Editorial Introduction: Pencils for Philosophy

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What kind of job are you going to get? — the mother asked the young philosopher, looking both confused and pitiful. The fact that financing a minivan payment and saving for a child's university degree isn't the point of studying philosophy seemed to be lost on her. We aren't in the business of making money. She shields her child from the philosopher, as if to say: no corruption here, thank you very much. You still have to eat, you know.

But Philosophy isn't about the paycheck. Neither is English Literature, nor Language Studies, nor Theatre. These are modes of being, not modes of vocation. To hold the world in your hand and understand it, make a critique of it, to change it, is not a job.

Philosophy matters more today than ever before. These critical questions about how to be in the world. How to be a body, be a mind, be a citizen in the world and exist in relation to other people—regardless of difference—are important questions that we delve into. Before we can get to those questions, we first need to justify our work to ourselves.

The Why of intellectual work appears to be something many of us in graduate school struggle with. As deadlines loom and procrastination keeps us up late into the night staring at a blank page, we have trouble seeing the importance of what we are doing. Ultimately, when you have found your passion, the mental work really matters to you and the paycheck, not so much.

A philosopher once said to a class of undergrads, when he was starting out he would have sold pencils for a living to study philosophy. He didn't care what the paycheck was he brought home, he wanted to "do philosophy." Whatever that means, he knew it mattered. He was sure that philosophy meant that much to him. Ultimately, if you love what you are doing enough, the paycheck doesn't matter. Finding that passion is what makes eating worthwhile.

Con Texte strives to create a place for people to exhibit the essential value of their work, whether it contains historical resonances, political influence, critiques of every day structures of society, or it is simply an examination of any type of written work. The first issue of *Con Texte* presents two new articles from students in North America: one critiquing everyday capitalism and its effects on the hyperreality of objects; another examining Kant's work on the human sublime. These authors have found an application for their thoughtful critiques of their everyday experiences. As we hope to display here, their work really does matter.