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Does Philosophy Matter? The Urgent Need for a Philosophical Revolution

Nicholas Maxwell¹

¹ University College London, University of London

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Abstract

Many hold that philosophy does not matter. It is an esoteric discipline devoid of intellectual and human significance. But in another way, philosophy matters profoundly, in part because of the failings of current academic philosophy. Academia at present fails to help humanity make progress towards a good, civilized world in part because it puts into practice a very bad philosophy of inquiry, here called knowledge-inquiry. As a matter of extreme urgency, academia needs to abandon allegiance to knowledge-inquiry and accept and implement a much more rigorous philosophy of inquiry, here called wisdom-inquiry. The outcome of such a philosophical and academic revolution would be an academic enterprise that would have a far greater capacity to help humanity make progress towards a better world. The argument in support of the urgent need for this philosophical and academic revolution has been widely available in books and academic journals for nearly 50 years; mainstream academic philosophy, however, ignores it. 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.

Nicholas Maxwell

Science and Technology Studies

University College London

London WC1E 6BT

It Does Not Matter

Most people would probably say – leaving aside academic philosophers and their students for the moment – “No, philosophy does not matter. It is an obscure, esoteric academic discipline that is of no interest to anyone outside it, and has no relevance whatsoever to anything else, whether that be science, the humanities, art, politics, life, or the future of the world”. Academic philosophy today is a hollow, sterile discipline, devoid of all intellectual and human significance.

It is not hard to find people making such declarations. Scientists, in particular, have long been scathing in their views

about philosophy. Thus John Ziman, a physicist and writer about science, declared some years ago that “the Philosophy of Science... [is] arid and repulsive. To read the latest symposium volume on this topic is to be reminded of the Talmud, or of the theological disputes of Byzantium”.¹ More recently Steven Weinberg declared: “From time to time... I have tried to read current work on the philosophy of science. Some of it I found to be written in a jargon so impenetrable that I can only think that it is aimed at impressing those who confound obscurity with profundity.... only rarely did it seem to me to have anything to do with the work of science as I knew it.... I am not alone in this; I know of *no one* who has participated actively in the advance of physics in the post-war period whose research has been significantly helped by the work of philosophers”.² Niels remarked, after attending a philosophy conference “I have made a great discovery, a very great discovery. All that philosophers have ever written is pure drivel!”.³ Stephen Hawking pronounced that “philosophy is dead”.⁴

Recently, even philosophers themselves have begun to acknowledge the dreadful poverty of contemporary academic philosophy. William Lycan, in a recently published paper, comes to the conclusion that academic philosophy, in recent years, has not succeeded in making a single contribution to thought that would be generally acknowledged to be valid and significant.⁵ Another philosopher, Daniel Kaufman, in a recent article, declared “philosophy’s decline within the Academy is already well underway,” and went on to say “Daniel Dennett recently said that ‘a great deal of philosophy doesn’t really deserve much of a place in the world’ and has become ‘self-indulgent, clever play in a vacuum that’s not dealing with problems of any intrinsic interest.’ Jerry Fodor wondered why ‘no one reads philosophy’ and could not ‘shake the sense that something has gone awfully wrong.’ Just last year, Susan Haack went so far as to publish an essay entitled ‘The Real Question: Can Philosophy Be Saved?’ She is not hopeful” (Kaufman 2019).

Even philosophers themselves hold that philosophy is devoid of any value or significance!

Philosophy Matters Profoundly

I agree with all this, and yet I utterly disagree. It is precisely because academic philosophy has degenerated into esoteric triviality that philosophy has come to matter profoundly. To put it in the simplest, baldest terms possible: Bad philosophy is responsible for many of the worst ills of the world. It imperils our future. And academic philosophers have become so wrapped up and blinded by their trivial intellectual pursuits that they do not see what is right before their eyes: *a bad philosophy that endangers all our lives*. As a matter of supreme urgency, we need academic philosophers to escape from their current intellectual obsessions, open their eyes, see the bad philosophy before them, see how profoundly damaging its consequences are for humanity and the planet, and arouse a great cry about the matter so that scientists, scholars, politicians and the public may come to see what is wrong too, and begin to put matters right.

What on earth is this bad philosophy? And how could something as esoteric, as aethereal, as a mere “philosophy” have the devastating and destructive consequences that I have indicated? Written down on a piece of paper, or merely enunciated in a lecture, this bad philosophy could not of course, of itself, conceivably have the widespread devastating repercussions I have indicated. But that is not what we are dealing with here.

The bad philosophy I have in mind is a bad *philosophy of inquiry*. And this bad philosophy of inquiry is built into academia all over the world. It is built into universities everywhere. It suffuses the whole structure and functioning of universities, the way they operate, the way they interact with the rest of the world. Scientific research, scholarly research in the humanities, publications, education, careers, funding, Nobel prizes, scientific and academic societies: everything is affected and shaped by this bad philosophy of inquiry that suffuses the whole academic enterprise.

But what is this bad philosophy of inquiry? It is the idea that the proper basic intellectual aim of academia is to acquire knowledge. An absolutely basic aim of academia is to help promote human welfare, but the proper way for academia to do that is first to acquire knowledge. First, knowledge and technological know-how are to be acquired; once acquired, they can be applied to help promote human welfare. Let us call this view about what the aims and methods of academic inquiry ought to be, this philosophy of academic inquiry, *knowledge-inquiry*. We may take *knowledge-inquiry* to stand, not just for a philosophy of inquiry, but also for the kind of inquiry that results when this philosophy is put into academic practice.

I do not claim that everything that goes on in universities conforms precisely to the edicts of knowledge-inquiry; and nor do I claim that all academics hold that universities ought to put knowledge-inquiry into practice. My claim is, rather, that knowledge-inquiry is the dominant creed, exercising a massive influence over the whole structure and character of universities, and much of what academics do in their research and teaching.

Knowledge-inquiry is, however, profoundly irrational. It violates THREE of the four most elementary rules of reason conceivable. And this irrationality is no mere formal matter. It has profoundly damaging consequences for humanity. That universities around the world put the severely irrational philosophy of knowledge-inquiry into academic practice has the consequence that universities fail drastically to help humanity solve global problems in the way that they ought to do. The outcome is the persistence, and intensification, of global problems that threaten our future: population growth, habitat destruction, loss of wild life, mass extinction of species, lethal modern war, the menace of nuclear weapons, gross inequalities of wealth and power around the planet, pollution of earth, sea and air, and what is perhaps the most serious global problem of all, the climate crisis.

If academia was devoted to helping humanity solve these grave global problems in a genuinely rational way, it would give absolute intellectual priority to the tasks of articulating our local and global problems of living, and proposing and critically assessing possible solutions – possible *actions*, policies, political programmes, ways of living. A basic task would be intelligently conducted public education about what our problems are, and what we need to do about them. The pursuit of knowledge would be important, but a secondary matter. The central concern would be to help humanity acquire the capacity to resolve the conflicts and problems of living, local and global, that beset us.

Universities today do hardly any of this. They do not even conceive of their tasks in this way. Why not? Because they take their basic task to be to acquire knowledge. Universities are at present, as I have said, dominated by the philosophy of knowledge-inquiry. This creed holds that universities, in order to be of value to humanity, must in the first instance acquire authentic, objective, reliable, factual knowledge, and that in turn demands that universities steer clear of becoming implicated in politics, the advocacy of policy, engagement in community action. If science or universities were to become

entangled in politics, objective factual knowledge would become mere propaganda or ideology – so knowledge-inquiry implies – and universities would lose their great value to humanity. In order to continue to be of value to humanity, universities must keep free of political engagement. So at least the intellectual standards of knowledge-inquiry imply.

Thus, in observing the intellectual standards of knowledge-inquiry, universities betray reason, and as a result betray humanity. They fail to do just that which most needs to be done: promote public understanding of what our problems are, and what we need to do about them.

If we are to solve the global problems that confront us, and make progress towards a better, wiser, more civilized world, we need to *learn* how to do it.⁶ That in turn demands that our institutions of learning, our schools and universities, are rationally organized for, and devoted to, the job. At present, they are not. They are devoted to the pursuit of knowledge, not to the pursuit of a better world. Because they are dominated by the bad philosophy of inquiry of knowledge-inquiry, universities fail to do what they most need to do to help humanity make progress towards a better world: actively promote public understanding of what our problems are, and what we need to do about them.

Universities are, in short, dominated by a philosophy of inquiry that is an intellectual disaster; and because it is so intellectually disastrous, it prevents universities from doing what they most need to do to help humanity learn how to solve local and global problems of living, and thus make progress towards a good world.

In the circumstances, there can scarcely be any more important task for academic philosophy to engage in than to do everything possible to alert academic colleagues to the situation – natural scientists, technologists, social scientists, scholars in the humanities, teachers, specialists in higher education, vice-chancellors, students, parents, governments, the public. There is scarcely a whisper of any of this in contemporary academic philosophical writing. Academic philosophers seem entirely blind to the situation, to the scandal of the way in which universities betray reason, and as a result betray humanity.

This, then, is why philosophy matters. It matters, first, because a bad philosophy of inquiry, built into our universities, prevents universities from helping humanity learn how to solve global problems and thus make progress towards a good, wise civilized world. We urgently need to transform our universities so that they come to put a genuinely *good* philosophy of inquiry into academic practice, one that enables universities to promote public learning about how to make progress towards a good world. And philosophy matters, second, because of the deplorably bad state of current academic philosophy. Academic philosophers, by and large, are at present blind to the intellectual and humanitarian disaster that looms in an entirely blatant way before their very eyes: the damagingly irrational philosophy of knowledge-inquiry that dominates universities today.

It is a basic job of academic philosophy to try to ensure that universities put a good philosophy of inquiry into academic practice. Academic philosophers have failed dismally to do this. And even worse, they are entirely blind to this monumental intellectual and humanitarian failure.

Our persistent failure to resolve local and global conflicts and problems is the cause of much human suffering and avoidable death. This persistent failure is in part due to a bad philosophy built into universities. And academic

philosophers have not even noticed. That amounts to an intellectual and moral scandal.

But the situation is even worse than I have indicated so far. For in truth, the scandal that I have just briefly depicted, has been spelled out in great detail in a series of books, articles, and lectures during the past 50 years or so. This work has had no discernible impact whatsoever. Mainstream academic philosophy just ignores it. Scour the leading philosophy journals of the world: *Mind*, *Journal of Philosophy*, *Philosophical Review*, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, *Nous* and the rest of them;⁷ there is not a whisper about the body of work whatsoever.

But this is still not the worst of it. The body of work I have just alluded to, spelling out just how disastrously academia betrays reason, and as a result betrays humanity, has not been entirely ignored. Over the decades, as book after book has appeared, glowing reviews have been published, some even in leading philosophy journals. It is not too much to say that this work has met with acclaim by discerning scientists and scholars. But that has not changed the situation one iota. Academic philosophy, for the last 50 years, despite this body of work, has entirely ignored its profound professional obligation to highlight the intellectually disastrous state of academia, its appalling failure to help humanity solve the terrifying global problems that threaten our future.

Worst of all, it has not even bothered to *discuss* this work, subject it to critical scrutiny, and thus attempt to determine whether there might be any validity to the call for an academic revolution. Academic philosophy is blind to its most basic intellectual and humanitarian responsibilities. A vitally urgent task lies before it, and academic philosophy indulges itself in arid, esoteric irrelevancy – as even some of its leading lights attest!

The body of work I have alluded to, spelling out the urgent need for an academic revolution, might have been noticed, taken up, generally discussed and assessed, and then, when found valid, put into academic practice, long ago, around 1990 let us say. If that had happened, we might now live in a very different world. From 1990 onwards, academics working in the fields of social sciences and humanities would have devoted all their energies and professional work to engaging with the public to provoke improved understanding of what our problems are and what we need to do about them. That would have included appreciation, in democratic countries, of how pressure can be brought on governments to do what needs to be done. Long ago, we might have begun to tackle the climate crisis in earnest – something we still have not done today. We might have stopped degrading natural habitats such as tropical rain forests and oceans. Catastrophic loss of wild life might have been stopped; fish, mammals, birds, insects might have begun to flourish again. Active steps to curb the explosive growth of the human population might have been taken. The degradation of democracy by the internet might have been curtailed. Brexit might not have been voted for. And Donald Trump might not have become President. And if academic philosophers had led the way in creating awareness of the urgent need to transform academia so as to become actively, effectively and rationally devoted to helping humanity make progress towards a good world, it would have been obvious to everyone that academic philosophy is of profound value to humanity.

But none of this happened. Academic philosophers have so far ignored the body of work arguing that an academic revolution is urgently needed. And as a result, this work remains unused and ignored.

At this point I must declare an interest. I am the author of the series of books and articles, published during the last 50

years, spelling out in great detail how academia betrays reason, and as a result, betrays humanity – there being an urgent need to put right these gross intellectual and humanitarian defects, so that universities may come to help humanity make progress towards a better, wiser world, and thus avoid the suffering and unnecessary deaths of millions.⁸

This body of work has been prominently published, by leading publishers, and in leading scientific and academic journals. Furthermore, book after book expounding and developing this work has been favourably reviewed by leading philosophers and scientists in leading philosophy and scientific journals. Christopher Longuet-Higgins, Mary Midgley, Robert May, J. J. C. Smart, Sherrilyn Roush, Daniel Dennett, Robert Sternberg, Anjan Chakravartty, Norman Dixon, Marvin Harris, Alan Sokal, Agustin Vicente, Julian Baggini, Alasdair MacIntyre, Harald Walach, and many others have commented favourably on my work in journals such as *Nature*, *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, *The Philosophical Review*, *Mind*, *Metascience*, *Philosophy*, *International Philosophical Quarterly*, *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, *Isis*, *Inquiry*, *British Journal for the History of Science*, *Metaphilosophy*, *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, *University Quarterly*, *New Statesman*, *Social Studies of Science*, *Review of Metaphysics*, *The Philosopher's Magazine*, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Modern Physics*, *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, *Canadian Philosophical Reviews*, *Journal for General Philosophy of Science*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, *Canadian Philosophical Review*, *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, *American Political Science Review*, *Social Science Quarterly*, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science* and elsewhere.⁹ Despite all this praise, mainstream philosophy continues on its way as if oblivious of this body of work.

That only intensifies the scandal. If this body of work had been published in obscure places, and received hardly any reviews, or only damning ones, it might be excusable and understandable that mainstream philosophy just ignores it. But that is not the situation at all. Books have been published during a 50 year period by well-known publishers, such as Blackwell and Oxford University Press. Articles expounding aspects of the work have appeared in well-known journals, such as *Philosophy of Science*, *Nature*, *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* and many others.¹⁰ And the books have, again and again, received favourable reviews by a host of philosophers and scientists, some very well known, in a wide range of academic journals.¹¹ And still the work is ignored. Not even discussed, apart from reviews.¹²

Gross and Damaging Defects of the Philosophy of Knowledge-Inquiry

At this point the reader may cry: but what are these devastating defects in the philosophy of knowledge-inquiry? Why is it supposedly so bad?

If the reader is indeed tempted to raise this question, that in itself demonstrates that the above applies to at least one (potential) philosopher! Somehow, dear reader, the body of work I have alluded to has passed you by.

Again and again in my publications, I have spelled out just what is wrong with knowledge-inquiry, how it has arisen, why it is so damaging, and just what needs to be done to put the matter right – namely accept and implement in academic practice a much improved philosophy of inquiry that I call *wisdom-inquiry*.¹³ I do not think I can repeat the argument here. The editors of this journal would not tolerate it.¹⁴ But I can indicate where the argument is to be found.

It was first spelled out in detail in my *From Knowledge to Wisdom* published in 1984. An earlier book, *What's Wrong With Science?*, published in 1976, expounded the argument in a more colloquial way in the form of angry exchanges between a scientist and a philosopher. Twelve subsequent books, published over the years from 1998 to 2021, developed the argument in further detail, spelled out the consequences for natural science, for technological research, for social inquiry, for the humanities, and for education. These developments were summarized in diverse ways in 132 papers published from 1972 to 2021.¹⁵

I urge the reader of the present article to have a look, at least, at one of my papers outlining the argument that we need urgently to bring about an academic revolution, from knowledge-inquiry to wisdom-inquiry. The reader might begin by having a look at a recently published article “How Universities Have Betrayed Reason and Humanity – And What’s To Be Done About It”: this gives an account of the work, from its inception in 1972 to 2021.

Other Work Critical of Modern Science and Technology

At this point it may be objected that, from what has been said so far, it sounds as if I am the only critic of modern science and technology, the modern academy, in modern times. But that is absurd. There is a whole army of critics critical of aspects of the academic enterprise.

I agree, and I have discussed the work of many of these critics in my work. Some of them are referred to in Maxwell (2021, p. 3).¹⁶ However, as far as I know, none has criticized modern science, or the modern academic enterprise, in the way that I have done. More to the point, as far as I know, none has articulated and argued for wisdom-inquiry, the crucial issue.

Some have criticized the whole project of promoting human welfare by means of science and technological research in a way that is the very opposite of my criticism. This project has been criticized for putting too much faith in scientific rationality, scientific method. A decade or so ago, this led to the so-called “science wars”,¹⁷ provoked in part by a spoof article published by Alan Sokal.¹⁸ Sociologists and historians of science attacked; scientists themselves sought to defend scientific rationality. But both parties missed the point. In defending orthodox conceptions of science, scientists defended a damagingly *irrational* conception of science; and in attacking scientific rationality, sociologists and historians of science attacked, not reason, but a characteristic kind of *irrationality* masquerading as reason. No one, as far as I know, pointed out that science, and our whole conception of science, needs urgently to become *more* rigorous, and as a result, of much greater human value; no one, as far as I know, made the point that the philosophy of inquiry at present dominating academia – namely, knowledge-inquiry – is an intellectual and humanitarian disaster that needs urgently to be transformed to become *wisdom-inquiry*.¹⁹

In recent years, stimulated in part by work by Robert Sternberg,²⁰ a major research industry has emerged in psychology, sociology and related fields, that is devoted to the enterprise of acquiring and improving *knowledge* about wisdom.²¹ This research industry does not, however, even begin to put wisdom-inquiry into practice. Its basic, implicit idea is first, to

acquire *knowledge* about wisdom, and then *apply* this knowledge to the social world to help promote a wiser world. That, of course, is precisely the prescription of *knowledge-inquiry*!

It is quite possible, of course, that thinkers unknown to me have indeed criticized modern science, and modern academia more generally, along lines similar to those that I have spelled out; these thinkers unknown to me may even have argued for conceptions of science and academic inquiry similar to those that I have argued for. I simply have not heard of their work, just as, no doubt, they have not heard of mine. But there is one point that I want to make very clearly. Ultimately, it does not matter what we call the new kind of academic inquiry that we so urgently need – whether we call it “wisdom-inquiry”, “rigorous inquiry”, “humanitarian inquiry”, or refer to it by some other term. What matters is that we have in place what at present we do not have: a kind of academic inquiry rationally organized and devoted to helping humanity solve problems of living in increasingly cooperatively rational ways so that we may make progress towards a good, wise, civilized world. Wisdom-inquiry is my argued proposal as to what such a mode of inquiry would be like.

Wisdom-inquiry, even if correct, is very far from being the last word on the subject. If ever academic philosophers wake up to their professional responsibilities – if ever academics in general wake up to theirs – and wisdom-inquiry is eventually adopted, so that the task to put it into academic practice is begun in earnest, then inevitably a multitude of new problems will emerge, some practical, some institutional, managerial and bureaucratic, but a host of others philosophical and intellectual. What implications does the new conception of science have for physics, for biology, for technological research, for the whole enterprise of natural science? What implications does wisdom-inquiry have for the social sciences, for sociology, psychology, economics, anthropology, political science, the study of public policy? How ought the big global problems that confront us to be divided up between the diverse branches of social inquiry? How is work promoting cooperative resolving of conflicts and problems of living in the real world to be rewarded academically? No one at present thinks about these problems because no one thinks and acts within the framework of wisdom-inquiry. But begin to try to put wisdom-inquiry into academic practice, and a host of such problems immediately arise. There is here a vast untapped reservoir of fuel for fundamental research so far entirely neglected.

Implications and Action

Granted that the argument for wisdom-inquiry is valid, what are the implications for academic philosophy?

A vital, basic task for academic philosophers is to get across to fellow academics, to those who run universities, to politicians, civil servants, governments, and to the public, that universities have long been dominated by a disastrous *philosophy* of academic inquiry: *knowledge-inquiry*. Humanity needs urgently to put a better *philosophy* into academic practice: *wisdom-inquiry*. Academia dominated by knowledge-inquiry violates, in a structural way, THREE of the four most elementary rules of rational problem-solving conceivable. A revolution is needed in universities around the world, one that affects every department and aspect of the academic enterprise. Physics needs to acknowledge that there is a substantial, highly problematic metaphysical assumption concerning the physical comprehensibility of the universe implicit in the methods of physics. Physics needs to adopt a new philosophy of physics that acknowledges problematic

metaphysical assumptions inherent in the aims of physics, and seeks to improve metaphysical assumptions, aims, and associated methods, as physics proceeds. A generalized version of this aims-and-methods improving methodology needs to be adopted by all of natural science.

The social sciences – sociology, economics, anthropology, psychology and the rest – need to be transformed so that the basic task becomes to help people solve local and global conflicts and problems of living in increasingly cooperatively rational ways. Social inquiry also needs to help humanity build into social life a generalized version of the progress-achieving methods of natural science, so that humanity may make progress towards a good, wise, genuinely civilized world. As a secondary matter, social inquiry also seeks to acquire knowledge, in order to facilitate the cooperatively rational tackling of problems of living; that is, social inquiry seeks to improve knowledge about what our problems of living are, and how good proposed solutions to such problems are. Academia acquires a new, basic aim: to seek and promote wisdom – wisdom being the capacity, active endeavour, and desire to realize what is of value in life, for oneself and others, wisdom in this sense including knowledge, understanding and technological know-how, but much else besides. The whole relationship between academia and society needs to be transformed. The university becomes a people's civil service, doing openly for the public what actual civil services are supposed to do in secret for governments. The job of the university is to put forward proposals to the public, make suggestions, engage in argument and debate, but not instruct or dictate. A basic task of the university is to engage in public education about what our problems are, and what we need to do about them; but universities need to listen to the public too, and learn from members of the public, as well. Universities need just enough power to preserve their independence from government, the media, the commercial world, and the public, but no more.

Why universities need to change, how they need to change, what needs to be done to bring about the change that is required: all this has been spelled out in detail in work published over the last 50 years. The time has come for academic philosophy to wake up from its esoteric slumbers, and alert fellow academics to these simple points:

1. The philosophy of knowledge-inquiry dominates every aspect of the university today.
2. It is an intellectual disaster, to the extent of violating, in a structural way, THREE of the four most elementary rules of rational problem solving conceivable.
3. As a result, the university today betrays humanity; it fails to do what it most needs to do, namely engage in active public education about what our problems are, and what we need to do about them.
4. The pursuit of knowledge dissociated from the pursuit of wisdom is a recipe for disaster.
5. A radical, comprehensive revolution in the university is required, so that the basic aim becomes to seek and promote wisdom and not just acquire knowledge (and then apply it).
6. The philosophy of knowledge-inquiry needs to be replaced by the philosophy of wisdom-inquiry,
7. What needs to be done to bring this about has been spelled out in detail in works published during the last 50 years.

There is also a more fundamental, long-term task for academic philosophy. It needs to undergo a major intellectual revolution and become what I have called *Critical Fundamentalism*.²² Critical Fundamentalism takes its basic task to be to keep alive imaginative and critical, that is rational, thinking about our fundamental problem: How can our human world

exist and best flourish embedded as it is in the physical universe? This problem encompasses all others of science, thought, and life. It encompasses the whole of the academic enterprise, from physics and technological science, at one end of the academic spectrum, to history and culture studies at the other end. The proper job of philosophy is to encourage everyone to think about the fundamental problem, now and again, and to think about interactions between this problem and the more urgent more particular and specialized problems of life and thought. The fundamental problem needs to be put at the centre of education, both in schools and universities. One vital professional job of the academic philosopher is to ensure that this state of affairs does indeed hold in our schools and universities. If academic philosophers had had their wits about them, and had engaged in Critical Fundamentalism during the past 50 years or so, let us say, then of course it would have been recognized, long ago, that the philosophy of knowledge-inquiry is a disaster, it being vital to modify it until it becomes wisdom-inquiry. It would have been understood that the proper, basic task of academic inquiry is to help humanity learn how to realize what is of value inherent or implicit in our human world – a world so problematically embedded in the physical universe.

A final remark. I have decided to submit this article to leading philosophy journals, one by one, until eventually it is accepted for publication, if it ever is. I will keep a record, here, of the journals that have rejected the article. I begin with *The Philosophical Review*.

Footnotes

¹ Ziman (1968, p. 31).

² Weinberg (1993, pp. 133-134).

³ Pais (1991).

⁴ Hawking and Mladinow (2010, ch. 1).

⁵ Lycan (2019, 200)

⁶ In order to become more civilized, it is *not sufficient* to learn how to do it, but it is, I submit, *necessary*. Learning how to make progress towards a good, wise, genuinely civilized world is a vital *part* of what we require in order actually to make progress towards such a world, even if it is not *all* that we require.

⁷ Australasian Journal of Philosophy, American Philosophical Quarterly, Analysis, British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, Canadian Journal of Philosophy, Philosophical Quarterly, Philosophical Studies, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Philosophy of Science, Synthese and others.

⁸ There are fifteen books, and 125 journal articles and chapters of books, published over a 50 year period. The chief books are Maxwell (1976; 1984; 1998; 2004; 2007; 2014; 2017a-c; 2019a-b; 2020; 2021). For articles summarizing the basic argument in diverse ways see Maxwell (1974; 1980; 1991; 1992; 2000; 2005; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2012; 2013; 2016; 2017d; 2018; 2019c-d; 2021b-c). The articles, and information about the books, are freely available online: see;

<https://philpeople.org/profiles/nicholas-maxwell>; <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Nicholas-Maxwell-2/research>; <https://ucl.academia.edu/NicholasMaxwell>; <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/view/people/ANMAX22.date.html>; <https://wisdomcenter.uchicago.edu/publications?search=nicholas%20maxwell>;

Phil-Sci Archive ; <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/displayabstractsearch.cfm> ; <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/from-knowledge-to-wisdom/publications> . Entire books can be accessed online free: *From Knowledge to Wisdom* (1984; 2007); *What's Wrong With Science?* (1976; 2009); *Cutting God in Half - And Putting the Pieces Together Again: A New Approach to Philosophy* (2010); and *Karl Popper, Science and Enlightenment* (2017). I spell all this out to make clear that inaccessibility is not the problem.

⁹ For extracts from reviews, see <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/from-knowledge-to-wisdom/reviews>. See also beginning and end of the second edition of *From Knowledge*, to be found online free at <https://philpapers.org/rec/MAXFKT-3>.

¹⁰ Australasian Journal of Philosophy, American Journal of Physics, Physics Letters, Foundations of Physics, The Ethical Record, Scientia, Inquiry, Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society, Science Technology and Society Newsletter, New Scientist, Critique of Anthropology, Science, Technology and Human Values, Reflections on Higher Education, The Philosophical Quarterly, Philosophy Today, Science and Public Affairs, Cogito, *The Dalhousie Review*, Philosophy, Journal of Applied Philosophy, Physics World, Times Higher Education Supplement, The Philosophers' Magazine, Metaphilosophy, Journal for General Philosophy of Science, Teaching in Higher Education, Scientists for Global Responsibility Newsletter, Theoria, Journal of Consciousness Studies, Dialogue and Universalism, Philosophia, Learning for Democracy, Gifted Education International, Solidarity, Sustainability, and Non-Violence, London Review of Education, Metapsychology, New Statesman, Journal for Biological Physics and Chemistry, International Studies in the Philosophy of Science, Oxford Magazine, Sublime, The Guardian, Mother Pelican: A Journal of Sustainable Development, Open Journal of Philosophy, Journal of Modern Wisdom, Advances in Historical Studies, On the Horizon, Acta Baltica Historiae et Philosophiae Scientiarum, HPS & ST Note, Educational Theory, Philosophies, Philosophy and Theory in Higher Education, Paradigm Explorer, Aeon, Human Affairs, Frontiers in Sustainability.

¹¹ For references to reviews, see note 9.

¹² This state of affairs in itself indicates that academia today is appallingly inadequate. It cannot respond to original and challenging ideas.

¹³ I have shown that it is not just the capacity of academia to help humanity solve practical problems of living that suffers as a result of the dominance of knowledge-inquiry; science and scholarship pursued for their own sake suffer as well. I have shown that both science and scholarship pursued for their own sake flourish better for a variety of reasons within the framework of wisdom-inquiry, than they do constrained by the defective, irrational philosophy of knowledge-inquiry: see, see for example, Maxwell (2019d), section entitled "Cultural Implications of Wisdom-Inquiry", and further references given there.

¹⁴ Boiled down to its essence, the argument amounts to this: "Humanity faces two fundamental problems of learning: learning about the universe, and learning to become civilized. We have solved the first problem, but not the second one,

and that puts us in a situation of great danger. Almost all of our global problems have arisen as a result. It has become a matter of extreme urgency to solve the second problem. The key to this is to learn from our solution to the first problem how to solve the second one. This was the basic idea of the 18th century Enlightenment, but in implementing this idea, the Enlightenment blundered. Their mistakes are still built into academia today. In order to learn how to create a civilized, enlightened world, the key thing we need to do is to cure academia of the structural blunders we have inherited from the Enlightenment. We need to bring about a revolution in science, and in academia more broadly so that the basic aim becomes wisdom, and not just knowledge.” See Maxwell (2021b, abstract).

¹⁵ See note 8 for details.

¹⁶ See especially Maxwell (1984, especially the 2nd edition of 2007). See also Maxwell (2019b).

¹⁷ For accounts of the so-called “Science Wars”, see Maxwell (1984, 2nd ed., 2007, pp. 40-46, 141-3); Koertge (1998); Segerstrale (2000).

¹⁸ Sokal (1996).

¹⁹ Well, I have of course been making these points again and again since at least 1976, but few seem to have heard.

²⁰ See in particular Sternberg (1990).

²¹ See the Center for Practical Wisdom: <https://wisdomcenter.uchicago.edu/>, a Chicago University based organization that announces itself as “The Scientific Understanding of Wisdom”.

²² See Maxwell (2019b, pp. 39-40, 153-7; 2020).

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