

Review of: "Does Philosophy Matter? The Urgent Need for a Philosophical Revolution"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Review of *Does Philosophy Matter? The Urgent Need for a Philosophical Revolution* by Nicholas Maxwell is an interesting read. Maxwell covers complex and broad issues related to the role and purpose of philosophy in universities today.

Maxwell is critical of academic philosophy stating, "Academic philosophy today is a hollow, sterile discipline, devoid of all intellectual and human significance." What is a hindrance Maxwell proposes, is the focus on what he terms, "knowledge inquiry." He goes further to state that, "Academic philosophers need urgently to wake up to their professional responsibilities, and alert academic colleagues to the need for the revolution in our universities, from knowledge-inquiry to wisdom-inquiry."

Maxwell's main thesis is that academic philosophy should be orientated towards "wisdom inquiry" has merit. This of course points to the original understanding of philosophy from antiquity, which is the 'love of wisdom.' To the extent which universities have failed to achieve this goal, however, is debatable.

Of course, all fields of study need to be revised and improved in how they deliver their materials to students. The issue largely ignored by Maxwell, however, pertains to pedagogy. That is, you might teach students about the ideas of Socrates or Kant, for example, in a manner that is content-based (relaying information, or what could link to what Maxwell terms as "knowledge-inquiry") or teach provocatively engage students, eliciting ideas, questions, and engaging discussions. The latter approach may potentially lead students towards insights and wisdom. Hence, this point relies mostly on the skills and pedagogical method of the teacher to engage students in philosophical ideas and debate, and their ability to make philosophy relevant to current issues and student concerns. These are areas that Maxwell argued were missing in the teaching of academic philosophy.

Hence, Maxwell could incorporate the significance of the educators' teaching approach that can make a difference in the value of philosophy. The importance of effective discussions either during (or after classes) are important in student engagement with the ideas of philosophers. Notably, open discussions are how philosophy was conducted at its inception, with the ancient Greek philosophers.

Furthermore, Maxwell's arguments could be further enhanced by developing some claims. For example, the rise of Trump cannot be attributed solely to the failure of philosophy to engage in "wisdom inquiry." There are many other complex factors at play. Also, drawing on the writings of existential phenomenologists (such as Martin Heidegger) would have enhanced Maxwell's critique of the sciences.

Nevertheless, Maxwell's article raises some bold and critical questions that need to be asked and pondered. Is philosophy in universities today the carrier of wisdom? As Maxwell rightly points out, it is the imparting of wisdom which should be the pivotal focus of philosophy teaching at university.

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