



# PŘEDNÁŠKOVÁ SÉRIE

## LECTURE SERIES

Richard Velkley (Tulane University, New Orleans)

# The Fate of Human Action: The Agency of ‘Reason’ in Modern Philosophy

A notable strand of contemporary philosophy criticizes the “naturalist” account of human action for its inability to grasp human agency as a first-person, purposive engagement with a world of already conceptually-interpreted content. The “brute given” description of nature according to modern scientific theory (or “seventeenth century picture of the world”) cannot provide causal grounds for human thoughts and intentions, as these reveal capacities for self-critical, justificatory and normative reasoning. Authors such as John McDowell and Charles Taylor would correct modern “naturalism” by drawing on German Idealist and phenomenological modes of thought. Still, they miss an important line of thought in modern philosophy which connects human action to imaginative projection of the possible future and to certain notions of “speculation.” Philosophers like Hobbes and Descartes help in this regard to illuminate the problematic character of human action.

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