



Psychosomatic Disorders in Seventeenth-Century French Literature: 5 (Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity)

Bernadette, Dr Höfer

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Bernadette Höfer's innovative and ambitious monograph argues that the epistemology of the Cartesian mind/body dualism, and its insistence on the primacy of analytic thought over bodily function, has surprisingly little purchase in texts by prominent classical writers. In this study Höfer explores how Surin, Molière, Lafayette, and Racine represent interconnections of body and mind that influence behaviour, both voluntary and involuntary, and that thus disprove the classical notion of the mind as distinct from and superior to the body. The author's interdisciplinary perspective utilizes early modern medical and philosophical treatises, as well as contemporary medical compilations in the disciplines of psychosomatic medicine, neurobiology, and psychoanalysis, to demonstrate that these seventeenth-century French writers established a view of human existence that fully anticipates current thought regarding psychosomatic illness.

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