

Descartes A Short Biography

In the Louvre museum hangs a portrait that is considered the iconic image of René Descartes, the great seventeenth-century French philosopher. And the painter of the work? The Dutch master Frans Hals--or so it was long believed, until the work was downgraded to a copy of an original. But where is the authentic version, and who painted it? Is the man in the painting--and in its original--really Descartes? A unique combination of philosophy, biography, and art history, *The Philosopher, the Priest, and the Painter* investigates the remarkable individuals and circumstances behind a small portrait. Through this image--and the intersecting lives of a brilliant philosopher, a Catholic priest, and a gifted painter--Steven Nadler opens a fascinating portal into Descartes's life and times, skillfully presenting an accessible introduction to Descartes's philosophical and scientific ideas, and an illuminating tour of the volatile political and religious environment of the Dutch Golden Age. As Nadler shows, Descartes's innovative ideas about the world, about human nature and knowledge, and about philosophy itself, stirred great controversy. Philosophical and theological critics vigorously opposed his views, and civil and ecclesiastic authorities condemned his writings. Nevertheless, Descartes's thought came to dominate the philosophical world of the period, and can rightly be called the philosophy of the seventeenth century. Shedding light on a well-known image, *The Philosopher, the Priest, and the Painter* offers an engaging exploration of a celebrated philosopher's world and work. Perhaps the most famous proposition in the history of philosophy is Descartes' cogito 'I think, therefore I am'. Husain Sarkar claims in this provocative interpretation of Descartes that the ancient tradition of reading the cogito as an argument is mistaken. It should, he says, be read

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as an intuition. Through this interpretative lens, the author reconsiders key Cartesian topics: the ideal inquirer, the role of clear and distinct ideas, the relation of these to the will, memory, the nature of intuition and deduction, the nature, content and elusiveness of 'I', and the tenability of the doctrine of the creation of eternal truths. Finally, the book demonstrates how Descartes' attempt to prove the existence of God is foiled by a new Cartesian Circle.

www.delphiclassics.com

This document from the American Mathematical Monthly offers a brief biography of René Descartes. Descartes was a leading thinker, mathematician, writer and philosopher during his time.?

Presents the philosopher's most important work, one that proves the existence of the self and God, and explains the physical world.

A collection of more than 30 specially commissioned essays, this volume surveys the work of the 17th-century philosopher-scientist commonly regarded as the founder of modern philosophy, while integrating unique essays detailing the context and impact of his work.

Covers the full range of historical and philosophical perspectives on the work of Descartes
Discusses his seminal contributions to our understanding of skepticism, mind-body dualism, self-knowledge, innate ideas, substance, causality, God, and the nature of animals
Explores the philosophical significance of his contributions to mathematics and science
Concludes with a section on the impact of Descartes's work on subsequent philosophers

René Descartes is best known as the man who coined the phrase "I think, therefore I am." But though he is remembered most as a thinker, Descartes, the man, was no disembodied mind, theorizing at great remove from the worldly affairs and concerns of his time. Far from it. As a

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young nobleman, Descartes was a soldier and courtier who took part in some of the greatest events of his generation—a man who would not seem out of place in the pages of *The Three Musketeers*. In *The Young Descartes*, Harold J. Cook tells the story of a man who did not set out to become an author or philosopher—Descartes began publishing only after the age of forty. Rather, for years he traveled throughout Europe in diplomacy and at war. He was present at the opening events of the Thirty Years' War in Central Europe and Northern Italy, and was also later involved in struggles within France. Enduring exile, scandals, and courtly intrigue, on his journeys Descartes associated with many of the most innovative free thinkers and poets of his day, as well as great noblemen, noblewomen, and charismatic religious reformers. In his personal life, he expressed love for men as well as women and was accused of libertinism by his adversaries. These early years on the move, in touch with powerful people and great events, and his experiences with military engineering and philosophical materialism all shaped the thinker and philosopher Descartes became in exile, where he would begin to write and publish, with purpose. But though it is these writings that made ultimately made him famous, *The Young Descartes* shows that this story of his early life and the tumultuous times that molded him is sure to spark a reappraisal of his philosophy and legacy.

Although René Descartes' (1596-1650) is best remembered today for writing "I think, therefore, I am," his unique contribution to the history of ideas was his effort to construct a philosophy that would be sympathetic to the new sciences that emerged in the seventeenth century. In four major publications, he fashioned a philosophical system that accommodated the needs of these new sciences, thereby earning the unrelenting hostility of both Catholic and Calvinist theologians, who relied on the scholastic philosophy that Descartes hoped to replace. His

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contemporaries claimed that his proofs of God's existence, in the Meditations, were so unsuccessful that he must have been a cryptic atheist, and that his discussion of skepticism served merely to fan the flames of libertinism. Although Descartes died in Stockholm in obscurity, he soon became one of the most famous philosophers of the seventeenth century, a status that he continues to enjoy today. This English-language biography addresses the complete range of Descartes' interests in theology, philosophy, and the sciences, and traces his intellectual development throughout his entire career. Desmond M. Clarke is Professor of Philosophy at University College Cork, Ireland, where he previously served as Dean of Arts and Vice-President. He is author of a number of books on Descartes and the seventeenth century, including Descartes' Philosophy of Science (1982), Occult Powers & Hypotheses (1989) and Descartes' Theory of Mind (1993). He has translated two selections of Descartes' writings and has also translated La Forge's Treatise on the Human Mind (1997) and Poulain de la Barre's The Equality of the Sexes.

'I concluded that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature resides only in thinking, and which, in order to exist, has no need of place and is not dependent on any material thing.' Descartes's A Discourse on the Method of Correctly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences marks a watershed in European thought; in it, the author provides an informal intellectual autobiography in the vernacular for a non-specialist readership, sweeps away all previous philosophical traditions, and sets out in brief his radical new philosophy,

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which begins with a proof of the existence of the self (the famous 'cogito ergo sum'), next deduces from it the existence and nature of God, and ends by offering a radical new account of the physical world and of human and animal nature. This new translation is accompanied by a substantial introductory essay which draws on Descartes's correspondence to examine his motivation and the impact of his great work on his contemporaries. Detailed notes explain his philosophical terminology and ideas. ABOUT THE SERIES: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the widest range of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, helpful notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more. A Short History of Modern Philosophy is a lucid, challenging and up-to-date survey of the philosophers and philosophies from the founding father of modern philosophy, René Descartes, to the most important and famous philosopher of the twentieth century, Ludwig Wittgenstein. Roger Scruton has been widely praised for his success in making the history of modern philosophy cogent and intelligible to anyone wishing to understand this fascinating subject. In this new edition, he has responded to the explosion of interest in the history of philosophy

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by substantially rewriting the book, taking account of recent debates and scholarship.

Principles of Philosophy is a book by René Descartes. In essence it is a synthesis of the Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy. It was written in Latin, published in 1644 and dedicated to Elisabeth of Bohemia, with whom Descartes had a long-standing friendship. A French version (Les Principes de la Philosophie) followed in 1647. It set forth the principles of nature--the Laws of Physics--as Descartes viewed them. Most notably, it set forth the principle that in the absence of external forces, an object's motion will be uniform and in a straight line. Newton borrowed this principle from Descartes and included it in his own Principia; to this day, it is still generally referred to as Newton's First Law of Motion. The book was primarily intended to replace the Aristotelian curriculum then used in French and British Universities. The work provides a systematic statement of his metaphysics and natural philosophy, and represents the first truly comprehensive, mechanistic account of the universe.

Since Descartes famously proclaimed, "I think, therefore I am," science has often overlooked emotions as the source of a person's true being. Even modern neuroscience has tended, until recently, to concentrate on the cognitive aspects of brain function, disregarding emotions. This attitude began to change with the

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publication of Descartes' Error in 1995. Antonio Damasio—"one of the world's leading neurologists" (The New York Times)—challenged traditional ideas about the connection between emotions and rationality. In this wondrously engaging book, Damasio takes the reader on a journey of scientific discovery through a series of case studies, demonstrating what many of us have long suspected: emotions are not a luxury, they are essential to rational thinking and to normal social behavior.

"Simply Descartes is the perfect one-stop-shop for all matters Cartesian. Smith presents Descartes's entire system from the ground up, building from metaphysics and epistemology to physics and morality. In some ways, he even goes one step further than the master himself for, with the benefit of hindsight and of the work of leading scholars, Smith reconstructs the system in a neat, orderly, clean and concise way, extracting the disparate pieces from Descartes's many works scattered over many years. For those seeking entry into Descartes, or into philosophy in general, as well as for those seeking a refresher on this foundational thinker, you can do no better than this book."—Andrew Pessin, author of *The Irrationalist: The Tragic Murder of René Descartes* and Professor of Philosophy at Connecticut College René Descartes was born in La Haye en Touraine, France, on March 31, 1596. He attended a Jesuit college and studied

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law for two years, but he soon gave up formal academics to immerse himself in “the great book of the world.” In 1618, he joined the army, where he became interested in military engineering and expanded his knowledge of physics and mathematics. Then, one night in 1619, he experienced what he described as divine visions, which inspired him to create a new mathematics-based philosophy. He spent the next 30 years writing a series of works that radically transformed mathematics and philosophy and, by the time of his death in 1650, he was recognized as one of Europe’s greatest philosophers and scientists. In *Simply Descartes*, Professor Kurt Smith offers the general reader an opportunity to get better acquainted with the philosophy of the man who, as much as any individual, helped shape our contemporary way of thinking. Written in simple, nonacademic language and based on the best recent scholarship, *Simply Descartes* is the ideal introduction to Descartes’ life and work—from the famous Cogito (“I think, therefore I am”) to the development of analytic geometry, to the nature of God. Not to mention which, if you’ve ever wondered whether all living things are nothing more than fancy machines, or whether life is really a Matrix-like dream, you’ll be amazed to discover that a 17th-century philosopher was asking (and answering) the same things!

Looks at the life and ideas of the seventeenth century French philosopher.

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Of all the works of the man claimed by many as the father of modern philosophy, the *MEDITATIONS*, first published in 1641, must surely be Rene Descartes' masterpiece. This volume consists of not only a new translation of the original Latin text and the expanded objections and replies, but also includes selected correspondence and other metaphysical writings from the period 1641-49.

"Descartes' early work in mathematics and science produced ground-breaking theories, methods, and tools still in use today. This book gives the first full account of how this

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work informed and influenced the later philosophical studies for which, above all, Descartes is renowned. Not only were philosophy and science intertwined in Descartes' life; so were philosophy and religion. The Church of Rome found Galileo guilty of heresy in 1633; two decades earlier, Copernicus' theories about the universe had been denounced as blasphemous. To avoid such accusations, Descartes clothed his views about the relation between God and humanity, and about the nature of the universe, in a philosophical garb acceptable to the Church. His most famous project was the exploration of the foundations of human knowledge, starting from the proof of one's own existence offered in the formula *Cogito ergo sum*, 'I am thinking therefore I exist'. Stephen Gaukroger argues that this was not intended as an exercise in philosophical scepticism, but rather to provide Descartes' scientific theories, influenced as they were by Copernicus and Galileo, with metaphysical legitimation." "This book offers for the first time a full understanding of how Descartes developed his revolutionary ideas. It will be a landmark publication, welcomed by all readers interested in the origins of modern thought."--Résumé de l'éditeur.

Rene Descartes was a highly influential philosopher, mathematician, and scientist and is regarded as the Father of modern philosophy and mathematics. This is the biography of Descartes, and it describes the life of Descartes, in the flesh and blood, rather than a technical analysis of his philosophical, scientific, and mathematical ideas.

Ren--eacute--; Descartes (1596-1650) had a remarkably short working life, and his

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output was small, yet his contributions to philosophy and science have endured to the present day. In this book Tom Sorell shows that Descartes was, above all, an advocate and practitioner of a new mathematical approach to physics, and that he developed his metaphysics to support his programme in the sciences.

Meditations on First Philosophy, in which the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are demonstrated is a philosophical treatise by René Descartes first published in Latin in 1641. The French translation was published in 1647 as *Méditations*. Descartes' ideas not only changed the course of Western philosophy but also led to or transformed the fields of metaphysics, epistemology, physics and mathematics, political theory and ethics, psychoanalysis, and literature and the arts. This book reprints Descartes' major works, *Discourse on Method* and *Meditations*, and presents essays by leading scholars that explore his contributions in each of those fields and place his ideas in the context of his time and our own. There are chapters by David Weissman on metaphysics and psychoanalysis, John Post on epistemology, Lou Massa on physics and mathematics, William T. Bluhm on politics and ethics, and Thomas Pavel on literature and art. These essays are accompanied by others by David Weissman and by Stephen Toulmin that introduce the idea of intellectual lineages, discuss the period in which Descartes wrote, and reexamine the premises of his philosophy in light of contemporary philosophical, political, and social thinking.

A unique combination of philosophy, biography, and art history. The philosopher, the

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priest, and the painter investigates the remarkable individuals and the circumstances behind a small portrait.

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A bold and insightful departure from related texts, Descartes goes beyond the categorical associations placed on the philosopher's ideas, and explores the subtleties of his beliefs. An elegant, compelling and insightful introduction to Descartes' life and work. Discusses a broad range of his most scrutinized philosophical thought, including his contributions to logic, philosophy of the mind, epistemology, metaphysics, the philosophy of science, and the philosophy of religion. Explores the subtleties of Descartes' seemingly contradictory beliefs. Addresses themes left unexamined in other works on Descartes.

This major intellectual biography illuminates the personal and historical events of Descartes's life, from his birth and early years in France to his death in Sweden, his burial, and the fate of his remains. Concerned not only with historical events but also with the development of Descartes's personality, Rodis-Lewis speculates on the effect childhood impressions may have had on his philosophy and scientific theories. She considers in detail his friendships, particularly with Isaac Beeckman and Marin Mersenne. Primarily on the basis of his private

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correspondence, Rodis-Lewis gives a thorough and balanced discussion of his personality. The Descartes she depicts is by turns generous and unforgiving, arrogant and open-minded, loyal in his friendships but eager for the isolation his work required. Drawing on Descartes's writings and his public and private correspondence, she corrects the errors of earlier biographies and clarifies many obscure episodes in the philosopher's life.

About the philosophy of René Descartes.

Cogito, Ergo Sum The Life of René Descartes David R Godine Pub

Sixteen years after René Descartes' death in Stockholm in 1650, a pious French ambassador exhumed the remains of the controversial philosopher to transport them back to Paris. Thus began a 350-year saga that saw Descartes' bones traverse a continent, passing between kings, philosophers, poets, and painters. But as Russell Shorto shows in this deeply engaging book, Descartes' bones also played a role in some of the most momentous episodes in history, which are also part of the philosopher's metaphorical remains: the birth of science, the rise of democracy, and the earliest debates between reason and faith. Descartes' Bones is a flesh-and-blood story about the battle between religion and rationalism that rages to this day. A New York Times Notable Book

Scientist, mathematician, traveler, soldier-and spy-Rene Descartes was one of the founders of the modern world. His life coincided with an extraordinary time in history: the first half of the miraculous seventeenth century, replete with genius in the arts and sciences, and wracked by civil and international conflicts across Europe. But at his birth in 1596 the world was still dominated by medieval beliefs in phenomena such as miracles and spontaneous generation. It was Descartes who identified the intellectual tools his peers needed to free themselves from

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the grip of religious authority and in doing so he founded modern philosophy. In this new biography, A. C. Grayling tells the story of Descartes' life, and places it in his tumultuous times—with the unexpected result that an entirely new aspect of the story comes to light.

The seventeenth century was a period of extraordinary invention, discovery and revolutions in scientific, social and political orders. It was a time of expansive automation, biological discovery, rapid advances in medical knowledge, of animal trials and a questioning of the boundaries between species, human and non-human, between social classes, and of the assumed naturalness of political inequality. This book gives a tour through those objects, ordinary and extraordinary, which captivated the philosophical imagination of the single most important French philosopher of this period, René Descartes. Deborah J. Brown and Calvin G. Normore document Descartes' attempt to make sense of the complex, composite objects of human and divine invention, consistent with the fundamental tenets of his metaphysical system. Their central argument is that, far from reducing all the categories of ordinary experience to the two basic categories of substance, mind and body, Descartes' philosophy recognises irreducible composites that resist reduction, and require their own distinctive modes of explanation.

The Cambridge Descartes Lexicon is the definitive reference source on René Descartes, 'the father of modern philosophy' and arguably among the most important philosophers of all time. Examining the full range of Descartes' achievements and legacy, it includes 256 in-depth entries that explain key concepts relating to his thought. Cumulatively they uncover interpretative disputes, trace his influences, and explain how his work was received by critics and developed by followers. There are entries on topics such as certainty, cogito ergo sum,

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doubt, dualism, free will, God, geometry, happiness, human being, knowledge, Meditations on First Philosophy, mind, passion, physics, and virtue, which are written by the largest and most distinguished team of Cartesian scholars ever assembled for a collaborative research project - 92 contributors from ten countries.

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This is the first intellectual biography of Descartes in English. Stephen Gaukroger provides a rich, authoritative account of Descartes' intellectual and personal development, understood in its historical context, and offers a reassessment of all aspects of his life and work.

Descartes is possibly the most famous of all writers on the mind, but his theory of mind has been almost universally misunderstood, because his philosophy has

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not been seen in the context of his scientific work. Desmond Clarke offers a radical and convincing rereading, undoing the received perception of Descartes as the chief defender of mind/body dualism. For Clarke, the key is to interpret his philosophical efforts as an attempt to reconcile his scientific pursuits with the theologically orthodox views of his time.

René Descartes (1596-1650) had a remarkably short working life, and his output was small, yet his contributions to philosophy and science have endured to the present day. He is perhaps best known for his statement 'Cogito, ergo sum'. By a mixture of 'intuition' and 'deduction' Descartes derived from the 'cogito' principle first the existence of a material world. But Descartes did not intend the metaphysics to stand apart from his scientific work, which included important investigations into physics, mathematics, psychology, and optics. In this book Tom Sorrell shows that Descartes was, above all, an advocate and practitioner of a new mathematical approach to physics, and that he developed his metaphysics to support his programme in the sciences. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging

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topics highly readable.

Philosophical thought is deciphered and made comprehensible and interesting to almost everyone.

Rene Descartes is the philosophical architect of our modern world. In metaphysics, he established the view that mind and body are distinct substances, a position foundational for any belief that the human soul is immortal. In mathematics, he invented analytic geometry - the basis of calculus - which makes physics as we know it possible. Descartes perfected the method of proposing and testing hypotheses with experiments that anyone can repeat, which forms the basis of modern science. In optics, he discovered and described laws of refraction and reflection. In medicine, he was a pioneer in vivisection and anatomical description for understanding the human body. In physiology, his analysis of the relations among the sense organs, nerves, and the brain is still taught today. In psychology, he discovered conditioned reflexes and investigated the role of the emotions in human behavior. Descartes said there was no point in trying to refute Aristotelian Scholasticism; rather, he would simply show a better way. Some 350 years after his death, our twenty-first-century world - from mind-body dualism to heart pumps, from pop psychology to personal computers - is thoroughly Cartesian. Nothing in the modern world would alarm or surprise him

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were he alive today.

A portrait of the seventeenth-century philosopher and mathematician looks at his interest in mysticism and probable membership in the occult brotherhood of Rosicrucians, and his secret notebook, which he kept in code, attempting to redecipher the contents of the long-lost volume.

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