

Philosophy for the Practical Man

Rahsaan Simon

August 2025

Philosophy is very much so for the practical man. There seems to be a general sentiment in the field that is contrary to this ideology, yet philosophy was a sport first authored by common men, and today, it is still practiced best by common men. Unfortunately, these people will never be able to express their ideas, which may advance the field greatly, simply because the profession only allows for those who are not original.

Indeed, the field of philosophy has been greatly hindered by the profession of philosophy. For now, what it means to be a philosopher is much different than what the title meant years ago. The philosopher is now someone who does analyses of incredible depth on the works of others. One could argue that the philosopher has always done this, that the philosopher has always taken inspiration from those who are like him. This is not wrong, but there is a difference between inspiration and obsession. For greed or mediocrity, these people are not "inspired" by those they study; rather, they study them for the sake of doing so itself, for the monetary benefit that might be incurred from publishing an article analyzing Kant's critique of reason, or perhaps analyzing another philosopher's analysis of Kant's book.

It is unfortunate to say that monetary benefit often ruins the creative subject, and, indeed, is the subject of philosophy creative, in fact, it may be one of the most creative subjects one can delve into. Since art has opened its gates to the possibility of being monetarily benefited from, starting at the expense of well-dead authors who in no way consented to their artwork being valued and sold at unholy amounts, and indeed would not have consented to this had they been alive, to the present day, where people now work towards such a benefit. It is natural for a field to optimize so that all people who work in it gain the most capital; this is simply the nature of capitalism. However, it goes without saying that optimization for capital is not optimization for quality. What may give me the most money may not give me the most joy, and what does not give me the most joy will not be the most appreciated by me; in the creative works, appreciation by an author is the largest determination of quality, for care becomes synonymous with quality when dealing with the arts. It is for this reason that this optimization has killed the arts in turning it into a profession, for greed clouds the judgment of the hobbyists' minds.

This is especially saddening when considering the case of philosophy. It is a subject that requires the most potent care and quality, different from the other

arts, and yet, it is so accessible that it is effectively within human nature to engage in it throughout one's lifetime incessantly. Academia, however, has made the subject virtually inaccessible through its active gate-keeping. Now, to practice or publish philosophy, one must go through the many hoops of university to become an "active professional", which are costly to one's time. Not only this, they must also be indoctrinated in the current field's affairs by current professionals, and since they have been ruined by a need for optimization, their students too will be ruined by this same need, and the cycle repeats.

This is the true problem with philosophy in academia. The professional education of philosophy is an excellent aid to the subject's understanding, and thus, a well opportunity for the public. Yet, the regular academic research format that has worked so well in favor of the sciences simply does not function for philosophy. Whereas the sciences do not require as much association with the author as the arts do, it is relatively easy to function properly whilst being detached, to do a good scientific job whilst not liking said job. The same is not true for philosophy. Often do we associate the best works in philosophy with their authors, the Republic with Plato and Socrates, Beyond Good and Evil with Nietzsche, because one has a better understanding of their work if they have a better understanding of the author, the author reflects in the work. Dissimilarly, it is far too easy to learn about Bohr's model of the atom without learning of Niels Bohr.

Ultimately, philosophy is best practiced by the common man. The common man does not labor through developing philosophical work, and so, after a hard day's labor, they can explore philosophy free from the burden of labor. They have no interest in monetary gain from their work, and so, they can afford to make mistakes. They have no need to impress anyone or to seek publishing or grants, and so, they can reflect their true thoughts and beliefs in their work and incorporate themselves. All of this deserves attention and recognition, as it was how the subject grew during its early stages. New ideas were promoted and created without a care for who they would entertain, or if they would entertain at all, and thus they were pure and unkept. These were not professionals; they were common men with aspirations that they poured into their work carelessly.

The idea of philosophy as a profession is an illusion, as there is no profession that can truly drive the heart and soul of a person; this is the task of an art. Even more so is philosophy a subject into which we all, as rational beings, inquire, without skill or due training, but through raw and unprovoked reason and our need to question. Philosophy is foremost and most truly for the practical man.

R.A. Simon