

**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

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LINA KAHN

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BY
LINA KAHN

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

New York

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

1918

P1275
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Printed from type, January, 1918

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

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"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.

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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.



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