



CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF
MEDICINE AND THE BODY
IN THE RENAISSANCE

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UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PARMA



STUDIO FIRMANO
PER LA STORIA DELL'ARTE MEDICA E DELLA SCIENZA

CSMBR
ONLINE
EVENTS

EMULATING GOD ON EARTH

16
JULY
2024
5.00 pm CET

LEIBNIZ ON THE ORGANISATION OF LIFE AND THE STRUCTURE OF IDEAL SOCIETIES

AUDREY BOROWSKI • University of Bonn

The German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) envisaged a rich metaphysics of life which had been carefully designed according to a divine calculus. Each living body, he proposed, formed a “kind of automaton,” not merely in its totality “but also in its smallest distinguishable parts”. The world was organized according to an infinitely divisible continuum, in which everything was interconnected and change occurred gradually. In it, “diversity

[was] compensated by identity” in the image of the monad, that foundational spiritual entity which acted as a “perpetual living mirror of the universe”. Leibniz’s philosophy, however, was not a purely contemplative one, but driven by the dictum of *theoria cum praxi*, namely the idea of deriving practical applications from theoretical insights and scientific discoveries. According to him, the temporal realm should strive to emulate

the perfection of the metaphysical realm and man, his creator. During Leibniz’s younger years in the 1670s, this meant designing a number of schemes which included projects for ideal societies all of which, according to Leibniz, would contribute to erect just and virtuous societies. By striving for the common good and the benefit of mankind, these institutions would be doing God’s work on Earth not without involving a certain measure of enlightened despotism or potential coercion. In this talk, I will highlight the links between Leibniz’s conception of life and ideal society and the potential tensions between them.

The event is free to attend but registration is required. Info at csnbr.fondazionecomel.org