

Peer Review

Review of: "Veering Philosophy Towards Its Public Role"

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This piece was clearly written, well-structured, and provided some practical reflections on the public role of philosophy. It was well expressed in its direct and succinct language as a healthy alternative to philosophical “peacocking,” i.e., showing off one’s brilliance, or by a narrow focus that is self-satisfying but doesn’t take on the task of philosophy in the agora. Here, the author practices what they preach in a way to be appreciated.

That said, the author gave themselves a huge task for a short-form article, considering metaphilosophical questions from philosophy’s normative role in the sciences to the nature and purpose of philosophy writing. For this reason, each of the 5 main body sections ended up being a quick skim of immensely rich topics. And the neutral, practical, and moderate solutions focused to address these domains could feel a bit superficial in their brevity. Instead of highlighting the fascinating depth of each of these topics (to be explored later) and providing some resources for them to serve instead of inhibit public engagement, we got what sometimes felt like quick tips that dismissed deeper issues and tasks (or in fact why philosophers have such different views of what philosophy is and how it works, well beyond the author’s own position). While I found all of the advice entirely reasonable, I don’t think the main sections give the metaphilosophical problematics a fair shake. I, of course, don’t expect, nor am I advocating, that the author create a peer-reviewed essay on each section (against the very kind of public engagement they are advocating for). That said, there are philosophers who are able to touch on such considerations without skipping over their depth (e.g., Pierre Hadot, Martha Nussbaum, John Kaag, and Robert Frodeman and Adam Briggie). These latter authors also tend toward a first-person, active voice style, which also helps give flesh and complexity to how they themselves navigate such terrain. I would recommend the author pick 1-2 of the 5 main topics and develop them for this piece, so there is more flesh and nuance available to them. The narrative would also flow more smoothly this way. I would then write follow-up pieces picking up the other threads.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.