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Forces and Fields: The Concept of Action at a Distance in the History of Physics

By Mary B. Hesse

Dover Publications. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 336 pages. Dimensions: 8.4in. x 5.4in. x 0.7in. This history of physics focuses on the question, How do bodies act on one another across space? The variety of answers illustrates the function of fundamental analogies or models in physics, as well as the role of so-called unobservable entities. *Forces and Fields* presents an in-depth look at the science of ancient Greece, and it examines the influence of antique philosophy on seventeenth-century thought. Additional topics embrace many elements of modern physics: the empirical basis of quantum mechanics, wave-particle duality and the uncertainty principle, and the action-at-a-distance theory of Wheeler and Feynman. The introductory chapter, in which the philosophical view is developed, can be omitted by readers more interested in history. Author Mary B. Hesse examines the use of analogies in primitive scientific explanation, particularly in the works of Aristotle, and contrasts them with latter-day theories such as those of gravitation and relativity. Hesse incorporates studies of the Pre-Socratics initiated by Francis Cornford and continued by contemporary classical historians. Her perspective sheds considerable light on the scientific thinking of antiquity, and it highlights the debt that the seventeenth-century natural philosophers owed to Greek ideas. This item ships...



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