



Occult Powers and Hypotheses : Cartesian Natural Philosophy Under Louis XIV

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Cartesian natural philosophers developed an understanding of scientific explanation as necessarily hypothetical. While they contributed little to new scientific discoveries, they made a lasting contribution to our concept of explanation. They argued in favour of substituting mechanical hypotheses for the occult powers of scholastic philosophy generations of scientists in subsequent centuries followed their lead. This book is an analysis of the concept of scientific explanation which was developed by French disciples of Descartes in the period 1660-1700. Clarke examines the views of renowned authors, such as Malebranche and Rohault, as well as the lesser-known, including Cordemoy, Gadroys, Poisson and Regis.

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