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Sommario/riassunto

In the early modern period, thinkers began to suggest that philosophy abjure the ideal of dispassionate contemplation of the natural world in favor of a more practically minded project that aimed to make human beings masters and possessors of nature. Humanity would seize control of its own fate and overthrow the rule by hostile natural or imaginary forces. The gradual spread of liberal democratic government, the Enlightenment, and the rise of technological modernity are to a considerable extent the fruits of this early modern shift in intellectual concern and focus. But these long-term trends have also brought unintended consequences in their wake as the dynamic forces of social reason, historical progress, and the continued recalcitrance of the natural world have combined to disillusion humans of the possibility—even the desirability—of their mastery over nature. The essays in *Mastery of Nature* constitute an extensive analysis of the fundamental aspects of the human grasp of nature. What is the foundation and motive of the modern project in the first place? What kind of a world did its early advocates hope to bring about? Contributors not only examine the foundational theories espoused by early modern thinkers such as Machiavelli, Bacon, Descartes, and Hobbes but also explore the criticisms and corrections that appeared in the works of Rousseau, Kant, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. Ranging from ancient Greek thought to contemporary quantum mechanics, *Mastery of Nature* investigates to what extent nature can be conquered to further human ends and to what extent such mastery is compatible with human flourishing. Contributors: Robert C. Bartlett, Mark Blitz, Daniel A. Doneson, Michael A. Gillespie, Ralph Lerner, Paul Ludwig, Harvey C. Mansfield, Arthur Melzer, Svetozar Y. Minkov, Christopher Nadon, Diana J. Schaub, Adam Schulman, Devin Stauffer, Bernhardt L. Trout, Lisa Van Boxel, Richard Velkley, Stuart D. Warner, Jerry Weinberger.