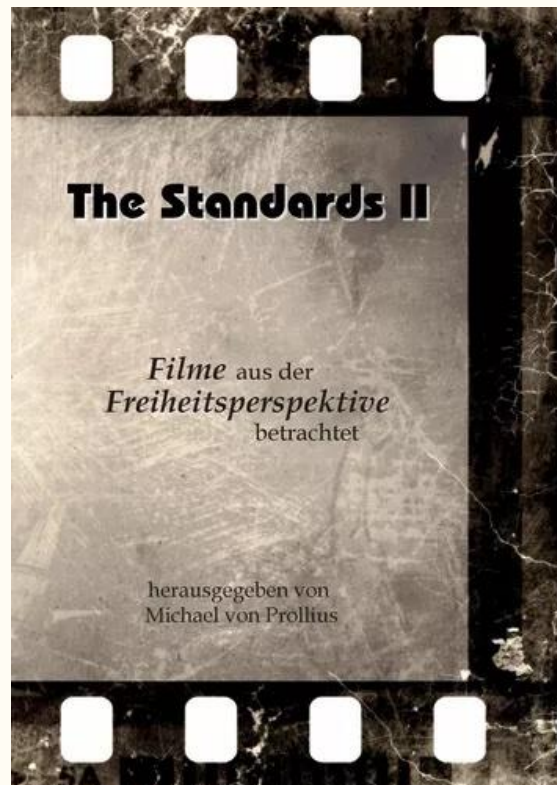


The Standards I & II

Classical Liberal Essays and Films from a Freedom Perspective

An Anthology Series on Economic Thought and Cultural Analysis



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One-Sentence Summary

This English summary presents Michael von Prollius's pioneering two-volume anthology series "The Standards," which systematically introduces international readers to classical liberal economic thought through reinterpreted foundational essays (Volume I) and films analyzed from a freedom perspective (Volume II), establishing a unique pedagogical framework for understanding market economics and libertarian cultural criticism.

About The Books

Publication Details:

- **Editor:** Michael von Prollius
- **Title:** The Standards. Klassisch-liberale Aufsätze neu interpretiert
- **Publisher:** Books on Demand, Norderstedt
- **ISBN:** 13: 9783734799051(Hardcover) 13: 9783734776090
- **Publication Date:** 2014
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- **Title:** The Standards II. Filme aus der Freiheitsperspektive betrachtet
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- **ISBN:** 13: 978-3739244778
- **Publication Date:** 2016
- **Format:** 124 pages

Editorial Vision and Conceptual Innovation

Michael von Prollius's "Standards" series represents a deliberate intervention in German-language classical liberal education. Drawing inspiration from music's "Great American Songbook" - where standards are frequently played pieces that endure stylistic changes through continuous reinterpretation - Prollius applies this concept to economic literature and cinema. Just as musical standards gain new life through fresh interpretations while preserving their essential character, the selected essays and films receive contemporary analysis while maintaining their foundational insights.

The editorial vision addresses a specific market gap: while numerous anthologies exist for books and broad economic topics, substantial summaries and presentations of seminal journal articles that qualify as classics remained scarce. Similarly, cinema predominantly reflects anti-capitalist sentiment, leaving audiences with limited exposure to films that genuinely advocate for freedom and individual responsibility.

Prollius's approach deliberately targets a student and academic audience seeking alternatives to mainstream aggregated economic models. The series promotes what he terms "individual responsibility and self-determination" while challenging the prevailing "interventionism, dirigisme, and statism" that characterizes contemporary economic education. The project explicitly aims to strengthen understanding of Austrian School economics and classical liberal principles through accessible yet rigorous analysis.

Book Abstract No.9

The Standards I & II

Classical Liberal Essays and Films from a Freedom Perspective

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Volume I: Classical Liberal Essays Reinterpreted

Scope and Selection Criteria

"The Standards: Klassisch liberale Aufsätze neu interpretiert" (2014) compiles seventeen seminal economic essays, each receiving individual summary and interpretation by qualified contributors. The selection spans foundational works from Frédéric Bastiat's "What Is Seen and What Is Not Seen" to Murray Rothbard's "Left and Right: The Prospects of Liberty," covering methodology, market theory, political economy, and historical analysis.

Implicit Thematic Structure

Economic Methodology and Market Understanding: Contributors examine works by James Buchanan ("What Should Economists Do?"), Jesús Huerta de Soto on the ongoing methodological debate within Austrian economics, and Armen Alchian's evolutionary approach to economic theory. These pieces establish philosophical foundations distinguishing e.g. Austrian methodology from mainstream neoclassical approaches.

Entrepreneurship and Market Process: Israel Kirzner's contributions on entrepreneurial discovery and market processes receive detailed analysis, complemented by examinations of uncertainty and evolution in economic theory. These interpretations emphasize the dynamic, discovery-oriented nature of markets versus static equilibrium models.

Political Economy and Institutional Analysis: The collection addresses regulatory capture through George Stigler's "Theory of Economic Regulation," collective action through Elinor Ostrom's behavioral approach, and the impossibility of socialist economic calculation via Ludwig von Mises's foundational 1920 essay. These analyses demonstrate how institutional frameworks determine economic outcomes.

Historical and Philosophical Perspectives: Friedrich August von Hayek's "History and Politics" and Lord Acton's freedom-historical works provide context for understanding capitalism's relationship to human liberty, while Wilhelm Röpke's humanistic economic approach challenges purely technical economic modeling.

Methodological Innovation

Each interpretation follows a standardized structure: identify the essay's central theme, sketch its significance, introduce the author, summarize content, and provide representative quotations. This format ensures accessibility while maintaining analytical rigor. Contributors include established academics and emerging scholars, creating a bridge between technical economic literature and educated general readers.

Contemporary Relevance

The volume's subtitle - "neu interpretiert" (newly interpreted) - reflects Prollius's conviction that these classical insights require fresh presentation for contemporary challenges. Bastiat's analysis of seen versus unseen consequences applies directly to current policy debates around minimum wages, rent controls, and stimulus packages. Mises's calculation argument gains renewed relevance amid discussions of industrial policy and central planning. The Austrian emphasis on subjective value theory and methodological individualism provides alternatives to aggregate demand management and mathematical formalism.

Volume II: Films from a Freedom Perspective

Cinematic Counter-Narrative

"The Standards II: Filme aus der Freiheitsperspektive betrachtet" (2016) represents a more experimental approach to classical liberal education. Recognizing cinema's cultural influence and predominantly anti-capitalist messaging, Prollius assembled analyses of eleven films that genuinely advocate for individual freedom, limited government, and personal responsibility.

Genre Diversity and Thematic Unity

Western Analysis: The collection opens with Western films including "Alamo," "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance," "Open Range," and "Das finstere Tal." These analyses explore themes of law versus order, individual versus community responsibility, and the establishment of property rights on frontiers. The Western genre provides natural vehicles for examining anarchistic versus statist solutions to social coordination problems.

Rebellion Narratives: The majority of films examine various forms of resistance to authoritarian power: "Braveheart" (Scottish independence), "V for Vendetta" (dystopian resistance), "Matrix" (liberation from artificial control), "Tribute von Panem" (youth rebellion against totalitarianism), and "Star Wars" (galactic freedom fighting). These analyses identify common patterns in successful resistance movements and individual agency against collective oppression.

Individual Dignity and Social Pressure: "Der Elefantenmensch" provides a different perspective on individual worth versus social conformity, examining how market mechanisms can protect vulnerable individuals better than state welfare systems.

Historical and Cultural Analysis: "Vikings" offers insights into pre-state social organization, power relationships, and the emergence of hierarchical authority structures.

Analytical Framework

Each film analysis follows the established Standards format: identify the film's theme and significance for freedom, list key personnel, summarize plot and interpretation, establish connections to liberty principles, and conclude with representative quotations. This structure enables systematic comparison across diverse genres while maintaining focus on classical liberal themes.

Cultural and Educational Purpose

The volume explicitly counters cinema's typical anti-market messaging. Contributors identify films that genuinely celebrate entrepreneurship, individual responsibility, voluntary cooperation, and resistance to arbitrary authority. The project aims to provide educators and students with culturally relevant examples of classical liberal principles in accessible entertainment formats.

von Prollius as Editor and Contributor

Editorial Leadership

As series editor, Prollius established the conceptual framework, selected contributors, and ensured thematic coherence across diverse topics and approaches. His editorial introductions ("Präludium" and "Vorspann") articulate the series' philosophical foundations and contemporary relevance. The project required coordinating academic contributors with varying methodological approaches while maintaining accessibility for student audiences.

Direct Contributions

Prollius contributed substantive analyses to both volumes. In Volume I, he interpreted Hayek's "Der Strom der Güter und Leistungen" (The Flow of Goods and Services), demonstrating how price mechanisms coordinate economic activity better than aggregate demand management. In Volume II, he analyzed "Open Range" and "Vikings," exploring property rights emergence and pre-state power relationships respectively.

Methodological Innovation

The Standards format represents Prollius's pedagogical innovation: providing sufficient context for understanding complex ideas while maintaining analytical rigor. His approach bridges the gap between technical academic literature and public education, making sophisticated economic arguments accessible to educated general readers.

Structural and Methodological Approach

Standardized Format with Individual Interpretation

The series employs consistent structural elements while encouraging individual interpretive approaches. Each contribution includes author background, work significance, content summary, contemporary applications, and key quotations. This format reduces transaction costs for readers while enabling comparative analysis across different topics and time periods.

Bridge Between Theory and Application

Both volumes demonstrate practical applications of classical liberal theory. Volume I shows how theoretical insights apply to contemporary policy debates, while Volume II identifies cultural narratives that support or undermine freedom principles. This dual approach addresses both intellectual and cultural aspects of classical liberal education.

International Accessibility

The series design facilitates translation and international distribution. Standardized formatting, clear argumentation, and cultural context explanations enable non-German speakers to understand both the specific works analyzed and their broader significance for classical liberal thought.

Contemporary Significance and Critical Assessment

Market Gap and Educational Innovation

The Standards series addresses genuine gaps in classical liberal education. Academic economics increasingly emphasizes mathematical formalism over institutional analysis, while popular education rarely engages seriously with Austrian School insights. Prollius's anthology approach provides systematic exposure to foundational works that influenced classical liberal development.

Pedagogical Effectiveness

The standardized format enables efficient knowledge transmission while encouraging critical engagement. Students can compare different analytical approaches, identify recurring themes, and develop independent judgment about economic and political questions. The film volume particularly appeals to contemporary learning preferences while maintaining intellectual rigor.

Limitations and Scope

The series reflects Prollius's particular interests and theoretical commitments. Volume I emphasizes Austrian School economics while giving less attention to other classical liberal traditions (Chicago School, Virginia School public choice theory). Volume II's film selection, while diverse, necessarily represents a small fraction of potentially relevant cinema.

The interpretive quality varies across contributors, with some analyses achieving greater analytical depth than others. The format's standardization, while useful for pedagogical purposes, occasionally constrains more sophisticated theoretical development.

Cultural and Political Impact

Both volumes contribute to German-language classical liberal discourse by providing accessible alternatives to mainstream academic presentations. The series design enables adoption in university courses, reading groups, and self-directed study programs. The film volume particularly addresses younger audiences who might not otherwise encounter serious classical liberal arguments.

Future Prospects and Continuing Significance

Series Development Potential

Prollius explicitly presents both volumes as initial efforts rather than definitive statements. The Standards format could accommodate additional volumes addressing other aspects of classical liberal thought: environmental economics, international relations, technological change, or biographical studies of key figures.

Educational Integration

The series design facilitates integration into formal educational programs. University instructors can adopt individual essays or films for specific courses, while the standardized format enables systematic comparison across different topics and time periods.

About This Abstract Series

MvP Book Abstracts provide comprehensive English summaries of Michael von Prollius's German publications for international readers. Unlike promotional summaries, these abstracts offer substantial intellectual engagement with research findings and analytical frameworks.

Series Coverage:

- Historical Analysis (ancient through modern periods)
- Economic History and Theory
- Political and Ideological Development
- Contemporary Policy Analysis
- Institutional Studies

Each abstract prioritizes detailed content over marketing, enabling meaningful engagement with the original research conducted in German scholarship.

About the Author

Michael von Prollius is a German historian, economist, and author specializing in the intersection of ideas, institutions, and historical development. He holds degrees in history and economics and has conducted extensive research spanning ancient history, economic thought, political philosophy, and contemporary policy analysis.

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