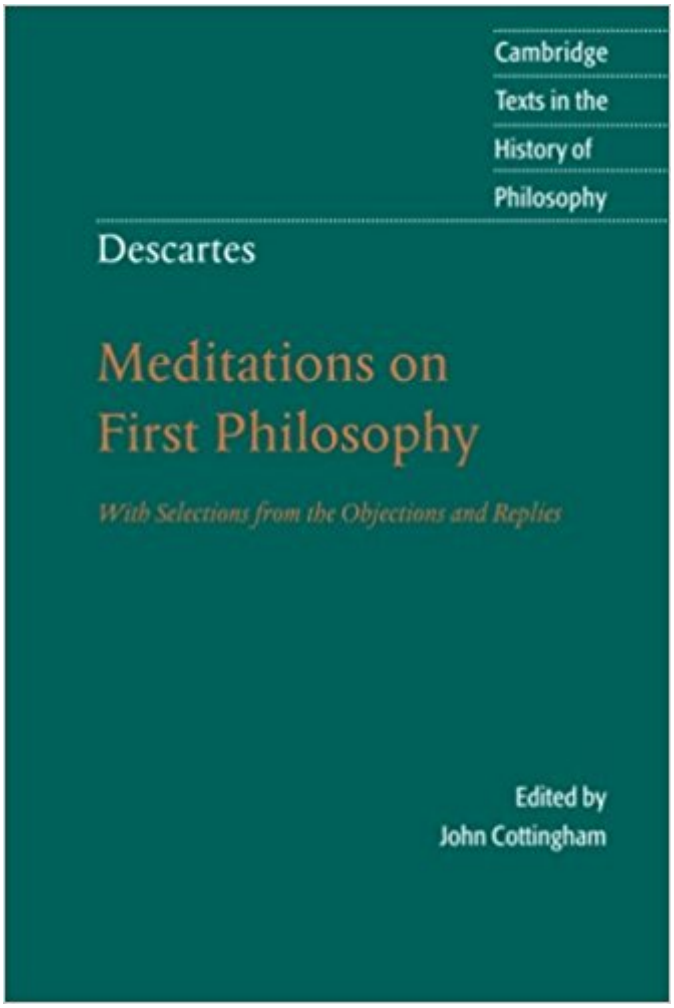
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Descartes: Meditations On First Philosophy: With Selections From The Objections And Replies (Cambridge Texts In The History Of Philosophy)




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Synopsis

This authoritative translation by John Cottingham of the Meditations is taken from the much acclaimed three-volume Cambridge edition of the Philosophical Writings of Descartes. It is based on the best available texts and presents Descartes' central metaphysical writings in clear, readable modern English.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"By far the best available English translation of the fundamental philosophical text." www.wordtrade.com/philosophy1 --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Text: English (translation) Original Language: Latin --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Hi, I want to write a review of this real quick because I just finished it and I think it would be interesting to come back and see what I thought if I better understand this some day. What can I say? This is Descartes Meditations, and this is really sensational philosophical writing. People say this is the beginning of Western philosophy and far be it from me to question that.This was published in 1641, this is old. I wanted an introduction to reading whole books of philosophy after being briefly introed to the genre of thought in a college intro class (mostly it was about abortion and

pollution, maybe nature). The first two meditations are an excellent such intro. Descartes shocks you with a real cornerstone of philosophy, I think therefore I am. Stupendous. He mentions he needs one solid foundation on which o move the world and this is it.Pretty much it's all working fine, relatively true, until we get to the third meditation--and what a doozy! By far the hardest part of the book, the most difficult to read outside the last half of the sixth meditation, the third focuses strictly on proving the existence of God. If I'm to be honest, this is why I bought the book. Well, Rene comes up short, very short. Of course if you were to consider this theologically, the great perfection of God would not be understandable through the science of thought that is philosophy, because as a being he is so grand and BEYOND our understanding. But Descartes tries anyway.If you think about it as a mild mannered regular Joe, Descartes just simply fails to put any proofs positive on the table. He gets closer in the fifth meditation, about His existence. Existence is precluded in perfection. But the arguments in the third, such as since he thinks God exists, he must therefore exist, because he is a thinking thing, and thinking is existing, and thinking through intellect and understanding is reality, is not quite so great. Or there is his theory that since he is finite, limitable human existence, the idea of his unperfection must strictly follow from an example of the divine and perfect, a being whose example is great enough to cast the shadow of his imperfect existence.Basically, when Descartes begins to talk about God, his argument goes underwater. I distinctly feel that his faith comes from reading of the scriptures, and not from his polymath philosophy, which is fine. You're not going to find faith in Descartes' Meditation on First Philosophy, you'll have to stick with the King James Bible for that.Everything else here, though, is fascinating, and it was ballsy just to attempt to define faith for all atheists in one piece of philosophy. The divine is best left for the divine, I think. His theories about mind and body, and truth and falsity, such that the will is second to nature (my own thing), or rather that the will is subservient to the divine, or rather that the will is incorrigible (I need to read this again) are brilliant. You have Descartes whole world view and I think, besides some middle ages thinking (the foot's feeling is fooled by indiscriminate other sensors, wha?), it'll closely align with yours and mine.This is obviously a masterpiece of philosophy, and was quite an intro. The Cogito Ergo Sum thing is very essential and it will make perfect sense to anyone here, who is either just getting into philosophy or attempting to discipline their mind.I really need to read this twice, but my brain is tired so I'll leave it alone for now. I imagine that this is one of those texts philosophy teachers love to come back to.

I've read two editions of the Meditations now, first this one and later the Hackett version from Cress. Overall while both were adequate and understandable, this was overall superior. It contains a great

translation, an excellent 50ish page introduction, numerous footnotes (including many instances where the french version differed from the Latin one) and then about 60 pages from the Objections and Replies (while I've not read all of the Objections, for a non-philosopher such as myself this selection was good and probably all I needed).Meditations further explains Descartes's ideas first explained in his Discourse on Method. He rejects everything he was taught and arrives at the fact that he exists, god exists, finally that other things exist and that the body is separate from the soul. It seems his god argument in this one slightly expands to a slightly different argument, namely that something can not come out of nothing and since imperfect things can only come from something more perfect than themselves, if you go up the line of perfection the most perfect thing or God. I guess to me all of these years later, I don't see how this proves god. Secondly I'm curious if the idea of god is natural, meaning if someone was born and never hear the idea of god mentioned would he arrive at the same conclusions of a perfect being or was Descartes influenced by his opinions found from a lifetime of learning from "the great book of the world". For the material things he realizes that for god to be perfect he wouldn't deceive him by making everything around him an illusion, therefore since God is not a deceiver, matter is real. My initial thought is that if an insane person perceives things as existing which do not, then they're not real and therefore would god then become a deceiver using this reasoning? Anyways regardless of one agrees with Descartes, these works are pretty interesting and for their importance to philosophy alone they are essential reads.

I'm relatively new to reading philosophy compared to a lot of people (I've read some Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and miscellaneous others), but I really enjoyed Descartes' "Meditations on First Philosophy." It seemed more focused on the method than the actual conclusions, which is great for those who completely disagree with what Descartes has to say. This contrasts with some of the other philosophy I've read in the past (especially Aristotle). "Meditations" could easily become one of my favorites.Of course, the edition of this is also superb; it provides very adequate footnotes and introduction (most of which is useful and interesting) to supplement the actual text. Overall, easily worth buying.

The book arrived with in a few days. Half the pages are clean and the other half are highlighted and written on with pen. It is a lot of marking but the book is fully readable and there is no damage to the text.

Perfect. There is another, more expensive copy, of Descartes' Meditations by the same editor but

the only significant difference is that this one is more condensed on the objections and replies to Descartes' claims. I still prefer this one.

Good

very interesting philosophy - would strongly recommend!

This book is a required read for most philosophy programs across the country for both undergraduate and graduate studies. If you're not in a college class where you can find other minds to chew this with I would recommend reading journal articles or other writings from philosophers that responded in some way to the premise this author is putting forth.

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