

Descartes Meditations Cambridge Critical Guides

Descartes Meditations Cambridge Critical Guides: A Deep Dive into Cartesian Philosophy

Descartes Meditations Cambridge Critical Guides serve as an invaluable resource for anyone keen to explore one of the most influential works in Western philosophy—René Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Whether you're a student grappling with Cartesian doubt or a seasoned philosopher looking to deepen your understanding, these guides offer comprehensive insights, critical analysis, and contextual background that illuminate Descartes' groundbreaking ideas.

In this article, we'll navigate through the significance of the *Meditations*, the unique contributions of the Cambridge Critical Guides series, and why these resources remain essential for engaging thoughtfully with Descartes' philosophy. Along the way, we'll touch on related concepts such as Cartesian skepticism, the mind-body dualism, and the role of reason in modern philosophy.

Understanding Descartes' Meditations: The Foundation of Modern Philosophy

René Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* is often considered the cornerstone of modern Western philosophy. Written in 1641, the work consists of six meditations that explore fundamental questions about knowledge, existence, and God. Descartes famously begins by doubting everything that can possibly be doubted, ultimately arriving at the famous conclusion, *Cogito, ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am").

The Core Themes of the Meditations

The *Meditations* delve into several key philosophical themes:

- **Radical Skepticism:** Descartes systematically questions the reliability of sensory experience and the certainty of knowledge.
- **The Cogito Argument:** Establishing the self's existence through the act of thinking.
- **Proofs for God's Existence:** Descartes offers arguments to validate the existence of a benevolent God as the foundation for certain knowledge.
- **Mind-Body Dualism:** The distinction between the thinking mind (*res cogitans*) and the extended body (*res extensa*).

These themes revolutionized epistemology and metaphysics, influencing countless philosophers and shaping the trajectory of philosophy itself.

What Makes the Cambridge Critical Guides on Descartes' Meditations Stand Out?

The *Descartes Meditations Cambridge Critical Guides* series is specially curated to help readers unpack the dense philosophical arguments and historical context of Descartes' work. Unlike general commentaries, these guides offer a scholarly yet accessible approach that balances critical rigor with clarity.

Expert Contributions and Diverse Perspectives

One of the hallmarks of the Cambridge Critical Guides is the inclusion of essays and analyses from leading experts in Cartesian philosophy. These contributors provide:

- **Historical Context:** Situating Descartes' work within the intellectual climate of the 17th century.
- **Philosophical Analysis:** Detailed breakdowns of key arguments and their implications.
- **Comparative Discussions:** How Descartes' ideas relate to both his contemporaries and modern thinkers.
- **Critical Evaluation:** Examination of strengths, limitations, and ongoing debates surrounding the *Meditations*.

This diversity of perspectives enriches the reader's understanding and encourages critical engagement rather than passive reading.

Accessible Yet Scholarly

While the *Meditations* can be challenging due to their abstract nature and complex argumentation, the Cambridge Critical Guides strive to make these ideas approachable without diluting their philosophical depth. The guides often include:

- Clear explanations of difficult concepts like Cartesian doubt and substance dualism.
- Summaries of each meditation to help readers track Descartes' progression of thought.
- Glossaries of key terms and references to relevant philosophical terminology.
- Suggested further readings for those who wish to explore specific themes more deeply.

These features make the guides suitable for both undergraduate students and more advanced readers seeking a deeper dive.

Diving into Cartesian Skepticism and Its Relevance Today

One of the most enduring contributions of Descartes' *Meditations* is the method of systematic doubt, sometimes called Cartesian skepticism. By doubting all beliefs that

could possibly be false, Descartes aimed to find an indubitable foundation for knowledge.

Why Skepticism Matters in Philosophy

Skepticism challenges us to question the sources and limits of knowledge. Descartes' approach insists that we:

- Examine assumptions underlying our beliefs.
- Recognize the possibility of error or deception.
- Seek certainty through reason rather than sensory experience alone.

This rigorous stance laid the groundwork for modern epistemology and continues to influence philosophical inquiry, cognitive science, and even artificial intelligence research.

How Cambridge Critical Guides Illuminate Skepticism

The Cambridge Critical Guides offer nuanced discussions on Cartesian skepticism, helping readers understand:

- The difference between methodological doubt and radical skepticism.
- How Descartes' doubt leads to the discovery of the self as a thinking entity.
- The implications of skepticism for knowledge, perception, and reality.

By contextualizing these ideas, the guides demonstrate why Cartesian skepticism remains relevant, especially when evaluating contemporary debates on truth and belief.

Exploring Mind-Body Dualism Through the Guides

Another pivotal aspect of Descartes' **Meditations** is the distinction between mind and body, often referred to as Cartesian dualism. This theory posits that the mind (a non-material thinking substance) is fundamentally different from the body (a material extended substance).

Challenges and Debates on Dualism

Dualism has sparked extensive philosophical debate, particularly concerning the interaction between mind and body:

- How can an immaterial mind affect a physical body?
- What does this say about consciousness, identity, and personal experience?
- How does dualism compare to monistic or physicalist accounts of the mind?

Insights from Cambridge Critical Guides

The **Descartes Meditations Cambridge Critical Guides** address these issues by:

- Presenting historical critiques and defenses of dualism.
- Exploring alternative interpretations of Descartes' texts.
- Highlighting the influence of dualism on later philosophy of mind.

These discussions provide a balanced view, encouraging readers to critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Cartesian dualism in light of contemporary philosophy and neuroscience.

Tips for Using Descartes Meditations Cambridge Critical Guides Effectively

If you're planning to engage with the Cambridge Critical Guides on Descartes' **Meditations**, here are some practical tips to get the most out of them:

- **Read the Meditations first:** Familiarize yourself with the original text before diving into critical essays. This will help you appreciate the nuances in commentary.
- **Take notes on key concepts:** Concepts like the cogito, Cartesian doubt, and substance dualism can be complex. Summarizing them in your own words aids comprehension.
- **Compare different essays:** The guides often feature contrasting viewpoints. Engaging with these debates enriches your understanding and critical thinking.
- **Use supplementary materials:** Philosophical dictionaries, lecture notes, or online resources can clarify difficult terms or ideas mentioned in the guides.
- **Discuss with others:** Philosophy thrives on dialogue. Join study groups or online forums to share insights and ask questions.

The Lasting Impact of Descartes and the Role of Critical Guides

Descartes' **Meditations** fundamentally transformed how we think about knowledge, existence, and the self. However, engaging deeply with his work requires more than just reading the original text—it demands contextual understanding, critical analysis, and reflection on its philosophical implications.

This is precisely where the *Descartes Meditations Cambridge Critical Guides* prove invaluable. By bridging historical context, textual analysis, and contemporary perspectives, these guides empower readers to appreciate the enduring relevance of Cartesian philosophy. Whether you're preparing for academic study or simply exploring the roots of modern thought, these guides offer a rich, nuanced pathway into the heart of Descartes' meditative journey.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the focus of the 'Descartes Meditations' in the Cambridge Critical Guides series?

The 'Descartes Meditations' in the Cambridge Critical Guides series focuses on providing comprehensive analysis and critical perspectives on René Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*, exploring its philosophical arguments, methodological approach, and lasting impact.

Who are some of the contributors to the 'Descartes Meditations' Cambridge Critical Guide?

The guide features contributions from leading scholars in the field of early modern philosophy, including experts on Descartes' metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of mind, offering diverse interpretations and critical insights.

How does the Cambridge Critical Guide interpret Descartes' method of doubt in the Meditations?

The guide examines Descartes' method of doubt as a foundational epistemological strategy, analyzing its role in achieving certainty and its implications for modern philosophy, while also discussing various scholarly debates about its application and effectiveness.

What relevance does the 'Descartes Meditations' Cambridge Critical Guide have for contemporary philosophy students?

The guide serves as an essential resource for contemporary philosophy students by providing clear explanations, contextual background, and critical discussions that enhance understanding of Descartes' *Meditations* and its significance in the history of philosophy.

Are there discussions on Descartes' mind-body dualism in the Cambridge Critical Guides on Meditations?

Yes, the guide includes detailed discussions on Descartes' mind-body dualism, exploring the arguments presented in the *Meditations*, their philosophical implications, and the

various critiques and defenses that have emerged in scholarly literature.

Additional Resources

Descartes Meditations Cambridge Critical Guides: A Scholarly Exploration

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides represent a pivotal resource for students, scholars, and enthusiasts of philosophy seeking a deeper understanding of René Descartes' seminal work, **Meditations on First Philosophy**. As one of the most influential texts in Western philosophy, Descartes' meditations have inspired extensive academic inquiry. The Cambridge Critical Guides series, known for its rigorous scholarship and analytical depth, offers a comprehensive lens through which to examine Descartes' philosophical arguments, historical significance, and enduring impact.

Understanding the Cambridge Critical Guides Approach to Descartes' Meditations

The Cambridge Critical Guides provide a structured, critical examination of classical texts, blending historical context with contemporary philosophical analysis. The volume dedicated to Descartes' **Meditations** meticulously unpacks the text's complex themes such as skepticism, the nature of knowledge, the existence of God, and the mind-body dualism. The guide aims not only to elucidate Descartes' arguments but also to situate them within broader philosophical debates, thereby enhancing readers' critical engagement.

The strength of the **descartes meditations cambridge critical guides** lies in its multi-faceted approach. It bridges the gap between introductory commentaries and advanced scholarly treatises, making it accessible to graduate students while still challenging seasoned philosophers. The editors and contributors often come from diverse philosophical backgrounds, ensuring a plurality of interpretations and critiques that enrich the discourse.

Key Themes Explored in the Cambridge Critical Guide

Among the numerous themes dissected in the guide, several stand out due to their centrality in Descartes' meditations and ongoing philosophical relevance:

- **Methodological Skepticism:** The guide thoroughly analyzes Descartes' use of radical doubt as a methodological tool. It details how this skepticism serves as the foundation for rebuilding knowledge on indubitable grounds.
- **The Cogito Argument:** A pivotal section is devoted to the famous "Cogito, ergo sum" ("I think, therefore I am") proposition. The contributors critically assess the argument's logical structure and philosophical implications.

- **Proofs for God's Existence:** The volume evaluates Descartes' ontological and cosmological arguments, comparing them to both contemporary and historical critiques.
- **Mind-Body Dualism:** The guide explores Descartes' assertion of the distinctness of mind and body, a concept foundational to modern philosophy of mind and cognitive science.

Comparative Insights: Cambridge Critical Guides Versus Other Commentaries

When juxtaposed with other scholarly commentaries on Descartes' **Meditations**, the Cambridge Critical Guides distinguish themselves by balancing accessibility with academic rigor. For instance, while some commentaries focus primarily on textual exegesis or historical contextualization, the Cambridge guide integrates both with contemporary philosophical analysis.

Moreover, the guide often engages with recent secondary literature, incorporating debates from analytic philosophy, epistemology, and metaphysics. This engagement with current scholarship ensures that readers are not only introduced to Descartes' original ideas but also to the latest interpretative trends and criticisms.

In contrast, certain other critical editions may emphasize a particular school of thought—such as phenomenology or continental philosophy—potentially limiting the scope of interpretation. The Cambridge approach, by contrast, is notably ecumenical, encouraging readers to consider multiple perspectives.

Features That Enhance Scholarly Engagement

The design and structure of the **descartes meditations cambridge critical guides** volume are tailored to facilitate in-depth study:

1. **Comprehensive Introductions:** Each chapter begins with an overview that situates the upcoming analysis within the broader themes of the meditations.
2. **Critical Essays:** Contributors present essays that interrogate specific sections or arguments of the **Meditations**, often challenging traditional interpretations.
3. **Contextual Background:** Historical and intellectual contexts are provided, illuminating Descartes' influences and the milieu in which he wrote.
4. **Bibliographical References:** Extensive bibliographies guide readers to further primary and secondary sources, supporting advanced research.

5. **Glossaries and Indexes:** Detailed glossaries clarify philosophical terminology, while indexes assist in navigating complex topics efficiently.

These features collectively make the guide an invaluable tool for coursework, research, and independent study.

Critical Perspectives and Scholarly Debates

The Cambridge Critical Guides do not merely summarize Descartes' meditations but actively engage with ongoing scholarly debates. For example, the nature and validity of the cogito have been questioned by various philosophers, including Heidegger and Wittgenstein. The guide juxtaposes these critiques with defenses rooted in analytic philosophy, inviting readers to weigh the cogito's epistemic status.

Similarly, Descartes' proofs for God's existence are scrutinized through the lens of contemporary metaphysics and philosophy of religion. The guide presents arguments both supporting and challenging Descartes' reasoning, discussing issues such as the clarity and distinctness criterion and the possibility of Cartesian circularity (the so-called "Cartesian circle").

Moreover, the mind-body dualism section addresses modern challenges arising from neuroscience and philosophy of mind, such as physicalism and the problem of mental causation. By situating Descartes' dualism within these debates, the guide highlights the continued relevance and contested nature of his ideas.

Pros and Cons of the Cambridge Critical Guide Approach

- **Pros:**

- Comprehensive and balanced treatment of complex philosophical themes.
- Accessibility for both newcomers and advanced scholars.
- Inclusion of diverse philosophical perspectives.
- Rich bibliographical resources supporting further research.

- **Cons:**

- Some readers may find certain essays densely philosophical and challenging without prior background.

- The broad approach may sacrifice depth in highly specialized subfields.
- Occasional emphasis on analytic philosophy might not appeal to readers favoring continental interpretations.

Why Choose the Descartes Meditations Cambridge Critical Guides?

For anyone invested in exploring Descartes' **Meditations**, the Cambridge Critical Guides represent a gold standard in philosophical scholarship. Its comprehensive and nuanced exploration aids in unpacking the dense arguments and situating them within historical and modern contexts. Especially for academic researchers and philosophy students, it offers a roadmap through one of the most challenging philosophical texts.

The guide's balanced presentation of various interpretations encourages critical thinking rather than dogmatic acceptance, making it a dynamic companion for readers who wish to engage actively with Descartes' legacy.

In summary, the **descartes meditations cambridge critical guides** volume stands out as a robust, authoritative, and insightful resource, indispensable for a serious study of Cartesian philosophy. It continues to shape the discourse around Descartes' meditations, fostering deeper understanding and ongoing scholarly conversation.

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descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: Descartes' Meditations [electronic Resource]. Karen Detlefsen,

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: Descartes' Meditations Karen Detlefsen, 2014-05-14 Provide new insights into understanding Descartes' philosophy of mind, especially the role and significance of the senses and emotions.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: The Routledge Guidebook to Descartes' Meditations Gary Hatfield, 2014-07-11 Descartes is widely regarded to be the father of modern philosophy and his *Meditations* is among the most important philosophical texts ever written. The Routledge Guidebook to Descartes' *Meditations* introduces the major themes in Descartes' great book and acts as a companion for reading this key work, examining: The context of Descartes' work and the background to his writing Each separate part of the text in relation to its goals, meanings and impact The reception the book received when first seen by the world The relevance of Descartes' work to modern philosophy, its legacy and influence With further reading included throughout, this text follows Descartes' original work closely, making it essential reading for all students of philosophy, and all those wishing to get to grips with this classic work.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: *René Descartes: Meditationen über die*

Erste Philosophie Andreas Kemmerling, 2019-09-02 Die „Meditationen“ sind ohne Zweifel ein Meilenstein und ein Meisterwerk des abendländischen Denkens. Durch sie wurde Descartes zum ‚Vater der modernen Philosophie‘ – und die Erkenntnistheorie auf Jahrhunderte zu deren Fundamentaldisziplin. Bis heute eignet sich kaum ein anderes epochemachendes Werk besser dazu, in der Auseinandersetzung mit den Argumentationsgängen eines Klassikers selbst zu erfahren, was philosophisches Denken ist – und wie es geht. Die neun Kapitel dieses Kommentars sind Originalbeiträge. Sie sollen Studierende und Dozenten bei der Lektüre begleiten und dazu beitragen, das intellektuelle Vergnügen an der Tiefe (und auch Schönheit) der „Meditationen“ noch zu steigern. Mit Beiträgen von: Lilli Alanen, Gary Hatfield, Andreas Hüttemann, Andreas Kemmerling, Tobias Rosefeldt, Andreas Schmidt und Hans-Peter Schütt.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: The Cartesian Mind Jorge Secada, Travis Tanner, Cecilia Wee, 2025-09-03 Descartes is widely acknowledged as a central figure in the origins of modernity. The nature of his thought and of the role it played is, however, a matter of considerable dispute among experts. The Cartesian Mind is a significant contribution to this debate. It covers the full extent of his work, not only placing it in its historical context but also exploring its reception, legacy, and contemporary significance. Comprising over 40 chapters by an international team of distinguished scholars, the collection is divided into 3 parts: Historical Context Philosophical Themes Reception and Influence. Within these parts, key topics are addressed, including Descartes's life and works, Platonism, Scholasticism, Stoicism, skepticism, atomism, meditation, method, the self, God, will and freedom, mind and body, biology and medicine, causation, mathematics, the natural sciences, philosophy of science, ethics, and the origins of idealism. Descartes's reception and legacy within science and philosophy from the seventeenth century to our days, including current analytic and continental traditions, as well as within the broader contemporary culture, also receive sustained attention. Descartes's work is central to all areas of philosophy, including epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, and ethics. As such The Cartesian Mind is essential reading and an indispensable tool for all students and researchers in the discipline.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: Descartes David Cunning, 2023-07-25 René Descartes (1596–1650) is well-known for his introspective turn away from sensible bodies and toward non-sensory ideas of mind, body, and God. Such a turn is appropriate, Descartes supposes, but only once in the course of life, and only to arrive at a more accurate picture of reality that we then incorporate in everyday embodied life. In this clear and engaging book David Cunning introduces and examines the full range of Descartes' philosophy. A central focus of the book is Descartes' view that embodied human beings become more perfect to the degree that they move in the direction of finite approximations of independence, activity, immutability, and increased knowledge. Beginning with an introduction and a chapter on Descartes' life and works, Cunning also addresses the following key topics: Descartes on the wonders of the material universe skepticism as epistemic garbage, and the easy dissolution of hyperbolic doubt Descartes' three arguments for the existence of God the ontology of possibility and necessity freedom and embodiment arguments for the immateriality of mind sensible bodies and the pragmatic certainty by which to navigate them Descartes' stoic view on how best to live. Descartes is an outstanding introduction to one of the greatest of Western philosophers. Including a chronology, suggestions for further reading, and a glossary of key terms, it is essential reading for anyone studying Descartes and the history of modern philosophy.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: The Oxford Handbook of Descartes and Cartesianism Steven M. Nadler, Tad M. Schmaltz, Delphine Antoine-Mahut, 2019 An illustrious team of scholars offer a rich survey of the thought of Rene Descartes; of the development of his ideas by those who followed in his footsteps; and of the reaction against Cartesianism. Epistemology, method, metaphysics, physics, mathematics, moral philosophy, political thought, medical thought, and aesthetics are all covered.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: Passion's Fictions from Shakespeare to Richardson Benedict S. Robinson, 2021 Passion's Fictions traces the intimate links between

literature and the sciences of mind and soul from the age of Shakespeare to the rise of the novel. It chronicles the emergence of new sciences of the passions between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, and it argues that this history was shaped by rhetoric that contained the most extensively particularized discourse on the passions, offering principles for moving and affecting the passions of others in concrete social scenes. This rhetoric of the passions centered on narrative as the instrument of a non-theoretical knowledge of the passions in their particularity, predicated on an account of passion as an intimate relation between an impassioned mind and an impassioning world: rhetoric offers a kind of externalist psychology, formalized in the relation of passion to action and underwriting an account of narrative as a means of both moving passion and knowing it. This volume describes the psychology of the passions before the discipline of psychology, tracing the influence of rhetoric on theories of the passions from Francis Bacon to Adam Smith and using that history to read literary works by Shakespeare, Milton, Haywood, Richardson, and others. Narrative offers a means of knowing and moving the passions by tracing them to the events and objects that generate them; the history of narrative practices is thus a key part of the history of the psychology of the passions at a critical moment in its development.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: Locke and Cartesian Philosophy

Philippe Hamou, Martine Pécharman, 2018 Twelve original essays by an international team of scholars investigate the relation of John Locke's thought to Descartes and Cartesianism. They explore not only these philosophers' theories of knowledge, but also their views on natural philosophy, metaphysics, and religion.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: *On the Genealogy of Color* Zed Adams, 2015-10-16 In *On the Genealogy of Color*, Zed Adams argues for a historicized approach to conceptual analysis, by exploring the relevance of the history of color science for contemporary philosophical debates about color realism. Adams contends that two prominent positions in these debates, Cartesian anti-realism and Oxford realism, are both predicated on the assumption that the concept of color is ahistorical and unrevisable. Adams takes issue with this premise by offering a philosophical genealogy of the concept of color. This book makes a significant contribution to recent debates on philosophical methodology by demonstrating the efficacy of using the genealogical method to explore philosophical concepts, and will appeal to philosophers of perception, philosophers of mind, and metaphysicians.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: *Know Thyself* Mitchell S. Green,

2017-11-28 *Know Thyself: The Value and Limits of Self-Knowledge* takes the reader on tour of the nature, value, and limits of self-knowledge. Mitchell S. Green calls on classical sources like Plato and Descartes, 20th-century thinkers like Freud, recent developments in neuroscience and experimental psychology, and even Buddhist philosophy to explore topics at the heart of who we are. The result is an unvarnished look at both the achievements and drawbacks of the many attempts to better know one's own self. Key topics in this volume include: Knowledge – what it means to know, the link between wisdom and knowledge, and the value of living an examined life Personal identity – questions of dualism (the idea that our mind is not only our brain), bodily continuity, and personhood The unconscious – including the kind posited by psychoanalysis as well as the form proposed by recent research on the so-called adaptive unconscious Free will – if we have it, and the recent arguments from neuroscience challenging it Self-misleading – the ways we willfully deceive ourselves, and how this relates to empathy, peer disagreement, implicit bias, and intellectual humility Experimental psychology – considerations on the automaticity of emotion and other cognitive processes, and how they shape us This book is designed to be used in conjunction with the free 'Know Thyself' MOOC (massive open online course) created through collaboration of the University of Connecticut's Project on Humility and Conviction in Public Life, and the University of Edinburgh's Eidyn research centre, and hosted on the Coursera platform (<https://www.coursera.org/learn/know-thyself>). The book is also suitable as a text for interdisciplinary courses in the philosophy of mind or self-knowledge, and is highly recommended for anyone looking for a short overview of this fascinating topic.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: *After Certainty* Robert Pasnau, 2017-11-17 No part of philosophy is as disconnected from its history as is epistemology. *After Certainty* offers a reconstruction of that history, understood as a series of changing expectations about the cognitive ideal that beings such as us might hope to achieve in a world such as this. The story begins with Aristotle and then looks at how his epistemic program was developed through later antiquity and into the Middle Ages, before being dramatically reformulated in the seventeenth century. In watching these debates unfold over the centuries, one sees why epistemology has traditionally been embedded within a much larger sphere of concerns about human nature and the reality of the world we live in. It ultimately becomes clear why epistemology today has become a much narrower and specialized field, concerned with the conditions under which it is true to say, that someone knows something. Based on a series of lectures given at Oxford University, Robert Pasnau's book ranges widely over the history of philosophy, and examines in some detail the rise of science as an autonomous discipline. Ultimately Pasnau argues that we may have no good reasons to suppose ourselves capable of achieving even the most minimal standards for knowledge, and the final chapter concludes with a discussion of faith and hope.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: *Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy Volume 8* Robert Pasnau, 2020-09-16 *Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy* showcases the best scholarly research in this flourishing field. The series covers all aspects of medieval philosophy, including the Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew traditions, and runs from the end of antiquity into the Renaissance. It publishes new work by leading scholars in the field, and combines historical scholarship with philosophical acuteness. The papers will address a wide range of topics, from political philosophy to ethics, and logic to metaphysics. OSMP is an essential resource for anyone working in the area.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: *Women and Liberty, 1600-1800* Jacqueline Broad, Karen Detlefsen, 2017-12-01 There have been many different historical-intellectual accounts of the shaping and development of concepts of liberty in pre-Enlightenment Europe. This volume is unique for addressing the subject of liberty principally as it is discussed in the writings of women philosophers, and as it is theorized with respect to women and their lives, during this period. The volume covers ethical, political, metaphysical, and religious notions of liberty, with some chapters discussing women's ideas about the metaphysics of free will, and others examining the topic of women's freedom (or lack thereof) in their moral and personal lives as well as in the public socio-political domain. In some cases, these topics are situated in relation to the emergence of the concept of autonomy in the late eighteenth century, and in others, with respect to recent feminist theorizing about relational autonomy and internalized oppression. Many of the chapters draw upon a wide range of genres, including polemical texts, poetry, plays, and other forms of fiction, as well as standard philosophical treatises. Taken as a whole, this volume shows how crucial it is to recover the too-long forgotten views of female and women-friendly male philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the process of recovering these voices, our understanding of philosophy in the early modern period is not only expanded, but also significantly enhanced, toward a more accurate and gender-inclusive history of our discipline.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: *Early Modern Medicine and Natural Philosophy* Peter Distelzweig, Benjamin Goldberg, Evan R. Ragland, 2015-12-11 This volume presents an innovative look at early modern medicine and natural philosophy as historically interrelated developments. The individual chapters chart this interrelation in a variety of contexts, from the Humanists who drew on Hippocrates, Galen, and Aristotle to answer philosophical and medical questions, to medical debates on the limits and power of mechanism, and on to eighteenth-century controversies over medical materialism and 'atheism.' The work presented here broadens our understanding of both philosophy and medicine in this period by illustrating the ways these disciplines were in deep theoretical and methodological dialogue and by demonstrating the importance of this dialogue for understanding their history. Taken together, these papers argue that to overlook the medical context of natural philosophy and the philosophical context of medicine is to

overlook fundamentally important aspects of these intellectual endeavors.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: The Blackwell Guide to Descartes' Meditations Stephen Gaukroger, 2008-04-15 Consisting of twelve newly commissioned essays and enhanced by William Molyneux's famous early translation of the Meditations, this volume touches on all the major themes of one of the most influential texts in the history of philosophy. Situates the Meditations in its philosophical and historical context. Touches on all of the major themes of the Meditations, including the mind-body relation, the nature of the mind, and the existence of the material world.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: Baumgarten and Kant on Metaphysics Courtney D. Fugate, John Hymers, 2018-05-30 Baumgarten and Kant on Metaphysics explores the metaphysics of Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762) and its decisive influence on Immanuel Kant. For over a century, scholars have recognized the significance of Baumgarten's Metaphysics, both because of its impact on Kant's intellectual development, and because of the way it fundamentally informed the work of generations of German philosophers, including Moses Mendelssohn, Thomas Abbt, Johann Gottfried Herder, Solomon Maimon, Johann August Eberhard, and arguably even Georg Friedrich Hegel. However, Baumgarten's Metaphysics has only recently become available in reliable German and English translations; as such, many scholars have been excluded from the discussion and the significance of Baumgarten's work has remained largely unexplored. Thus with the appearance of these translations, interest in Baumgarten's work has surged. This collection provides an anchor for this emerging discussion by presenting chapters by some of the scholars most responsible for Baumgarten's current reputation, together with some of the best young scholars in this emerging field.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: Stuff, Quality, Structure Galen Strawson, 2024-07-10 Stuff, Quality, Structure makes a case for identity metaphysics. It defends categorial monism, the view that there's only one fundamental metaphysical category, which Strawson calls 'stuff'. It argues for the ultimate metaphysical identity of things that other views hold to be irreducibly distinct. It rejects separatism, which posits such irreducible metaphysical differences. The notions of object, process, property, state, and event seem to signal fundamental ontological differences, but these differences are superficial, according to identity metaphysics. The same goes for energy/force/laws of nature/causation/power: according to identity metaphysics, these are different ways of conceptualizing the same phenomenon, the best name for which is simply 'the nature of stuff'. More particularly: identity metaphysics opposes (1) object-property separatism and (2) stuff-law separatism. It then denies that (1) and (2) themselves are fundamentally different issues. Strawson also endorses 'stuff monism', the view that there is only one kind of fundamental stuff, and favours 'thing monism', the view that there is only one fundamental entity in reality. He then considers the place of the notion of structure in an account of concrete reality. Structure considered just as such is an abstract, wholly logico-mathematically characterizable phenomenon. If a structure is concretely realized it must be realized by something that isn't itself just a matter of structure. It is arguable, nevertheless, that a thing's structural nature may--and perhaps must--completely fix its non-structural nature in any world, or at least in any world to which the notion of structure is generally applicable.

descartes meditations cambridge critical guides: Theories of Consciousness William Seager, 2016-02-12 Despite recent strides in neuroscience and psychology that have deepened understanding of the brain, consciousness remains one of the greatest philosophical and scientific puzzles. The second edition of Theories of Consciousness: An Introduction and Assessment provides a fresh and up-to-date introduction to a variety of approaches to consciousness, and contributes to the current lively debate about the nature of consciousness and whether a scientific understanding of it is possible. After an initial overview of the status and prospects of physicalism in the face of the problem of consciousness, William Seager explores key themes from Descartes - the founder of the modern problem of consciousness. He then turns to the most important theories of consciousness: identity theories and the generation problem higher-order thought theories of consciousness

self-representational theories of consciousness Daniel Dennett's theory of consciousness attention-based theories of consciousness representational theories of consciousness conscious intentionality panpsychism neutral monism Thoroughly revised and expanded throughout, this second edition includes new chapters on animal consciousness, reflexive consciousness, combinatorial forms of panpsychism and neutral monism, as well as a significant new chapter on physicalism, emergence and consciousness. The book's broad scope, depth of coverage and focus on key philosophical positions and arguments make it an indispensable text for those teaching or studying philosophy of mind and psychology. It is also an excellent resource for those working in related fields such as cognitive science and the neuroscience of consciousness.

Descartes Meditations Cambridge Critical Guides: The Routledge Guidebook to Berkeley's Three Dialogues Stefan Storrie, 2018-12-21 The Routledge Guidebook to Berkeley's Three Dialogues is an engaging introduction to the last of a trio of works that cemented Berkeley's position as one of the truly great philosophers of the western canon. Berkeley's distinctive idealist philosophy has been a challenge and inspiration for thinkers ever since. Written for readers approaching this seminal work for the first time, this book: provides the philosophical context in which Three Dialogues was written; critically discusses the arguments in each of the Three Dialogues; and examines some of the principal disputes concerning the interpretation of his work. The Routledge Guidebook to Berkeley's Three Dialogues offers a clear and comprehensive guide to this ground-breaking volume and includes further reading sections at the end of each chapter. This is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand this influential work.

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