

Foreword

Philosophical Work

A question that is frequently asked is this - why is philosophy no longer the search for wisdom, especially academic philosophy? One answer is that we live in a competitive world. The job of a university is to provide people with degrees that help to prepare them for the work market. They may come to philosophy with all sorts of expectations but at the end of the day they are expected to apply for jobs in the market after graduation or get higher qualifications so that they can become lecturers or undertake further study. There will be more demands on them once they get a university position to publish papers to gain further promotion.

The days of patrons have long gone, and the philosopher needs to be enterprising. Philosophers need to sell themselves in the marketplace. Some historians date this trend as starting in the 18th century. But it was a gradual transition from patronage to full dependence on publication and university positions. Edward G. Andrew gave a good survey of the 18th century in his book *Patrons of Enlightenment* (2006). Apparently, Adam Smith thought that the break from patronage was a good thing. He thought the development was liberating, especially given the advances in and ease of printing. It has also been thought that the Church attracted some talented thinkers through patronage, support and positions. Even Marx found himself in need of a patron, or what you may call solidarity, in the figure of Engels his rich manufacturing friend.

So it seems that earning a living is detrimental to the quality and purpose of philosophy. That is why you find rich or retired persons enjoy philosophy as a contemplative discipline. But I may also add that there are also those who live frugally to allow themselves to dedicate more time to thinking and studying. The target in most of these cases is not qualifications but a genuine search for wisdom. It is in the spirit of the love of wisdom that we formed *The Wednesday* group and published the magazine. My thanks to all those who have participated and made this project a success.

The Editor