

THE PRINCIPLE OF INDIVIDUATION

A Brief History

PERMANENT SEMINAR MARCH APRIL MAY 2019 FLUC

DR. SIMONE GUIDI • IEF

That of the principle of individuation is one of the most relevant problems in Medieval and Early Modern Metaphysics and Logic, even if it is also a relevant question in the contemporary debate, as well as in our everyday life.

What makes of Socrates this or that individual? Why and how one can classify many individuals provided with the same features in common groups? How to explain the relationship between singularity and multiplicity, dealing with many individuals pertaining to the same species or genus?

The Seminar addresses the many accounts to these issues over the History of Medieval, Modern and Contemporary Philosophy, choosing a specific path, aimed at showing a surprising continuity, in the discontinuity, between ancient and current debates on individuation.

The first four appointments, dedicated to the most relevant stages of individuation in the Scholastic thought, will take place in the course of Medieval Philosophy, dealing with Boethius, Bonaventure, Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, as well as with the reception of Medieval debate in late Aristotelianism, namely in Fonseca and Suárez. I will try to show how the problem of individuation would be placed among the questions on the ontological status of universals, on the logical status of individuals, and on the physical and metaphysical composition of substances.

The remaining lessons will be instead dedicated to Modern and Contemporary accounts and issues pertaining individuation: Leibniz, Spinoza, Schopenhauer, Bergson and Simondon. Here I will try to show how the Modern age inherits the Early modern paradigms of individuation at least until the end of the nineteenth century. Finally, I will also deal with contemporary accounts of individuation as a process, in the philosophy of Bergson and Simondon, pointing out what looks new and what is borrowed from the classic debate.

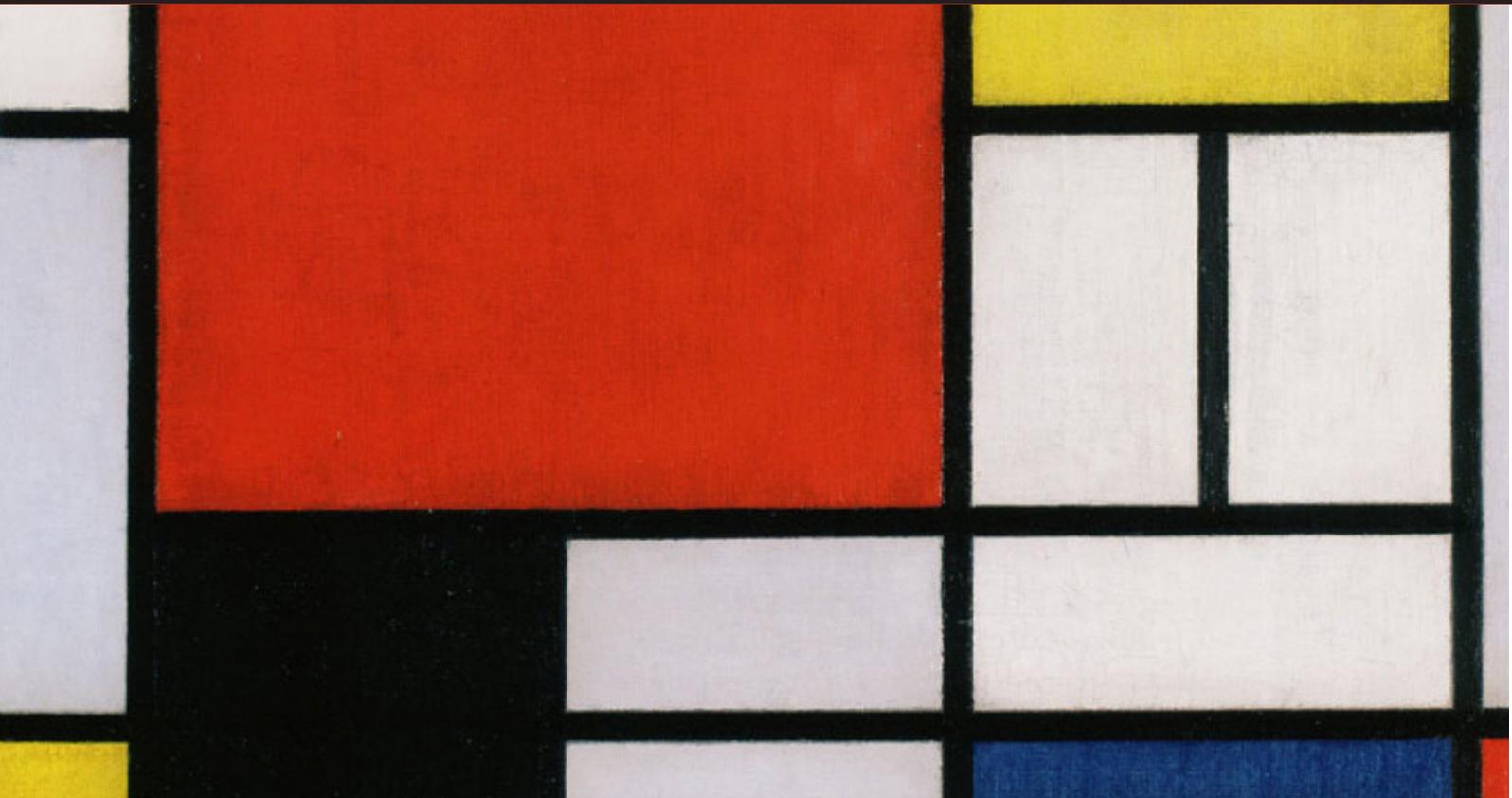
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SALA 12 • FLUC • H.14-16



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The principle of individuation is one of the most relevant topics in the History of Philosophy. The Seminar, addressed at students of any level, deals with the most important stages in the history of this concept. Such a path is aimed at showing a surprising continuity in all the many accounts of the question about individuation over the centuries. Thus, it will start from the “prehistory” of the concept in the ancient thought, and will reach the contemporary debate, passing through medieval and modern elaborations of the issue.

LESSONS: **14/03** The Principle of Individuation: a Prehistory • **15/03** *Hoc Aliquid*. Physical and Metaphysical Individuation in the Middle Ages • **22/03** A Positive Individuation: Duns Scotus' *Haecceitas* • **29/03** Early Modern Individuations: Fonseca and Suárez • **05/04** Early Modern Issues about Individuation: Leibniz and Spinoza • **12/04** Will and Individuation: Schopenhauer and Nietzsche • **10/05** Process and the Principle of Individuation: Bergson, Simondon