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Philosophy Begins With Love

This is the edited transcript of Nicholas Holman's presentation to Panel 1 of the Schiller Institute's Oct. 15, 2022 conference, "Build the New Paradigm, Defeat Green Fascism." Mr. Holman is a member of the international LaRouche Youth Movement.

Hello, everybody! I'm trying to persuade you all to read some philosophy. And I want to start off by saying what philosophy is, and why it's beneficial. Maybe a lot of you don't have a lot of free time. You may think, "I've got to save the world—what is learning some arcane philosophy have to do with that?" A lot of obscure and unusual professors in our schools today, think that a philosopher contributes best to the world through pragmatism and through skepticism. That is, an idea is presented, and a philosopher disputes it, tells you why it's false, why you shouldn't do that.

This is not what I'm encouraging you all to do. And it's also extremely alien to the examples of philosophy that we find in Classical literature, and even to the actual meaning of the word. The word "philosophy" is the combination of two Greek words, *philos* and *sophia*. That means love and wisdom. And a lot of people say that—I think they say that in every Philosophy 101 class—but they rarely stop to explain what it means. See, anybody who doesn't *love* something, is really not a philosopher. Anybody who cannot explain the wisdom in that which he loves, is clearly not a philosopher, for the exact same reason. So I think it's extremely inappropriate to call anything philosophy, except for this: The science by which people *discover* the wisdom in what they love.

See, I don't think philosophy can persuade somebody to love something. With respect to politics, which is an example of this science, philosophy doesn't *persuade* somebody to love humanity itself. You need to *begin* with that love. But once you do, there are lots of benefits you can receive from the study of philosophy.



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What I'd like to pick on, in particular, is courage. See, lots of people have courage, but by having a particular scientific understanding of the object of one's courage, it's transformed into something better. Lots of people have courage, and maybe some of them love humanity, so why don't they act? I think we encounter this inertia all the time, especially when we're organizing on the street, or we're talking to people we

know. They can imagine a better world, but they don't *know* it. They think there are all sorts of things that *can* be done, but none of it "*must* be done by me." This is because they don't have a scientific understanding of what they're trying to do.

So in times of stress, a philosopher and a non-philosopher will have very different responses, when the object of their love is in danger. Somebody who simply loves a thing without its understanding, can say plenty of things that would improve it, but can't pick a particular thing because they don't have the necessary knowledge of it.

What I'm trying to say is that philosophy takes their courage, and by saying what it necessarily requires, what it needs to provide to the object of its love or the object of the philosophical study is, philosophy transforms courage, which—it can be acted upon or it can not be acted upon—transforms it into conviction; it transforms it into something which *must* be done.

This is something which follows naturally from the exposition of scientific principles. It follows from the study of geometry and the study of physics, but also from the study of ethics and the study of politics in general: That if you want to act on a thing *necessarily*, you're going to need to begin by understanding it scientifically, which is the purpose of philosophy.

So, thank you. You should all read Plato.