

造物者與萬物：近代歐洲早期的宗教與醫學

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This talk is an introduction to the early modern discussions on the nature of life and the broad philosophical and theological questions those discussions addressed. It examines as an example the English philosopher and theologian Ralph Cudworth's formulation of life and his criticism of the proposal of the so-called "mechanists." As we will show, every early modern formulations of life inevitably suggested a role of God in relation to his creatures. In this context the question of life concerned not only those who treated life, i.e., medical professionals, but also philosophers and theologians who wanted to understand the fundamental nature of the natural and divine order of the world.

Outlines:

1. The Mechanistic World-View
2. Cudworth's Criticism of Mechanism
3. Cudworth's Conception of Plastic Nature
4. God's Role in Relation to his Creatures
5. The Philosophical and Theological Significance of Life

Questions to Ponder:

1. How did Descartes conceive of the constitution of the organism?
2. For Cudworth, what was the problem of Descartes' conception of the world?
3. What did Cudworth propose to solve the problem concerning the nature of life? What was God's role in Cudworth's formulation?

Suggested Readings:

1. Ku-ming Chang, "The Matter of Life: Georg Ernst Stahl and the Reconceptualization of Matter, Body, and Life in Early Modern Europe," Ph.D. Dissertation, the University of Chicago, 2002, 171-85, 201-02.
2. William B. Hunter, Jr., "The Seventeenth Century Doctrine of Plastic Nature," *Harvard Theological Review*, 42 (1950), 197-213.