

"MINOR" AND "MAJOR" TEXTS

In one of his essays, Gerd B. Achenbach makes an astonishing remark. Philosophers considered 'minors' by the academic philosophy can be of a major importance for philosophical practice. His example is Seneca, a much known philosophical author, who is not important for academic philosophy.

Could be Achenbach's remark be applied in the textual field? Can 'minor' texts from the perspective of academic philosophy be of major importance for philosophical practice? I think yes. But only if we use this contrast in terms of a narrative, and not in an axiological sense. According to this distinction, a 'minor' text would be a letter, a fragment, a diary note; a 'major' text an opus magnum or another important work.

Philosophical practice is primarily unconditioned dialogue, no doubt. Nevertheless, engaging with texts is also a very important part of philosophical practice. 'Minor' texts have a major advantage: They are often short and, therefore, handy. Their brevity releases more space for dialogue without obliging to long term close readings of classical seminars and academic lectures. Apart from their handiness, 'minor' texts carry plenty of advantages: They function complementary to philosophical key ideas of a philosopher, and clarify them from a fresh point of view; they are perfect for surprises because they lack concrete intentions and are, thus, open for wonder based interactions. Most important, as forms of spontaneous self-reflection, they get personal often whispering "Do I live what I am writing about?"

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