

GASTVORTRAG



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“Reason” in the Age of Reason

Abstract

The eighteenth century is commonly described as the “Age of Enlightenment” or the “Age of Reason.” While the meaning and significance of “enlightenment” has been widely discussed both historically and philosophically, the more fundamental notion of “reason” has oddly received less attention. But what is “reason”? Is it simply a cognitive faculty? Does it have a normative content, referring to valid inferences? Or does reason have something to do with the rationality and comprehensibility of the world? And how did philosophers of the enlightenment understand the related terms “Philosophy”, “Rationalism”, “Metaphysics” and “Science”? This talk addresses these questions and attempts to show that “reason” was not a univocal concept, but rather reflected in certain ways the self-conception of different philosophers.

Brandon Look is University Research Professor and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Kentucky. He specializes in the history of early-modern philosophy and is the author of *Leibniz and the “vinculum substantiale”* (Stuttgart, 1999), co-editor of the *The Leibniz-Des Bosses Correspondence* (New Haven, 2007) and *The Oxford Handbook to Eighteenth-Century German Philosophy* (in progress) and editor of *The Continuum Companion to Leibniz* (London, 2011; reissued as *The Bloomsbury Companion to Leibniz*, London, 2014) and *Leibniz and Kant* (Oxford, forthcoming).

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