

**A Matter of Time**  
**CL 65/Math 5**  
**Winter 2003**

**Friday Discussion #4**

The material below comes from the Connecting Across Borders sections of the textbook, *A Matter of Time*, by Lahr and Pastor.

From Section 7.3:

1. Descartes, French physician, mathematician, and philosopher, is regarded as the father of modern reason. Why do you think that is?

Related Issues

- (a) What was Descartes' Method?
  - (b) How was it related to geometry?
  - (c) How was it used to develop a new kind of geometry?
  - (d) How did he apply it to his philosophical investigations?
    - to his conception of time?
    - to his conception of the universe?
    - to the human body?
    - to the nature and existence of God?
  - (e) How effective do you think Descartes' Method is?
2. What is the difference between the function of the clock in the Flemish miniature—depicted in the dialogue between Wisdom and a monk—and its function in Descartes' thought?
  3. Do you think that the displacement of time by mechanism in Descartes' philosophy is a result of his work as a mathematician or of his views of the world as a philosopher?
  4. In what specific ways is Goya's Kronos devouring his son a critique of Descartes' analytical/scientific approach to time and reality?
  5. Compare and contrast Descartes' clockwork universe with Zeno's world and Scharlach's view of the world in *Death and the Compass*.