



Leibniz (Classic Thinkers (Hardcover))

Richard T.W. Arthur

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Few philosophers have left a legacy like that of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. He has been credited not only with inventing the differential calculus, but also with anticipating the basic ideas of modern logic, information science, and fractal geometry. He made important contributions to such diverse fields as jurisprudence, geology and etymology, while sketching designs for calculating machines, wind pumps, and submarines. But the common presentation of his philosophy as a kind of unworldly idealism is at odds with all this bustling practical activity.

In this book Richard. T. W. Arthur offers a fresh reading of Leibniz's philosophy, clearly situating it in its scientific, political and theological contexts. He argues that Leibniz aimed to provide an improved foundation for the mechanical philosophy based on a new kind of universal language. His contributions to natural philosophy are an integral part of this programme, which his metaphysics, dynamics and organic philosophy were designed to support. Rather than denying that substances really exist in space and time, as the idealist reading proposes, Leibniz sought to provide a deeper understanding of substance and body, and a correct understanding of space as an order of situations and time as an order of successive things.

This lively and approachable book will appeal to students of philosophy, as well as anyone seeking a stimulating introduction to Leibniz's thought and its continuing relevance.

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