
Once again, however, I find that I must question such "intentions", principally on the grounds that all writing necessitates a certain "distancing" from the text. Ultimately the author finds himself severed from the text, and his own writing becomes, in a sense, a stranger to him. The situation may perhaps be compared to a broken love affair, where one partner is unwilling or unable to make that final "break" with his lover, and insists, to the embarrassment of both, to invoke memories of the past into a hopelessly irretrievable affair. Or perhaps one finds a new love, whom he cannot have, but cannot release. Hoping against hope, he plays the fool, writing letters, making calls, each time regretting his actions, but acknowledging that he cannot bring himself to say goodbye forever. What shall we say of such a man? That he "will not go softly into that bleak night"? That he is unwilling to relinquish his privileged position and allow his former lover a measure of self-determination? Ultimately I think we must say that all of his announced intentions and clarifications of the relationship are muted and distorted by his own chaotic passions, which mockingly twist his sublimest intentions into cynical demands for a power which is not his to command.

In the same way, I think, the language of intention announces new twists and ambiguities, which all stem from an author's reluctance to let his text live—to realize that all writing is in principle inexhaustible, and there are only other interpretations, which differ one from another. There is no final interpretation meted out by the author to the waiting throngs who hang upon his every word. There is only interpretation, one after another, and we must be content to observe the free play of signs which constitutes the text, and not be overly concerned with the "truth" and "finality" of our interpretations. Truth in this context oversteps the limits of being an honorific term, and itself becomes the unfounded hope that there is an origin or a presence outside of the playful differing of signs which can be confirmed by the linguistic system, and frozen by a statement of intentions. We are witnessing the breakup of such a notion of presence and self-presence, wherein the author is de-centered, because ultimately man himself (as Author-Guide) has been removed as the baseline of interpretation. Thus Jacques Derrida can say,

There are thus two interpretations of interpretation, of structure, of freeplay. The one seeks to decipher, dreams of deciphering, a truth or an origin which is free from freeplay and from the order of the sign, and lives like an exile the necessity of interpretation. The other, which is no longer turned toward the origin, affirms freeplay and tries to pass beyond man and humanism, the name man being the name of that being who, throughout the history of metaphysics or of ontotheology . . . has dreamed of full presence, the reassuring foundation, the origin, and the end of the game.68

Derrida can say this, of course, because such is the strange being of the sign—half of it is "not there", and the other half "not yet".

B. GROUNDS FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF SEVERANCE FROM COMMUNITY

From his earliest writings Descartes struggled with the question of the status of the philosophical tradition, and the possibility of forging new ground in philosophy. Thus, we ought not to be surprised to
find in the *Meditations* a tension between respecting the testimony of the ancients (and the subsequent reformulation in the Schools), and the absolute autonomy of the individual scientist/philosopher. Our concern in this section is to see how he handles this issue, and seeks to maintain a delicate balance between the historical claims of the tradition on the one hand, and his own pioneering philosophic conscience on the other.


Any and all claims of the scientist's severing himself from the community always presupposes a community from which he is to be severed. Thus, the historical testimony of the ancients is not rejected out of hand, but neither is it to be followed slavishly.

In the subjects we propose to investigate, our inquiries should be directed, not to what others have thought, nor to what we ourselves conjecture, but to what we can clearly and perspicuously behold and with certainty deduce; for knowledge is not won in any other way . . . To study the writings of the ancients is right, because it is a great boon for us to make use of the labors of so many men; and we should do so, both in order to discover what they have correctly made out in previous ages, and also so that we may inform ourselves as to what in the various sciences is still left for investigation. But yet there is a danger lest in a too absorbed study of these works we should become infected with their errors, guard against them as we may.69

Here is that famous Cartesian overthrow of all of the convictions and customs which we have been accepting up until now, until nothing remains but that guiding final ideal of an absolute grounding of science, from the ground story up, based upon evidence which is first in itself and indubitable. Although the testimony of the ancients may be beneficial in some respects, it is easy for one to uncritically accept wholesale the errors of the ancients as well. Consequently, each philosopher/scientist must bear responsibility for his work alone. One cannot be overly concerned with the progress of others on this score. Each man is assigned to himself, that he may "once in his life" discover the possibility of certitude within himself alone.

2. The absolute autonomy of the scientist/philosopher.

The point is to be made here is that the philosopher/scientist has a responsibility to govern his own ultimate philosophical judgment. He has an obligation to safeguard that ultimate judgment at the expense of any outside force which would seek to forcibly compel him in any manner. Thus, in that passage cited from the *Discourse* earlier, Descartes states that "I will not say that I agreed with this opinion (the condemnation of Galileo), but only that before their censure I observed in it nothing which I could possibly imagine to be prejudicial either to Religion or to the State, or consequently which could have prevented me from giving expression to it in writing, if my reason had persuaded me to do so".

Here we see quite clearly that despite his deference to religious and temporal authority (which causes him to publicly refrain from embracing the Copernican theory), Descartes boldly announces that he re-
serves judgment as to the truth of the theory to himself. While prox­
ially deferring to the constraints which worked externally upon him,
and vexed him until the day he died, Descartes quite courageously in­
sisted upon the philosopher's ultimate reservation of final judgment. His
is a courage which we in these days would be wise to emulate.

ENDNOTES

1 The full title of this work, as it appeared on the original title
page of the 1641 Michael Soly (Paris) edition is: Renati Des-Cartes, Medi­
tationes De Prima Philosophia, In Qua Dei Existentia Et Animae Immortalitas
Demonstratur. The standard critical edition, which I have consulted
for this paper, is Oeuvres de Descartes, publiées par Ch. Adam et P.
Tannery, Paris, Cerf. 1897-1913; reprinted Paris, J. Vrin, 1957--; 2 vol­
umes. Hereafter, the Adam and Tannery critical edition will be cited sim­
ply as AT.

It is volume vii of AT which constitutes the Latin text; volume ix
is the French edition, translated into French by Duc de Luynes, with
the approval of Descartes. As Margaret Wilson points out, the notion of
Descartes' "approval" of the French text is not without its own ambigu­
ities, and despite the fact that he apparently introduces some changes
into the French edition, there is no way of knowing for certain whether
a given change is Descartes' or his translator's. Consequently, I shall
stay with the Latin text, relegating the alternative reading from the
French, as needed, to square brackets.

The policy of this report is to give all English translations in the
main body of the text, reserving the Latin for the footnotes. Unless oth­
ewise specified, all Latin quotes are from AT, vol. vii. The translation
used is that of Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross, The Philosophical
Works of Descartes, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1911); reprinted
1978; 2 vols. Hereafter this work shall be cited as HR, 1 or 2.

2 L.J. Beck, The Metaphysics of Descartes: A Study of The Media­
Beck.

3 AT iii, 265:16-21.

4 Beck, 40.

5 For a helpful discussion of the "synthetic" or geometrical method,
see Hooker's article in Michael Hooker, ed., Descartes: Critical and Inter­
Cf. also Frankfort's Introduction in Harry G. Frankfurt, Demons, Dream­
ers and Madmen: The Defense of Reason in Descartes' Meditations, (Indian­
apolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970) 3-9. Hereafter cited as DDM.

6 My use of the term "purity" in this paper is informed by Bernard
Williams' book, Descartes: The Project of Pure Enquiry (New York: Pen­
guin Books, 1978). Williams conceives of Descartes' project as one where­
in he is devoted solely to inquiry, and as long as this devotion con­tinues, he has no other interests. In William's words: "let us call the per­
spective from which all strategic considerations are laid aside except
those internal to inquiry and the search for truth the perspective of
the Pure Enquirer; our original primitive truth gatherer...may be said to turn into the Pure Enquirer when he loses all interest other than his interest in knowledge". Conceived in this way, the Pure Enquirer is seen as that individual who is exclusively devoted to maximizing the truth ratio—yet in terms of a wider usefulness to human life. Cf. 46-8. Hereafter cited as Williams.

7 This discussion is informed by Martin Heidegger, Being and Time (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 414-5.

8 Cf. Williams, chapter 1 ("Knowledge is Possible") for an excellent discussion of the problem of the "Cartesian Circle", and the argument against the classic "Memory Answer" which has been traditionally been suggested as a response to this problem.

9 HR 2:26. AT vii: 124-5. TERTIO, cum nondum certus sis de illa Dei existentia, neque tamen te de ulla re certum esse, vel clare et distincte aliquid te cognoscere, posse dicas, nisi prius certo et clare Deum moveris existere, secuitur te nondum clare et distincte scire quod sis res cogitans, cum ex ulla cognitio pendet a clara Dei existentis cognitione, quam nondum probasti locis ipsis, ubi conclusis te clare nosse quod sis.

10 Let the reader be advised that even in this sentence a hint is provided to a possible resolution of the problem by the temporal signifier "when", which cues us to the fact that there is a necessary temporal dimension to all evidence-giving...A consideration which I will pursue at some "later" time.

11 HR, 1:159. AT vii: 38. Sed hic praecipue de iis est quaerendum, quas tanquam a rebus extra me existentibus desumptas confidero, quae-nam me mo veat ration ut illas istis rebus similis esse existimationem. Nempe ita videor doctus a natura. Et praeterea experior illas non a mea voluntate nec proide a me ipso pendere.

12 HR, 1:139. AT viii:9. Quantum autem ad illos, qui, rationum mearum seriem et nexum comprehendere non curantes, in singulas tantum clausulas, ut multis in more est, argutani studebunt, non magnum ex huius scripti lectione fructum sunt percepturi; et quamvis forte in multis cavillandi occasionem inveniant, non facile tamen aliquid quo urget aut responsione dignum sit objiciant.


14 Beck, 44. Cf. AT iii: 241-42.


16 Cf. Kuhn, 10. Chapter II of Kuhn's book is an extended discussion of "the Route to Normal Science". Echoing Feyerabend, let me say that it is not at all clear to me that such a period of "normal science" has ever existed.

17 HR 1:118.


HR 1:118.

Cf. *AT* iii:259. As Caton points out, Laporte ignores this text from the Discourse, and fixes instead on the correspondence on the matter which is written mostly to Mersenne. Here he discovers "an intellectual and moral scruple about the Copernican theory".

HR 1:118.

This passage is taken from the Discourse, HR 1:118-19.

HR 1:133. *AT* vill:1. Tam justa causa me impellit ad hoc scriptum vobis offerendum, et tam justam etiam vos habitos esse confido ad ejus defensionem suscipiendam, postquam instituti mei rationem intelligetis, ut nulla re mellius illud hic possim commendare, quam si quid in eo sequutos sim paucis dicam.

HR 1:135. *AT* viii:5. Atque ideo, quaesecunque meae rationes esse possint,quia tamen ad Philosophiam spectant, non spero me illarum ope magnum operae pretium esse facturum, nisi me patrocinio vestro adjuvetis.

HR 1:135.

Idem.

HR 1:136. *AT* viii:5. Sed cum tanta inhaerat omnium mentibus de vestra Facultate opinio, tantaque sit authoritative SORBONAE nomen, ut non modo in rebus fidei nulli unquam Societati post sacra Concilia tantum creditum sit quam vestrae, sed etiam in humanana Philosophia nullibi major perspicacia et soliditas, nec ad ferenda judicia major integritas et sapientia esse existimetur.

Cf. note 24 above.


HR 1:137-138. *AT* viii:7-8. Primum est, ex eo quod men humana in se sonversa non percipiat aliquid se esse quam rem cogitandum, non sequitur naturam sive essentiam in eo tantum consistere, quod sit res cogitans, ita ut vox tantum caetera omnia exclut quae forte etiam dicit possent ad animae naturam pertinere. Cui objectioni respondeo me etiam ibi noluisse illa excludere in ordine ad ipsum rei veritatem (de qua scilicet tunc non agebam), sed dumtaxet in ordine ad meas perceptionem, adeo ut sensus esset me nihil plane cognoscere quod essem res cogitans, sive res habens in se facultatem cogitandi. In seuentibus autem offendam quo pacto, ex eo quod nihil aliud ad essentiam meam pertinere cognoscam, sequatur nihil etiam aliud revera ad illam pertinere.

Here is Mctaggart's "B-Series" which calls for the use of tenseless language.
McTaggart's "A-Series".

*DDM*, 3.

*Idem.*


It is not accidental that the *Discourse* was originally published anonymously. Cf. *DDM*, 9.


*CM*, 12.

*Idem.*

Rene Descartes, *Regulae Ad Directionem Ingenii*. Edited by G. Cappelli, with the Dutch translation (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966). The English translation of the *Regulae* which is followed is that of HR. Hereafter cited as *C*.

*IMT*, 146.


Caton, 10-20.


*Idem.*

*Idem.*

*CM*, 24.

This is an admittedly enigmatic statement which deserves to be unpacked and situated. As one reviewer of this article suggested to me, this statement might mean one of two things: 1) the thesis that language, like thought, is intentional (Brentano-like and unexciting); or, 2) "every case of 'I shall' necessitates dissimulation" (unclear and probably false). I certainly agree with number one, which seems self-evident to me and is not, in any case, the point to be made in the paper. I am not attempting to argue number two, at least not in an unqualified way. What I attempt to show in the paper is that in the context of a peculiar community situation, Descartes does adopt a studied strategy of disclosure/concealment which in point of fact does evoke theses of dissimulation in the reading/interpreting community. It seem prudent therefore to qualify number two to read, "in strategic disclosure/concealment environments, every case of 'I shall' necessitates dissimulation".
No doubt I am speaking intentionally to you as I write this, a mental act of my consciousness aiming at your consciousness in intentional fashion. In Husserl’s terms, I am effecting a noetic-noematic correlation, one which creates new meaning structures, and indeed makes meaning itself possible. As near as I can tell, I am not dissembling as I write, although I must at least admit the possibility that there are hidden sub-conscious forces at work which determine in some way not only what becomes present on the page, but what is non-present as well. In this case any strategic use of the language of intention has a double parentage: it is born on the one hand from a need to disclose; on the other hand from the desire to evade. The point I have tried to make throughout the paper is that Descartes is employing just such a strategic use of the language of intent. The result is that he often persuades his enemies, but confounds his friends (or ultimately, persuades his friends but confounds his enemies; or maybe he persuades and confounds his friends, his enemies, and himself?) In any case, one can see in these scenarios the seeds of a thesis—the thesis of dissimulation.

As I have said, the language of intention in Descartes’ text takes the form of a strategy of protection, deferral and conciliation. In such cases, one view oneself as required to "speak out of both sides of one's mouth", i.e., to "speak after the manner of the tradition", even when it is precisely the tradition which is being plotted against and subverted. For Descartes, in this strategic community situation, language must perform a double service and writing is a "double science": it must disclose and conceal.

Another way to ask the question is this: What are the requirements of dissimulation? Again, I think it is clear that one needs both an intent to reveal as well as an intent to conceal; but what is masked is the strategic locale of concealment/disclosure in Descartes text, a non-presence that positively marks the text and makes it ultimately undecidable. My strongest criticism of "theses of dissimulation" is that the dialectical character of dissimulation may make misreaders out of friends, as well as enemies: it is a (violent) two-edged theory. It is as if, in employing his strategy, Descartes provided "maps of misreading" both to his friends as well as his enemies. The result is that one may find a "friend" (Adam, Leroy) reappropriating the language of intention in the text in order to launch a theory, always a violent exercise...

53 Caton, 10.
54 Ibid., 11-12.
55 Ibid., 12.
56 For Descartes (and the Cartesian) as the benefactor of citizens, see the anonymous preface to Les Passions de l' âme. H Caton has argued that this is written by Descartes himself. Cf. "Les écrits anonymes de Descartes", Les études philosophiques (1976), 405-16. I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for calling this excellent article to my attention, a fact not without its own irony.

I should hasten to add that Descartes' stance toward community was politic throughout, and is always to be understood as plural. Thus, in appealing for protection and espousing fidelity toward existing com-
munities, it is clear that Descartes aspires towards a radically new community, socially constructed of persons of bon sens. Furthermore, there is a sense in which his highly personalized language (particularly in the Discourse and Meditations) in effect creates the new community, as the "artful I" ever tends toward a solidarity with a community of the "I-made-public"; in short, the "we". We might chance to phrase Descartes' problematic in this way: "I ought to be public but can't--but perhaps after all, we can?" Clearly then, the movement from the "I" to the "we", from privateness to publicness, is a political event, a fact which was not to escape Kant in The Conflict of the Faculties. As Werner Hamacher has remarked, a propos of Kant, "In speaking we become tomorrow". To which I can only add, "not without risk".

May I take the trouble to provide in this space, for readers whose eyes have strayed this far, a quotation from James Collins' Interpreting Modern Philosophy (54) which speaks eloquently to precisely this point (thus weaving into the text his signature, remembered with gratitude and fondness):

"Although the Discourse on Method is not solely an essay in personal reminiscence, it does communicate Descartes' methodology and doctrinal program within a vivid autobiographical context. It places a personal signature upon all his writing, obliging us to refer them quite definitely to his own life of reflection. Such personal reference is not meant in any trivial egoistic sense, as though it merely describes some private episodes having no general philosophic significance and validity. But it does serve Descartes' dual purpose of grounding arguments in his own perspective and act of judging the evidence, as well as eliciting a similar use of intelligence on the part of his readers. They learn to interpret his references to "I", "me", and "myself", in a composite sense which always keeps his general theory of self and mind closely related with a testing basis in his personal pursuit of the truth."

And how can the pursuit of truth be other than personal? And how shall the self be constructed if not socially, in community?

57 AT iii:297-8. The translation is that of Caton, 19.
58 Caton, 17.
59 Idem.
60 Idem.
61 Ibid., 19.
63 Caton, 18.
64 An alternative rendering suggested to me by James Collins.
65 Caton, 19.
66 Passions of the Soul, # 211. Found in HR 1:426-7.
67 Caton, 20.

HR 1:5-6. C. 6-7. Circa objecta proposita non quid alii senserint, vel quid ipsi suspecemur, sed quid clare et evidenter possimus intueri, vel certo deducere quaerendum est; non aliter enim scientia acquiritur. . .Legendi sunt Antiquorum libri, quoniam ingens beneficium est tot hominum laboribus nos uti posse tum ut illa, quae jam olim recte inventa sunt, cognoscamus, tum etiam ut quae eum ulterius in omnibus disciplinis supersint excogitanda admoneamus. Sed interim valde perculseum est, ne quae forsitan errorum maculae, ex illonum nimis attenta lectione contractae, quontumlibet invitis et carentibus nobis adhaerant.