# METAPHYSICS OF THE SUPERNATURAL AS ILLUSTRATED BY DESCARTES

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

#### ISBN 9780649346264

Metaphysics of the Supernatural as Illustrated by Descartes by Lina Kahn

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd. Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

### LINA KAHN

## METAPHYSICS OF THE SUPERNATURAL AS ILLUSTRATED BY DESCARTES



# METAPHYSICS OF THE SUPERNATURAL AS ILLUSTRATED BY DESCARTES

#### by LINA KAHN

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University

Oaku Harris

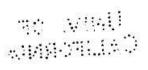
Aew Dork

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS
1918

F1378

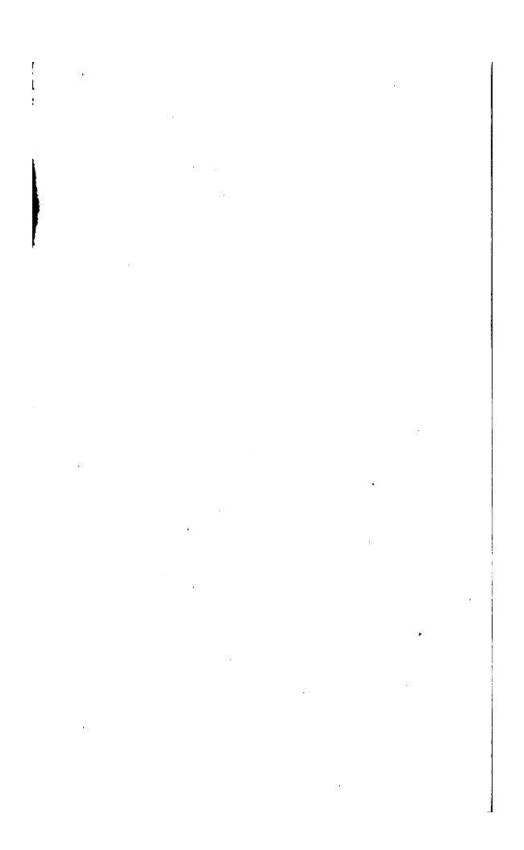
#### COPYRIGHT, 1918 By COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

Printed from type, January, 1918



B1818

"À messieurs les archevêques et évêques de France. Messieurs: Je cite devant vous Monsieur des Cartes et ses plus ' fameux sectateurs: je les accuse d'être d'accord avec Calvin et les Calvinistes sur des Principes de Philosophie contraire à la doctrine de l'Église: c'est à vous, Messieurs, à en juger!"—Louis de la Ville (le Père de Valois), Sentiments de Monsieur des Cartes touchant l'essence et les propriétés du corps opposés à la doctrine de l'Église et conformes aux Erreurs de Calvin sur le sujet de l'Eucharistie. Paris, 1680.

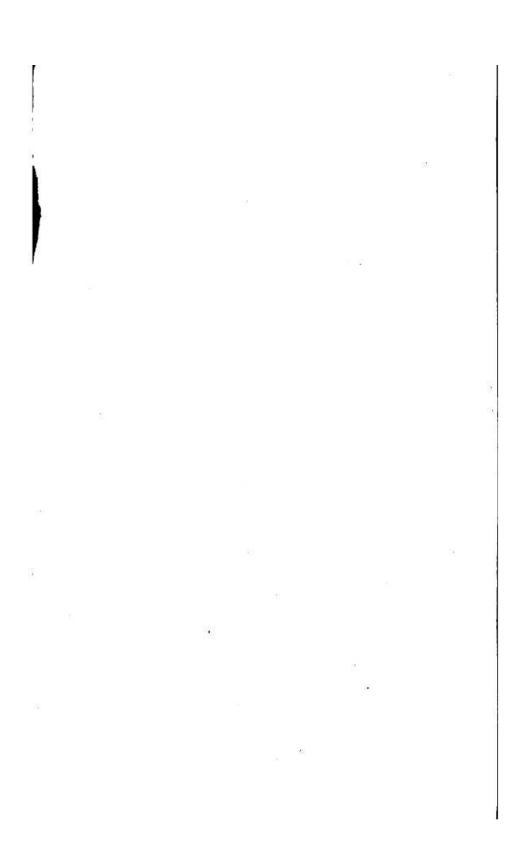


#### PREFACE

The present study of Descartes was undertaken for the sake of a better understanding of the common tendency of philosophers to deal with the supernatural. Descartes is one of the modern philosophers who, despite a strong preference for scientific investigation of the world of experience, devoted a great deal of speculation to tradition. To lift the veil from this mystery, his major as well as his minor works and correspondence are studied here in the light of his time. By this method we discover that the conflict between science and theology brought Descartes to the diplomacy of disguising his scientific ideas in a theological garb. Historians have overlooked his scientific side and have brought out only his cautious and timid side. He is represented in the history of philosophy as a dialectician and a rationalist whose main concern was the demonstration of the existence of God and the soul. The attempt is here made to give to Descartes's rationalism its proper setting and to present his naturalism as his genuine philosophy.

Unless otherwise indicated, all footnotes refer to the Adam and Tannery edition. In most cases the spelling has been modernized.

I take this occasion to express my gratitude for valuable suggestions and helpful criticism to Professor F. J. E. Woodbridge, Professor W. P. Montague, Professor John Dewey, and Professor W. T. Bush, all of Columbia University. My warmest thanks are, however, due to the latter, whose constant advice and, particularly, encouragement I most highly appreciate.



#### CONTENTS

#### CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION: PERSISTENT PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY.

#### CHAPTER II. PROGRESSIVE IDEAS IN DESCARTES.

- Break with authority and tradition; sincere inquiry in place of authority; experience in place of tradition.
- Nature his primary interest; study of nature by experiment and observation.
- 3. Scientific interpretation of the world and of man.
- Conflict of his scientific ideas with theology.
  - Explaining away of the traditional soul by his physiology and psychology.
  - b. Interference of his cosmology with the traditional teachings about the "universe" and God.
  - Overthrowing of traditional ethics by his basis for morality.
  - d. Undermining of the theory of the Eucharist by his physics.
- Elimination of the traditional problems of orthodox methaphysics.

## Chapter III. Conservation of Traditions Despite Progressive Ideas.

- The principle of God and the principle of clearness and distinctness of our ideas for the derivation of the existence of the material world; the Cogito ergo sum; the doctrine of the clearness of the idea of soul.
- 2. The traditional problems of God and the soul.

1

- (a. Proof of the existence of God; mixture of theology and traditional philosophy; failure.
- b. Proof of the existence of the soul; mixture of accepted beliefs and his own radical conceptions; failure.
- Lack of empirical and historical research in his treatment of traditional problems.
- d. Interpretation of the failure in the solution of the traditional problems; traditional elements of his method; subject-matter.
- The loose connection of the traditional problems with the entire scheme of his system; motive for treating them.