

Descartes



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出版者:Oxford University Press, U.S.A.

出版时间:1998-9-24

装帧:Paperback

isbn:9780198751823

This latest volume in the Oxford Readings in Philosophy series brings together some of the most influential and stimulating essays on Descartes' philosophy to have appeared in the last fifty years, edited by the renowned Descartes specialist Professor John Cottingham. A lucid introduction by the editor outlines the principle features of Descartes' philosophy and summarizes the main arguments of each chapter. Covering the full range of Descartes' thought, the volume opens with a cluster of central issues in Descartes' metaphysics: systematic doubt, the Cogito, clarity and distinctness, and the Cartesian Circle; followed by chapters on Descartes' theory of the will, and his account of necessity and possibility. Two notorious and interrelated problems in Descartes' system are then dealt with: the distinction between mind and body, and the unity of the human being. There follow chapters on Descartes' account of human nature and the passions, and his treatment of animals; and the volume closes with three chapters on Cartesian science, covering Descartes' views on the relationship between experiment and deduction, his account of scientific explanation, and the notion of causal agency or force in his physics. These broad-ranging and accessible perspectives on Descartes' work will be essential reading for students and specialists.

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