

Prolegomena to the Study of Modern Philosophy

Bearbeitet von
Andrej Démuth

1. Auflage 2016. Taschenbuch. 126 S. Softcover

ISBN 978 3 631 67338 6

Format (B x L): 12 x 17 cm

[Weitere Fachgebiete > Philosophie, Wissenschaftstheorie, Informationswissenschaft > Philosophie: Allgemeines > Mittelalterliche & Scholastische Philosophie](#)

Zu [Inhaltsverzeichnis](#)

schnell und portofrei erhältlich bei

The logo for beck-shop.de features the text 'beck-shop.de' in a bold, red, sans-serif font. Above the 'i' in 'shop' are three red dots of increasing size. Below the main text, 'DIE FACHBUCHHANDLUNG' is written in a smaller, red, all-caps, sans-serif font.

beck-shop.de
DIE FACHBUCHHANDLUNG

Die Online-Fachbuchhandlung beck-shop.de ist spezialisiert auf Fachbücher, insbesondere Recht, Steuern und Wirtschaft. Im Sortiment finden Sie alle Medien (Bücher, Zeitschriften, CDs, eBooks, etc.) aller Verlage. Ergänzt wird das Programm durch Services wie Neuerscheinungsdienst oder Zusammenstellungen von Büchern zu Sonderpreisen. Der Shop führt mehr als 8 Millionen Produkte.

UNI SLOVAKIA

ANDREJ DÉMUTH

**Prolegomena to the
Study of Modern
Philosophy**



PETER LANG
EDITION

Prolegomena to the Study of Modern Philosophy

The present work does not attempt to provide a detailed history of modern philosophy or an exhaustive interpretation and analysis of the ideas and works of individual philosophers and philosophies. There are sufficient classic works like these in the international (F. Copleston, *Cambridge Companion to Philosophy*, Oxford, Routledge, Blackwell) as well as domestic linguistic environment (*Dějiny filosofie (The History of Philosophy)*, OIKOYMENH – Vol. 13). The aim of the present text is rather to focus on briefly introducing the issue – to introduce the reader to the basic problematic issues of modern philosophy, the concepts and their solutions, the fundamental theories and ideas, and the definitions of key notions, ideas, and approaches. Therefore, this is not a typical history-philosophy thesis, but rather an outline of char-

acteristics of the thinking in the period – by thematising the main topics of modern-day thinking.

If we discuss the historical approach to philosophy in the modern era, from the beginning we need to point out that defining the modern period is itself associated with a number of challenges concerning delineation. Firstly, the modern period has not yet been defined by an historical event that has been generally accepted as the beginning or end of the period. To this day, historians continue to argue if such an initial milestone exists, and if so, which historical event it is (the discovery of America in 1492, Germany in 1517 (Luther's theses), the reformation in England in 1485, the reformation in France in 1515, in Spain in 1515, in Sweden in 1523, in Norway in 1536, in Denmark in 1533, in Poland in 1505, in Russia in 1533, in the Netherlands in 1519, Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in 1452, the fall of Constantinople in 1453). The year 1526, when the Battle of Mohács took place, is an analogical historic milestone within Bohemia and Hungary. Moreover, it is obvious that defining the modern era is also challenging in terms of geography (while a process is ending in one country, it has not yet started in another; in addition, irregular manifestations in various areas – painting vs. philosophy, science, and the like – in the same period and in the same territory can be observed). Another question is what the modern era should be defined against, and what is or is not a part of it (are Humanism and the Renaissance a part of

the modern era, or of its predecessor?) Do we still live in the modern era, or is our age something different? (The English term, “modern”, has been used to denote this period, but it denotes neither Modernism nor the present day contemporary period)?

The modern era has been historically, logically and etymologically delineated against the Middle Ages. Using Jan Werich’s ideas of chronology (the Middle Ages are midway between ancient history and the modern era), the passage of time inevitably leads to a shift from the Middle Ages and thereby to the question of what, in fact, is characterised by it. It seems the period can best be defined by a way of thinking and distinctive topics. We often say that the Middle Ages was a dark age and we simplify the image of the era (it was a period of obscurantism; philosophy played a secondary role as theology’s servant; it was a period of denying and limiting science...). On the other hand, it was during this period that education was institutionalised (universities were established as well as the educational system (Le Goff 1999)), hospitals were founded, and the methodology of thinking was thoroughly précised ... (Démuth 2013, 46 – 52). Other cultural as well as institutional structures were also formed during the Middle Ages, thus the period is a corner stone of today’s society. Therefore, it seems the true reason of our perception of the Medieval Period as “dark”, is rather a kind of information paradox – not the dark Middle Ages, but the dark places in the facts

of the period. This is due to the lack of medieval texts translated into the living languages of today (e.g. a lack of works translated into Slovak or Czech, although we have ancient texts), in the nature of ideas and the forms of medieval texts being large tractates, in underestimating the topic – they say, those are only commentaries on ancient classics – but also in the fact that not many readers are able to read these texts in their original form.

Thus, the way the Medieval Ages are mostly defined as concerning topics such as: commenting on ancient works; the predominance of supernaturalism and privileging theology as the queen of sciences and cognition; exaggerated speculativeness and an emphasis on rationalism or suprarationalism (irrationalism) subjecting reason to faith. In ethics, the core of reflections are the instructions for gaining individual salvation, drawing attention to the immortal and spiritual nature of mankind, and focusing on the afterlife or eternal objectives.

On the contrary, despite its similar return to the classic ancient texts and values (the term “Renaissance” comes from 1840, and a “Renaissance man” from 1906 – etymonline), the core topics in the modern era include cognition (its birth and mechanisms), the individual, and, for the first time, society, or possibly the way a (perfect) state should be organised to bring well-being here and now (not as late as after death, like in *Civitas Dei*). The transition towards mankind can be observed in

that man rests at the core of these reflections, analogies and metaphors, man becomes a true focal point of the world perception perspective. In addition, almost every topic of thought is subjected to man, be it science, art or a nature which he/she wants to subdue (excluding the understanding of God which is delineated and simulated as well as denied – knowing God through nature – naturalism). The subject of modern era cognition is the world in terms of nature, including all which the term “nature” (*Natura*) comprehends as power, nature and essence (homo – imago dei plus the interest in experimenting and experience – changing the focus of science).

This text will therefore try to serve as a survey of the aforementioned key topics and attitudes offered by the history of philosophical thinking in the modern era. When I refer to the modern period, for the purposes of this text I mean the whole era starting with Cusanus (the thinker, who could be also perceived as medieval, based on the period (born in 1401), function (a papal legate, cardinal) as well as his key interest (God); however, his thinking and topics make him rather a Renaissance and modern era thinker), up until Hegel’s philosophy and the immediate response to it. (That said, the whole of classical German idealistic philosophy could be perceived as an independent era of philosophical thought).

This text is divided into nine chapters in which I will try to draw attention to various aspects of understanding God, to the question of the individual, ideal state

arrangement, and the question of freedom as well as history. I will pay special attention to the issue of cognition, its justification, sources and competencies, but also to the transformation of the forms of Platonism and Aristotelianism in the modern period, the question of sensibility and sense, as well as language and the issue of a system in philosophy. Chapters are arranged as historical characteristics of the issue with an introduction of key approaches and ideas, including references to bibliography. Considering the introductive nature of this text, each chapter has additional references to secondary literature which may help the reader further develop the issues discussed in each chapter in greater detail.