

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

Joseph Pitt¹

¹ Virginia Tech (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University)

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When I started this article I quickly became seriously excited. I really liked what the author was saying about what was wrong with contemporary philosophy and the university. But then I got bored when it became nothing more than a lament to the effect of "I have been writing about this for 50 years and despite the fact that people seem to have read what I have written and commented on it, nothing has been really done to implement my ideas." I do think he has hit the nail on its head with his criticism of contemporary academe. But, might I suggest a slightly different approach. To begin with, he offers no definition of "Philosophy" as such. If we start by looking at the original account of philosophy and then examine what the word means, we can get to where the author wants to go more directly. The word "Philosophy" comes from two Greek words meaning "love of wisdom". If we then propose that "wisdom" is an action-oriented concept, we are right there. Why should we love wisdom? Because the objective of seeking wisdom is to find out what the right thing to do is to make the world a better place. Philosophers very quickly gave up paying attention to the meaning of the term that identifies their discipline and it devolved into rather esoteric exercises that don't obviously help us make the world better. No wonder we are ignored, as we should be. If we take the pragmatist route to finding out what we need to do, we quickly find out that considering the consequences of proposed actions will go a long way toward helping us achieve our objective. So, I say to our author: stop whining.