

Nanopublication – The provisional code crystallizes on schedule – but its silence is chosen, not opaque

by Arnaud Quercy

The line runs exactly through P19a's unstated audience scope: read the receiver as the actual correspondent, and Descartes' provisional code is a textbook proto-codex crystallizing through dialogic ricochet into the Passions of the Soul; read the receiver as unrestricted, and Descartes' explicit reservation of ethical explanation to sovereigns and trusted interlocutors – his refusal of the public treatise – sits outside what the explicability clause anticipated, since the withholding is deliberate and political, not epistemic.

CONTEXT

▲ **This reading did not pass its traceability check.** The check verifies one thing: that every proposition cited in the structured record is actually argued in the reading's prose. Published as-is, uncorrected. What was missing:

- read_against P11 claims 'term-touched' but neither the term 'diffraction' nor P11 appears in the prose

WHAT THE SOURCE SAYS ^[1]

Descartes never wrote a treatise on ethics. The 'provisional moral code' of the Discourse on Method offers a handful of personal maxims – obey local custom, act resolutely on the most probable opinion, master oneself rather than fortune – explicitly adopted 'provisionally' pending fuller knowledge. Descartes refused to expand it into a public doctrine, citing two reasons of caution: ethics invites slander, and regulating morals belongs to sovereigns, not philosophers. Yet the code was not static: letters to Reneri, then an extended exchange with Princess Elisabeth on Seneca and the passions, revised and filled it out – dropping the deference-to-custom clause, adding an account of the supreme good as 'a firm and constant will to judge well' – culminating in The Passions of the Soul (1649), which reworks passion, generosity, and contentment into something close to a stable position. Politics receives the same reticence: Descartes declines to prescribe for princes, offering instead the notion of 'office' – keeping one's actions within the limits of one's actual role.

WHERE THE LENS GRIPS

P14a's proto-codex grips the provisional code cleanly: named imperfect, adopted 'provisionally,' guiding real conduct while unable to answer what the supreme good is or how the passions work – exactly the claim that proto-codex emissions are real even though the intentional invariant remains partly inaccessible. P14b's crystallization grips the documented trajectory: iterative correspondence (Reneri, then Elisabeth) destabilizes and adjusts specific clauses until the account stabilizes in the Passions of the Soul – 'not by arbitrary decision but by convergence.' P18a's ricochet grips the correspondence itself: Elisabeth's requests for the 'why' behind a maxim do not just repeat it back – they generate the doctrine of generosity and contentment, folded back into Descartes' own position, in his words 'reasons... justified anew.'

WHERE IT BREAKS

P19a's explicability clause slips against Descartes' second and third reasons for caution: he withholds the treatise not because the invariant is inarticulable (opaque) but because articulating it publicly is judged dangerous – fear of slander, deference to the sovereign's exclusive right to regulate morals. This is a register the framework does not distinguish: full articulacy demonstrably present in private (to Elisabeth, Chanut, Burman) alongside deliberate withholding of that same content from the general public. P19a treats explicability as binary – explained on request, or mute and opaque – with no category for a reasoned, prudential non-publication of an invariant that is otherwise complete and stated. X slips IF one reads 'the receiver' in P19a as unrestricted (any receiver, including strangers and future readers, is owed explanation on request); it holds if one reads it as restricted to interlocutors the emitter has actually engaged – in which case Descartes satisfies the clause fully, since he explains at length whenever Elisabeth, Chanut, or Burman ask.

PROPOSITIONAL GRID [2]

Read this grid. “Not evaluated” does **not** mean the source has nothing to say about that proposition. It means **the reading did not instruct it**. That is not a result, and it counts in no denominator. A silence, by contrast, is a finding: the reading touched the proposition without concluding, or noted its absence itself.

Evaluated

proposi- tion		audit status	relational verdict
P14a	The Proto-Codex	not audited	evidence-for
P14b	Codex Crystallization	not audited	evidence-for
P18a	The Ricochet Effect	not audited	evidence-for
P19a	Explicability as Condition	not audited	pressure-against

Not evaluated (33) – P1, P2, P3, P3a, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P16a, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P22, P23, P24, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30, P31

Overall verdict: Bounded – taxonomy of the August 2026 pass, predating the move to relational verdicts. Kept as metadata: the gap between the two forms is data, not residue. This reading’s judgement is in the grid above.

Reading of 2026-05-20 · model claude-sonnet-5 · source 67,819 chars · 4 attempt(s)

FIRST PASS – KEPT AS WRITTEN

Reading produced by the T50 RSS pass, before the boundary lens. It is reproduced UNCORRECTED. Keeping it is the point: without it, a changed title is just a changed title – with it, what the second pass refused becomes legible.

Descartes' ethics, grounded in the passions and their rational governance, presents a codex – a systematic constraint on how the self receives and responds to the world. The passions are not noise to be eliminated but the material through which ethical action takes form. If we read Descartes' system as a formal protocol for shaping reception (how the mind encounters the external, how it transforms affect into action), we see the codex at work: explicit rules, translatable principles, a teachable method. The new entry's treatment of how Descartes structures ethical life through rational ordering of the passions is precisely the engineering of diffraction – not suppressing the wave but channeling it through deliberate constraint. The ouverture (the Cartesian

mind) is not passive; it is actively shaped by a codex of rational governance that determines what meanings can emerge from encounter.

T50 RSS assessment · 2026-05-20 · remplacée par boundary-lens-2026-08

REFERENCES

[1] Descartes' Ethics. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2026-05-20. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/descartes-ethics/>

[2] Quercy, A. (2026). The 31 Propositions of Ideamorphism. <https://ideamorphism.org/en/publications/2026/03/the-31-propositions-of-ideamorphism.html>

EPISTEMIC PROFILE

Claim type	boundary reading
Voice	third person analysis
Epistemic status	bounded grip
Methodology	Boundary-finding lens applied to one source, model claude-sonnet-5, 4 attempt(s), traceability check FAILED.

CHECKSUM (SHA-256)

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