

SHARE

PHILOSOPHY SHARING FOUNDATION

ISSUE 9

SEPTEMBER 2018

Art is anything you
can get away with
- Andy Warhol

- If you like it does it matter if it's real?

- Why rites of passage might help humanity through its current crises & into the future

- Buddhism's take on the discussion of human difference...and much more!

Enter our
article writing
competition &
Win!!

SHARE

PHILOSOPHY SHARING FOUNDATION

ISSUE 9 - September 2018

As with the previous editions, this ninth issue of the **SHARE** magazine has packed together, cover to cover, a broad range of diverse topics and philosophical views – from exploring the philosophical themes underlying American culture, the Christian Democratic ideals that shaped Europe, to thought-provoking questions about hedonism or about what makes the collective identity of a nation. **SHARE** magazine continues to strive for excellence as it goes through its early growth phase, while adhering to its main objective of disseminating interesting articles that engender thought and discussion without being bound to any single ideological or political view. Philosophy Sharing may or may not agree with the views expressed by the authors in the published articles;

There have been a few changes in the interim period between the previous issue and this one, the most note-worthy being the change of editor and the new role of deputy editor. As from this current issue, we will be also featuring an interview carried out by members of the Malta and Gozo branch of the Philosophy sharing foundation. The aim of the interviews is not to question high-profile individuals, but the ‘average’ man on the street who, despite being ‘average’ in some ways, has some uncommon views to share or is living some alternative lifestyle on the fringes of institutionalized normalcy.

The Editor philosophysharingmalta@gmail.com

Editorial Board:

Printer: Max Cassar (Malta branch President)

Designer: George Busuttil

Administrator: Mario Sciberras

Selected Texts: Kevin Saliba

Supplier: Miller Distributors Ltd.

© **SHARE** 2018

Anyone may submit an article for **SHARE**. However, it shall be the sole prerogative and responsibility of the Editor to determine which contributions to include or exclude from the magazine. Articles shall be in English, and not longer than a 1,000 words. Any subject matter may be dealt with (no censorship shall be applied). However, articles must be of a philosophical nature (with theses supported by logical proof). Critiques, commentaries, expositions or analyses (of a mere informative kind) would not be considered favourably. Thought-provoking, audacious and stimulating contributions are preferred. Technical jargon is to be avoided. References, if any, are to be placed within the text. The articles should not have been published elsewhere.

SHARE MAGAZINE

**Philosophy Sharing Foundation 129 St Paul's Street
Valletta vlt 1216**

www.philosophysharing.org

◀ Front image: *Gambling* (2017) by Inês Ferreira on Unsplash

EDITORIAL

BRING HER OUT TO THE WORLD

There are well over a hundred thousand internet searches made every month with queries to the like of “what is Philosophy?”, “Define Philosophy” or “Philosophy meaning”. This sets me off thinking in two seemingly opposite directions. On one hand it comes as somehow a bit of a surprise to learn that every month, around 0.001% of the entire world population, is interested in finding out what this subject called Philosophy is about and what’s all the big fuss. Perhaps my expectations were too low, but I seriously would have never thought that there were so many inquisitive minds actively googling the web in search for a definition or a brief intimation to the subject. On the other hand, it got me thinking as to why there is a larger percentage of searches made in relation to definitions rather than on topics, questions or themes within the subject matter itself, such as for example ‘Greek Philosophy’ or ‘Philosophy of Mind’. This is particularly not so with many other subjects such as for instance Mathematics, Psychology, or Physics.

I might be reading off the data incorrectly here or my tentative interpretation of it is off cue, but I believe that the second question sheds some more light on the fact that there is a huge accessibility gap between the academia or intellectual and scholarly circles, and the public at large. If it had to be personified, it seems that Philosophy is a bit of a recluse and a tad snub-nosed. She doesn’t show herself around much these days, and when she does, she only mingles with the chosen few. Few people know who she is and when they hear about her name through the grapevine, they go home and try to scoop out her identity from the web.

Yet, one might be asking, what has this problem got to do with the price of eggs? A lot, I would say, and a keyword that hints to an answer here is relevance. Philosophy, unlike what some people might think or believe, is not dead, and it is certainly not irrelevant to current discourse. Quite the contrary, Philosophy is more relevant than it ever was.

We are living in a point in time of our evolution where change is starting to move at an exponential rate and the types of problems we are facing are more existential in nature than any other time in our history. As technological advancement outpaces our growth in knowledge and wisdom, and our materialist and capitalist models of reality are failing us big time, we are entering into a series of global crises that mark our increasing inability to deal with change and the future, while the risks of making some real bad choices with armageddon-scale consequences are more present than ever. As we collectively witness the accelerated degradation of our biosphere, overpopulation, mass migration, wars and civil unrest, to the meltdown of economic and social structures, it’s time to start asking the right questions and

look into different avenues for answers. We need to start doing things differently and this entails starting to think in fresh new ways.

Philosophy has a big role to play in this emerging new world. We cannot afford to leave philosophical discourse relegated to Tuesday night circles criticising defunct literary work and never-ending debates on who-said-what-against-whom is right or wrong. This is not doing any service to Philosophy or to the world - and this is a point that has been made in the previous editorial. We need Philosophical thinking to enter the boardroom, the global economic and science think tanks and international fora on global policy. As we stand, we have an enormous deficit in skills and resources to deal with uncertainty about the world's future, especially when it comes to creative leaders and thinkers. We need movers and shakers who can think outside of the current socio-economic paradigms, cultural biases and conditioned ways of responding to same old problems created by the same old mindset. We need more people who have acquired the right set of thinking skills - from critical thinking, to asking the relevant questions from the right angles, and approaching

problems from an unbound creative perspective. We require philosophy to work side by side with other disciplines and contribute in cutting edge trans-disciplinary research by revisiting the big questions on consciousness, the nature of reality and what it means to be human as we inch closer to unlock the mysteries of life and the Universe in large hadron colliders, sophisticated neuroimaging, A.I. and genetic engineering among other things.

We are at the crossroads of old world paradigms that are no longer adequate to deal with our current crises, and an emerging new world that is qualitatively different than anything else we have witnessed so far in all our history on this planet. We need to start playing to a different tune but to do so we need to start listening harder to the beat and rhythms of our times. We need to recognise the relevance that Philosophy has in all of this and to usher her way out from private hangouts and flirtations with academics and armchair intellectuals to become a common acquaintance among the many, especially those who will be leading the generations to come out of our current predicament. The bottom-line is: it's time to bring her out to the world.



ARTICLE WRITING COMPETITION FOR PHILOSOPHY SHARE READERS

In this edition of the Philosophy Share magazine we are inviting YOU, our reader, to strut your stuff and pour some digital ink to enter our article writing competition and win some awesome prizes.

In order to enter the competition, you need to write a 900-1000 word article about a topic that was purposely chosen by the Gozo branch of the Philosophy Sharing Foundation. The chosen topic is:

"ARE ANIMALS CAPABLE OF LOVING?"

The editorial board will then review the submitted article and a winner will be selected and announced in the following issue. The winner's prize is any one from the upcoming philosophy courses to be delivered in Malta or Gozo in 2018/2019 and a free book on Philosophy of your choice.

In order to submit your writing, send an email to the editor at philosophysharingmalta@gmail.com

Through the lens:

Andy Warhol and t

by Natale Letizia

In general, Pop Art is held to be one of the most important artistic movements of the post-war period. Born in England and then growing in popularity and artistic status in the United States in the 1960s, it is considered by many to be a reaction to Abstract Expressionism. Its name derives from "popular art" or folk art. Pop artists are inspired by the consumer society and take suggestions from advertising, from everyday objects, consumables and comics. Pop artists portray scenes of daily life of the contemporary man, the

artificial world made up of innumerable industrial products of common use and mass media, but also the celebrity icons of cinema and music, historical and social events, overlaid with a personal touch. It is a color-laden world that seems to want to communicate cheerfulness and vibrance, but hides the anxiety of an existential angst that lies behind the full and bright colors and behind the shiny surfaces.

"An artist is somebody who produces things that people don't need to have".

The fact of wanting to put on the canvas or in sculpture daily objects and elevating them to artistic manifestation can ideally be linked to the Swiss Dada movement, but stripped of that anarchic, provocative and critical charge. The novelty also lies in the fact that the authors of such beauties have introduced tools such as photography and collage. The latter, still much appreciated and used today, is the one made by Hamilton, one of the founders of this artistic style, who had cut out some extravagant images from the newspapers of the time. The greatest exponent however is Warhol, who invents the business of art, where marketing itself becomes art. Its main characteristic was reproducing the same image many times over on large canvasses alternating the colors on each reproduction.

Andy Warhol (1928 – 1987), born Andrew Warhola, was an American artist, Director and Producer, who was a leading figure in the visual art movement known as Pop

"Isn't life a series of images that change as they repeat themselves?"

Art. His works explore the relationship between artistic expression, celebrity culture, and advertising that flourished by the 1960s and span a variety of media, including silk-screening, painting, photography, film, and sculpture. Some of his best-known works include the silkscreen paintings Campbell's soup cans (1962) and Marilyn Diptych (1962).

After exhibiting his work in several galleries in the late 1950s, he began to receive recognition as an influential and controversial artist. His New York studio, the Factory, became a well-known gathering place that brought together distinguished intellectuals, drag queens, playwrights,

NOTABLE MOMENTS

- 
- 1962 CAMPBELL'S SOUP CANS**
Warhol first exhibited his iconic paintings of Campbell's soup cans.
 - 1966 THE VELVET UNDERGROUND**
Warhol produces *The Velvet Underground's* first album and creates the album art.
 - 1968 OPENS "THE FACTORY"**
After skyrocketing success, Warhol founded his creative epicenter in Manhattan.
 - 1969 INTERVIEW MAGAZINE**
Warhol founded *Interview Magazine* featuring intimate conversations with stars.
 - 1987 DEATH**
Warhol passed away from complications following a routine surgical operation.

“

They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.

< Image source: invaluable.com. Original illustration was modified

the Pop Art Movement



The Andy Warhol Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce, Slovakia. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

bohemian street people, Hollywood celebrities, and wealthy patrons.

Warhol was the subject of numerous retrospective exhibitions, books, and feature and documentary films. Warhol's early career was dedicated to commercial and advertising art, where his first commission had been to draw shoes for glamour. Warhol was an early silkscreen printmaking artist, by the beginning of the 1960s, Pop Art was an experimental form that several artists were independently using. Warhol became famous as the "Pope

"In the future everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes."

of the Pop". His early paintings show images taken from cartoons and advertisements, hand-painted with paint drips.

The screen printing process was a technique frequently used by Warhol in the 1960s. This process is described as picking up a photograph, blow it up, transfer it in glue onto silk, then roll ink across it so the ink goes through the silk but not through the glue. It was the method used by him to get the same image, slightly different each time it was impressed. One of the most iconic screen prints by the artist is that of Marilyn Monroe, which Warhol had made as a tribute to the actress after her death in 1962.

Warhol started a magazine called Interview, so that he could go to movie screenings, get to know and indeed interview movie stars. By his death, which happened in 1987, the magazine had a circulation of around 160,000 readers. Through a will left by the artist, a Foundation was created out of his entire estate after his death. The primary focus of the Foundation was to support the creation, presentation and documentation of contemporary visual art, particularly work that is experimental, under-recognized, or challenging in nature.

Unlike most artists of the 20th century, Warhol worked in great depth in many different forms of media. For example, in addition to being a Pop artist, Warhol was a filmmaker, a writer, a photographer, a band-leader (he was involved with the band Velvet Underground), a TV soap opera producer, a window designer, a celebrity actor and model, an installation artist, a commercial illustrator, an artist's book creator, a magazine editor and publisher, a businessman of sorts, a stand-up comedian of sorts, an exhibition curator, a collector and archivist, a self-portrait of his celebrity, and ultimately, a Pop and post-modern Renaissance man.

Born in Italy, Natale Letizia has an MSc in Medialogy from Aalborg University, Denmark.

He is very much interested in arts, culture, narratives, rethorics and philosophy. He lives in Malta.

If You Like It, Does It Matter Whether It's Real?



"Images under creative commons license"

by Maarten van Doorn

Are pleasurable experiences the only thing that matters in life? Should one's sole goal be to maximize pleasure? Ethical hedonism answers both these questions with 'yes'. Only the internal aspects of pleasure and pain intrinsically affect our well-being. Hence, pleasure and pain are the only ultimately important considerations.

Robert Nozick's Experience Machine thought experiment is often employed as a decisive objection against such hedonism. Here is the argument, worth quoting in full:

Suppose there were an experience machine that would give you any experience you desired. Super-duper neuropsychologists could stimulate your brain so that you would think and feel you were writing a great novel, or making a friend, or reading an interesting book. All the time you would be floating in a tank, with electrodes attached to your brain. Should you plug into this machine for life, preprogramming your life's experiences? If you are worried about missing out on desirable experiences, we can suppose that business enterprises have researched thoroughly the lives of many others. You can pick and choose from their large library or smorgasbord of such experiences

for, say, the next two years. After two years have passed, you will have ten minutes or ten hours out of the tank, to select the experiences of your next two years. Of course, while in the tank, you won't know that you're there; you'll think it's all actually happening. (...) Would you plug in? What else can matter to us, other than how our lives feel from the inside? Nor should you refrain because of the few moments distress between the moment you've decided and the moment you're plugged in. What's a few moments of distress compared to a lifetime of bliss (if that's what you choose), and why feel any distress at all if your decision is the best one?

According to Nozick, most people would not "plug in" – most people would choose to stay in reality. It follows that something else than experience matters to us; that we value something other than the internal aspects of pleasure. Our resistance to plugging in to the experience machine seems to show that a connection with reality must be valuable and that pleasure is not the only thing of intrinsic value. Hence, the argument goes, ethical hedonism is false.

Most proponents of the experience machine objection to hedonism understand the thought experiment to isolate a prudential value comparison between reality and how

that all that determines whether and to what degree my life is going well is my experience, or how things seem or feel to me 'from the inside', that all that contributes directly to the value of my life is my experience, seems to me to be quite plausible. When such mental state theorists insist that all that matters is experience, their intended contrast is between what is inside and what is outside our heads, rather than an externally generated string of mind



stuff on the one hand, and a structured and ongoing inner life on the other hand. The idea is that nothing can have intrinsic value if it does not affect someone.

But, surely, we don't want to believe in an illusion? Surely, our experiences must be 'bound up' with reality in the right way? Having true beliefs about reality might be intrinsically valuable, but what is at issue is whether it contributes to the value of my life and to my life going well. How having such beliefs is somehow good for us remains mysterious.

7



Christian Democracy is one of the key ideas that shaped post-war Europe. Much has been written about the people, places and events that formed this epoch. However, there is scant literature on the ideals that underpinned some of these developments.

There are some valid reasons behind this. Unlike the other dominant ideas of the 20th century, Christian Democracy has no big theory, no big book and no grand narrative. It is best described as a set of principles or ideas rather than an ideology. It is hard to pigeonhole in the left-right political spectrum. It is mostly a form of inoffensive centrism which has, thus, drawn support (and criticism) from both the left and the right.

Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution

As with many other political ideas, Christian Democracy is a result of, and a reaction to, the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. The Enlightenment attempted to create a society governed by the principles of reason. Wrongly believing that faith was incompatible with reason, attempts were made to push religion out of public life. The Industrial Revolution led to a seismic shift in social relations, uprooting masses of people from the countryside into cities where new opportunities could be found. Capital now determined social ties.

The Catholic response was initially one of condemnation. This was undoubtedly worsened by the capture of Rome and the loss of the Papal States, the suppression of religious orders, the takeover of various Catholic schools and the confiscation of property. For Catholics in good standing,

THE CHRISTIAN DE THAT SHAPED M

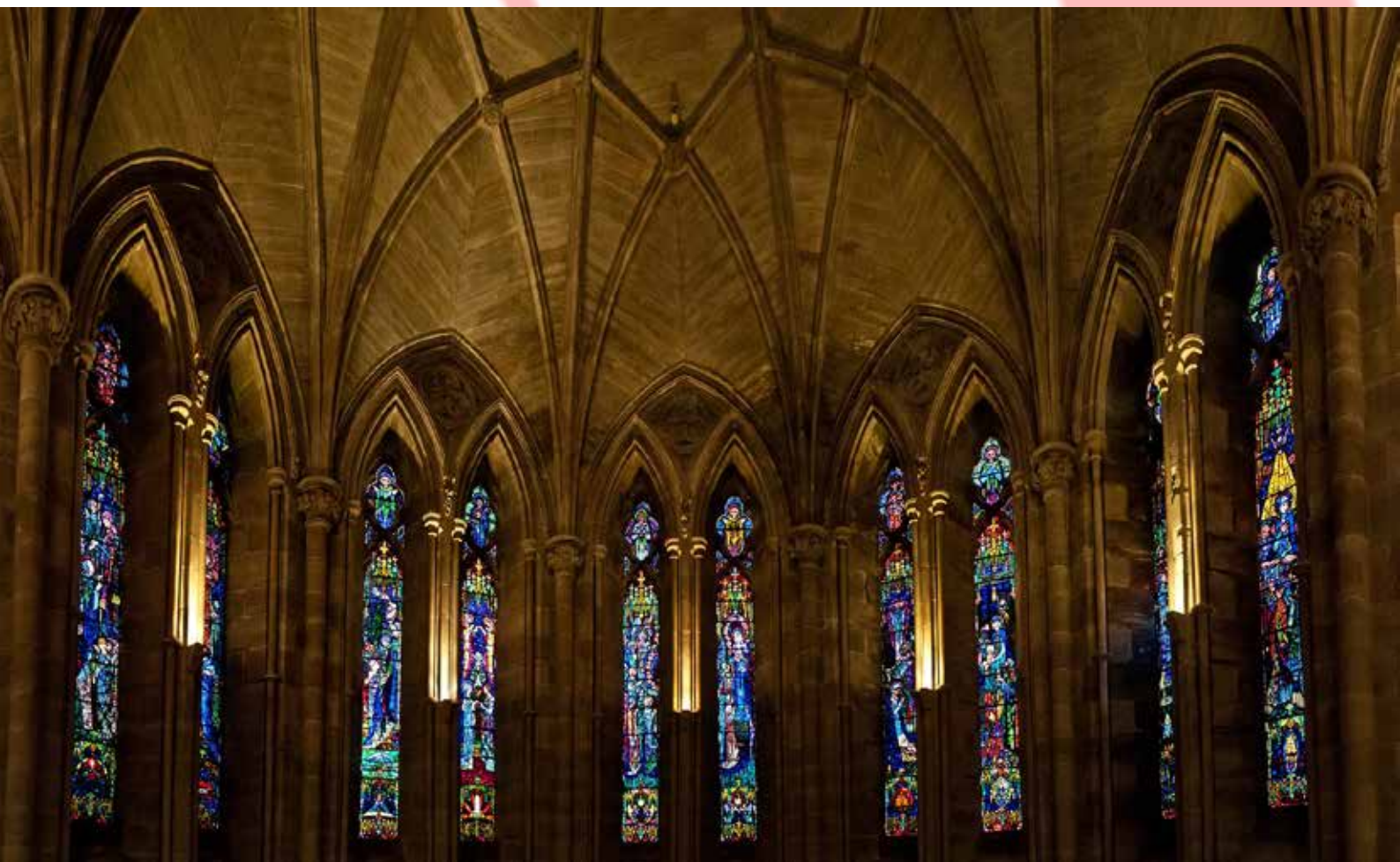
to take part in public life was initially seen as a form of collaborationism with the new emerging world order.

The Rerum Novarum

There was, however, a great need for the Church to address some of the developments occurring during the late nineteenth century. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII issued the groundbreaking encyclical *Rerum Novarum* – on the conditions of labour. It reiterated and introduced concepts which would later be considered central tenets of the Christian Democratic ideals.

Firstly, there's the centrality of the common good and the need to work for a more just society. Leo XIII writes: "all citizens, without exception, can and ought to contribute to that common good in which individually share so profitably to themselves."

Secondly, there is a consistent criticism of both socialism and capitalism. The State, "must not absorb the individual or the family; both should be allowed free and untrammelled action so far as is consistent with the common good and the interest of others." Nonetheless, the State is forced to intervene to provide for "the remedy of the evil or the removal of the mischief."



DEMOCRATIC IDEALS MODERN EUROPE

by Maarten van Doorn

Thirdly, private property is praised and encouraged since this could help the working classes in bridging the gulf between wealth and poverty, increasing worker productivity and halting economic migration.

Fourthly, workmen's associations (more akin to medieval trade guilds rather than modern trade unions) and Catholic associations are encouraged. These factors begin to open the path to the broader participation of Catholics in public life.

The Human Person at the centre of a Just Society

The tension over what role governments should take lies at the heart of the Christian Democratic ideal. The French Catholic philosopher, Jacques Maritain (1882 – 1973), shows a general contempt for an interventionist state, however, he speaks of the need for state intervention in favour of 'the common good' whenever industrial capitalism fails.

Eventually, two tenets came to define and describe Christian Democracy – subsidiarity and solidarity. Subsidiarity ensures that decisions are taken at a level closer to the citizen. Thus, the central government should not perform a role when the local government would serve the citizen better. Solidarity acknowledges that we live in a society and we are, thus, connected to our neighbours through our shared living space.

At the heart of Christian Democracy is the understanding that every member of a society is a human person, rather than an individual. This distinction is not merely linguistic; the term 'individual', often used by liberal thinkers, points to a rather impersonal and narrow understanding of humanity. Moreover, in an ever-increasing materialistic society, the 'individual' is often understood to be a mere 'consumer'. By contrast, the term 'human person' attempts to see the person in their whole totality and complexity, beyond their purchasing power or their productive output.

The Christian Democratic Parties of the Twentieth Century

Christian Democratic parties began to crystallise in the

early decades of the twentieth century. By 1905, even the anti-modernist Pope Pius X realised that there might be a case for the participation of Catholics in democratic politics mainly since such involvement could prevent the election of subversive candidates. The Vatican reversed its non expedit policy in 1918.

In 1919, the Italian Popular Party was founded by Don Luigi Sturzo (1871 – 1959) and became an important political force in Italy. The German Centre Party was equally instrumental in the Weimar Republic. However, the rise of Fascism and Nazism led to a quick reversal of fortunes for these parties. Some folded while others took the ignominious route of collaboration.

The post-war era reignited interest in Christian Democracy. The victorious Allies regarded these parties as reliable allies who could form administrations which act as bulwarks against Communism. Christian Democratic statesmen were also instrumental in kick-starting the European Economic Community – the precursor of the modern-day European Union. This was partly possible because of the lack of a coherent 'theory of the nation'



within Christian Democracy.

As the threat of communism receded, Christian Democracy suffered a brief decline. Much of its recent success is due to its accommodation of various neo-liberal policies in the field of economics and its adoption of various socially-liberal causes such as abortion and same-sex marriage. Whether this will guarantee continuity into the future remains to be seen. The rise of populism shows that, unless Christian Democratic parties rediscover their roots, their days could be numbered.

Maarten van Doorn is a PhD candidate in philosophy at the Central European University and writes a practical philosophy blog on Medium.

The Art of Simple Living

Interview by
Marta Obiols Fornell

Do you remember the story of Diogenes of Sinope and Alexander the Great? Something similar happened to us during our first informal interview for the Magazine Share. The legend says that one morning while Diogenes was absorbed in his thoughts, soaking the sun outside the gymnasium in the outskirts of Corinth, Alexander the Great arrived to meet the man himself, having heard of his wisdom that by then had become famous beyond the Ionian sea. Alexander introduced himself to Diogenes saying “I am Alexander the Great” and Diogenes replied “And I am Diogenes the dog”. Diogenes was not afraid of talking like that to Alexander, because if he was a good man, he thought, where is the problem? The king was so amazed that he offered Diogenes anything he wished. Diogenes answered: “Yes, stand a little out of my sun”. At the end Alexander said that if he were not Alexander, he would have liked to be Diogenes.

From now on, we will attempt to interview non-academic people who have something to say about how to live life in an alternative, non-mainstream, fashion, especially, those who have decided to part from the merry-go-round of life and go their own way.

In Gozo, we all know Patrick Grima. He usually sits at San George’s Square, basking in the sun and watching the world go by. He keeps long grey hair and a white beard, and he always seems to be happy, gracing passers-by with a warm, friendly smile and an occasional hello. Patrick always stays in the company of his sweet little dog “Keegan”. He gladly and kindly accepted to be interviewed for Share Magazine as we shared a coffee and a chat with him in one of the cafes at his favorite square.

Share Magazine: Where were you born?

Patrick Grima: I was born in Gozo and I lived here, in Victoria, all my life.

SM: Are you a pensioner?

PG: Yes, now I am retired.

SM: Did you marry?

PG: No marriage, I wanted to be free.

SM: What did you do for your living?

PG: I had a governmental job. I was cleaning roads, streets, toilets, etc.

SM: Did you study?

PG: No, I finished school when I was 11 and then I started to work as a conductor in the buses. After that, when I turned 18, I got the job as a cleaner. I never learned how to write.



Patrick being interviewed by Marta for Share magazine.

SM: Would you have liked to go to university and visit other countries?

PG: No, I didn’t have money.

SM: We found out that you were the mayor of Victoria.

PG: Yes, I was a councillor, in 1994.

SM: How did you end up being a councillor?

PG: People voted me in. In the book of records I am the most voted councilor in Gozo and Malta. I kept my job as a cleaner while participating in council meetings with the aim of improving the village.

SM: What was your role there? Did you belong to a party?

PG: No, I was independent. I was there in the name of hard rock.

SM: What do you think it is important to improve in our society?

PG: The cleaning of the public spaces, the dirt that comes with the trees and birds.

[Editor’s note: Many would agree with what Patrick is implicitly saying here, or rather not saying but can intuit at some level: That cleaning up and changing our society at large starts from taking one simple and humble step. A broom in hand and cleaning up the physical spaces quite literally!]

SM: Are you afraid of something in life?

PG: Yes, I am afraid of mice and cockroaches.

SM: Are you happy?

PG: Yes, I am a happy man.

SM: What makes you happy?

PG: To Sing. I was a singer. All my family was involved in music. I did concerts in Gozo and in Malta. I recorded an album too.

SM: Do you sing nowadays?

PG: No.

SM: What do you do?

PG: During the day I stay at the square with my dog.

SM: What do you think it is important in life?

PG: Take a coffee and do nothing.

SM: What would you like in general?

PG: Now, to be alone with my dog.

SM: Do you believe in God?

PG: Yes, I do.

SM: What do you think happen after life?

PG: I am a Christian, I believe in Heaven.

SM: If you would be reborn, what would you like to do?

PG: The same, I would do the same: sing and few work. My passion is music. Would you like to write down some of my lyrics?

SM: Of course!

Searching for you.

Walking, searching for you. But I am always missing you. Looking sad, I am feeling mad. I need

you baby. I am so glad living baby and living in sin. Though it's bad, it's what I mean. Living baby, living it's hard for me. So keep your distance from attending me.

Think of me

Think of me, oh please think of me. Remember me, was in a while. Promise me, please promise me, you tried. You found love and now take the heart away. Be free, be free. If you ever find, do, please, think of me sometimes. Be free, be free.

Sing a song to me

Asleep I sing to you. You dream of happiness. It sings inside my heart for nightly stress. I call to me so loud make your hours here, but you drove back your face because I am fear. So sing a song to me. You speaking call my name and make your hours here because I am fear.

It was not easy, at the beginning, to handle the interview since his answers were very short and brief. However, when we started to talk about music, things changed completely and Patrick got passionate, remembering the songs he wrote and how much music means to him. Singing rock, cleaning the streets and becoming a councilor... quite an amazing story! Thanks a lot Patrick, what a pleasure to be next to a happy man with his own musicality!



Patrick Grima and 'Keegan' the dog

Rites of Passage, the Changing Self and the Future of Humanity

by Gilbert Ross



Whether we fight it or embrace it with a pinch of wisdom and grace, the only thing that remains a constant in our life is change itself. Our biology, with our changing and ageing bodies, is a first-hand experience that nothing really stays the same and everything is in constant flux. As we experience key developmental milestones, we come to the alienating realization that our physical shell is permanently changing in a very impermanent universe. Life seems to be a constant rite of passage.

Our relationship with change is not only biological but also psychological and social. As we go through major stages in life, we feel that certain changes have been unexpectedly dropped on our heads while others are more transitional and longer-term such as for instance parenthood, switching career paths, changing family relations, and so on. Some other changes even span beyond the narrative of an individual life history and enter into the collective—the trans-personal or trans-generational aspect of social life. For instance, the state of the environment, leaps in technology, shifting political landscapes, cultural transformations, etc., are all silent game changers that influence us both collectively and individually.

The Alchemical Process of the Changing Self

When you look closer at it, these natural cycles of life have a common denominator—the self. The natural rhythms of change are really a story about the self. It is paradoxical in a way since the self is both the witness of these changes as much as it is the real subject of change. There is both an element of continuity and transformation. It is an opportunity

for an alchemical process (if we dare take the challenge) wherein we shed away and breakthrough our old identities of self as it unfolds and morphs into something new. It is a process of individuation—shedding off the unnecessary identifications and approaching closer to a more authentic version of the Self. It is also holotropic, to use a term coined by Stanislov Grof, since it moves from a fragmented version of self towards one that is more whole and integrated.

This is one of the reasons why tribal cultures give so much importance to formalizing rites of passage in a ceremonial setting such as for instance the initiation into manhood. Rites of passage are an important thread in the tapestry of communal life because they weave a trans-generational story that both glues the community together while imprinting a non-verbal lesson in the psyche of its members. It is a self-regulating mechanism that both allows the individual to relate to the changing self and to keep the balance (and sanity) of the community at large. Most of all, it is meant to guide the initiated to be an adept in the changing currents of life and to be given the intimation that life is constantly changing and we must let go of our old-world identification to embrace a brave new world full of uncertainty and impermanence.

Embracing the Crisis

Unfortunately, in our modern-day world we do not have many formalized rites of passage, at least not in any ceremonial setting or in any direct sense. I dare say that this is perhaps why so many people feel lost or in crisis when

Image under Creative Commons license





Image under Creative Commons license

facing crucial y-points in life and this, in turn, effects all of us at a social level and the state of our world at large.

Crises are not a bad thing per se. All meaningful change happens through a crisis of some sort. It's only how we deal with crisis that requires scrutiny. In the absence of codified instructions such as those found in rites of passage or initiations, we have this choice to make: We open our ears and hearts to our ancestral wisdom without reinventing the wheel or find some other modality to channel us through the tumultuous passages of life both individually and collectively as a species.

“Exploration is misguided. The future of humanity hinges upon one single enterprise—inner exploration. Novelty is not a necessity but an emergency.”

Inner Exploration & Reorienting our World

So now the question is: where should we be looking for answers?

The short answer to such a question is within ourselves. The future has always been uncertain to humans in all epochs of history. The difference in present times is that this feeling is blown out of proportions because of the exponential rate of change, increasing world crises and most of all because we are looking for answers outside of ourselves. Unless we get conscious of this pattern, more attempts will be futile just like digging holes in water.

We need to shift our perspective, but more importantly our orientation, from outward looking to inward searching. Exploration is misguided. The future of humanity hinges upon one single enterprise—inner exploration. Novelty is not a necessity but an emergency.

The Truth is Not Out There

We dug holes in the earth, sent probes to the farthest reaches of our solar system, cracked a few codes, and pried on the inner workings of matter. It's about time we realise that it's not about seeking some holy grail on the outskirts of our physical space but in the innermost sacred chambers of our being. You see, sages have been harping on this for ages if we cared listening a little bit harder.

Science and technology are great and the mind is a wonderful tool but the truth does not follow from projecting and externalising it to our external world. It's just not there. Period. And by truth I mean the intrinsic arcane knowledge of who we really are, our purpose (individual or collective) and our role in creating and shaping our future. The mind with all its beautiful creations will not take you there.

We need to start living less in our heads and tune into our feelings and intuitions more often. It would make us take so much less for granted—to rely less on conventional and consensual knowledge, the institutions, authoritative figures, approval by others and cultural norms. The result would be living a life that is more authentically human—less muddled with half-baked ‘truths’ which we were spoon-fed rather than coming out from inner exploration and honest self-enquiry guided by time-tested rites of passage.

This is not idealism. This is real, practical and achievable if we are to get out of our collective death-wish anytime soon.

Gilbert Ross is editor of the Share Magazine. He has studied Philosophy at the University of London and University of Malta. He is a researcher, blogger and writer for several online media sites and publications.

by Oshan Jarow



Or, consider the female praying mantis, who eats the skull of her male partner during sex. In a remarkable display of perseverance, the male keeps thrusting while she chomps.

What's going on here? This is philosophy's old question, of course. How to live in a world where a wide enough survey of the land ruptures any sense we may cling to. Things are completely mad. In multiple observed cases, the male mantis truly carries on his sexual performance while his head is being consumed!

So too did Nietzsche, followed by the postmodernists, chew the head off God. Where next to turn for support? My hope is that we find no God, no institution. That we're left emphatically alone with ourselves and the world. What might we find?

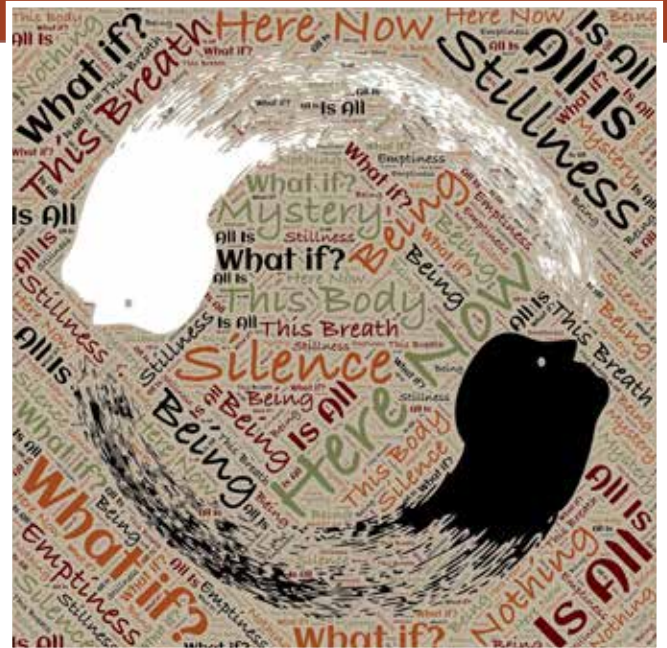
Deep within that inmost terrain of commonality between us, I propose there runs a familiar, albeit submerged, sensation of bewilderment. Where we formerly turned to God, or more recently capitalism, to mitigate our perplexity and guide conduct, an earnest sensory exploration of our innate bewilderment may unearth not only personal revelation—Emerson's original relation to the Universe—but universal principles to fill the void left by the postmodern takedown of universals.

Annie Dillard describes this sensation as a power, a force:

“What do we ever know that is higher than that power which, from time to time, seizes our lives, and reveals us startlingly to ourselves as creatures set down here bewildered?”

This power, universal as it may be, lies at the bottom of personal experience. As the prolific diarist Anaïs Nin notes, if we probe ourselves deep enough, what begins as an individual path wanders into the communal:

“The personal, if it is deep enough, becomes universal, mythical, symbolic; I never generalize, intellectualize. I see, I hear, I feel. These are my primitive instruments of discovery.” (*The Diary of Anaïs Nin, Volume Four*)



Plumbing the personal to unearth the universal was also among James Joyce's triumphs in *Ulysses*. He brought to light the subsurface stream of consciousness, a deeply private experience pursued to the point of generality.

Is this stream of consciousness not the shared substrate of private experience? Does it not offer the universality that postmodernists declared is radically absent?

By default, our lives are the experience of this stream. Through it we receive everything—stimuli of the outer world and unconscious influences from the interior. We ride its surface. A prime question of philosophy, then, is whether or not anything can be done about this. Can we introduce a degree of separation between the stream and our experience, so as to inspect the stream itself? Are we confined to the surface, with its accumulated debris, or are there penetrable depths?

Such a departure from surface debris is how Annie Dillard stoked her bewilderment:

“The world’s spiritual geniuses seem to discover universally that the mind’s muddy river, this ceaseless flow of trivia and trash, cannot be dammed, and that trying to dam it is a waste of effort that might lead to madness. Instead, you must allow the muddy river to flow unheeded in the dim channels of consciousness; you must raise your sights; you look along it, mildly, acknowledging its presence without interest and gazing beyond it into the realm of the real where

subjects and objects act and rest purely, without utterance.” (*Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*)

But where Dillard dismisses the mind’s river altogether, I wonder if the realm she gazes upon ‘beyond’ is actually below. I doubt whether there’s anywhere else for us to live than within our own streams of consciousness; it’s all we can know. Life becomes a question of depth.

[...]

Juxtaposed with this rosy portrait of submerging via attentive stillness are those struggling at the surface, for whom mildly observing life is a laughable suggestion. Drowning occurs out of compulsion, when one’s experience in the stream of consciousness is a struggle for survival. Here, there’s little interest in exploring the depths below. We’re propelled by a sense of urgency to flail our arms and grab whatever nearby debris offers a modicum of support.

So when asking what’s going on here, how best to navigate the given world, how can we hope to figure things out without a moment to look around? It’s too easy to never see past the struggle of keeping afloat.

Inevitably, this evokes the overgrown capitalist ethos and its emerging attention economy, so deeply entwined with how we live that philosophy and politics are shoved together.

What might help fill the postmodern abyss and reclaim our bewilderment—and this would be an evolutionarily

unprecedented feat—is a degree of assured livelihood, like a modest raft, calming the waters, allowing us to explore the given world from a standpoint of freedom, rather than compulsion. Is this too utopian, even with today’s exponential gains in technology, productivity, and wealth?

To such ideals, Dillard cautions:

“Wherever we go, there seems to be only one business at hand—that of finding workable compromises between the sublimity of our ideas and the absurdity of the fact of us.”

Whether the proposal is absurd or sublime, I don’t know. Philosophy often bridges the two. We can construct those rafts with universal basic income proposals. Education reform can center around honing, not atrophying attention. Give as much place and reverence to what remains unknown as we do the known. Imagine public schools of telescopes and meditation cushions!

Nevertheless, philosophy’s perennial teaching is that the work to be done is, first and foremost, in the stream of consciousness occurring here and now. Breathe, sleep, stretch, and eat. Sharpen attention, look around, and never tire from the view. There is little else philosophy requires to bring on a new paradigm.

Oshan Jarow is interested in many things, like consciousness, meditation, & economics. He’s sure of nothing, like how to exist well, or play the saxophone. He lives in Kingston, New York, and writes at www.MusingMind.org.



Post-colonial identity and collective memory

by Charles Xuereb

Collective memory is held to be a collection of traces left by the events that have affected the course of the history of the group concerned, and that it is accorded the power to place on stage these common memories, on the occasion of holidays, rites and public celebrations.’ This succinct definition of collective consciousness by Paul Ricoeur, one of France’s foremost philosophers on the subject of collective memory and identity highlights the role of the public sphere in contemporary society. In his last milestone contribution on the subject of memory, history and forgetting, Ricoeur deals with the problem of blocked memory a community could suffer when its own history is marred by dominating props – be it monuments, effigies or architectural memorials – erected as a result of manipulated memory and distortion. He labels this blocking as *une maladie historique*. He also asks whether history is a remedy for or a hindrance to these problems. The question is to what extent history depends on memory.

According to another French academician, historian Pierre Nora ‘today’s society is in a transitional stage, during which there is a breakdown of the connection to a lived nation-specific, identity-forming past.’ In the knowledge that the facts of history are nothing without interpretation one is summoned to investigate and analyse mnemonic media products – both text and memorials – to help liberate the shackles of colonialism and perhaps look to the future with brightness of responsibility in accepting the ‘true’ past.

Nora does not believe history is synonymous to memory. ‘Memory is life... It remains in permanent evolution... History is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete. Memory is always actual;

history, a representation of the past... Memory is naturally multiple and yet specific, collective, pluralistic and yet individualized...takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects. History binds itself only to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things. Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative.’

It takes much more than this limited space to discuss the study of collective memory now found in the contemporary human, natural, and cultural sciences, ‘encompassing hermeneutics, the neurocognitive, and sociohistorical disciplines’. In a world of pluriversality emanating from ‘decolonial quarrels’, it is no wonder that memory and identity are taking centre stage on new perspectives of colonial times, now considered as criminal actions by certain scholars of past imperial powers. In 2017 London Mayor Sadiq Khan has called for the British government to make



a “full and formal” apology for the 1919 Amritsar massacre.

High percentages of educated societies in a number of ex-colonies, including Malta, still cast ‘Britain’s empire as a great moral achievement, and its collapse as an act of casual generosity’, therefore perpetuating their perception of their colonial past as a positive experience, sanctioning imperial criminal activity from organized looting to cultural annihilation. Worst still in a world where communities are scrutinizing past foreign monuments of oppression and propaganda, post-Independence local state authorities bask in a public space, including memorials and symbols that threaten national identity through their very contention.

Are the Maltese, as ethnologist Marc Augé suggests, thinking of their identity when reconstituting their public places? Are they correctly evaluating the substance of colonial times? Should the monument scape of the Island’s capital strive to strike a balance between the colonial past and republican citizenship?

As early as the 19th century, Maltese migrants to North Africa in search for a better and secure livelihood left their native British colony as they felt dejected by their own homeland. As Claude Liauzu observed between 1825 and 1885, these migrants ‘felt they were in fact very feeble subjects of His Majesty as they did not mind French naturalisation and their predisposition to mixed marriages in Algeria was stronger than that of the French, the Italians and the Spanish. This showed slight binding to their native country. They had left their homeland because of little British



investment in Malta thus producing no job opportunities.’

British hegemony had robbed them of their native identity, seeding the dilemma Maltese society faces today as an independent nation.



The Tool & Machinery Experts

WHAT WE DO PROFESSIONALLY.
C & C Technik is one of the leading tool importers, wholesalers and distributors in Malta and Gozo. The company presently has two recognized tool centre outlets on the island. We are distributors of leading European brands. We strive to provide the best **quality, reliability, commitment and professionalism.**

		
		RHODIUS
		
		
		
		
	FESTOOL	DUSS

ST. VENERA, CANNON ROAD. Tel: 21498640



MOSTA, CONSTITUTION STREET. Tel: 21423317



Buddhism's Two Truths in the Discussion of Human Difference

By Michaela Maxwell

In discussions of human difference, such as race, gender, and other individual variations, I've found that well-intentioned people tend toward one of two distinct approaches. Either we frame conversations in a way that positions differences as ontologically 'true' and fixed, or we choose to disregard our differences in favor of a notion of 'shared humanity' which overshadows individual characteristics. The Buddhist understanding of 'conventional' and 'ultimate' truth has been of use to me in such conversations, as it illuminates the possibility that phenomena can be simultaneously real and illusory, offering a balance between otherwise binary approaches. By framing our discussions of difference with these two truths, I believe we can more accurately reflect the nature of human difference. Although I cannot do justice here to the concepts of conventional and ultimate reality in their full philosophical context, I wish to outline these terms and briefly share how we might use them to talk about our differences in a way that honors individuals' experiences without losing sight of our connectedness.

First, I should briefly state the advantages and shortcomings of the aforementioned approaches. In the first, where ontological weight is given to characteristics, one advantage is that this allows difference to be distinctly celebrated, as is seen in Pride parades, for example. Yet, as long as we believe in fixed categories, not only can this cause communication difficulties and fear between groups that feel separated from each other, but there will also always be individuals who do not fit any of the available categories, no matter how meticulously we define them. The second approach is rooted in the notion that race, gender, and other such differences are myths that have prospered due to their political expediency throughout history, and that for the sake of progress and unity we should let go of these myths. One problem with this approach is that it opens doors for seemingly innocent claims such as the claim of 'color blindness,' which, however well-meaning, ignores the fact that our society still divides people based on the color of their skin. How can someone who claims to be 'color-blind' truly empathize with and help to combat these problems? I have seen people with equally good intentions argue over which approach to discussions of difference lends itself to an equal future for all. Should we talk about difference as 'real' or as 'illusory'? Which is more accurate? I believe it is neither, and both, the answer lies somewhere in the middle.

In Buddhist philosophy, realizing the two truths/realities, conventional and ultimate, is to see through the illusory nature of experience, a crucial step on the path to enlightenment. Conventional reality describes the way in which the world

appears to us. Although there can be valid and invalid cognition, conventional reality is illusory -- or deceptive -- in that things appear to us as having intrinsic existence, when in fact no independent phenomena exist. Instead, phenomena are dependent upon conditions. We can think of the example of fire, which does not exist as a thing in itself but depends upon oxygen, fuel, and so on. So, it is not that things, such as fire, do not exist, but that they do not have intrinsic essence. The term 'emptiness' in Buddhism, therefore, describes the notion that phenomena are conventionally true.

Ultimate truth in Buddhist philosophy describes how objects and life are understood non-conceptually, once the conventional nature of phenomena is realized. From the 'standpoint' of ultimate reality, phenomena are not reified as having inherent existence. In this way, the self, and attributes of the self - such as race, gender, and so on- are understood as empty of intrinsic existence. The conceptual dissolution of conventional reality is meant to help individuals let go of our attachments to the illusory ways in which we view the world. In this way, human attributes such as 'race' and





‘gender,’ although conventionally real are be ultimately empty.

Still, it is important to understand that ultimate truth and its realization do not negate conventional truth, which works to explain the causes and effects of daily life. In fact, third century Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna argued that conventional and ultimately reality are tied to each other. For one, conventional reality functions as such because it is ultimately empty and reliant upon conditions. If phenomena, for example, were not empty of inherent existence they could not be connect to each other because intrinsically existing, static things cannot interact or change. Moreover, conventional truth and language are tools by which we might realize ultimate truth. Nagarjuna argued in his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* that the two truths are different and yet the same. He argued that ultimate reality, which describes the emptiness of intrinsic existence, is in itself empty. Not only is it empty because it is itself a concept described in empty language, but because if it describes all phenomena as empty, it cannot be its own exception.

Nagarjuna explains that to be empty is to exist conventionally, and to exist conventionally is to be empty. The first part of this claim explains the way in which our understanding of emptiness is dependent upon conditions (language, concepts, etc), and the second reiterates what was explained, that conventional reality is empty. The importance of Nagarjuna’s argument for the emptiness of emptiness is that he eliminates the separation between conventional and ultimate reality. By positing emptiness as conventional, he

disproves the notion of ultimate truth as a standpoint, and asserts that all views are but conventionally true, because views, themselves dependent, can only exist conventionally. Additionally, there are no objects to ‘know’ ultimately. The notion of ultimate truth should not lead to essentialism but is merely a tool for the negation of conventional truth, which is also the only truth that we can know.

Through the framework of conventional and ultimate truth, individual attributes and the differences we carve out of them can be understood as empty of intrinsic existence. Yet, their conventional reality alone gives our differences weight. I believe that seeing our differences as both ultimately empty but conventionally real, we can spark more effective conversations, in which we remind ourselves and our audiences of the relevant truth at the relevant moment. There are times in which it may be more effective to remind ourselves of the palpable, conventional truths that spark discrimination, differences which will always be conventionally visible, and there are times in which we need to remind ourselves that in the end our differences are illusory. By adopting the terms of conventional and ultimate reality, we ensure that these two assertions are not contradictory, by acknowledging that difference is both real and illusory.

Michaela Targhetta Maxwell earned her BA from Middlebury College in Vermont and is Associate Editor for the blog of the American Philosophical Association. Her main interests are in ancient Buddhist philosophy and its concrete applications to social issues.



Philosophical ideas can have extensive and profound practical impact. This has been as true in American history as it has been for any other culture. In the American case there are several philosophical themes that underlie distinctive and influential aspects of American culture. On this occasion I would like to focus briefly on five of them, discuss their intellectual origins and meaning, and explore a bit how they have in the past and today influenced American society, politics, and culture generally. The five topics to be considered are exceptionalism, individualism, community, rights, and pragmatism.

What is commonly referred to in American political culture as ‘American exceptionalism’ may be the most influential of the underlying philosophical and ideological concepts. The idea, basically, is that Americans typically consider their country to have a special, unique, indeed exceptional, place in relation to all other countries. This idea was expressed early in American history when at the founding of one of the early English colonies, the leader of the colonists, John Winthrop, said in a sermon to his followers that ‘...we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of the world are upon us...’. Winthrop was of course referring to his Puritan settlement, but the idea has been applied to the US generally since its founding. To this day, Americans believe their country to be a model for all others. The reference to the US as ‘a city upon a hill’ is often used by politicians in speeches, and during the Clinton administration in the 1990s, the Secretary of State Madeline Albright referred to the US as ‘the indispensable nation.’

During his administration Barack Obama tried to temper this enthusiasm a bit by saying that all countries are special in their own ways. The backlash was so strong that Obama was compelled to reverse himself and say that of course all countries are special, but the US is, in the end, exceptionally so. The power of this concept is critical to understanding contemporary American society, culture, and behavior.

Two of the other key concepts in American culture are the individual and the community, and in the American case they are best understood in the context of their sometimes conflicting relation with one another. The importance of the individual has been a prominent theme since the earliest days of American history. Many of the early colonists were Protestant dissidents who asserted their right to an individual relation to God independent of the Church, especially the Roman and Anglican Churches. A similar emphasis on the individual’s entitlements against the State are enshrined in the first ten amendments to the US Constitution. And the centrality of the individual has been appealed to repeatedly in the context of popular struggles for civil rights and other social justice movements of the past century. Despite its centrality though, the influence of the belief in the importance of the individual has always been in tension with the equally central idea of the necessity of the community, in one form or another. The early Puritans who asserted their individual relation to God and their independence from the Church also insisted on the preeminence of their own congregations against individual conscience. Members of the 17th century Puritan communities who disagreed with their leaders’

actions were ostracized and occasionally driven out of the communities entirely.

This tension between the individual and the community has played a role throughout American history, and it continues to do so. Today, for example, there are newly energized debates about the legitimate extent of free speech, especially in universities. There are individuals now who wish to use universities to defend ideas, for example the idea of white supremacism, that others find not only offensive but indeed threatening to their well-being. The tension is whether the individual's interest in expressing his opinion is or is not more important than the community's interest, in this case a university, in defending its values and the interests of its members.

Debates such as this often take the form of a discussion of rights, specifically 'human' or 'natural' rights. This, too, has deep roots in American culture, particularly in the American expression of the 18th Century Enlightenment. One of the founding documents of the American nation, and one taken very seriously indeed to this day, is the Declaration of Independence, written and passed by the Continental Congress in 1776, which offered a justification for the colonies' break from the British Parliament and Crown. That document contains

all Americans learn – “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men...”

In other words, not only are such rights, and there is disagreement about what those rights are, given by God (or nature) itself, but their defense is the very reason government exists. This is as profound a

statement of the importance of human rights as one could imagine, and it is not surprising that the language of 'rights' infuses Americans' debates about many things. We argue about States' rights against the power of the federal government, and individual rights, and civil rights, and rights to marriage equality, and animal rights, and just about everything else.

These are all examples of the power of ideas to shape

debate, policy, and history itself. That ideas like these are central to American culture is often surprising to people because Americans are considered to be a highly 'pragmatic' people, in the sense of being practical rather than theoretical people. There is some truth to this, but the distinction is probably exaggerated. As it happens, the most influential and distinctive branch of philosophy to emerge from American culture is itself called 'Pragmatism'. The idea, basically, is not that theory and ideas are unimportant, but that theory and ideas must remain grounded in our experience, and that their meaning and value resides in their impact in experience. This is a philosophical tradition that arose in the late 19th century, primarily at Harvard University, and it remains very much alive and influential to this day.

When we consider, as we have briefly done here, the way ideas and concepts have arisen from American experience and the ways they impact such experience, one can see that the pragmatist philosophers not only have a point about the importance of practice in relation to theory, but that their point helps to illuminate features of American experience itself. One has to say, though, that in this respect there is nothing exceptional about America. Every culture and every nation exists in a conceptual context, whether it is recognized and understood or not.



John Ryder is Provost and Professor of Philosophy at the American University of Malta. He is the author of two monographs - *Interpreting America: Russian and Soviet Studies of the History of American Thought* (1999) and *The Things in Heaven and Earth: An Essay in Pragmatic Naturalism* (2013), nearly 100 articles and book chapters, and the co-editor of several volumes dealing with American philosophy.



For the seventh season running Philosophy Sharing Foundation has prepared philosophy courses aimed at the general public and hence no qualifications or vast philosophical knowledge is needed to follow the courses.

From September 2018 to May 2019, Philosophy Sharing will offer five courses delivered by experts in their field of study. Classes are held on five consecutive Mondays from 6.30pm to 8pm at 181, Valletta Volunteer Centre, Melita Street Valletta.

Philosophical Themes in American Culture



Delivered by: Prof. John Ryder

Dates: 24 September to 22 October 2018

This series of lectures will examine several philosophical themes that underlie definitive aspects of American culture including exceptionalism, individualism, rights, pragmatism, and community whilst discussing major figures and documents in American philosophical and intellectual history from various periods, including Puritanism, the Enlightenment, Transcendentalism, Pragmatism, as well as current developments.

An introduction to Christian Democracy



Delivered by: André P. DeBattista

Dates: 12 November to 10 December 2018

This short course looks at various aspects of Christian Democracy including its development, its core ideas, its principles and values, its leading figures and its future. Deeply rooted in the social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church; however, paradoxically, it was regarded with suspicion by several Popes in the pre-war period; its appeal in some countries transcended religious divides. Some credit Christian Democracy with keeping Europe at peace in the post-War period. However, its future now seems somewhat dubious.



The Philosophy of Emotions



Delivered by: Dr. Max Cassar

Dates: 7 January to 4 February 2019

When Dr Cassar presented this theme in two short talks in 2018, there was such a good feedback that due to popular demand it will be developed further into a five-lecture course. Dr Cassar will investigate how philosophy regards emotions and feelings, how philosophers throughout the ages related to their feelings and asks if we are destined to be slaves to our emotions.



Collective Memory and identity in an ex-colony



Delivered by: Dr. Charles Xuereb

Dates: 18 February to 18 March 2019

Memory and identity are frequently discussed but not so much reflected upon to understand who we are and why we behave as we do. As regards Malta, colonialism shaped who we are and its identity with a colonial mentality, memory in public spaces occupied by foreigners and a tainted idea of how we project ourselves to the 'others'. Were our forefathers wrong? Are we a complete nation? Did the Church help or hinder? This course will try to answer these questions.



Faith and Science

Delivered by: Dr. Colette Sciberras

Dates: 8 April to 6 May 2019

The course will analyse the conceptual and historical opposition between religious faith and science while focusing in depth on the first principles of philosophy, and the way these were incorporated into modern science, divested of their traditional and religious implications. The course is intended to allow students to think more clearly about religious faith in relation to contemporary scientific understanding of the world, and to form their own conclusions about whether the two can be reconciled.



= in Maltese



= in English

Members of the Foundation, registered students and senior citizens enrol for only €15 for each course. Everyone else enrolls for €25 for each course. There is special reduction on attendance for consecutive courses as well for those who wish to become members and enrol for a course at the same time. There is no need for booking. Enrolment and payment for the course takes place on the day of the first lecture of the course. For further information e-mail philosophysharingmalta@gmail.com

philosophysharing *n e w s* m a l t a

Since the last issue of the Share magazine, the Malta branch of the Philosophy Sharing Foundation has held a couple of talks and a short course. Also in the interim period, there were a few changes that were on top of the steering committee's agenda – bringing a new editor for the Share magazine on board. In fact as from this very edition, Gilbert Ross will be the new editor and Valdeli Pereira will be helping out as deputy editor.

We are also very happy to share with our readers that Ian Rizzo, the treasurer for the Philosophy Sharing Malta, has won a competition for the magazine Philosophy Now for an essay he submitted. Well done Ian!

And now to the talks and the course. Going by chronological order, the short course by Mark Montebello was held in April and May and tackled the topic of 'The Philosophy of Jesus'. The course tried to answer questions like: 'What kind of philosopher was Jesus?' And 'What was Jesus' anthropological vision?'

Participants could appreciate better the relevance of Jesus' teachings in today's world for individuals, communities and society at large.

The course was well attended and it actually give a good insight to how Jesus viewed the world in his humanity.

On the 6th of June, Judge Dr. Toni Abela held a talk about the Spanish Civil War at the Valletta Voluntary Centre. In his talk he outlined questions of why the event came about and the repercussions it created in the aftermath. The talk was well attended.



Ms Leanne Borg delivering a talk at Luciano's Restaurant in Valletta

On the 5th of July, lecturer Leanne Borg delivered a talk titled "L-Indipendenza qerdet is-soċjeta'? Xi rwol kelli jien?" (Has independence ruined society? What was my role?).

Audience interaction proved satisfactory to the points made throughout the talk. Not only did those present corroborate with examples from their own lives, but they also were able to connect the links made with past events, to foresee how these issues might/will affect present and future generations

Here is a short description of the talk that might serve you as a preview should you wish to attend if the talk is held again in future:

"In an ever changing society, independence was a goal much longed for throughout the years. The Industrial Revolution, and the changes that it brought with it, made this possible. However, it came at a cost. For a while now, people have struggled due to the loss of identity within a community. They can no longer define themselves within society, but must look internally for answers about the self. Self-fulfillment is one of many struggles that plague modern man. Adding social media, and the technological revolution to this, people have now become all the more individualistic. Contact with others has, more often than not, been reduced to screen time. Yet, at the same time, concepts of citizenship and the importance of participating within a community have been a primary focus in sociological and political realms. So where does this leave us? This question among others was discussed during the talk given by Ms. Leanne Borg in July.



Judge Dr Toni Abela giving a talk about the Spanish Civil War at the Valletta Voluntary Centre"

philosophysharing the gozo experience

'Talking Love' and 'The Philosophy of Love' by Heiko Jörjes

Before I start to drop a few lines about Philosophy Sharing Gozo's last 'Pizza Meeting' on the philosophical aspects of 'Love', which will also be a subject for the upcoming 'Pizza Meetings', I would like to a little about the course 'The Philosophy of Jesus', held last May by Father Dr. Mark Montebello at the Volunteer Centre in Xewkija and Dr. François Mifsud's lecture 'Inclusive Religious Education' which took place at Circolo Gozitano on June 1st.

Being a Dominican priest, but also being a writer and philosopher, Dr. Montebello left the religious aspects of Jesus' teachings behind and focused on the philosophical and also secular impact of Jesus. Dr. Montebello revealed and discussed the philosophical aspects of wordings, which not only address people's religious life in itself but also the wider motifs and themes together with the major questions about human existence and the philosophical weight they carry. One can imagine, that a one month course was not intended to exhaustively give answers to the complexity of the subject but to give an give momentum to a broader examination of Jesus' teachings and life under different philosophical lenses.

Dr. François Mifsud's lecture on 'Inclusive Religious Education' took the opposite direction. As a lecturer at the University of Malta, a theologian, ethicist and social anthropologist with a focus on epistemology, his lecture dealt with the many challenges religious education and taught religion faces in modern society and schooling, while showing possible ways to address these challenges. Dr. Mifsud explicated the concepts of 'Active Thinking' and 'Passive Thinking'. To the contrary of what these terms might suggest, 'Active Thinking' refers to being taught and to learn by given hypotheses, while 'Passive Thinking' refers to the process wherein a student learns actively through experimentation and discovery, i.e. not learning by rote but by understanding context and the interrelations between objects and events. Touching upon ideas such as indifference and

indoctrination, Dr. Mifsud concluded his lecture with the awareness of 'complexification', i.e. the 'encounter with the other', the novel and unknown, questioning the solidity of the known and the self by introducing the self to the unknown and embracing it'.

The lecture was followed by a discussion and a glass of wine at 'Maji', 'The Magic Bistro', situated on the Circolo Gozitano's rooftop.

'Liebe geht durch den Magen' - 'Love passes through the stomach'^[SEP] And with this saying, the philosophical - and gastronomical - encounter with 'Love', the title 'Love on the Roof' became the subject of our monthly 'Pizza Meeting' on



Outside, pizza meeting: Mark Montebello, Christopher Bugeja, Louise Sultana, Alfred Grech, Marta Obiols, Marc Delannoy. Heiko Jörjes is

the rooftop of Circolo Gozitano, overlooking Victoria.

Enjoying a plate of homely pasta and glass of wine, or two, we had a lively discussion on the the Article 'Love in the 21st Century', published by Laura Kipnis in the New York Times Magazine in 2001. Being a motley crew with different ideas, we shared various views on questions regarding 'love's longevity', the modern idea and ideal of a 'happy love', 'passion and love' and even the question 'whether animals are capable to love their animal partner or not'. At the end of the evening we ended up with so many different views and their ramifications, that it became clear that the subject requires to be followed up at our next Pizza Meeting in July which will be held on Friday the 20th at 7.30 pm, Circolo Gozitano 'maji – The Magic Bistro'.

Feel free to join us on July 20th at Circolo Gozitano, where we will be continuing our interesting discussions and we will also touch upon 'The Metaphysics of Love' by Arthur Schopenhauer.^[SEP] You will find more information on this through the following link:

<http://www.misterjung.com/love/schopenhauer.pdf>



Francois Mifsud giving a lecture to the foundation members in Victoria, Gozo

VERONI active isotonic

Isotonic drink orange
Bez konserwantów
Preservatives free

Isotonic drink multifruit
Bez konserwantów
Preservatives free

Isotonic drink lemon
Bez konserwantów
Preservatives free

S.Trek

Contact Tel: +356 21470474 Mob: +356 79430257

S.Trek
LOGISTICS LTD

