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Descartes' Solitude Thesis: A Neglected Aspect of the Cartesian Methodology

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Abstract

Recent research has defended the surprising thesis that in many cases the search for truth is better off if the information exchanged between the members of an epistemic community is limited. This is what one may call the limited information thesis. There is, however, the possibility of an even more radical position than this: the thesis that any communication between peers has zero epistemic value and that the search for truth is better off if the truth-inquirer does not take into consideration the truth-claims of her peers. This can be called the solitude thesis. The paper defends the claim that Descartes is a supporter of the solitude thesis with respect to metaphysical inquiry. The defense is facilitated by means of interpreting textual evidence found in Descartes' essays *Discourse on the Method*, *The Search for Truth* and the *Meditations on First Philosophy*.

Keywords

solitude Descartes metaphysics truth Other learning teaching method

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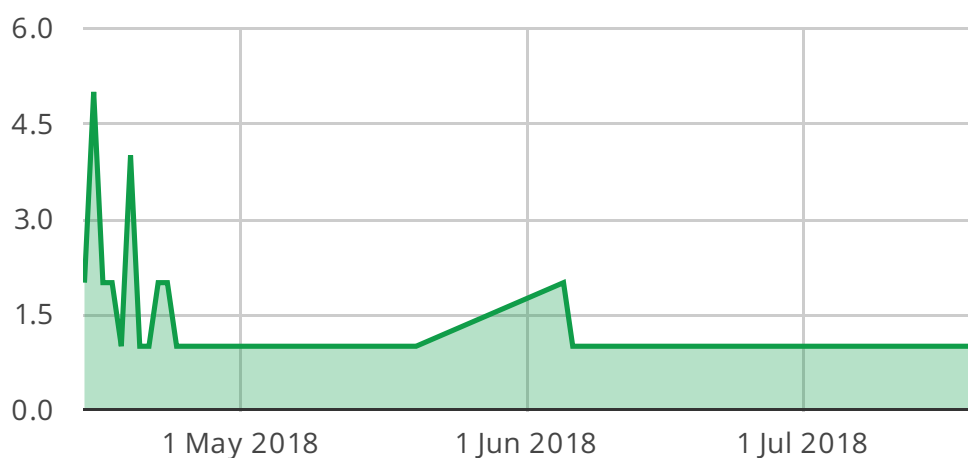
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