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Marc Elliott Bobro

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# CONSOLATION AND CARTESIAN IMMORTALITY

Marc Elliott Bobro

Like many other Christian philosophers, past and present, Descartes envisions an “afterlife” for the soul after bodily death. Some, both Christian and non-Christian, including Geach, Strawson and Williams, have argued that the afterlife Descartes envisions is far from the attractive state heaven is supposed to be. Others, including Leibniz, Russier, and Cottingham, have argued that a Cartesian afterlife represents a state of existence that cannot even be rationally desired. But I shall argue in this paper that both criticisms fail to appreciate fully the details of Descartes’ doctrine of immortality.

*As for the soul’s condition after this life ... by natural reason alone we can make many gratifying guesses and have fine expectations, but we cannot have any certainty. (René Descartes: AT IV, 333 [1645])*

Many conceptions of immortality—indigenous, folk, and Christian—promise not only the endless, future existence of a conscious person in relation to other conscious persons and contingent upon gods or God, but also the possibility that this existence be blissful. Now, although Descartes does on occasion attempt to prove the natural immortality of the soul, he is notoriously shy about discussing the *nature* of immortality. Nevertheless, this fact has not stopped philosophers, Christian apologists, and even science fiction authors, from criticizing the sort of disembodied survival Descartes envisions for the soul after bodily death. Some have argued that such survival is far from blissful; actually, it is a “bleak fantasy.”<sup>2</sup> Others have argued that Cartesian immortality represents a state of existence that cannot be rationally desired.<sup>3</sup> But I shall argue that both criticisms reveal a lack of understanding of Descartes’ doctrine of immortality. All told, this doctrine does not deserve the volume of vilification it generally receives. Though it probably deserves some.

## *I. Death and Dualism*

“It is a savage superstition,” Peter Geach says, “to suppose that a [human] consists of two pieces, body and soul, which come apart at death; the superstition is not mended but rather aggravated by conceptual confusion, if the soul-piece is supposed to be immaterial. The genius of Plato and Descartes has given this superstition an undeservedly long lease of life; it gained some accidental support from Scriptural language ... about flesh



and spirit—accidental, because a Platonic-Cartesian reading of such passages is mistaken, as Scripture scholars now generally agree.”<sup>4</sup> Be that last point as it may, in this section I want to explain quickly what this “superstition” amounts to in Descartes’ hands.

For Descartes and the Scholastics, immortality entails the endless, future existence of a conscious person in relation to and contingent upon God. But, for Descartes, what are the logically necessary and sufficient conditions for the continued existence of a person? A person is *just* a particular thinking substance, a *res cogitans* (AT VII, 78: CSM II, 54). So, to continue to exist as one and the same person, one must remain one and the same particular *res cogitans*. What, however, are the logically necessary and sufficient conditions for the continued existence of a *res cogitans*? It is easier to answer this question via a process of elimination. The first thing to realize is that a *res cogitans*, a thinking substance, is utterly distinct from a *res extensa*, an extended substance. Descartes rejects hylomorphism—the view according to which individual substances are corporeal unities, constituted of matter and form—even while he retains the language of hylomorphism. According to traditional hylomorphism, death is the disintegration of a single, unified substance, for forms are themselves neither substances nor are they capable of existing apart from matter.<sup>5</sup> But, contrary to traditional hylomorphism, Descartes holds that our body (the *res extensa* we are temporarily united with) and soul (i.e., the *res cogitans* we are identical with) are two distinct substances, each of which could exist separately from the other. The essence of the body is extension; the essence of the soul is thought and volition, which cannot be extended. Cartesian death, therefore, entails the survival of the immaterial soul (the *res cogitans*) after decay of the material body (the *res extensa*).

Furthermore, Descartes eliminates all of the accidental properties or “accidents” of *res cogitans* as being identity conditions of *res cogitans*: “... the human mind,” he writes in the Synopsis of the *Meditations* (1640), “is not constituted of any accidents, but is a pure substance: for even if all of its accidents change, so that it has different objects of the understanding and different desires and sensations, it does not on that account become a different mind; whereas a human body loses its identity merely as a result of a change in the shape of some of its parts” (AT VII, 14: CSM II, 9). Descartes also eliminates from the identity conditions of *res cogitans* the passive faculty of sensory perception and its active counterpart, imagination. He writes in Meditation 6: “I find in myself faculties for certain modes of thinking, namely imagination and sensory perception. Now I can clearly and distinctly understand myself as a whole without these faculties” (AT VII, 78: CSM II, 54). In sum, it is neither necessary or sufficient for the continued existence of a *res cogitans*, and hence a person, to possess the same thoughts, beliefs, desires, sensations, mental images, or even the mental capacities of sensation and imagining. It follows that I could wholly preserve my identity even if, God forbid, all my current thoughts, beliefs, desires, and my other “accidents” were erased and replaced with new ones. So, what identity conditions are necessary and sufficient? Descartes appears to stress only two mental *capacities* in us: the faculty of thought or understanding (i.e., the intellect) and the faculty of volition (i.e., the will).

So, as long as I keep my intellect and will (just what this means is not at all clear), I am the same *res cogitans*, and hence the same person.

Such an account of what it means to be a *res cogitans* over time facilitates quite nicely a proof for our immortality, argues Descartes: since a *res cogitans* does not lose its identity on account of any change (however radical) of its accidents—as opposed to a *res extensa*—we cannot die, except by God’s hand (AT VII, 14: CSM II, 9; AT VII, 153: CSM II, 109). Lest I be misunderstood, I am not asserting here that this proof for the immortality of the soul is “nice.”<sup>6</sup> Instead, my point is merely that given Descartes’ dualist metaphysics, a “proof” for the soul’s immortality can easily be fashioned.

## II. Blissful Existence or Bleak Fantasy?

How attractive could a life, or better, an “afterlife,” be for a disembodied *res cogitans*? Or to state the question another way, could the promise of such an afterlife serve to console us regarding our future survival beyond death? Geach agrees with Descartes that we can demonstrate “the possibility of disembodied thought; thought unconnected with any living organism. And some continuing disembodied thought might have such connection with the thoughts I have as a living man as to constitute my survival as a ‘separated soul.’”<sup>7</sup> However, such a prospect is far from attractive, Geach argues:

To be sure, such survival must sound a meagre and unsatisfying thing; particularly if it is the case, as I should hold, that there is no question of sensations and warm human feelings and mental images existing apart from a living organism. But I do not want the prospect to be anything but bleak; I am of the mind of Aquinas about the survival of ‘separated souls’, when he says in his commentary on I Corinthians that my soul is not I, and if only my soul is saved then I am not saved nor is any man. Even if Christians believe there are ‘separate souls’, the Christian hope is the glorious resurrection of the body, not the survival of a ‘separated soul’.<sup>8</sup>

The Bible tells us of a sincere, wealthy young Jewish ruler who came up to Jesus and asked, “What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10:17). But, if Descartes were right, according to Geach, this young ruler would not *want* to inherit eternal life. Embodiment seems necessary (though of course not sufficient) for an *attractive* existence.

But must needs Descartes deny embodied immortality? In other words, might not Descartes stay true to his dualist theory of soul and body and his denial of the resurrection of the body we are united with in our time on earth *and* at the same time offer a vision of the afterlife that is truly attractive, and to that extent console us? It appears so, if Descartes were to accept a view wherein souls take on new, “subtle” or celestial bodies in the afterlife. Arguably, this is the orthodox Judaeo-Christian view, as articulated by thinkers as historically stratified as Paul, Origen, and Leibniz.<sup>9</sup> This is what Paul writes to the Corinthians:

There is a physical body, and there is a spiritual body.... Just as we have borne the image of the one made of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one. I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality. (I Corinthians 15:44-53)

Here, Paul expresses the proposition that there are different kinds of bodies. The resurrection-body will be a new one; it will be an incorruptible one, neither a body of flesh and blood nor a body of a purely phantasmal nature—that would be a form of extreme docetism.<sup>10</sup> Though historically there have been exceptions within the Christian community—Tertullian and St. Augustine both accepted a straightforwardly physical view of the resurrection body—we are told by an authority that “the pendulum has been swinging strongly in the direction of a more spiritual ... view.”<sup>11</sup> In fact, Christians by and large are motivated to hold a subtle or celestial body account of the resurrection in part for precisely the kinds of reasons Geach gives.

But there are two good reasons to think that Descartes would be unimpressed by such an attempt to reconcile his dualism with an embodied afterlife via union with a “celestial,” incorruptible body. First, according to Descartes, there are no naturally incorruptible bodies; being extended, bodies by their very nature undergo an ever-changing movement of parts, and are therefore subject to dissolution. And, Descartes is adamant that there cannot be two kinds of body—one corruptible and one not. As he attempts to demonstrate in the *Principles of Philosophy*, since we can understand body in only one sense (that is, simply in its being an extended substance), therefore celestial matter can be no different from terrestrial matter.<sup>12</sup> So “even if there were an infinite number of worlds, the matter of which they were composed would have to be identical” (AT VIII A, 52: CSM I, 232). Even if God were to render a body incorruptible, it seems that this would not change the body’s *essence*, but rather involve the restructuring of the laws of motion and perhaps the universe’s initial states. In other words, bodies are of one kind—extended substance; thus, they are *naturally* corruptible even if God were to allow some individual body or all individual bodies to persist forever.<sup>13</sup> (Descartes’ account of celestial and terrestrial matter alike as being generable and corruptible certainly owes much to Galileo’s devastating criticism of Aristotle.<sup>14</sup>)

Second, Descartes believes that even without the body, happiness, joy, pleasure, satisfaction, and contentment are possible. So, even if we could reconcile Descartes’ dualism with the possibility of an embodied afterlife, there might be no special reason to do so. To understand this second point, we must be aware of a couple of very important distinctions that Descartes makes. First, there is the distinction between strictly intellectual acts—“I have often distinctly showed that the mind can operate independently of the brain” (AT VII, 358-9: CSM II, 248)—and mental acts involving refer-

ence to physical states (AT X, 415-6: CSM I, 42f). So, Descartes denies the claim that the mind develops or deteriorates with the body, and conversely (AT VII, 353f: CSM II, 245). Second, there is the distinction between the kind of knowledge the soul gains “by the reflection which it makes on itself in the case of intellectual matters” and “in the case of corporeal matters” the kind of knowledge the soul derives from reflection “on the various dispositions of the brain to which it is joined, which may result from the action of the senses or from other causes” (AT II, 598: CSM III, 140). So, for example, a person thinking about God, or doing metaphysics, or reflecting on the soul itself—assuming, at least, that he or she has the true, non-physical notions of God, the soul, and so forth—is acting purely intellectually. So, even in a disembodied state, according to Descartes, intellectual acts and the knowledge gained therefrom are possible.

But knowledge is not the only thing to be gained in a disembodied state. There can be joy as well. In the *Passions of the Soul* (1649), Descartes writes that “the purely intellectual joy that arises in the soul through an action of the soul alone.... may be said to be a pleasant emotion which the soul arouses in itself whenever it enjoys a good [a good thing is that which reason judges to be agreeable to our nature (AT XI, 391: CSM I, 358)] which its understanding represents to it as its own” (AT XI, 397: CSM I, 360). So, for example, when someone meditates on the resemblance between the human soul’s nature and God’s nature and comes to understand properly that our mind is “an emanation of his supreme intelligence .... they are filled with extreme joy” (AT IV, 609: CSMK III, 309). “Of course,” as Descartes points out, “while the soul is joined to the body, this intellectual joy can scarcely fail to be accompanied by the joy which is a passion [namely, the ‘corporeal’ joy (AT XI, 396: CSM I, 360)]. For as soon as our intellect perceives that we possess some good, even one so different from anything belonging to the body as to be wholly unimaginable, the imagination cannot fail immediately to form some impression in the brain, from which there ensues the movement of the spirits which produces the passion of joy” (AT XI, 397: CSM I, 361). (As an interesting aside, when Descartes speaks of our imperfections in Meditation 4, he does not mention our passions at all. Instead, he focuses on the limitations of our intellect.<sup>16</sup>)

So emotions can attend both this life and the next, according to Descartes. But it seems that we can also have desires in the afterlife. And, in fact, we may have some of the same kinds of desires, whether we are united with a body or not. For example, in both states, we may have a desire for knowledge—Descartes calls this ‘curiosity’ (AT XI, 394: CSM I, 359)—and a desire for the preservation of the good and for the absence of an evil (AT XI, 375: CSM I, 350). Descartes also speaks of these desires being frustrated in the afterlife, leading to less-than-joyful emotions (AT XI, 434: CSM I, 378). There may be intellectual sadness as well; such a state affects the soul when the understanding represents an evil or deficiency as its own (AT XI, 397: CSM I, 361). Hence, the life of the disembodied soul as Descartes envisions it is not so different as we might first imagine from the life of the embodied soul.

For Descartes, therefore, we can have emotions and desires in a disembodied state. But what about sensations, feelings, and mental images?

Surely, Descartes' dualism entails that there would naturally be no *new* sensations, feelings, and mental images in a separated soul, for such "accidents" are mental acts that must involve reference to physical states.<sup>17</sup> There would thus be no bodily pleasures in the afterlife. But Descartes does not find this consequence at all unattractive. For there is an important difference between the pleasures of the body and those of the soul, as he explained to Princess Elizabeth after he heard that she was seriously ill:

The body is subject to perpetual change, and indeed its preservation and well-being depend on change; so all the pleasures proper to it last a very short time, since they arise from the acquisition of something useful to the body at the moment of reception, and cease as soon as it stops being useful. The pleasures of the soul, on the other hand, can be as immortal as the soul itself provided they are so solidly founded that neither the knowledge of truth nor any false conviction can destroy them. (AT IV, 286: CSM III, 264f)

Interestingly, this view of Descartes' echoes Hobbes, who writes in *Leviathan*: "[T]here is no such thing as perpetual tranquility of mind, *while we live here*; because life itself is but motion, and can never be without desire, nor without fear, no more than without sense" (Part I, vi, 58; my emphasis). But the idea here—and it is much clearer in Descartes than in Hobbes—is that the mind, at least on the intellectual level, can find permanent pleasure or "perpetual tranquility," to use Hobbes' phrase.

Descartes also emphasizes to Princess Elizabeth that the soul "subsists apart from the body, and is much nobler than the body, and that it is capable of enjoying countless satisfactions not to be found in this life. This prevents us from fearing death, and so detaches our affections from the things of this world that we look upon whatever is in the power of fortune with nothing but scorn" (AT IV, 292: CSM III, 265f). In fact, Descartes believes that "if we had no body ... we could not go too far in abandoning ourselves to love and joy, or in avoiding hatred and sadness" (AT XI, 434: CSM I, 378). Louis de la Forge, a Cartesian, thinks he understands what Descartes is driving at: "[The soul] will conceive things by the action of the understanding alone, which will furnish it with much clearer and more distinct ideas than all those it had by means of the senses in this life, even if, in comparing those with each other, there may have been some which were more evident or obscure than others. That is why the soul will be incomparably happier in this state than it is at present."<sup>18</sup>

I think de la Forge is probably right about Descartes. Indeed, Descartes claims, "our well-being depends principally on internal emotions which are produced in the soul only by the soul itself. [I take it that 'internal emotions' refer to intellectual emotions. Descartes speaks of the "purely intellectual joy that arises in the soul through an action of the soul alone" (AT XI, 396: CSM I, 360).] .... Although these emotions of the soul are often joined with the passions which are similar to them, they frequently occur with others, and they may even originate in those to which they are opposed" (AT XI, 440f: CSM I, 381). Descartes then gives a couple of very interesting examples:

[W]hen a husband mourns his dead wife, it sometimes happens that he would be sorry to see her brought to life again. It may be that his heart is torn by the sadness aroused in him by the funeral display and by the absence of a person to whose company he was accustomed. And it may be that some remnants of love or of pity occur in his imagination and draw genuine tears from his eyes. Nevertheless he feels at the same time a secret joy in his innermost soul, and the emotion of this joy has such power that the concomitant sadness and tears can do nothing to diminish its force. Again, when we read of strange adventures in a book or see them acted out on the stage, this sometimes arouses sadness in us, sometimes, joy, or love, or hatred, and generally any of the passions, depending on the diversity of the objects which are presented to our imagination. But we also have pleasure in feeling them aroused in us, and this pleasure is an intellectual joy which may as readily originate in sadness as in any of the other passions. (AT XI, 441: CSM I, 381)<sup>19</sup>

Descartes goes on to suggest that “these internal emotions [such as the private intellectual joys experienced by the mourning husband and the book-reader, respectively] affect us more intimately, and consequently have much more power over us than the passions which occur with them but are distinct from them” (AT XI, 441f: CSM I, 381f). “To this extent,” Descartes continues, “it is certain that, provided our soul always has the means of happiness within itself, all the troubles coming from elsewhere are powerless to harm it. Such troubles will serve rather to increase its joy; for on seeing that it cannot be harmed by them, it becomes aware of its perfections. And in order that our soul should have the means of happiness, it needs only to pursue virtue diligently” (AT XI 442, CSM I, 382). But for Descartes, of course, a diligent pursuit of virtue is much more possible and realistic in a state unencumbered by the body and its concomitant passions. The soul will be, as the Cartesian de la Forge insists, “master of its thoughts.”<sup>20</sup>

This being said—and there is much more to be said—Descartes’ account of the life (or better, afterlife) of the disembodied soul is not as unattractive as it might first appear. Moreover, I think that the aforementioned letters to Elizabeth reveal some effort on Descartes’ part to console her that the soul’s condition after separation from the body is actually an attractive and valuable prospect. But is Descartes’ attempt to console Princess Elizabeth at all convincing? I doubt that Bernard Williams would think so. He writes: “[Life after death] might consist of purely intellectual activity, which of course many philosophers have seen as the ideal future. I can see why *they* might be particularly interested in it; others might be less so ... I mean, suppose that the prospects of Heaven or the future life are those of intellectual contemplation, and I am a jolly, good-hearted fun-loving sensual character from the seaside.”<sup>21</sup> How would Descartes respond to this criticism? Perhaps Descartes would reply that the fact that I am more of a sensual person than an intellectual one—that I prefer a sensual existence over an intellectual one—is a merely accidental property of mine. (It is interesting to note that Descartes himself was much more of a sensual character than is commonly thought.<sup>22</sup>) Such a property might even be contingent on hav-



ing a body. But the afterlife is a disembodied one, according to Descartes,<sup>23</sup> so it then follows that the question of whether we would *prefer* a sensual existence as opposed to an intellectual one, at least when applied to the afterlife, is moot.<sup>24</sup>

Reminiscent of Williams, Strawson argues that Descartes' vision of the afterlife is singularly unattractive since, he claims, it entails a solitary and therefore lonely existence. Let me quote a lengthy passage from Strawson:

[T]he strictly disembodied individual is strictly solitary, and it must remain for him an utterly empty, though not meaningless, speculation, as to whether there are any other members of his class. The other, and less commonly noticed point, is that in order to retain his idea of himself as an individual, he must always think of himself as disembodied, as a former person. That is to say, he must contrive still to have the idea of himself as a member of a class or type of entities with whom, however, he is now debarred from entering into any of those transactions the past fact of which was the condition of his having any idea of himself at all. Since then he has, as it were, no personal life of his own to lead, he must live much in the memories of the personal life he did lead; or he might, when this living in the past loses its appeal, achieve some kind of attenuated vicarious personal existence by taking a certain kind of interest in the human affairs of which he is a mute and invisible witness—much like that kind of spectator at a play what says to himself: 'That's what I should have done (or said)' or 'If I were he, I should ...'. ... At the limit of attenuation there is, *from the point of view of his survival as an individual*, no difference between the continuance of experience and its cessation. No doubt it is for this reason that the orthodox have wisely insisted on the resurrection of the body.<sup>25</sup>

However, to my mind, Descartes can mount a reply to Strawson similar to the one we supposed in the case of Williams. The basic idea is simply this: the sort of existence Descartes envisions is so radically different from life as we know it that we must be very careful not to judge its attractiveness from, or in relation to, our current, comfortably embodied state of being. But it seems that Strawson does precisely that. As we already saw, Williams seems to make this mistake as well. At any rate, this is largely speculative; as far as I can determine, Descartes never entertains the sort of objection Williams and Strawson raise.

### III. Rational Desire

We might wonder if all this talk of the attractiveness or value of Descartes' doctrine of immortality is even relevant. Blissful. Bleak. We can debate the attractiveness of Descartes' vision of the afterlife all day, but it has been argued that the kind of immortality Descartes envisions is a future we can have no reason to desire, no matter how attractive it may seem and even how blissful it might be for an individual to experience it. We cannot look forward to, or anticipate a future life in which we will permanently lose the

memory of our past—in this case, embodied—life. Or so the objection goes.

The possible permanent loss in the hereafter of the memory of one's past was a serious concern for the Scholastics,<sup>26</sup> yet perhaps Leibniz expresses the worry best:

Descartes' immortality of soul is worth [little]. I believe that I will not bring pleasure to some, for people are normally unhappy to be awakened from a pleasant dream. But what should I do? Descartes wishes us to uproot false thoughts before introducing true ones. We must follow his example; and I believe I would be doing the public a service if I could disabuse people of such [a] dangerous [doctrine]. I therefore assert that the immortality of soul, as established by Descartes, is useless and could not console us in any way. For let us suppose that soul is a substance and that no substance perishes; given that, the soul would not perish and, in fact, nothing would perish in nature. But just as matter, the soul will change in its way, and just as the matter that composes a man has at other times composed other plants and animals, similarly, this soul might be immortal in fact, but it might pass through a thousand changes without remembering what it once was.<sup>27</sup> ... What good would it do you to become the King of China under that condition that you forget what you once were? Would that not be the same as if God created a King of China at the same time as he destroyed you? (GP IV, 300: AG 243)

In short, the mere fact that the *res cogitans* that I am identical with is naturally indestructible is insufficient basis for what Leibniz calls *meaningful* immortality. Without mentioning Descartes as a target, Leibniz also gives the same argument in the *Discourse on Metaphysics* §34:

Let us suppose that some individual were suddenly to become King of China, but on condition of forgetting what he has been, as if he had just been born anew. Is not this practically the same, or the same as far as the effects which can be apperceived, as if he were to be annihilated and a King of China were to be created in his place at the same moment? And this particular individual has no reason to desire this. (GP iv, 460: AG 66)

Leibniz seems to argue in these two passages that it is not rational for us to desire survival as the King of China if such a state does not guarantee the memory or knowledge of what we have been, whatever else may be promised. Leibniz imagines a situation where we become, in an instant, the King of China, presumably with all the excellent accoutrements that come with being a 17th century Chinese king. Yet, on becoming the King of China, we forget our past, and most importantly, we forget what we once were. As the King of China, it is *as if* we had been annihilated, for not only can we not remember what we once were via introspection, but there are no other persons in our new community who could remind us of our past life and what we once were. (Remember that Leibniz's audience consisted of 17th century Western Europeans, some of them, like Leibniz, fascinated with Eastern cul-

ture but with little chance of actually visiting the Far East.) If offered such a future existence, we would have no reason to desire becoming the King of China. And, if we cannot rationally desire a potentially very *valuable* state without a guarantee of the memory of what we had been, then how can we rationally desire *any* state without such a guarantee?<sup>28</sup>

This is an interesting objection but appears at first glance to be potentially much more damaging to Averröes' or Spinoza's doctrines of immortality than it is to Descartes'. For Leibniz seems to ignore completely Descartes' important, but often overlooked, distinction between corporeal and intellectual memory. While the memory of physical things—corporeal memory [*mémoire corporelle*]"—depends on the marks [*vestiges*] which remain in the brain, after an image has been imprinted on it" (AT IV, 114: CSM III, 233), as the folds in a piece of paper make it easier to fold again in that way than it would be if it had never been so folded before or, to use an analogy borrowed from Plato's *Theaetetus*, as a wax block retains imprints after being impressed upon, the memory of intellectual things—intellectual memory [*mémoire intellectuelle*]"—depends on some other marks which remain in the soul itself" (AT IV, 114: CSM III, 233). But besides the kinds of objects it takes, intellectual memory differs in another way from corporeal memory. "Intellectual memory has its own separate impressions, which do not depend in any way on these folds" (AT III, 84: CSM III, 148). Rather, it is contained wholly within the immaterial soul and can function entirely without the body.<sup>29</sup> Thus, it seems there is nothing in Descartes' doctrine of immortality that rules out the preservation of *intellectual* memory in the disembodied soul.

On the other hand, Averroistic and Spinozistic doctrines of immortality deny that memories of *any* kind—corporeal or intellectual—are preserved in the afterlife. (Of course, the term 'afterlife' does not quite register in the systems of these two philosophers.) Leibniz certainly criticizes Averröes and Spinoza along the same lines he adopts against Descartes' doctrine of immortality (A vi, 6, 58f; GP vi, 143ff, 529-38; L 554ff, 594). Regarding Spinoza's view in particular, Leibniz writes very early on in his career "that what will survive ... will in no way pertain to us, for it will not be remembered, nor shall we have any sensation of it, and we labor in vain to perfect our mind on behalf of its state after death. For that ultimate perfect essence [there is some sarcasm here, I think], which is all that will survive when we die, is nothing to us" (A vi, 3, 510: P 63). Perhaps then Leibniz mistakenly lumps Descartes in with Spinoza and Averröes.

Yet, as Jeanne Russier, Emilienne Naërt, and John Cottingham have wondered, even if Descartes' distinction between corporeal and intellectual memory makes perfect sense and we do retain our intellectual memories after bodily death, how is it that intellectual memories alone can preserve one's sense of one's *personal* past?<sup>30</sup> For intellectual memory seems to concern only universals (e.g., redness, organic according to the *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée*, king, friend, birthday) and not particulars (e.g., organic red wines, King Louis XIV, the images, sounds, and faces of my friends, my 14th birthday), as Frans Burman claims Descartes told him (AT V, 150: CSM III, 337). Also, Descartes himself writes that "where intellectual things are concerned, memory in the strict sense is not involved; they are thought of

just as readily irrespective of whether it is the first or second time that they come to mind" (AT III, 425: CSM III, 190). It would thus appear that Descartes does not hold that logical, geometrical, and metaphysical truths, for example, are properly even *remembered*. Now there is certainly a role for intellectual memory (for example, in pure deduction where there is no recourse to empirical data) and it is a useful faculty, but at the same time it is difficult to see how intellectual memories can preserve the sense of one's personal past. So the fact that Leibniz does not seem to recognize Descartes' distinction between corporeal and intellectual memories is moot, since (or so the objection goes) corporeal memories are necessary for the preservation of the memory of one's personal past. Leibniz's objection thus retains some force against Descartes. Cottingham neatly describes the problem: "When sensible ideas and images fade, the soul will be left to contemplate merely abstract and general ideas such as those of mathematics. And this in turn makes it hard to see how any real personality or individuality could be preserved. Just as the Thomists had earlier wrestled with the problem of what differentiates one angel from another, so the later Cartesians were in trouble explaining how one impersonal, disembodied *res cogitans* could be distinct from another. In the end, the ghost of Averroës, which had plagued the scholastics, returned to haunt the Cartesians."<sup>31</sup>

But there is reason to think that Russier, Naërt, and Cottingham have got Descartes wrong. To begin with, it is doubtful whether Burman expressed Descartes' views entirely accurately. For probably Descartes did not mean to say that the *content* of intellectual memory concerns only universals (and I have seen nothing in what he says that entails this); rather, it is in the very *act* of pure intellection that only universals are used. For example, in deducing that the rational numbers are non-denumerable I grasp only universals. Yet at the same time it seems that Descartes does not want to rule out the possibility that I *remember* having proved in the past that the rational numbers are non-denumerable; and, it seems that this intellectual memory is of a *particular*, a particular past deed of mine. To reiterate, apart from the somewhat dubious *Conversation with Burman*, which has some problems with provenance, Descartes' account is perfectly compatible with the idea that even when I store a memory dealing with the grasping of a universal axiom, such as "The rational numbers are infinite," that memory also deals with a particular, namely, "I recollect proving that the rational numbers are non-denumerable in the past." In fact, as Richard Joyce argues and as we will see shortly, "Descartes *needs* to locate the faculty for remembering such things in the soul; he has, after all, no model for how such a purely mental activity could leave a trace upon the corporeal brain. So in this respect the intellectual memory contains particulars (concerning 'intellectual things') as well as universals."<sup>32</sup> So although it is plainly clear that Descartes has no completely worked out account of intellectual memory (though he hints as though he does in a letter to "Hyperaspistes" [AT III, 425: CSM III, 190f]), it is possible that Descartes himself thinks that intellectual memory alone can guarantee the memory of one's personal past.

But debating whether or not Descartes himself believes intellectual memory alone can guarantee the memory of one's personal past is neither here nor there unless we can see how it is that intellectual memory *can* pro-

vide such a guarantee. At first glance, it appears that it cannot. For does not one's personal past include *inter alia* morally evaluable actions, that is, those actions for which one is morally responsible? Perhaps even such actions comprise the most important subset of one's actions. But purely intellectual deeds, for example, proving that the rational numbers are non-denumerable in graduate school, are not normally morally evaluable. Expect in rather bizarre circumstances, I do not deserve moral praise for proving that the rational numbers are non-denumerable; neither do I deserve moral blame for making a mistake in the proof. Generally, our morally evaluable deeds are restricted to our bodily actions, as when I help someone with a proof.

However, there are clues in Descartes' corpus to the effect that intellectual memory alone does have the capacity to retain memories of bodily actions. In other words, it is possible that Descartes himself believes that the memories of bodily actions are or at least can be preserved in intellectual memory. Suppose that I want to recall my first tuba lesson. Now, for Descartes, while I am still united with "my body" (a *res extensa*) "my soul" (strictly speaking, the *res cogitans* that I am identical with) can willfully "revisit" (the French *souvenir*) memories of bodily actions by initiating and completing a search of my corporeal memory. Corporeal memory, we might recall, depends on the physical marks which remain in the brain after an image has been imprinted on it.<sup>33</sup> So to revisit the memory of my first tuba lesson as it is inscribed on my brain, my soul must somehow be able to recognize a previously imprinted image, from millions of other previously imprinted tuba-related and non-tuba-related images, as the memory of my first tuba lesson. But how can the soul accomplish this, without already knowing in some sense what it is searching for?<sup>34</sup> There seem to be only two plausible explanations that Descartes can give. First, he might claim that images themselves are stored not only in the brain, but also in the soul. But this would seem to make his account of corporeal and intellectual memory superfluous and redundant. For why would the soul need to make a search of the brain? Second, he might say that corporeal memories are indexed in the soul's intellectual memory in an attenuated or compressed form. So the memory of my first tuba lesson is actually inscribed on my brain as a particular image or set of images *as well as* stored as a (I would guess) linguistic or propositional entity in my soul that is somehow sufficient, without being the same kind of thing, to function as a purely mental counterpart to a physical entity in the brain. But in either case, it seems that intellectual memory alone can serve as a repository of bodily and therefore, morally-evaluable actions.<sup>35</sup> (I wonder if this explains, at least in part, why Descartes claims in a letter to Mersenne that intellectual memory, not corporeal memory, is what "we mainly use" [AT III, 143: CSMK III, 151]. For on my interpretation of Descartes' account of memory, every corporeal remembering is also an intellectual one but not every intellectual remembering is a corporeal one.) Admittedly, this talk about the function of intellectual memory is somewhat speculative—Descartes gives us little to go on—but it seems that Descartes' notion of intellectual memory is broad enough (and vague enough) to facilitate the preservation of the memory of bodily actions and not just purely intellectual ones. If so, then it

seems that the afterlife Descartes envisions is a state of existence we can have reason to desire.

Yet I should not suppress the fact that there are several philosophical problems with such an account. For instance, if intellectual memories are merely linguistic or propositional in form, what is it that guarantees that my intellectual memories of bodily actions are actually of the actions of *my* body, as opposed to someone else's body?<sup>36</sup> For it seems that merely linguistic or propositional encodings in one's memory could not themselves represent or uniquely pick out the particular *self* that underwent the actions described in those linguistic or propositional encodings. If there were no such guarantee, then how is it possible that I can preserve my personal past after losing my body and therefore my brain? Presumably, Descartes would say that it is God who guarantees that the memories of bodily actions that I retain after bodily death are indeed memories of *my* body's actions, by setting up some reliable causal process from which memory traces on the brain are somehow registered on the soul. But does not this appeal to God and causation miss the point? The question was whether a linguistic or propositional entity alone could serve to represent or pick out one self among many. But what does the causal origin of that entity have to do with its content? To be fair, though, I do not think that Descartes is alone in facing such problems in representing *in memory alone* the history of one and the same self. Consider the famous case of Locke and his theory of personal identity. Also, I do not want to presume that Descartes (or Locke for that matter) has no answer to such problems. We might also question whether intellectual memories must be linguistic or propositional in form, but I do not any good alternatives, either.

#### IV. Doting on the Beyond

Thus far, we have seen that Descartes says enough, perhaps just enough, to accommodate the possibility of an afterlife that we can rationally desire and that is potentially quite attractive. Nevertheless, Descartes' treatment of immortality lacks the confidence and specificity which might be expected by those seeking *consolation* in the idea of immortality. This "problem" was evident even to Descartes' disciples. De la Forge, for example, tries to remedy the situation by giving a much more definite and confident description of the state of the soul after bodily death.<sup>37</sup> But why is Descartes' own treatment lacking? A couple of causes can readily be surmised: (i) due to the unorthodox, possibly heretical nature of his doctrine of immortality, Descartes does not want to reveal too much about his position; and, (ii) he simply has not worked out his doctrine of immortality in any adequate way.<sup>38</sup> No doubt both (i) and (ii) help to explain why Descartes says little about the condition of the immortal soul after bodily death. However, I do not believe that (i) and (ii), even taken jointly, are sufficient to explain why Descartes (except perhaps in his letters to Elizabeth) seems not at all *concerned* to console us about the afterlife. To my mind, what is missing from any complete explanation is the interesting fact that (iii) Descartes does not think that the question of what the afterlife will be like is an appropriate one to pursue in a deliberate or systematic way.

There seem to be two main reasons why Descartes thinks that we should not dote on the beyond, as it were. The first is epistemological in kind: we lack any certain knowledge of the nature of immortality. Consider the following exchange between Princess Elizabeth and Descartes. Elizabeth writes to Descartes on October the 28th, 1645:

If one is well persuaded of the immortality of the soul, it would be impossible to doubt that the soul will not be happier after its separation from the body (which is the origin of all the displeasures of life, just as the soul is the origin of the greatest contentments [of life]) were it not for the opinion of Mister [Kenhelm] Digby<sup>39</sup> ... [who believes] that the passions that have dominated over reason during the life of man still leave some traces in the soul after the death of the body; and all the more they torment the soul the more they find no means of satisfying themselves in so pure a substance. I fail to see how this accords with the soul's immateriality. But I have no doubt that, although life is not evil in itself, it ought to be abandoned for a condition that one will know to be better. (AT IV, 323f)

Descartes responds on November the 3rd:

As for the state of the soul after this life, I am not so well informed as Mister Digby. Leaving aside what faith tells us, I agree that by natural reason alone we can make many gratifying guesses and have fine expectations, but we cannot have any certainty. The same natural reason teaches us also that we always have more good than evil in this life, and that we should never leave what is certain for what is uncertain. Consequently, in my opinion, it teaches that though we should not seriously fear death, we should equally never seek it. (AT IV, 333: CSMK III, 277)

Suppose one were to reply to Descartes that we could be certain about the state of the soul after bodily death if we were only to enquire as to what kind of immortality God would promise us. But Descartes is plainly clear that we are not, as the Scholastics wantonly did, to assert claims about this world and the next based merely on our understanding of what God would or would not do. That would be to know God's intentions, his reasons for making this world and the next the way they are. But, as Descartes is purported to have said in his conversation with Burman: "All the purposes of God are hidden from us, and it is rash to want to plunge into them. I am not speaking here of purposes which are known through revelation; it is purely as a philosopher that I am considering them. It is here that we go completely astray. We think of God as a sort of superman, who thinks up such-and-such a scheme, and tries to realize it by such-and-such a means. This is clearly quite unworthy of God ..." (AT V, 158: CSM III, 341). Descartes also says: "I do not take it upon myself to try to use the power of human reason to settle any of these matters which depend on the free will of God" (AT VII, 153: CSM II, 109). So, it seems at best disingenuous to accuse Descartes of fashioning a doctrine of immortality in which there is no guarantee that

the memory of one's personal past will be preserved *in toto* in the afterlife. For Descartes, what kind of immortality God has in store for us is something we do not know, nor should we care to speculate.

There is a second reason why we should not dote on the beyond. Consider what Descartes writes to Elizabeth in a slightly earlier letter on October the 6th, 1645:

It is true ... that knowledge of the immortality of the soul and of the felicity of which it will be capable after this life, might give occasion to those who are tired of this life to leave it, if they were certain that they would afterwards enjoy all that felicity. But no reason guarantees this, and there is nothing to show that the present life is bad except the false philosophy of Hegesias (whose book was banned by Ptolemy because many of its readers killed themselves). True philosophy, on the contrary, teaches that even amid the saddest disasters and most bitter pains we can always be content, provided that we know how to use our reason. (AT IV, 315: CSMK III, 272)

The main idea here, I think, is that wise and good humans will not concern themselves with the precise make-up of life after death even while they face adversity or even death. For not only is our knowledge of the afterlife uncertain, life on earth is really not so intolerable. And, even during those "intolerable" times, our rational nature allows us to remain content. Note the distinctly Stoic element, here. In fact, in another exchange with Elizabeth, Descartes praises and discusses the Stoic ethic and recommends that she read Seneca's treatise *De vita beata* (AT IV, 253: CSMK III, 256).<sup>40</sup> I do not think it too much of a stretch to educe that for Descartes the wise and good person will trust in God's goodness—which surely extends also to the present life—and not seek consolation in speculation about the next life. (Descartes' reference to Seneca is highly ironic, considering the fact that Seneca was a great and famous consoler.<sup>41</sup> I would argue that for Seneca the central aim of philosophy is precisely that of consolation.)

I am reminded here of what the "metaphysical poet" George Herbert says in 1633: "Poor man, thou searchest round [t]o find out death, but missest life at hand."<sup>42</sup> Kant too seems to have much the same attitude. Not only does Kant agree with Descartes that we know very little about our future life, but also by trying to describe it, "the speculative man becomes entangled in mysticism where his reason does not understand itself and what it wants, and rather prefers to dote on the beyond than to confine itself within the bounds of the world, as is fitting for an intellectual inhabitant of a sensible world."<sup>43</sup>

### V. Conclusion

So, Descartes thinks that demonstrating that there is hope of an afterlife is enough. And, he thinks he has done this with his argument for the real distinction between soul and body. Descartes writes in the Synopsis of the *Meditations*: "... the decay of the body does not imply the destruction of the mind, and hence enough to give mortals the hope of an afterlife" (AT VII,



13: CSM II, 10). At the same time, Descartes does not think that he needs to demonstrate that there is hope for an afterlife, as he writes to Mersenne: "I could ... prove ... only that [the soul] is by nature entirely distinct from the body, and consequently is not bound by nature to die with it. This is all that is required as a foundation for religion, and is all that I had set out to prove" (AT III, 266: CSM III, 163). This is not very consoling, but it seems that consolation was not a high priority for Descartes.<sup>44</sup>

*University of Southern Maine*

#### NOTES

The following abbreviations are used. A/*Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, edited by the German Academy of Science (Darmstadt, Leipzig, and Berlin: Georg Olms and Akademie Verlag, 1923- ); AG/G. W. *Leibniz Philosophical Essays*, edited and translated by Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co., 1989); AT/*Oeuvres de Descartes*, edited by Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris, 1897-1913); CSM & CSMK/*The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, edited and translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Murdoch and Anthony Kenny (Cambridge: 1985); GP/*Die philosophischen Schriften von G. W. Leibniz*, edited by C. J. Gerhardt (Berlin, 1875-1890. Reprint. Hildesheim; Georg Olms, 1965. Cited by volume and page); L/G. W. *Leibniz, Philosophical Papers and Letters*, edited and translated by Leroy E. Loemker (2nd edition. Dordrecht and Boston: D. Reidel, 1969); P/*De Summa Rerum: Metaphysical Papers, 1675-76*, translated by G.H.R. Parkinson (Yale: 1992). Where no English translation is cited, the translation is my own. And, with only a few exceptions, I have not altered the translations of CSM and CSMK.

1. See Thomas Prendergast, "Descartes: Immortality, Human Bodies, and God's Absolute Freedom," *The Modern Schoolman* 71 (1993), 17, for some explanation on why this is the case. In Part IV, I will say a bit more.

2. A short list: Peter Geach, *God and the Soul* (original, 1969; reprint, London: Thoemmes, 1994); C.S. Lewis, *Readings for Meditation and Reflection*, ed. Walter Hooper (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), 28, 84; Stanislaw Lem, *Memoirs of a Space Traveler* (Harcourt, 1981; original Polish edition, 1971).

3. Gottfried Leibniz, "Discourse on Metaphysics" (GP iv, 300/AG 243; GP iv, 460/AG 66); Jeanne Russier, *Sagesse cartésienne et religion* (Paris: University Press, 1958), 119; Emilienne Naërt, *Mémoire et conscience de soi selon Leibniz* (Paris: Vrin, 1961), 135-6 fn.64; and, John Cottingham, "Cartesian Dualism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes* (Cambridge: 1992).

4. Peter Geach, *God and the Soul*, 38. C. S. Lewis, *Readings for Meditation and Reflection*, 28, says that "[t]he Resurrection narratives are not a picture of survival after death; they record how a totally new mode of being has arisen in the Universe. Something new had appeared in the Universe: as new as the first coming of organic life. This Man, after death, does not get divided into 'ghost' and 'corpse.'" Lewis, 84, also writes that "Christianity is almost the only one of the great religions which thoroughly approves of the body—which believes that matter is good, that God Himself once took on a human body, that some kind of body is going to be given to us even in heaven and is going to be an essential part of our happiness, our beauty, and our energy."

5. I say 'traditional' since Aquinas does sometimes slide into talking of the rational soul existing in a disembodied state, in order to contend with worries over immortality.

6. Take as examples, Russier, *Sagesse cartésienne et religion*, Ch. 2; Cottingham, "Cartesian Dualism," 237-41; and, especially Louis Loeb, *From Descartes to Hume: Continental Metaphysics and the Development of Modern Philosophy* (Cornell: 1981), 114-26, criticize the cogency of Descartes' "proof."

7. Peter Geach, *God and the Soul*, 39f.

8. *Ibid.*, 40.

9. See G.R.S. Mead, *The Doctrine of the Subtle Body in Western Tradition*, (London: Stuart & Watkins, 1919), 84; and, Caroline Walker Bynum, "Material Continuity, Personal Survival, and the Resurrection of the Body: A Scholastic Discussion in its Medieval and Modern Contexts," *History of Religions* 30 (1990): 51-85.

10. See Cottingham, "Cartesian Dualism," 238, 253 fn.3.

11. See Mead, 87.

12. Do not be misled by Descartes' talk of "subtle matter"; for him, all matter is of the same essence. See Roger Ariew, *Descartes and the Last Scholastics* (Cornell: 1999), 24.

13. In private correspondence, Andrew Pessin wonders if Descartes could still allow incorruptible bodies in the following sense: Descartes seems to distinguish between "body in general" from "individual body." If so, then it seems that according to Descartes there is one kind of body in general—namely, extension—and that body in general in fact is not naturally corruptible. But there would also be individual bodies which in fact are corruptible, since their parts are continually undergoing change. However, apart from the fact that the notion of a particular soul being united with extension—that is, body *in general*—seems deeply non-Christian, it is difficult to see how individual immortality could meaningfully be construed in such terms. In what sense could extension *simpliciter* be immortal?

14. Galileo Galilei, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967, 2nd ed.), 37-41.

15. See John Cottingham, *Philosophy and the Good Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 93. Cottingham also notes that for Descartes angels can experience only intellectual joy.

16. I owe Seamus Griesbach for this observation.

17. Louis de la Forge, *A Treatise of the Human Mind*, trans. Desmond Clarke (Kluwer: 1998; original, 1666), 213, reads Descartes this way as well: "[S]ince our soul will no longer be united to the body it will no longer have sensation, memory, or imagination, because these ways of thinking depend on the body and only served to inform it of the condition of its body or of how other bodies, among which its own body subsisted, could be beneficial or harmful to it." But, as we shall see, de la Forge would be making an error in interpretation if he means memory in general.

18. De la Forge, 213.

19. There is a children's series by Arnold Lobel about two friends, Frog and Toad. In one particular story called "Shivers," Frog tells a ghost story to his good friend Toad; afterwards, they sit in the dark shivering and scared. The narrator tells us it was a "good, warm feeling."

20. De la Forge, 213.

21. Bernard Williams, in H.D. Lewis, *Persons and Life After Death* (London: 1978), 72.

22. See Geneviève Rodis-Lewis, *Descartes: His Life and Thought*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Ithaca: Cornell, 1998) for accounts of his "love life," his love of music, and his fencing exploits.

23. De la Forge, 215, is not so sure.

24. Or perhaps Descartes might simply take an Aristotelian line and reply

that judgments whether an individual is happy do not turn on that individual's subjective state. That is to say, the fact that I do not normally *feel* as happy using my intellect as I do when soaking up the sun on the seaside is a genuine fact about my current subjective preferences but does not count in determining whether or not I am genuinely happy. But again, this is mostly conjecture.

25. Peter Strawson, *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics* (London: Methuen, 1959), 115f. Stanislaw Lem, the Polish science fiction writer, makes a related objection. He has a story in which a professor of comparative ontogenetics named Decantor invents the immortal soul in which he places his wife's consciousness in the soul. He then places it in a box. Decantor shows a certain Mister Tichy the box and attempts to sell it to Tichy. After much "grim bargaining," Tichy reports: "I do not know whether he was a great scientist, but a great scoundrel he definitely was. ... [For] he had bestowed upon [his wife] the most terrible thing, the most terrible, I repeat, for nothing can compare with the horror of being condemned to solitude for all eternity. The idea, of course, is beyond our comprehension. When you return home, try lying down in a dark room, so that no sound or ray of light reaches you, and close your eyes and imagine that you will go on like that, in utter silence, without any, without even the slightest change, for a day and night, and then for another day; imagine that weeks, months, years, even centuries will go by. Imagine, furthermore, that you have been subjected to a treatment that makes escape into madness impossible" (*Memoirs of a Space Traveler*, 64f). Tichy manages to buy the soul for a ridiculously low price, and immediately proceeds to smash the box with a hammer. The immortal soul is killed, put out of its misery.

26. See, for example, St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, 77, art. 8.

27. At this point in the text, Leibniz gives an example of how immortality without the memory of one's past is useless. He says: "But this immortality without memory is completely useless to morality, for it upsets all reward and punishment."

28. For more, see my "Prudence and the Concern to Survive in Leibniz's Doctrine of Immortality," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* (1998), 303-322.

29. Descartes claims that corporeal memory but not intellectual memory is found in animals (AT III, 143; CSMK III, 151; AT III, 310; CSMK III, 270).

30. Russier, *Sagesse cartésienne et religion*, 119, writes: "... l'âme est immortelle en tant 'pure substance', distincte de ses accidents, et *une* malgré leur multiplicité. Ne l'est-elle pas dès lors sans ces accidents, qui pourtant assurent son unicité? N'ya-t-il as ici une sorte de conflit entre l'unité, garante d'immortalité, et l'unicité, dont l'absence enlèvera à cette immortalité son caractère personnel?" Naërt, *Mémoire et conscience de soi selon Leibniz*, 135-6 fn.64, writes: "L'immortalité cartésienne est-elle une immortalité sans souvenance? Il est clair que Descartes admet avec la mémoire sensible l'existence d'une autre mémoire 'qui est tout à fait spirituelle et ne se trouve point dans les bêtes.' Mais cette mémoire intellectuelle est celle des idées générales non des choses particulières. Elle ne nous permet donc pas de nous souvenir de notre passé. A supposer que cette mémoire subsiste dans l'âme séparée car elle ne dépend que de 'vestiges qui demeurent dans la pensée même,' ce n'est pas elle qui assurerait à l'immortalité son caractère personnel." Also, see Cottingham, "Cartesian Dualism."

31. Cottingham, "Cartesian Dualism," 241.

32. See Richard Joyce, "Cartesian Memory," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 35 (1997), 391f.

33. For a nice account, see John Sutton, *Philosophy and Memory Traces: Descartes to Connectionism* (Cambridge: 1998).

34. Compare Thomas Kuhn's suggestion in an entirely different context

that one cannot strictly discover anything unless expecting it somehow.

35. For defenses of this interpretation, see Joyce, 383f; and, J. Morris, "Pattern Recognition in Descartes' Automata," *Isis* 60 (1969), 458f.

36. This objection is due to Nicholas Smith.

37. Chapter 25 of De la Forge is titled "The State of the Soul after Death."

38. To be sure, I do not have concrete evidence for (i). I doubt even if Descartes considered his view to be heretical. But I believe that given the religious climate Descartes was unwilling to risk his view being taken as heretical. The 1513 Lateran council had condemned the Averroëan heresy (referring to Averroës' view that one's personality was not preserved at bodily death) and we have seen that some have been tempted to attribute a similar view to Descartes. I think that (ii) has been confirmed in large part by this paper.

39. Elizabeth is probably referring to Sir Kenhelm Digby's *Two Treatises in the one of which, The Nature of bodies: in the other, The Nature of Mans Soule: is looked into: in a way of Discovery, of the Immortality of Reasonable Soules* (Paris: 1644).

40. Rodis-Lewis, *Descartes: His Life and Thought*, 16, briefly discusses this exchange. Cottingham, *Philosophy and the Good Life*, Ch. 3, offers a detailed and rewarding look into Descartes' ethics.

41. See, for example, Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic*, ed. Robin Campbell (London: Penguin, 1969), *passim*.

42. George Herbert, last two lines of "Vanity(1)" in *Four Metaphysical Poets* (London: Everyman, 1997).

43. Quoted and discussed in Allen Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion* (Cornell: 1970), 124.

44. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 2000 Eastern Division Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers and at Lewis and Clark College. I especially wish to thank Christopher Tollefsen, Andrew Pessin, Kevin Staley, Seamus Griesbach, Nicholas Smith, John Cottingham, and two anonymous referees for this journal.