

Introduction to Philosophy Café: What is the Genre of Philosophical Writing?

Sunday, November 13, 2022

The Philosophy Cafe Meet Up

Brisbane, Australia



Figure 1. Photo 192481127 / Philosophy Everything © Jon Anders Wiken | Dreamstime.com

Next year, 2023, the curriculum program will go to 'philosophical readings'. It will be a year of discussing a cross-section of the key essays in the history of Philosophy.

It goes to the philosophical question of what is the genre of philosophical writing for the inclusion and exclusion of philosophic works.

So, how do we define the genre?

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The Conditions for the Philosophy Genre

Conditions are not criteria. Conditions are important to overcome the pedantic fallacy: to attempt devaluation of an argument or explanation on the basis of uncommonly minor exceptions or mistakes made.

Condition 1: [Basic] Rules of logic are followed, but this may include paradoxical logic. Contradictions are contextually recognised. This is applicable to disciplines other than philosophy writing. For example, see [Buch's Historical Sociology Thesis: From Sociology of Knowledge to Sociology of Ideology and Networks](#).

Condition 2: [Ethical] Ethical rules, obligations, duties, responsibilities, and characteristics, are followed (each term is a different way of thinking). Specifically, is the protocol:

- against plagiarism;
- for knowledge or (at least) understanding;
- for authentic process of thought (e.g., not a glib comment)

Attitude and approaches are important, and the way we write expresses those motivations.

Condition 3: [Normative] The writing fits within a history or narrative of philosophical tradition. This is more usually the western canon but can also be the perennial 'East' traditions, either systemised, as with schools of Buddhism, or eclectic, as with individual gurus or monks. Most modern traditions overlap, whether systematised or eclectic. The challenge with systematised traditions is that it can be read dogmatically, rather as a model. Philosophy opposes dogma, as opposed to the category of 'religion' (in one theory of religion). Philosophy has problems with eclectic thought, in that one must question the connection from one idea to another. Often the process becomes experiment philosophy, which must at the end show 'fit'.

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