

Against the Idols of the Age

By David Stove

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Against the Idols of the Age By David Stove

Little known outside his native Australia, David Stove was one of the most illuminating and brilliant philosophical essayists of the postwar era. A fearless attacker of intellectual and cultural orthodoxies, Stove left powerful critiques of scientific irrationalism, Darwinian theories of human behavior, and philosophical idealism. He was also an occasional essayist of considerable charm and polemical snap. Stove's writing is both rigorous and immensely readable. It is, in the words of Roger Kimball, "an invigorating blend of analytic lucidity, mordant humor, and an amount of common sense too great to be called 'common.'" *Against the Idols of the Age* brings together a representative selection of Stove's writing and is an ideal introduction to his work.

The book opens with some of Stove's most important attacks on irrationalism in the philosophy of science. He exposes the roots of this fashionable attitude, tracing it through writers like Paul Feyerabend and Thomas Kuhn to Karl Popper. Stove was a born controversialist, so it is not surprising that when he turned his attention to contemporary affairs he said things that are politically incorrect. The topical essays that make up the second part of the book show Stove at his most withering and combative. Whether the subject is race, feminism, the Enlightenment, or the demand for "non-coercive philosophy," Stove is on the mark with a battery of impressive arguments expressed in sharp, uncompromising prose. *Against the Idols of the Age* concludes with a generous sampling of his blistering attacks on Darwinism.

David Stove's writings are an undiscovered treasure. Although readers may disagree with some of his opinions, they will find it difficult to dismiss his razor-sharp arguments. *Against the Idols of the Age* is the first book to make the full range of this important thinker available to the general reader.

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