

Early Modern Naturalisms: Spinozist and Humean

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Oktatási Központ

Scientific Programme



While both Hume and Spinoza have been claimed as paradigmatic naturalists, it is far from clear that they are naturalists in the same sense. Further, it is not obvious that the label applies to either without qualification. Spinoza's and Hume's projects moved in markedly different directions, so we propose a workshop with the aim of examining what is at stake in calling either thinker a naturalist.

By placing Spinoza and Hume in conversation on this topic, the conference seeks to illuminate two distinct (purported) strands of early modern naturalism: one expansive and metaphysical, the other cautious and anthropological. Are these differences merely a matter of emphasis and scale, or do they represent fundamentally incompatible conceptions of nature and its significance? Does calling them naturalists collapse their distinct philosophies into a single tradition? And what, if anything, is gained by framing the early modern naturalist field in terms of "Spinozist" and "Humean" trajectories rather than the more traditional "rationalist" vs. "empiricist" divide?

We want to revisit early modern naturalism, not merely as a retrospective label, but as a philosophical option characterised by contested outlines. Contributors are invited to explore these and related questions for the purpose of critically reevaluating the categories through which early modern thought is often organised, and reimagining naturalism as a central thread both connecting and dividing the period's major figures.