

Call for papers

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Common Notions in Early Modern Thought

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The notion of common notions plays a prominent role in early modern thought. However, the epistemological conceptions standing behind this notion diverge widely. One conception derives from the Aristotelian theory of abstraction; this conception is prominent in early modern philosophies of mind that are influenced by the Aristotelian tradition. Another conception derives from the Platonic theory of innateness; this conception is prominent in the various versions of early modern Neoplatonism. However, while both the Aristotelian and the Platonic epistemologies of common notions have found much attention from commentators, there are other ways of thinking about common notions in early modern philosophy and science that are less-well explored, and to these ways of thinking the projected issue of JEMS will be devoted. Possible topics include:

- The reception and development of the Epicurean theory of common notions in Gassendi and other early modern atomists.
- Neo-Stoic developments of common notions
- The connection between the notion of common notions and the notion of common usage in early modern theories of meaning.
- The relevance of common notions and common usage for theories of juridical interpretation
- The connection between the notions of common notions and common usage and early modern conceptions of logic
- The connection between the notion of common notions and Strawson's conception of "descriptive" metaphysics
- The relevance of these alternative ways of thinking about common notions for Spinoza's and Leibniz's metaphysics, ethics, and political thought.
- The application of the notion of common notions in early modern philosophy of mathematics.

Exploring these topics could indicate that the epistemologies standing behind early modern conception of common notions were more variegated than is often realized. This may not only be a point of historical interest but also of systematic interest, in two respects: (1) It could be instructive to ask whether these alternative ways of thinking about common notions are susceptible to the same criticisms that, in the seventeenth century, were raised against the Aristotelian and Platonic conceptions of common notions. (2) It could be instructive to discuss how well these early modern approaches fare in view of the recent revival of "revisionary" metaphysics and, especially, with respect to the question of how the idea could be explicated that philosophy should be a purely descriptive endeavor that can provide clarification but does not have the purpose of overturning our ordinary ways of thinking.

Journal of the Early Modern Studies is an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal, dedicated to the exploration of the interactions between philosophy, science and religion in Early Modern Europe. *JEMS* publishes high-quality articles reporting results of research in intellectual history, history of philosophy and history of early modern science, with a special interest in cross-disciplinary approaches. The main language of the journal is English, although contributions in French are also accepted. We are seeking for articles no longer than 10.000 words.

Deadline for submission: November 30, 2018.

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