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Honors Thesis

WHAT ROLE SHOULD PHILOSOPHY PLAY IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE? THE INTRINSIC VALUE
OF PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY

by
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ABSTRACT

WHAT ROLE SHOULD PHILOSOPHY PLAY IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE? THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY

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Public philosophy is a relatively new area of meta-philosophy requiring further development. In this paper I seek to establish a clear definition of public philosophy and clarify what at times has become a muddled term. This is followed by laying a groundwork for how to view philosophical study and its consequences to the students. I primarily address Weinstein's argument that public philosophy is primarily for entertainment. This is based on one of his points that public philosophy leads to self-knowledge (self-cultivation). Rather than peripheral to public philosophy, I will argue that this is central to public philosophy, establishing it as an intrinsically valuable practice. It is intrinsically valuable because it leads to self-cultivation and the development of intellectual virtues. This addresses Weinstein's concerns that studying philosophy does not make us better citizens. Instead, it invites considerations for reforming public education as well as the professional incentives philosophers have. By aligning tenure and promotion incentives more with the teaching mission of philosophy, we can make space for the practice of public philosophy in academia. While this does not require all academics, it certainly requires more public philosophy to be produced by philosophers than is currently done.

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Most important in preparing this thesis are the many conversations I have had with faculty members of the Brigham Young University philosophy department. While some of these conversations were scheduled, often the most interesting insights came in passing comments or spontaneous hallway conversations that fueled my insights.

I owe the Brigham Young University philosophy department faculty my deep and sincere gratitude. I changed my major from Music Education to Entrepreneurship to Philosophy to Entrepreneurship and back to Philosophy before finally calling Philosophy home. I have been enriched by the many conversations I have had the past few years as a Philosophy student at BYU. While most people have been confused or skeptical to my choice to study philosophy at BYU, it is certainly the education I desired. Whether it was surviving logic courses, spending hours reading a couple pages of Kant, or trying to understand the ineffable dao, I have been given a priceless education.

I know that so much work the faculty gives goes unseen. A few moments from my time stand out: Thank you to Professor Christensen for first hooking me into the discipline with his logic classes. Thank you to Professor Jensen for your friendship, for stretching my capacity, and for always believing that I was capable of more. Thank you to Professors Graham and Hansen for accommodating my class needs so that I could graduate. Thank you to Professor White for the many spontaneous hallway conversations. Thank you to Professor Mower for your friendship, guidance, and mentorship as I have matured these past few years. Thank you to Cindy for the many fun hallway conversations and your

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What Role Should Philosophy Play in the Public Sphere? The intrinsic value of public philosophy

Introduction

Discussing public philosophy reminds me of Detective James Carter's (Chris Tucker) exchange with a Kung Fu master in Rush Hour 3. He is there to interrogate the headmaster about a member of his dojo. The confusion comes from the names of the headmaster Yu and his head apprentice Mi. Detective Carter becomes flustered at exchanges such as "Who are you?" "I am Yu." "He is Mi and I am Yu." Detective Carter becomes quite angry. While public philosophy is not as emotional as the case Carter was working on, there is plenty of room for clarity and development on the subject. There is a lot of misunderstanding and contention around the subject of public philosophy, making progressive discourse challenging. Frankly, it is often unclear what we are even talking about when the term "public philosophy" is mentioned. It means different things to different people and many meanings and definitions are correct. Part of my quest in this paper is to bring clarity to the confusion as well as offer some insights as to the benefits of expanding the teaching mission of philosophers.

In this paper, I will respond to Jack Weinstein's arguments against public philosophy in "What Does Public Philosophy Do? (Hint: It Does Not Make Better Citizens." I will defend that public philosophy develops civic virtues and that teaching philosophy is intrinsically valuable to any student of philosophy. I will conclude that philosophers should embrace public philosophy as well as extending the teaching of philosophy earlier in our education

system.¹ As this is a budding area of meta-philosophical discourse, I will expand upon existing ideas and synthesize them into one narrative around public philosophy. This will all tie under the umbrella idea that public philosophy is an intrinsically valuable activity.

We have to be clear what we mean when we say public philosophy. I will begin by identifying four definitions for public philosophy, describing each, and qualifying their applications to the discourse of public philosophy. In considering objections against public philosophy, I found Jack Weinstein's paper most important to respond to. This is because he addresses common objections to public philosophy, introduces some new objections to its practice which stem from his extensive experience in public philosophy. He is important to respond to both as a leading author on the topic and as a practitioner.

Before responding to Weinstein, it is important to address misconceptions about public philosophy and expand upon existing but underdeveloped ideas addressing them. I will expand upon an existing framework for describing the different kinds of philosophical study and the consequences for individuals under each category of study. This lays a foundation for addressing Weinstein and expanding the discourse of public philosophy. Weinstein frames self-knowledge as peripheral to public philosophy, but I will argue that it is central to it. This has been a consistent viewpoint throughout the history of philosophy and has mostly come under scrutiny over the past few decades. Self-knowledge, which I will often refer to interchangeably with self-cultivation, is an intrinsic good. It develops intellectual virtues which naturally follow from philosophical study. This is consistent with

¹ It is worth noting that there is almost no body of literature produced by philosophers refuting the value of public philosophy. The majority of writings on the topic address academic culture within philosophy. The fact that little public philosophy is done, or at least not enough, is evidence that these arguments point to, directly and indirectly, that a case is to be made for public philosophy. However, there is not a body of literature to refer to beyond what I have addressed in my literature view.

the teaching of philosophy which requires a philosopher mentor to develop the philosophical or intellectual virtues that are related to the intrinsic good of philosophical study.

In light of the intrinsic benefits of studying philosophy, I agree with Greg Littman in “Writing Philosophy for the Public Is a Moral Obligation” that philosophers have a moral obligation to practice public philosophy. This encourages the practice of public philosophy but is not an imperative for all philosophers. This follows from an expanded understanding of the teaching mission of philosophers. By re-emphasizing this teaching mission in the career path for tenure and promotion, we can better align professional incentives with the needed practice of public philosophy. I will conclude this paper by discussing the irony of decoupling the promotion of philosophical study from philosophers.

What is public philosophy?

Answering this question is perhaps the hardest aspect of this paper. However, beginning with a clear understanding of what public philosophy is, and its relationship to philosophy, will clarify much confusion on the topic. Various definitions abound, muddling any discussion on the subject. This is a significant contribution to the topic of public philosophy. Until now, I am yet to see any attempt to acknowledge the different meanings of “public philosophy” and focus the conversation around one common definition. By categorizing the various kinds of public philosophy and focusing on what the dialogue is about, our discourse on the subject can advance more successfully.

There are five variables to consider that distinguish the categories of philosophical practice: author, audience, topic, medium, and purpose. These five variables combine in various forms to identify the various practices of philosophy. I will clarify by defining

philosophy with these variables. Philosophy is written by philosophers to philosophers on philosophical topics, typically through the written word, with the purpose of advancing research in philosophy. It is by philosophers for philosophers because the content requires specialized training to understand and engage with it. Although presenting at conferences, classroom lectures, and conversations among philosophers are helpful, they all serve the purpose of eventually publishing papers on philosophical topics. This allows the philosophical community to engage with these papers before publication for peer review and creates a lasting asset which the rest of the community can respond to. These practices advance the grander truth-seeking mission of philosophy to study the most basic and fundamental concepts and principles.

So, then what is public philosophy? As will become evident, there are numerous combinations of these variables, many of which we see commonly. We can narrow the scope of some of these variables for further clarity. Among authors, there are philosophers and the public. Philosophers at the very least are professionally trained in a university setting and typically hold a university position in philosophy departments. The public is everyone else, ranging from those with some professional training, such as an undergraduate degree in philosophy, or no training at all such as most people. The audiences are similarly distinguished as philosophers, who are actively engaged in advancing the research efforts of philosophy, and everyone else, generally referred to as the public. For the purposes of this discussion, topics are either philosophical or non-philosophical, although in some cases it is worth clarifying specific topics. The medium is most important to philosophers doing philosophy because it belongs in written form. Beyond this category, media may vary from classrooms to podcasts, blog posts to Youtube

videos. The purpose of each category varies in importance throughout this paper and will only be highlighted if the purpose is especially important. The following are four definitions of public philosophy:

(1) Philosophers or the public addressing philosophers or the public on applied philosophical concerns.

(2) Philosophers or the public addressing philosophers or the public on political philosophy.

(3) Philosophers to the public through various media on philosophical topics for the purpose of teaching.

(4) The public to the public through various media on philosophical topics, typically with the purpose of teaching.

(1) is typically applied philosophy of some sort. This includes philosophically informed media on moral issues such as the morality of abortion or gun control, etc. (2) is political philosophy of some sort such as discussions on economic models, labor theory, etc. An example of (1) and (2) is Michael Sandel's book *Public Philosophy: Essays on Morality in Politics*. It both addresses political philosophy in the public sphere as well as applied issues such as criminal justice and abortion ethics. It is worth noting that in another conversation, interesting distinctions could be made between what professionals create and what the public creates for both (1) and (2). The topics of applied or moral and political philosophy are rich domains abundant in content from both philosophers and the public. However, since neither (1) nor (2) fall under the scope of this thesis, the content that philosophers and the public create is lumped under two categories instead of four.

(3) and (4) combined are the broad conception of public philosophy. An example of (3) is Harry Frankfurt's book *On Bullshit*. At times throughout my paper I will address (3), especially when discussing the role of professional philosophers and how they can contribute to the public. (4) captures every case of a non-professional addressing philosophical topics. It varies broadly in medium and quality. Examples of (4) include books such as *Avengers Infinity Saga and Philosophy*, *KISS and Philosophy*, or the "Philosophize This" podcast by Steven West. It is the realm of amateurs and often gets a bad reputation by philosophers because it lacks the rigor that philosophers practice. The reputation (4) has with philosophers is largely why philosophers hesitate to do (3). While both (3) and (4) are primarily teaching oriented, sometimes (4) confuses its ability to expand the discipline. (4) lacks the rigors in quality of work required in (3) to successfully advance the discipline of philosophy.

Not mentioned above is the idea of a bidirectional feedback loop between the public and philosophy. The point is that not only philosophers can inform the public but that the public can inform philosophers. This is interesting and worth exploring, but it is hard to argue for and not the main point of this paper. Conceiving that the public can directly influence the progress of philosophy, with all its rigor and its advanced nature, is a tough pill to swallow. This is comparable to claiming that someone with no scientific background can contribute to significant cancer breakthroughs in the field of medical research. While such a scenario is hard to conceive of, there is potential for the opposite direction to happen. There is potential for philosophers to offer something of benefit to non-philosophers just as cancer researchers offer medical breakthroughs and new practices.

Regardless of how we discuss public philosophy, it is important to begin by assuming the face-value account of philosophy. This is the idea that what philosophy aims to do, it succeeds at. I agree with Greg Littman in embracing this account as necessary for discussing public philosophy. It would be unusual to promote philosophy in a public setting if it was ultimately failing at its end. If philosophy is failing its mission, then that is a separate concern beyond this paper. Perhaps a richer discussion on this point would achieve a more nuanced view in which philosophy is a partial success, but I believe it is safe to assume that at least to a large degree, philosophy is succeeding at its intended purpose and is worth pursuing and sharing.

Jack Weinstein's definition of (3) is the most satisfying I have come across, albeit overly narrow for some cases. He defines public philosophy as "the act of professional philosophers engaging with non-professionals, in a non-academic setting, with the specific goals of exploring issues philosophically" (Weinstein 38). This is an excellent starting point for narrow conception of public philosophy. However, it is worth noting that the broad conception of public philosophy, which includes (4) as well as (3), is very relevant to any discussion on the topic. In fact, one of the main trends within literature on public philosophy is that (4) is more prolific than (3) currently, leading to a general invitation for more of (3) to happen. The same Weinstein who introduces this definition is who I will respond to in my paper.

Weinstein's concerns with public philosophy

Jack Weinstein's "What does Public Philosophy do? (Hint: It does not make better citizens)" is the primary argument against public philosophy that I will address. He is a seminal figure on the topic and his perspective is interesting since he actively practices

public philosophy, so his argument is informed not only by theory but by his own experiences. First, I will elaborate on Weinstein's understanding of public philosophy. He defines public philosophy as "the act of professional philosophers engaging with non-professionals, in a non-academic setting, with the specific goals of exploring issues philosophically" (Weinstein 38). Instrumental to his practice of public philosophy is showing his audience his thinking (Weinstein 47). He guides them through his thought processes in an engaging manner that pulls them into the subject (Weinstein 48). From this process he argues two points about public philosophy. (1) Public philosophy does not make better citizens. (2) Public philosophy is primarily for entertainment. While he makes other points, I will focus on these. First, I will summarize his arguments for each and then offer my responses.

Weinstein argues that public philosophy does not make better citizens. This argument is based on his definition of liberalism. Liberalism is the political philosophy that takes liberty to be its highest value. In a social context, the liberty in question is the individual's freedom to formulate their own conceptions of the good life. The government cannot impose upon us its conception of the good life; it should remain neutral or impartial.² Weinstein's conception of liberalism operates on the premise that a liberal society follows the assumption of the "unquestioned competence of the unmodified individual" (Weinstein 39). This is justified based on liberal commentaries by Isaiah Berlin, Charles Taylor (especially his commentaries on Hegelianism), and Karl Popper (Weinstein 39). An individual's natural capacity for reason, achieved when they become an adult, is

² Definitions and general commentary on liberal political philosophy is cited from conversations with Gordy Mower.

sufficient for their political participation. Any claims that an individual needs to be, beyond becoming an adult and therefore gaining their natural rational capacity, is anti-liberal (Weinstein 39).

Weinstein's point is that "liberal theory cannot depend upon philosophy to legitimate citizenship" (Weinstein 40). The individual within a society is intrinsically valuable without stipulations. Weinstein believes these views on liberalism refute needs for civic virtues such as rationalism, better informed individuals, better arguers, objectivity, etc. (Weinstein 38). He reviews authors such as Socrates, Rousseau, Mill, and Marx who all defend the need for civic virtues in order to be good citizens. Adam Smith argues that while the individual is the best person to be able to take care of themselves; the more informed they are the better (Weinstein 39). However, Weinstein summarizes the contemporary landscape as largely rejecting civic virtues as necessary for a liberal society, removing them from the equation. He concludes that philosophical education is anti-liberal because it questions the claim that individuals are naturally well equipped with wisdom and judgment to be good citizens.

Beyond the debate over whether civic virtues are liberal or not, Weinstein asserts that whatever traits people gain from the study of philosophy do not actually inform their civic decision making. Instead, we are persuaded by colors, rhetoric, and other forms of manipulation (Weinstein 41). Democratic deliberation is often irrational and not improved through philosophical training (Weinstein 43). Teaching critical thinking to the entire population will likely not change political discourse. This is based on Weinstein's assumption that reasoning is fluid and can come to different conclusions (Weinstein 43). Some evidence supports the notion that individuals become less rational the more the truth

is explained to them (Weinstein 41). For public philosophy to make individuals into better citizens, it would have to disarm the other non-rational factors that actually drive our decisions, civic engagement, and perspectives we take (Weinstein 44).

Weinstein's second key conclusion is that public philosophy is primarily a form of entertainment which opens our eyes to new perspectives (Weinstein 41). While it may be part of philosophical inquiry, it is primarily a distraction from day-to-day habitual thought (Weinstein 50). Participants in public philosophy may come to an event for the topic or guest speaker, but they stay because of the connection they feel at the event itself (Weinstein 49). It is individual and passion based rather than disciplined, rigorous, or advancing the field of philosophy in any way. In fact, public philosophy is antithetical to many of the finest traits of academic philosophy.

“[Public philosophy] models thinking, is individualistic not collective, it is built on personality not ideas, is passionate and not detached, and advocates for people not ideas. It seeks to prepare ground for future philosophical endeavors, and while the questions asked may be about any area of life, knowledge or inquiry, it should become obvious that public philosophical investigation skews towards the individuals who happen to be there. Most public philosophy involves examination of one's own personal life. *It is about self-knowledge before it is about anything else,*” (Weinstein 51).

Weinstein limits the scope of his self-knowledge claim. It is not the path to self-knowledge but creates a groundwork for it. The hope is that an individual will reflect enough to take their study further (Weinstein 51). However, Weinstein is largely skeptical that public philosophy results in anything more than momentary entertainment (Weinstein 52).

Correcting misconceptions about public philosophy

The basketball analogy

My first step in addressing Weinstein's concerns with public philosophy is to expand our foundational understanding of how we view and understand philosophy. This first step elaborates on the importance of discussing philosophy in a non-binary split between professional and non-professional. This creates room for discussing public philosophy and addresses a general dismissive attitude alluded to in pro-public philosophy literature that public philosophy is not philosophy at all. I will follow this by defending that public philosophy does make better citizens and present a case for the intrinsic value of philosophical study.

It is problematic to discuss public philosophy as the antithesis of philosophy or lesser than philosophy. This dichotomy makes the two pursuits come across as clear-cut different pursuits. However, I believe this dichotomy oversimplifies what is better described as a spectrum of philosophical study. This is supported by Weinstein (Weinstein 36). He proposes three standards for academic philosophy: print, contextualized within the discipline (citations engaging in the existing discourse), and peer reviewed (Weinstein 37). Public philosophy may often meet the first two requirements, but the third is antithetical to the pursuit of public philosophy (Weinstein 37). However, I find these requirements still do not convey philosophy on a spectrum, so while Weinstein alludes to the idea, it deserves further elaboration, which will support some of my later claims. To do so, I will compare philosophy to basketball to highlight the value of viewing philosophy as a spectrum rather than as a binary split between professional academic work and public philosophy.

To see how this is a problematic division, imagine if we discussed a sport like basketball as being strictly professional or non-professional. Imagine that in this case anything that is professional is referred to as “basketball” while any other expression of basketball as we understand it is “not basketball.” This categorizes the National Basketball Association (NBA) as “basketball” and everything beneath their level of skill and play as simply not worth discussing. This is clearly not how we discuss basketball, and it does not make sense to discuss it this way. Instead, there is a rich conversation across the spectrum of practice. At the least experienced level, there are dads picking up their toddlers and hoisting them up to the hoop with basketball in hand to drop it in. As that toddler grows, he shoots hoops with other kids in the neighborhood. If their interest develops, they join a youth league basketball team before eventually joining the middle school, high school, and college basketball teams. If their skills are developed enough, then they could be recruited by an NBA team. It would be absurd to only define the final step of joining the NBA as “basketball.” In this example, everything they did leading up to that moment was basketball. The differences lie in why they played or practiced and how good they were at it.

The purpose of being a professional in the NBA is not necessarily to only “advance the discipline” but to entertain and inspire. If it were only to advance the discipline, then the only people really contributing to basketball are those famous NBA players who break records and redefine the sport. However, there are hundreds of other players who will not “advance the discipline” under such definition. However, they certainly play basketball and succeed in entertaining others and supporting the culture and discipline of the sport.

The spectrum of philosophy

We can view philosophy more similarly to how we discuss basketball. Rather than viewing philosophy strictly as the work done by academics with PhDs on the subject, I will describe five categories within the spectrum of studying philosophy. This framework ties in well with a taxonomy of philosophical study proposed by Massimo Pigliucci and Leonard Finkelman in “The Value of Public Philosophy to Philosophers,” but their taxonomy does not clarify the different levels of study among laypeople, which I deem important to elaborate in this discussion (Pigliucci and Finkelman 95). In developing this spectrum of philosophical study, I identify two distinguishing criteria between different levels of philosophical study: the student’s commitment to the truth-finding mission of philosophy and their intent in studying philosophy. I will begin with the most serious category of philosophical study and work down in degrees of less seriousness.

The first category of philosophical study belongs to academics. They are the most committed to the truth-finding mission of philosophy and their intent in studying philosophy is to advance the discipline. While this first category is primarily defined by their publication of professional papers on philosophical topics, there is also a broader sense of “doing philosophy” which encompasses all of their professional activities. This includes publishing, presenting at conferences, teaching, serving on committees, and other activities within the university community. This includes teaching university students, who constitute the second category.

The second category of philosophical study belongs to university students studying philosophy. This is comparable to Pigliucci and Finkelman’s “Professional Philosopher to Philosophy Student” form of interaction (Pigliucci and Finkelman 95). They are seriously

committed to learning the craft of philosophy. They are trained by professional philosophers on how to understand and write philosophy. They gain hands on experience and iterative feedback as they improve their philosophical abilities. While they are not yet at the level to produce advanced publications, they are preparing for it. While some intend to continue cultivating their philosophical skills and contribute to the discipline, others do not share that intention. In fact, most university students who study philosophy will not develop a career in the discipline. Intentions may range from simply getting a degree, studying philosophy because they enjoy it, gaining soft skills that will translate to other career paths, and many more.

The third category of philosophical study is made up of those who study philosophy seriously but informally and share a wide range of intentions. They are still committed to the truth-finding mission of philosophy but do not receive training directly from university professors like university students do. However sincere they may be in understanding philosophy, without a professor's mentorship, these informal students of philosophy are largely left to their own efforts and interpretations. Intentions vary widely as to why they study philosophy, but their commitment to the truth-finding mission of philosophy means they still have some inclinations toward understanding truth.

The fourth category of philosophical study is characterized by casual study that lacks a commitment to the truth-finding mission of philosophy and shares a wide range of intentions behind said study. However, they are still engaging with philosophical content. This is different from the fifth and bottom category of philosophical study. This is characterized by those who use the term philosophy but have lost any semblance of what the higher categories are concerned with. This includes witty aphorisms, people's opinions

labeled as “my philosophy is...” or “what is your personal philosophy on...”, self-help topics, and other concerns that are often misunderstood as philosophy but are simply mislabeled.

One objection to how I defined these categories is that philosophy itself, as practiced by academics with PhDs, is poorly defined. This topic is certainly open to debate, and there is likely not a consensus among philosophers as to what the definition of philosophy is. However, it is commonly understood well enough among academics that we can identify who is a philosopher and who is not and then engage in philosophical work with the professionals. The fact that we can accurately debate the topic with others at all, and consider them peers, lends itself to the notion that philosophy, albeit controversial in definition, is commonly understood among those who practice it. This is not to say that there are not definitions that could be considered here for their merits. I simply choose not to discuss them because it does not further the purposes of this paper.

From this section we now identify five kinds of philosophical study varying by their commitment to the mission of philosophy and their reasons for studying philosophy (their intentions). It is important to understand that everyone passes through each of the lower categories on their way to the highest. Everyone is born a member of the fifth category of philosophical study and must progress through each step in sequential order before arriving at the first and highest category of philosophical study. Some may move from the fourth to the third or even the second categories quickly. Regardless, this sequence accurately reflects the learning experience of everyone’s relationship with philosophy.

These categories that describe the various degrees of philosophical study offer a useful frame of reference for understanding public philosophy. Within this framework, I argue that public philosophy is primarily concerned with clarifying misconceptions among

the fifth category and engaging with the third and fourth categories of philosophical study. A public philosopher's intent is to generate interest among the lower categories, hopefully generating enough interest to move them into a higher category of philosophical study. Those who belong to the third category are the best consumers of public philosophy because they have interest in the topic and have a genuine intention around finding the truth. As I will now discuss, this engagement among the various categories of philosophical study can make us into better citizens and is intrinsically valuable for any individual who chooses to study philosophy with any degree of interest.

Defending the better citizens argument

A major flaw in Weinstein's denial that studying philosophy makes a better citizen is his atypical perspective on liberal theory. While he does draw on a few different authors, it is by no means a knock down argument for his take on liberalism. On the contrary, John Rawls in "The Priority of Right and Ideas of the Good" written in 1988 presents a contemporary take on liberalism that affirms the necessity of civic virtues. While a government cannot fully dictate its conception of the good life to its people, it cannot be neutral either (Rawls 260). Rather than attempt a comprehensive ideal of the good, the state requires a conception of the good limited to political ideals (Rawls 253). Civic virtues are necessary for the promulgation of a successful liberal society. These civic virtues include but are not limited to fair social cooperation, tolerance, reasonableness, a sense of fairness (Rawls 263). While this just scratches the surface of Rawls' arguments, there is also a commonsense view to consider.

Consider the better citizens argument in the context of what makes a good citizen based on common sense. A citizen, according to Aristotle, is someone who has a stake in

their government and is able to participate in the deliberations of the state. Based on this definition, what makes a citizen good or bad? A government needs its citizens to participate. If citizens did things like actively destroying the government, or harming other citizens for example, then we would likely consider them bad citizens. What would the opposite look like? It would be someone who works well with other members of society to engage in the deliberative process of a liberal society. This entails civic activities such as how to vote, why I should vote, what serving on a jury means, thinking about rights, who has a right to what, what we should make legal and illegal, how we should organize our society, etc. Each of these activities is part of one's civic duties within a liberal society. Essentially the entire realm of applied philosophy are issues at the forefront of public discourse. It makes sense that anything that helps a citizen to engage in these activities would make them a better citizen. This enables citizens to engage in society in a constructive way.

Philosophy works at the core of civic concerns and develops these civic virtues. Philosophers research how to organize society through political philosophy. We consider what decisions we should or should not allow within our society through research in morals. Philosophy engages with these fundamental questions that matter to both individuals and society. It is a clear problem if the leading experts in these matters are not bringing them to the public. It defeats much of the purpose for their research. What good is knowing the truth if no one else knows it? Philosophy's value shines brightest when shared broadly, discussed openly, and crafted for public consumption. I will argue in the following sections that the practice of public philosophy is an intrinsic good.

Public philosophy is intrinsically good

Self-knowledge

Weinstein claims that self-knowledge is a starting point for further philosophical inquiry into deeper philosophical inquiry, such as truth, reality, knowledge, and justice, etc. (Weinstein 51). I believe that his claims about self-knowledge should be stronger. Self-knowledge is not just a starting point for further philosophical inquiry. It is an intrinsic good and an end in and of itself. I claim the value of self-knowledge on first principles. It is something that I stipulate, and it is not an argument I will comprehensively defend in this paper. This elevates the value of public philosophy from an instrumental good for fostering further philosophical inquiry to an end of its own.

Philosophical ideas are valuable for ordinary people just as much as to philosophers, just for different reasons (Littman 106). This is similar to how science matters to people. Consider dieting as an example. A nutrition scientist is advancing the limits of our knowledge of how our nutrition affects our bodies. While a typical person does not concern themselves with the extremes of the discipline, there are clear benefits that we can glean from their study. We can learn to better understand how we should eat so that we can be happy and healthy. I believe part of the longevity of philosophy throughout history stems from how important philosophical questions to our nature.

Moral education

Philosophy applies across various aspects of our lives. One of the more obvious applications is moral philosophy. Moral philosophy concerns itself with questions such as “What should or should not we do?” “Is x behavior morally acceptable?” These are

considerations we make every day. Regardless of whether philosophy is persuasive in becoming a moral person, it offers the reasons for whether a decision is moral or not.

In Kant's "Architectonic" section of the first Critique, Kant outlines the most important practical ends of philosophy. This is to achieve the greatest practical good, which is to define the maxims of our actions and understanding the laws of nature through science (Sweet 85). The primary ends of human life are moral goodness and a just society (Sweet 86). Philosophy's role in this task is of moral education and political critique, which bring society in line with universal law.

Philosophers must engage in moral education because morality will be corrupted without proper fundamental maxims to build from. Moral education entails understanding the supreme principles of morality and defining what our duties are from them (Sweet 86). This moral education counterbalances our natural dispositions toward dialectic and feeding our desires rather than following a moral life. While Weinstein is right that much of our decision making is emotionally based, we need moral education to enlighten and help us improve our desires (Weinstein 43). If happiness really comes from moral goodness, as Kant claims, then this moral education is key to the happiness of our society (Sweet 87).

Morality is one of many applicable areas within philosophy. Political philosophy tries to describe what kind of society we should form. Questions about agency inform our moral decisions and help us understand how much we are in control versus how much they are already determined. Epistemology helps us understand differences between knowledge, understanding, and truth. Who are we? Why do we do what we do? What should we do? How should we live? What is real? What is truth? How can we recognize truth?

“The students who attend philosophy classes are not a class of human beings with a unique need for philosophy. As noted, the questions faced by professional philosophers are, more or less, the questions faced by everyone,” (Littman 111).

Philosophical inquiry was not born out of coincidence or happenstance but began and continues because it is natural for us to inquire philosophically. These questions and many more are part of our nature to ask. While various disciplines approach them from their own perspectives, philosophy contributes from its own. This is why philosophy has public inclinations through all of history as Littman argues.

Greg Littman is right in pointing out the strong public inclinations of philosophy throughout most of history. Ancient Greek philosophers such as Socrates took philosophy to the public. Plato and Aristotle both tutored future kings (Littman 104). Machiavelli’s ethics were originally written for a broad political audience and independent rulers (Littman 104). As I will address later, Kant’s writings were intended for informing the public’s moral behavior. Even recent philosophers such as Bertrand Russell and Chomsky engaged in public philosophical forums (Littman 104). In fact, one of three explicit purposes of the American Philosophical Association founded in 1918 was to engage in philosophical activities with the general public (Littman 104). There is vast historical precedence for public philosophy. This public inclination of philosophy is well acknowledged by Weinstein’s concluding thoughts.

“My tentative answer to the question “what does public philosophy do?” should therefore be understood as follows: *public philosophy creates the groundwork for philosophical reflection in personal life with the hope and that*

this reflection may inspire future wide-ranging conversations about culture and meaning in life,” (Weinstein 51).

I wholeheartedly agree with Weinstein here. However, this is a valuable end of its own. Weinstein is right that public philosophy is individual oriented (Weinstein 52). However, he trivializes the value of that contribution by simplifying its contribution as entertainment. He describes public philosophy as primarily a distraction from day-to-day lives, but in countering the belief that public philosophy makes us better citizens, he fails to emphasize how it makes us better people. Regardless of whether it makes us better citizens, the value of developing ourselves transcends either of them.

It is worth noting that any individual who consumes public philosophy chose to be there. Whether they go to an event or listen to a podcast, it is a choice they have made. The will behind their interest is driven by at least curiosity and often much more. This is consistent with what I have seen from the professors I have worked with during my undergraduate education. Rather than dispassionate discourses on obscure theoretical concepts, I have been instructed with passion, vigor, and exceptional interest in the topics. In learning my professors’ stories, it is clear to me that their study of philosophy has greatly influenced who they are and how they view the world and life. This is important, as most students of philosophy will never become philosophy professors. This is why intrinsic goods such as the development of intellectual virtues are important byproducts of studying philosophy.

Intellectual virtues

Considering most university students do not build their careers in philosophy, it is important to at least touch on the other benefits of studying philosophy. I believe that

philosophy can lead to the development of intellectual virtues, some of which include: critical thinking, a greater reasoning capacity, better practical reasoning, negotiation, reasonable compromise, wisdom, curiosity, intellectual humility, intellectual autonomy, attentiveness, attention to detail, consistency, flexibility, adaptability, caution, thoughtfulness, thoroughness, open-mindedness, intellectual courage, intellectual tenacity, and more. These are some of but not all potential virtues that come from a philosophical education. However, the development of these virtues is not guaranteed. One objection is that the study of philosophy develops vices rather than virtues.

Philosophy can also develop vices such as egoism, pride, and arrogance. While most of these claims are not backed by empirical research, anecdotally they seem somewhat true. Jorge Gracia certainly agrees. In “Philosophy in American Public Life: ‘De Facto’ and ‘De Jure’” he argues that in some cases philosophers can make public life worse due to the cultural issues within philosophy (egoism, arrogance, etc.). He says he would prefer “a corrupt politician any time rather than a principled, self-conceited, cantankerous, and arrogant, philosopher. “You can get a politician to move, if you exert the right kind of pressure, but you can never get a philosopher to budge,” (Gracia 156-157). I prefer to have neither a corrupt politician nor an arrogant philosopher. Gracia’s point emphasizes how challenging intellectual vices can be.

Whether studying philosophy turns into virtues or vices largely depends on the individual. One person can walk away from their undergraduate walks away from their university experience believing they have it all figured out. Another will graduate keenly aware of how little they know. I chose to study philosophy because of the virtues I saw it develop in me, but that has not come without its vices. I am much better able to break down

someone's thinking, understand their assumptions, and come to my own conclusions through my analysis. This is thanks to consistently studying challenging philosophical writing, seeking to understand it, and drawing my own conclusions from it. However, when people struggle to give reasons for their beliefs or behaviors, I can be less empathetic and understanding. Studying philosophy, along with any discipline, will develop in us what we allow it to. Before concluding this paper, I will make two recommendations.

The teaching of philosophy

Public education

Now I want to address Weinstein's argument second point that even if public philosophy were not anti-liberal, it does not make better citizens since reason does not inform how people make decisions. His point is that people make decisions irrationally, based on emotions and other psychological factors. Teaching someone philosophy would not change their decision making. I will address this by discussing the public education system in the USA. This will support my recommendation that philosophy needs to be taught earlier in our lives than in a University setting. I agree with Jorge Gracia, who argues that philosophy does not currently play a role in American public life because it is not taught until college (Gracia 152). This excludes most of the general public from having a philosophical education both because most people do not get a college education and few people will choose philosophy as a major in college (Gracia 153). This late philosophical education misses most people. For those who do study it, it misses the most formative years of our education.

Our public and general education is justified at least on the assumption that it makes us better people, or even potentially better citizens. These justifications are often given in

defending what we teach K-12 and even in college general education courses. Our psychological default as we develop into adults is not to study these subjects; at least not perfectly so. Children both love and hate their education. They both enjoy learning and interacting together yet hate sitting at a desk and need lots of play time. Yet we subject generation after generation with foundational learning such as language, math, science, and more. This education is woven into our society, with all of our psychological tendencies in favor of and against it.

It is not anti-liberal because it does not offer a conception of the good beyond some notion that being educated is important for any citizen to pursue their own good. It is pro-liberal because it supports our political values such as social cooperation that we learn in school or reasonable discourse that we practice in the classroom. While any person may be able to conceive of and enjoy their conception of the good, with or without education, we seem to value education that informs how we conceive of and pursue the good. Philosophy can and should play a larger role in this process.

Philosophy fits under the same parameters. I believe it is a gross failing of our education system today that our children do not receive more of a philosophical education because of the benefits I previously described. A philosophical education is a liberal notion. This makes citizens better by helping them to self-determine their conception of the good just as much if not better than many other subjects taught in our education system. Philosophy is well equipped to develop our own self-reflective journeys because philosophical inquiry is part of human nature. It also makes sense since philosophy plays a major role in the development of most every other discipline. They all branched off from philosophers at one point or another. Tracing the intellectual roots of their studies offers

marvelous intellectual context for their education. Beyond public philosophy, we need more philosophy in our K-12 education.

It is important to recognize that expanding philosophy to public education is not public philosophy. This is an extension of the same philosophical teaching happening within universities. It simply happens earlier in life. However, it is more formal than public philosophy by creating the teacher-student mentorship relationship which is so crucial to quality philosophical study. This expansion of philosophy teaching an extension of the second class of studying philosophy described earlier in this paper. This step would be unique because the people teaching in K-12 would be developing their skills, or even getting degrees in Philosophy Education rather than simply Philosophy. This is similar to other disciplines such as music. The skills to perform music are related to but different from the skills to teach music. Such degrees exist because there are professions dedicated to teaching music. This is probably why public philosophy is somewhat controversial. Compared to other disciplines, philosophy has not developed a teaching arm uniquely dedicated to it. This means that the people publishing philosophy are also asked to teach. The possibility of developing a class of philosophers uniquely dedicated to teaching outside of the universities could be an excellent alternative which would lessen the impact on academia tremendously. As the next section discusses, it is important to limit how many philosophers are actually being addressed in advocating for the growth of practicing public philosophy.

The marketing objection

The first objection I will address is what I call “the marketing objection.” Note that in this context, I focus on one byproduct or component of public philosophy. In business,

marketing is the process of generating awareness and interest in a product or a service. Marketing philosophy could entail activities that generate more awareness of philosophy, of its benefits to the public, promoting its popularity in the public eye, and increasing the number of participants in philosophy (e.g. increase the number of students interested in studying philosophy at a university).

This objection is based in the premise that philosophers are only meant to do philosophy and advance the discipline. This is what the university system is built around and what a professor's professional incentives direct them toward. While professors spend time educating students, the end goal of teaching students is to prepare them for doing philosophy. Research is the core activity of a philosopher, and any marketing activities would distract them from it. Marketing philosophy belongs to marketers rather than philosophers and is a distraction from the craft philosophers are trained to do. If philosophers had a duty to market philosophy to the public, then they would have gained marketing skills and would have chosen a career path where they could be paid to promote philosophy, such as being hired by a university's marketing department. I will address this objection on three points: First, limiting the scope of who practices public philosophy. Second, illustrating the difference between marketing activities and marketing content. Third, the clear benefits to philosophy as a whole by marketing it to the public through public philosophy.

Limiting the scope of public philosophers

I agree with Littman that public philosophy is not for all philosophers, but it is for more philosophers than is currently practiced. It would be a problem if all philosophers abandoned their research efforts in favor of public teaching. The discipline would stop

expanding its current limits and the limits of our understanding would stagnate. While I do not see a clear way of defining when “enough is enough” for how many philosophers should engage in how much public philosophy, that is frankly a question to answer when it is closer to becoming a concern. So little public philosophy is done compared to the number of philosophers in the world that there is plenty of room for increasing its practice without harming philosophical research.

Marketing activities vs. the content of marketing

Philosophers are meant to generate content for public philosophy rather than do the marketing themselves. This is true of anything being marketed. Marketing is its own unique skillset, but until some content to market is applied to it, it is empty. This means public philosophy is more about the content philosophers prepare rather than requiring mastery of the method of distribution. Just as any business hires its own marketing department, either in-house or outsourced, so a public philosopher can rely on the talents of marketing professionals to share their public philosophy with the world. This allows philosophers to focus on the craft of writing quality philosophy tailored to a public audience rather than mastering the skillset of marketing.

Part of the skill of public philosophy does require learning to tailor philosophy to public audiences of varying skills and backgrounds. Public philosophy does not mean taking a philosophy paper published in an academic journal and simply running Facebook ads for lay people to click on and read. Not only would it be incredibly difficult to motivate someone to click on that, but once they did, they would be thrown into a narrative that has been evolving for thousands of years. Philosophy has its own style of writing, its own lexicon, jargon, nuanced language, and frankly varying degrees in the quality of writing for

anyone to understand.³ Part of the art of public philosophy is capturing as much of the depth that philosophy offers as possible while making it understandable to an untrained reader. This does not mean public philosophy assumes that its target reader is dumb or ignorant. It simply means these readers have not dedicated years to the discipline of philosophy and the challenges that come with it. However, this kind of work will mature the teaching craft of philosophers. It is self-evident that the practice of teaching to untrained professionals can clarify the thinking of the teacher. The teacher student relationship is not a one-way flow of intellectual growth. This does not mean the student must lecture the teacher, but in the preparation of preparing public philosophy, I stipulate that the process will be of benefit to the public philosopher as well.

There are many quality concerns around public philosophy. It is sometimes seen as illegitimate, giving “true philosophy” a bad name. This concern is easily addressed if philosophers themselves learn to cater their message to a public audience. If left in the hands of amateurs, then quality concerns about public philosophy may continue, but if philosophers were originating public philosophy, with the guidance and help of sound marketing practices, then it would be more effective and maintain the integrity of the discipline. Such practices would remind the public of the importance of our discipline (Pigliucci and Finkelman 90).

³ Anyone first learning philosophy will appreciate the difference between reading Plato and Aristotle, or Kant and Hume. Some writing is easier to understand than others. Kant is very technical in his language and requires different guidance than understanding the dialectic writing style of Plato. Even in contemporary philosophy, some of it is understandable and well-written, while others are much harder to understand. While this is largely because philosophical writing is challenging on its own, some authors simply write better.

Marketing benefits philosophers

I agree with Weinstein and Meyers that public philosophy is good marketing (Weinstein 51). Christopher Meyers agrees that public philosophy can play an important role in philosophy departments. He makes an important distinction that this marketing element to public philosophy is not some sort of moral obligation (in terms of marketing) but is a necessity (Meyers 59). It reminds the public of the importance of philosophy (Meyers 59). This does not mean every philosopher need become a public philosopher but that some should (Meyers 59).

One of the most commonly cited benefits of marketing philosophy is incentivizing continued funding for philosophy. Philosophy, like much of academia, does not pay for itself through the sale of some consumer product like a typical business. Instead, philosophers work within higher education institutions who fund their research. That money comes from foundations, the government, tuition, and more. Those who fund academia need to see the value of it, or else funding may go away. Science funding was threatened in the early 1990s, especially in areas that the public disapproved of or misunderstood such as evolutionary biology (Pigliucci and Finkelman 89). What followed was a surge of scientific public outreach which not only protected the field but established holidays around science such as “Darwin Day” (Pigliucci and Finkelman 89). Aside from a fear-based argument of threatening to cut funding, we can view this as a positive opportunity to expand the discipline of philosophy to new limits beyond its current funding constraints.

Another perceived benefit is the perpetuation of the discipline. These claims certainly need empirical verification, but at face-value they seem directionally true. It

makes sense that public philosophy increases interest in philosophy. This can lead to more students of philosophy in the University system. Increasing the number of philosophy students in universities only benefits the strength of philosophy. This is what has happened with science. It is now common to have events like STEM fairs, bills in government funding further STEM education, etc. This is because STEM education is perceived as important for today's job markets. While this is true, there is a rapidly growing demand for soft skills that philosophy develops. However, beyond developing marketable professional skills, expanding interest in philosophy can encourage greater intellectual diversity within the discipline.

The more diverse individuals that enter the discipline, the greater intellectual diversity the discipline will enjoy. Philosophy has many longstanding traditions, and sometimes it takes fresh eyes to question them and come up with exciting breakthroughs. Consider how Kant realized we had not sufficiently justified our use of reasoning. This led to many writings which established a priori as standard philosophical knowledge and much more. It took him questioning our use of reasoning to make these breakthroughs. If we draw in more people from different backgrounds and different perspectives, it will refine the work already going on and open up further opportunities for research advancements.

Tenure and academic incentives objection

Another objection to my arguments for public philosophy is that it is impractical for professors to do it based on their professional incentives. Professors are funded by universities who incentivize them to "publish or perish" as the old saying goes. It is impractical and unfair to professors, who are already overworked and underpaid, to need to expand the scope of their responsibilities by adding public philosophy to their work. It

does not make sense for their professional careers. If a professor's activities are incentivized to publish above all other activities, then pursuing public philosophy will only harm the careers of its practitioners by distracting them from what grants career advancement. I agree that this is a legitimate concern. Not only is this an unreasonable request to make of professors to sacrifice their aspirations for tenure, but my paper would fail to cause any change without addressing these practical concerns. As the current academic system stands, the promotion of public philosophy, despite the many papers supporting it, will not happen. This is why I both agree with this objection and will highlight an excellent solution recommended by Christopher Meyers' recommendations as presented in "Public Philosophy and Tenure/Promotion: Rethinking Teaching, Scholarship and Service."

Without reforming the academic system as it stands, at least to some modest extent, my arguments may be well and good but never turn into anything. While I do not have the expertise to diagnose challenges in academia and create an actionable, feasible plan, I will share some recommendations from other philosophers and lend some insights of my own. Most interesting to me is Meyers' teacher-scholar paradigm as a new way of considering a philosopher's academic development and contribution to the university. This term ties in the identity of an excellent philosopher (Meyers 62). Many activities are productive in academia but struggle to fit the traditional categories of teaching, service, or scholarship (Meyers 62). This would better incentivize activities in public philosophy, which the current tenure model does not.

Meyers offers three reasons that public philosophy is a poor fit in the current tenure model. The first is that academicians are conservative and want to preserve their values

and process in an unreflective manner (Meyers 63). The second is that moving beyond the categories of teaching, research, and scholarship is scary to reconsider (Meyers 63). The third is a sort of painful tradition, a mindset passed on from generation to generation that “If I had to publish then you do too,” (Meyers 63). This does not mean that Meyers is anti-publishing. On the contrary, Meyers lists seven goods that stem from academic publishing.⁴ Meyers then presents ways that public philosophy fits the same criteria. (Meyers 68-70). All of these points would be better captured under his teacher-scholar paradigm, which is the best treatise on the subject I have found. Consider the following comparison of two professors work and how they are rewarded under the current system.

Let us compare two hypothetical philosophy professors, Joe and Jane. Both professors have the same philosophical credentials. They have Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctorate degrees in the discipline. Each specializes in Hume and produces substantial works on the subject. Each takes a special interest in his virtue theory, expanding the area of interest appropriately. However, each takes a different path in what they produce. Joe follows the traditional path of publish or perish. He writes excellent professional pieces in philosophy, presents them at conferences, serves in his Philosophy department in various chairs, and teaches a couple classes each semester to undergraduate and master’s students at his university.

What goods has Joe produced and how are they valued? He produces a few goods, each of which is valued to varying extents. The good he is most valued for is his

⁴ 1) It establishes a faculty member’s expertise. 2) It demonstrates the intellectual and communication skills of a philosopher. 3) It contributes the intellectual climate of a campus. 4) Good research makes a faculty member a better teacher. 5) Scholarship wins prestige in the academic world. 6) Research and scholarship seek out truth which is intrinsically good. 7) Research and scholarship lead to discoveries that improve people’s daily lives (Meyers 67-68).

publications. This essentially defines his career. Certainly he contributes to his department and the lives of the students he teaches, but when he is assessed for tenure, his professional publications are valued above all else. These papers will be read by a handful of scholars worldwide who push the envelope on our understanding of Hume and virtue theory. He is highly respected by his colleagues and is seen as a prominent expert in Hume's virtue theory. Thanks to his efforts, we have a much richer understanding of Hume's theory of virtue.

Jane takes a different approach to what goods she chooses to produce in her career. Jane also publishes quality writing to advance the discipline of philosophy, but her primary motive is to refine her abilities rather than make it her end. Professional publications have the instrumental good of improving her philosophical thinking. She then applies this ability to think by presenting Humean ideas of virtue in a public setting. She starts her own philosophy podcast, picking a niche in teaching and applying virtue theory based on Hume's conception. Her listeners are not only introduced to philosophy, developing their understanding over the course of the weekly podcast episodes she produces, but they gain valuable insights on how these theories work in reality. She ties in examples of the news and even listener situation submissions. Her interpretations of Hume applied to these circumstances are shared every week with her listeners, which grow in popularity. In addition to her podcasts, she speaks at local high schools about the importance of studying and applying philosophy in our lives. Thanks to Jane's efforts, philosophy majors increase at her university and many of her listeners gain a greater understanding of philosophy.

In today's world of the academic ladder, Joe would achieve tenure while Jane would not. Her intermittent professional publications would be frowned upon and her public

philosophy would go largely unrewarded compared to if she had dedicated her time to developing the field. If we disincentivize the Janes of the world to not engage with the public on philosophical topics, then it will be left to the work of amateurs or not at all. I believe that it is important to elevate the teaching mission of philosophy higher than it has been thus far without sacrificing the benefits of research. Rather, philosophers, especially if viewed as “teacher-scholars,” could choose the best way they can fulfill their professorship.

Work in academia need not be uniquely dedicated to advancement of the theoretical aspects of the discipline. On the contrary, there is a deep practical relationship that can be maintained with even the most abstract of disciplines. Many research centers have been funded to advance the discipline of biology and other related fields for the purpose of curing cancer. Does their theoretical knowledge have a valuable end? In one sense it certainly may. There is a strong argument to be made that knowledge is an end of itself, but can we truly say that theoretical knowledge without application can compare to the remarkable joy we feel in discovering cures to a disease that has plagued mankind for our entire history? Certainly, no matter how enamored academia is with the theory of a discipline, there is some hope somewhere deep inside, that it may be of benefit to society and promote the good of others.

Conclusion

Amateurs in public philosophy

There is some irony in philosophers rejecting the practice of public philosophy. In doing so, they often reject the practices that generate interest in their discipline and the authors who inspire students to enter their classrooms. One example is the case of Ayn Rand. She studied some philosophy in her undergraduate degree in Russia, but beyond that

she is not formally trained in philosophy. She is primarily a fiction novelist who crept into writing more and more on philosophical topics. Her writings have generated a cult-like following, one which is often associated with the discipline of philosophy. While it is near impossible to identify how many students gained interest in studying philosophy through Ayn Rand's writings, certainly many philosophy professors have the experience of "curing" their students of misconceptions about Rand's achievements and teachings in philosophy. Her philosophy is inconsistent and almost universally deemed unsound. However, as an amateur philosopher of sorts, she is many people's first impression of philosophy.

If professional philosophers will not do public philosophy, then it will be left to the work of amateurs such as Ayn Rand. Her work became very popular in the public eye. So have books like *The Tao of Pooh* and more. Amateurs writing philosophy may promote philosophy to the general public, and this is what philosophers are rightly concerned about. Much of this amateur public philosophy is simply false or far from the quality that philosophers work hard to develop. I believe that if professionally trained philosophers made more of an effort to take up public philosophy, the quality would rise and these misconceptions about philosophy would clear up.

Although some public philosophy is being done, there is a need for more. Consider the case of Harry Frankfurt's book *On Bullshit*. It was originally published as an article in a professional journal, but later it became a best seller with a general audience. While it was not originally written with the public in mind, at some point, somehow, it found a public audience. This used to be the objective of philosophers such as David Hume, who hoped to become wealthy from the popularity of their books. I wonder if this has become less the goal of modern-day philosophers simply because philosophy is more advanced than it once

was. The lexicon needed to understand philosophy continually grows. The areas of interest in philosophy are increasingly specialized, requiring more and more familiarity with the established philosophical discourse to follow the conversation. And frankly, the world has changed too. More information is broadly available than ever before. Relative to the entirety of what people could read, philosophy may get lost in the noise. Whatever the reason, there is a growing perception in literature on public philosophy that more should be done. Philosophy needs to break through today's noisy world. Until professionals will prepare philosophy for public consumption, it will remain a fringe of society done by amateurs rather than a key area of interest. Frankly, as Meyers puts it, philosophy needs a public image makeover (Meyers 58).

Philosophy's public relations problem

Non-philosophers are generally skeptical of why philosophy is even taught or practiced. Misconceptions about the study of philosophy abound. When I declared myself a Philosophy major, my parents were deeply concerned that I would become an egotistical atheist. Pigliucci and Finkelman focus on the contributions philosophers have made to philosophy's public relations problem (Pigliucci and Finkelman 88). These problems affect both the public image of philosophy as well as the discipline itself, which is embroiled within its own debates (Pigliucci and Massimo 88). Outside of philosophy, some scientists are the biggest critics of the value of philosophy, condemning it as having an inferior intellectual value compared to their pursuits (Pigliucci and Finkelman 87). The irony is that science faced a similar public relations problem in the 90s. The US government was seriously considering slashing scientific funding, but science has seen a total reversal since science professional societies and organizations banded together to improve their public

image (Pigliucci and Finkelman 89). Now STEM education gets more attention than ever, tons of funding, and the sense of a secure job path ahead of them. I am not arguing that the challenges STEM faced, and that philosophy now faces, are equal. They are different in that philosophy is a specialized discipline, which exists almost entirely within universities. Science has a branch dedicated to the education of science, something which philosophy lacks. This changes the dynamics between the two by quite a bit. Rather than a direct comparison, the point is that a discipline, once fallen out of good graces with the public, can achieve not only good standing but broader adoption and interest in general. However, it will take more than we have given so far.

Not only will philosophers benefit from this practice, but we will be able to further spread the intrinsic goods of philosophical study. Reemphasizing the intrinsic value of philosophical teaching is consistent with the fruits of philosophy throughout time. We, the students of philosophy, are the greatest legacy that past philosophers have. Yes, they did excellent research, and we should too. Yet when philosophers look back on their lives, I believe their greatest joy will be from the students they enlightened rather than just the ideas they developed.

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