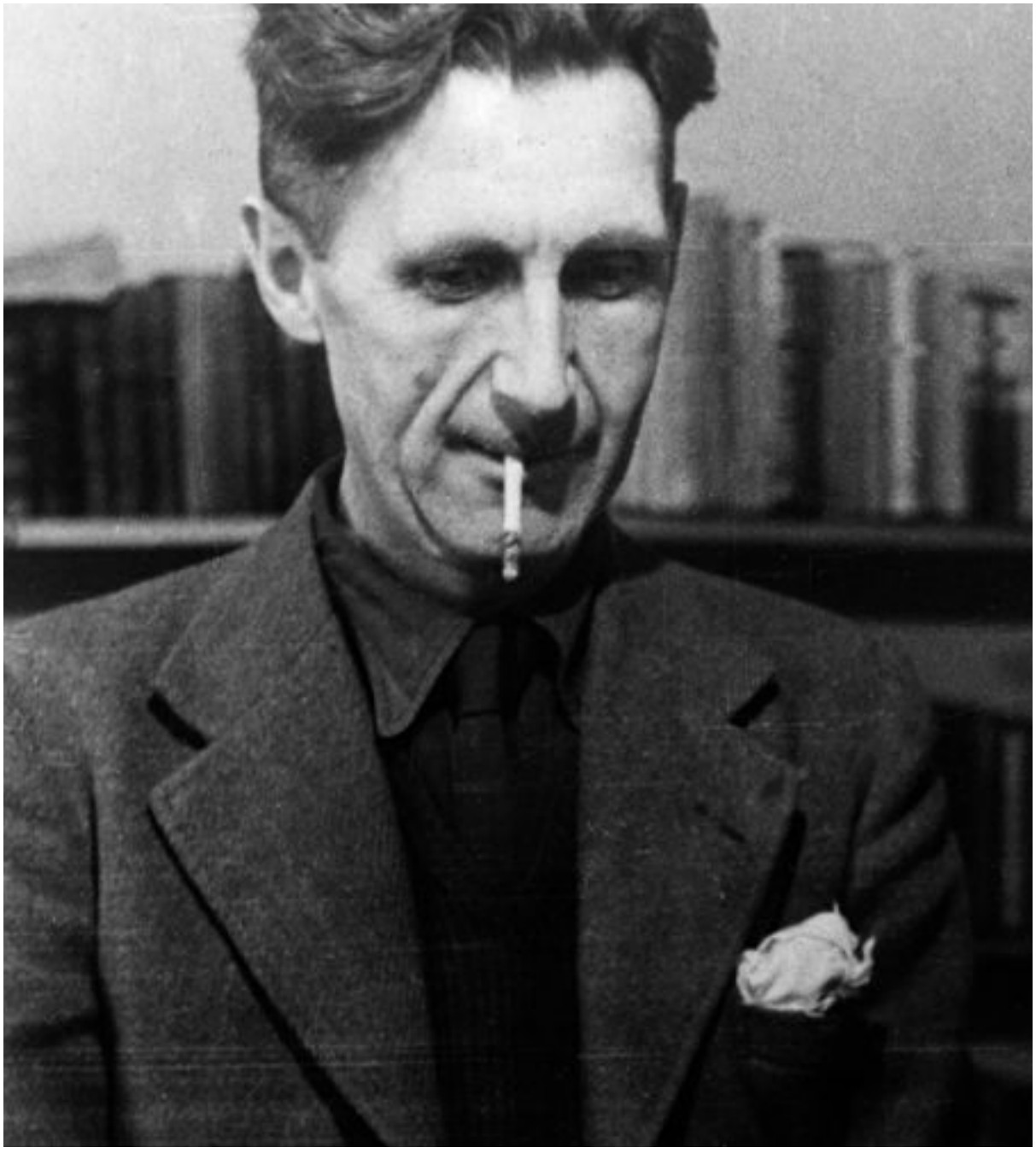
IL PONTE
BISLA
STUDENT PERIODICAL



1-2 / IL PONTE
3-5 / THE ONE WHO WALKS AWAY FROM OMELAS
6-7 / WHY GEORGE?
7 / UNIVERSALITY OF HUMAN LANGUAGE
8 / EXCHANGE STUDENTS - TILBURG
8-9 / EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT VERA PIZZA NAPOLETANA
10-11 / INTERVIEW WITH JAMES GRIFFITH

“ANYONE WHOSE GOAL IS 'SOMETHING HIGHER' MUST EXPECT SOMEDAY TO SUFFER VERTIGO. WHAT IS VERTIGO? FEAR OF FALLING? NO, VERTIGO IS SOMETHING OTHER THAN FEAR OF FALLING. IT IS THE VOICE OF THE EMPTINESS BELOW US WHICH TEMPTS AND LURES US, IT IS THE DESIRE TO FALL, AGAINST WHICH, TERRIFIED, WE DEFEND OURSELVES.”

At the beginning there was a thought.

Thought about connecting and uniting people. Not as a phrase but as a serious need and desire to bring people together and to do something real. To offer a place for everyone who feels like he got something to say. Many people are fascinated by language. Mixture of words and sentences that all together create something valuable. But what is the force behind this value? It is us. Human thought, idea, innovation and creation. It is our time and our effort we put in things that make us value something. However, even though Oscar Wilde was usually right, I cant agree with his „Art for art's sake“, because as much as any kind of human activity, there is no meaningful pleasure in things, unless you share and connect.

This is why il Ponte came to exist. We hope that this periodical can become our bridge that will connect us with different topics we find interesting and hopefully, will give you some inspiration and motivation to create and share.



Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Article 19

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION, THIS RIGHT INCLUDES FREEDOM TO HOLD OPINIONS WITHOUT INTERFERENCE AND TO SEEK, RECEIVE AND IMPART INFORMATION AND IDEAS THROUGH ANY MEDIA AND REGARDLESS

Il ponte is a student periodical of BISLA University which believes and supports The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, fights for freedom of expression, tries to enhance critical thinking and spread an interesting ideas which will stimulate student's imagination and motivate them to engage in a further discussion.

For the environmental protection and sustainability, ***Il ponte*** will be distributed and published especially in electronical format. This is because we strongly support UNEP (United Nation Environment Programme) and we agree with the promoting and raising awareness about Environmental issues and climate change.

We stand for an idea of social justice in a terms of promoting tolerance, freedom and equality for all people regardless of race, sex, orientation, national origin or handicap.
Il ponte also actively supports LGBTIQ individuals inside and outside university in their struggle for equal rights.

„IF LIBERTY MEANS ANYTHING AT ALL, IT MEANS THE RIGHT TO TELL PEOPLE WHAT THEY DO NOT WANT TO HEAR.“

-Geroge Orwell

THE ONE WHO WALKS AWAY FROM OMELAS

Ursula Le Guin

With a clamor of bells that set the swallows soaring, the Festival of Summer came to the city Omelas, bright-towered by the sea. The rigging of the boats in harbor sparkled with flags. In the streets between houses with red roofs and painted walls, between old moss-grown gardens and under avenues of trees, past great parks and public buildings, processions moved. Some were decorous: old people in long stiff robes of mauve and grey, grave master workmen, quiet, merry women carrying their babies and chatting as they walked. In other streets the music beat faster, a shimmering of gong and tambourine, and the people went dancing, the procession was a dance. Children dodged in and out, their high calls rising like the swallows' crossing flights over the music and the singing. All the processions wound towards the north side of the city, where on the great water-meadow called the Green Fields boys and girls, naked in the bright air, with mud-stained feet and ankles and long, lithe arms, exercised their restive horses before the race. The horses wore no gear at all but a halter without bit. Their manes were braided with streamers of silver, gold, and green. They flared their nostrils and pranced and boasted to one another; they were vastly excited, the horse being the only animal who has adopted our ceremonies as his own. Far off to the north and west the mountains stood up half encircling Omelas on her bay. The air of morning was so clear that the snow still crowning the Eighteen Peaks burned with white-gold fire across the miles of sunlit air, under the dark blue of the sky. There was just enough wind to make the banners that marked the racecourse snap and flutter now and then. In the silence of the broad green meadows one could hear the music winding through the city streets, farther and nearer and ever approaching, a cheerful faint sweetness of the air that from time to time trembled and gathered together and broke out into the great joyous clanging of the bells.

Joyous! How is one to tell about joy? How describe the citizens of Omelas?

They were not simple folk, you see, though they were happy. But we do not say the words of cheer much anymore. All smiles have become archaic. Given a description such as this one tends to make certain assumptions. Given a description such as this one tends to look next for the King, mounted on a splendid stallion and surrounded by his noble knights, or perhaps in a golden litter borne by great-muscled slaves. But there was no king. They did not use swords, or keep slaves. They were not barbarians. I do not know the rules and laws of their society, but I suspect that they were singularly few. As they did without monarchy and slavery, so they also got on without the stock exchange, the advertisement, the secret police, and the bomb. Yet I repeat that these were not simple folk, not dulcet shepherds, noble savages, and bland utopians. They were not less complex than us. The trouble is that we have a bad habit, encouraged by pedants and sophisticates, of considering happiness as something rather stupid. Only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting. This is the treason of the artist: a refusal to admit the banality of evil and the terrible boredom of pain. If you can't lick 'em, join 'em. If it hurts, repeat it. But to praise despair is to condemn delight; to embrace violence is to lose hold of everything else. We have almost lost hold; we can no longer describe a happy man, nor make any celebration of joy.

How can I tell you about the people of Omelas? They were not naive and happy children--though their children were, in fact, happy. They were mature, intelligent, passionate adults whose lives were not wretched. O miracle! but I wish I could describe it better. I wish I could convince you. Omelas sounds in my words like a city in a fairy tale, long ago and far away, once upon a time. Perhaps it would be best if you imagined it as your own fancy bids, assuming it will rise to the occasion, for certainly I cannot suit you all. For instance, how about technology? I think that there would be no cars or helicopters in and above the streets; this follows from the fact that the people of Omelas are happy people. Happiness is based on a just discrimination of what is necessary, what is neither necessary nor destructive, and what is destructive. In the middle category, however--that of the unnecessary but undestructive, that of comfort, luxury, exuberance, etc.--they could perfectly well have central heating, subway trains, washing machines, and all kinds of marvelous

devices not yet invented here, floating light-sources, fuelless power, a cure for the common cold. Or they could have none of that; it doesn't matter. As you like it. I incline to think that people from towns up and down the coast have been coming in to Omelas during the last days before the Festival on very fast little trains and double-decked trams, and that the train station of Omelas is actually the handsomest building in town, though plainer than the magnificent Farmers' Market. But even granted trains, I fear that Omelas so far strikes some of you as goody-goody. Smiles, bells, parades, horses, bleh. If so, please add an orgy. If an orgy would help, don't hesitate. Let us not, however, have temples from which issue beautiful nude priests and priestesses already half in ecstasy and ready to copulate with any man or woman, lover or stranger, who desires union with the deep godhead of the blood, although that was my first idea. But really it would be better not to have any temples in Omelas--at least, not manned temples. Religion yes, clergy no. Surely the beautiful nudes can just wander about, offering themselves like divine soufflés to the hunger of the needy and the rapture of the flesh. Let them join the processions. One thing I know there is none of in Omelas is guilt. But what else should there be? I thought at first there were not drugs, but that is puritanical. For more modest tastes I think there ought to be beer. What else, what else belongs in the joyous city? The sense of victory, surely, the celebration of courage. But as we did without clergy, let us do without soldiers. The joy built upon successful slaughter is not the right kind of joy; it will not do; it is fearful and it is trivial. Most of the procession have reached the Green Fields by now. A marvelous smell of cooking goes forth from the red and blue tents of the provisioners. The faces of small children are amiably sticky; in the benign grey beard of a man a couple of crumbs of rich pastry are entangled. The youths and girls have mounted their horses and are beginning to group around the starting line of the course. An old women, small, fat, and laughing, is passing out flowers from a basket, and tall young men where her flowers in their shining hair. A child of nine or ten sits at the edge of the crowd, alone, playing on a wooden flute. People pause to listen, and the smile, but they do not speak to him, for he never ceases playing and never sees them, his dark eyes wholly rapt in the sweet, thinmagic of the tune. He finishes, and slowly lowers his hands holding the wooden flute. As if that little private silence were the signal, all at once a trumpet sounds from the pavilion near the starting line: imperious, melancholy, piercing. The horses rear on their slender legs, and some of them neigh in answer. Sober-faced, the young riders stroke the horses' necks and soothe them, whispering, "Quiet, quiet, there my beauty, my hope...." They begin to form in rank along the starting line. The crowds along the racecourse are like a field of grass and flowers in the wind. The Festival of Summer has begun.

Do you believe? Do you accept the festival, the city, the joy? No? Then let me describe one more thing.

In a basement under one of the beautiful public buildings of Omelas, or perhaps in the cellar of one of its spacious private homes, there is a room. It has one locked door, and no window. A little light seeps in dustily between cracks in the boards, secondhand from a cobwebbed window somewhere across the cellar. In one corner of the little room a couple of mops, with stiff, clotted, foul-smelling heads stand near a rusty bucket. The floor is dirt, a little damp to the touch, as a cellar dirt usually is. The room is about three paces long and two wide: a mere broom closet or disused tool room. In the room a child is sitting. It could be a boy or a girl. It looks about six, but actually is nearly ten. It is feeble-minded. Perhaps it was born defective, or perhaps it has become imbecile through fear, malnutrition, and neglect. It picks its nose and occasionally fumbles vaguely with its toes or genitals, as it sits hunched in the corner farthest from the bucket and the two mops. It is afraid of the mops. It finds them horrible. It shuts its eyes, but it knows the mops are still standing there; and the door is locked; and nobody will come. The door is always locked; and nobody ever comes, except that sometimes--the child has no understanding of time or interval--sometimes the door rattles terribly and opens, and a person, or several people, is there. One of them may come in and kick the child to make it stand up. The others never come close, but peer in at it with frightened, disgusted eyes. The food bowl and the water jug are hastily filled, the door is locked, the eyes disappear. The people at the door never say anything, but the child, who has not always lived in the tool room, and can remember sunlight and its mother's voice, sometimes speaks. "I will be good," it says. "Please let me out. I will be good!" They never answer. The child used to scream for help at night, and cry a good deal, but now it only makes a kind of whining, "eh-haa, eh-haa," and it speaks less and less often.

It is so thin there are no calves to its legs; its belly protrudes; it lives on a half-bowl of corn meal and grease a day. It is naked. Its buttocks and thighs are a mass of festered sores, as it sits in its own excrement continually.

They all know it is there, all the people of Omelas. Some of them have come to see it, others are content merely to know it is there. They all know that it has to be there. Some of them understand why, and some do not, but they all understand that their happiness, the beauty of their city, the tenderness of their friendships, the health of their children, the wisdom of their scholars, the skill of their makers, even the abundance of their harvest and the kindly weathers of their skies, depend wholly on this child's abominable misery. This is usually explained to children when they are between eight and twelve, whenever they seem capable of understanding; and most of those who come to see the child are young people, though often enough an adult comes, or comes back, to see the child. No matter how well the matter has been explained to them, these young spectators are always shocked and sickened at the sight. They feel disgust, which they had thought themselves superior to. They feel anger, outrage, impotence, despite all the explanations. They would like to do something for the child. But there is nothing they can do. If the child were brought up into the sunlight out of that vile place, if it were cleaned and fed and comforted, that would be a good thing indeed; but if it were done, in that day and hour all the prosperity and beauty and delight of Omelas would wither and be destroyed. Those are the terms. To exchange all the goodness and grace of every life in Omelas for that single, small improvement: to throw away the happiness of thousands for the chance of the happiness of one: that would be to let guilt within the walls indeed. The terms are strict and absolute; there may not even be a kind word spoken to the child. Often the young people go home in tears, or in a tearless rage, when they have seen the child and faced this terrible paradox. They may brood over it for weeks or years. But as time goes on they begin to realize that even if the child could be released, it would not get much good of its freedom: a little vague pleasure of warmth and food, no doubt, but little more. It is too degraded and imbecile to know any real joy. It has been afraid too long ever to be free of fear. Its habits are too uncouth for it to respond to humane treatment. Indeed, after so long it would probably be wretched without walls about it to protect it, and darkness for its eyes, and its own excrement to sit in. Their tears at the bitter injustice dry when they begin to perceive the terrible justice of reality, and to accept it. Yet it is their tears and anger, the trying of their generosity and the acceptance of their helplessness, which are perhaps the true source of the splendor of their lives. Theirs is no vapid, irresponsible happiness. They know that they, like the child, are not free. They know compassion. It is the existence of the child, and their knowledge of its existence, that makes possible the nobility of their architecture, the poignancy of their music, the profundity of their science. It is because of the child that they are so gentle with children. They know that if the wretched one were not there sniveling in the dark, the other one, the flute- player, could make no joyful music as the young riders line up in their beauty for the race in the sunlight of the first morning of summer.

Now do you believe in them? Are they not more credible? But there is one more thing to tell, and this is quite incredible. At times one of the adolescent girls or boys who go to see the child does not go home to weep or rage, does not, in fact, go home at all. Sometimes also a man or woman much older falls silent for a day or two, and then leaves home. These people go out into the street, and walk down the street alone. They keep walking, and walk straight out of the city of Omelas, through the beautiful gates. They keep walking across the farmlands of Omelas. Each one goes alone, youth or girl, man or woman. Night falls; the traveler must pass down village streets, between the houses with yellow-lit windows, and on out into the darkness of the fields. Each alone, they go west or north, towards the mountains. They go on. They leave Omelas, they walk ahead into the darkness, and they do not come back. The place they go towards is a place even less imaginable to most of us than the city of happiness. I cannot describe it at all. It is possible that it does not exist. But they seem to know where they are going, the ones who walk away from Omelas.

WHY GEORGE?

"I HAD THE LONELY CHILD'S HABIT OF MAKING UP STORIES AND HOLDING CONVERSATIONS WITH IMAGINARY PERSONS, AND I THINK FROM THE VERY START MY LITERARY AMBITIONS WERE MIXED UP WITH THE FEELING OF BEING ISOLATED AND UNDERVALUED."



Eric Arthur Blair. If you already know who I am talking about you don't belong into majority of people who usually recognize this writer by his pen name- George Orwell.

Born in 1903 in India (the work place of his father) and raised in England, Orwell started to engage in writing very early in his life. He considered himself to have a less social skills as his peers, struggling against the system which was more favorable to the rich kids than the poor ones. After finishing his studies he decided to join Imperial Force and was sent to Burma., since his family could not afford to pay for an university education. However, after 5 years service he decided to return to England and start his writing career.

But why do I see him as an extraordinary writer and journalist? When we look on his works such as *Down and Out in Paris and London (*1933*)* , *Burmese days* (1934) , *Homage to Catalonia* (1938) or *Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), all of them are partially or entirely based on his personal experience. When starting with his career, Orwell decided to move to the poorest part of the London and live among labourers. in lodging houses. Similarly, he also spent some time living in the slums of Paris while working as a dish washer. All of this in order to understand living conditions of the lowest class and to overcome social barriers that hindered him in understanding the situation. He used his experiences when writing his first book in 1933. In 1936 Orwell traveled to the norther part of England, which was the rural area with the majority of mining industry at that time. He observed and shared their every they life so afterward he could write an extent criticism of social conditions and injustice at time., called *Road to Wigan Pier.* In 1937 Orwell decided to join the Republican militia and fought in Spanish Civil War where he was seriously wounded. Those experience are being recorded in his *Homage to Catalonia. (1938).*

We can see that after spending few years in Burma, Orwell understood the basic nature of imperialism. According to him, those experiences along with living in poverty increased in him hatred towards authority. However, he became to establish his political opinions during the Spanish Civil War (1936/37). After this, his writings started to openly criticize any form of totalitarianism and Orwell himself started to advocate for social democracy. We can see this in his most famous works like *Animal Farm* (1944) and *1984* (1949). In fact, it is legit to say that

Orwell became an important voice for the poorest and the most disadvantaged people of his time. He was fighting against totalitarianism, social injustice and oppressive authority, while trying to point at the most important political issues and problems. During his life Orwell established a lot of important friendships with people like T.E.Elliot or Aldous Huxley who he met during the high school. He wrote and published for a different publications and also worked in broadcasting for BBC. Unfortunately, Orwell died as a married man in 1950 at the age of 46 because of TBC. However, even after decades he is still the source of inspiration and a role model for any aspiring journalist who wants to make an impact and change the world to a better place.

"HAPPINESS CAN ONLY EXIST IN ACCEPTANCE."

"FREEDOM IS RIGHT TO TELL THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY DON'T WANT TO HEAR."

"NOT TO EXPOSE YOUR TRUE FEELING TO AN ADULT SEEMS TO BE INSTINCTIVE FROM THE AGE OF 7 OR 8 ONWARDS."

"A TRAGIC SITUATION EXISTS PRECISELY WHEN VIRTUE DOES NOT TRIUMPH BUT WHEN IT IS STILL FELT THAT MAN IS NOBLER THAN THE FORCES WHICH DESTROY HIM."

UNIVERSALITY OF HUMAN LANGUAGE

Reality. How do we become able to distinguish what is real and what is not? What is true and what is just a mere play of our imagination? In fact, we don't. Or better said we cannot.

But there are some days. And nights. Moments. When the night becomes a day, or when the day is stuck somewhere between yesterday and tomorrow. You meet people. You meet some of them for a very first time. You sit next to each other and you start to talk. Slowly, word by word, trying to uncover what is hidden. Human beings are like a puzzle. You need to ask right questions to get the important pieces and then you can start putting them together. And understand.

You sit there, looking into the eyes of someone who was a complete stranger just few hours ago. There is no way you could say you know that person. But there is something, something in their eyes which makes you feel. And suddenly you have a feeling you understand. The pain, the unbearable sadness they went through. Love, happiness, moments of never-ending laughter... cannot see it. It is like a channel that is there, but we cannot see it. Somewhere, under all of those layers of social roles and plays. Our beliefs and ideas, which make us to forget the basic language of humans. But when we manage to open that channel, suddenly, we are able to see a real connection that is lying here right in front of us.

AA.

BISLA EXCHANGE STUDENTS

Moje meno je David a som študentom druhého ročníka na BISLE. Tento semester som vycestoval do Holandska v rámci európskeho programu študentskej mobility-Erasmus. Moja spolužiačka Barbara ma požiadala o krátky komentár toho ako sa mi tú páči. Aké cítim zmeny. Čo je pozitívne a čo nie.

V prvom rade by som chcel spomenúť, kde presne teda som. Tilburg University je jednou z popredných škôl v rámci ekonómie a podnikania. Okrem toho je tu samozrejme kvalitná fakulta Social and Behavioural Sciences. Kombinácia predmetov z týchto fakúlt okorenená predmetom z humanitnej fakulty mi umožnila namiešať ten správny mix predmetov podl'a mojej chuti a potreby. A toto považujem zatial' za najväčšie pozitívum. Asi ako väčšina študentov na BISLE sa zaujímam o problematiku z mnoho oblastí a preto napríklad predmet z oblastí medzinárodného a obchodného práva je presne to čo som od erasmu očakával.

Za ďalšie, a asi najväčšie, pozitívum považujem networking. Vďaka mobilite človek každý deň spozná mnoho zaujímavých l'udí z celého sveta. A práve toto su skúsenosti, ktoré (dúfam) v živote využijem.

Jednou nepríjemnou zmenou pre mňa ale bola forma výuky. Namiesto malých tried a intenzívneho dialógu s vyučujúcim na ktoré som zvyknutý z BISLY tu prebieha výuka v triedach po sto žiakoch. Až teraz som si naplno uvedomil ako vysokú kvalitu a nie len v kontraste s inymi slovenskými školami BISLA ponúka a pevne verím, že bude ponúkať aj naďalej.

Na dlhší komentár po necelých troch týždňoch nemám dostatok skúseností. Možno niekedy inokedy. Na záver mi už ostáva len pozdraviť l'udí na BISLE a v prvomrade sa úprimne poďakovať pánovi rektorovi Samuelovi Abrahámovi, pánovi profesorovi Novosádovi a mojej tútorke Dagmar Kusej za to, že vďaka ním BISLA existuje a vďaka nej sa vzdelávam nie len doma ale aj v zahraničí.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT VERA PIZZA NAPOLETANA

Emma Jasmin Viskupič

I am not going to claim here myself being an expert on Napoletanian pizza, but I have spent over two weeks in Naples participating on a course where real pizzaiolos (pronounce pizzaYOLO) and masters of pizza have been sharing their knowledge and skills with anyone who felt passionate enough, and paid a fee.
I have only been a spouse to one of the course-takers, but even that has gotten me pretty far in technique, flavor, and dough quality and of course a lot of tasting.
First thing that you need to know when you think of the original pizza in Naples is that there is an original recipe, but each pizzeria and each pizzaiolo have their own little modification to it, that makes the pizza unique and you can really taste the the differences. The association that organizes the course has had a long tradition, working with antique and traditional pizzerias, their owners and their masters. At first you become a pizzaiolo, then a pizza master. This process takes approximately ten years, with attestations and yearly check-ups by the association on your technique, quality and ingredients you and your pizzeria uses. Anyway there isn't really just one crucial part of the pizza puzzle. The dough, where you have to consider the right type of flour, ratio of water to flour, amount of yeasts and salt are all important. The process of leavening really determines how well is it going to be separated into individual portions, stretched and baked to perfection. The sauce should be made out of san marzano tomatoes, some pizzerias in Naples use the tomatoes that grow on the mountain Vesuvio (the volcano). Each pizzaiolo should be able to make his sauce himself. The mozzarella included in original recipe is really

debatable. Some pizzerias in Naples use the tomatoes that grow on the mountain Vesuvio (the volcano). Each pizzaiolo should be able to make his sauce himself. The mozzarella included in original recipe is really debatable.

Some pizza masters argue buffalo mozzarella should be used, some disagree and prefer cow milk mozzarella for its denser less watery consistence. It is true that the buffalo mozzarella releases a lot of water when baked and really soaks up the pie. The essential ingredient is basil leaves that are actually baked with the whole pie. I have seen the basil being put on the pie after being taken out of the oven, which seems not to be the way they do it with the traditional recipe. Least but not least, the work with fire wood oven is crucial and really difficult. There is couple of tools that you use to throw the pizza in and then rotate it in the oven. Altogether the pizza stays in only for ninety seconds. If your dough is good, there shouldn't be any big bubbles that could turn into holes in your pie.

The whole technique is really seventy percent practice, then the theory. I have seen some really bad pies being made and some really good ones too. The original recipe is really too salty for me, but fortunately majority of pizzerias had really balanced flavor of their dough.

In conclusion, I have only gotten bored once of pizza in Naples, otherwise I ate it every day at least once. They also have great calzones which they call ripieno, some are fried of a smaller size and really delicious. I believe that it is really enough to put on your pizza and the commercialized image of pizza where you put steak and tons of ingredients on top is real butchering of the incredibly light and delightful meal that the original Napoletanian pizza makes.



INTERVIEW WITH
JAMES GRIFFITH

If you want you can give us some brief information about yourself your academic career, fields of interest etc ..

My main areas of academic interest are contemporary Continental or European philosophy and early modern philosophy. As an undergraduate, I was a double major in English and philosophy at a small liberal arts school in Connecticut called Trinity College. After taking four years off to live and work in different places, I went back to school, getting my Master's degree in philosophy at the New School for Social Research in New York and my Ph.D. at DePaul University in Chicago. At the New School, I tried to use the history of political philosophy as a way to think through a lot of different philosophical issues and wrote a thesis on Kant, Schmitt, and American reactions to the attacks on 9/11. At DePaul, I wanted to expand my interests and eventually became interested in Descartes and wrote a dissertation on how his use and discussion of fables affects how we can think about the method of philosophical and scientific investigation he develops as well as the structure of the mind that he gives us.

Q: What does philosophy means to you and why do you think we should study philosophy?

Starting me off with an easy one, huh? This is one of those questions that's been asked about philosophy, by philosophers as well as others, from its beginnings, and one that I'm not sure has a satisfactory answer. However, I think the lack of a satisfactory answer is also what makes philosophy so important. If philosophy really is the love of wisdom, then it's a practice or way of living so that answers are, by and large, not going to be satisfying. To desire to have an answer, if it's a desire to then be done with the question, is, frequently, a desire not to think (at least not to think about that particular question). To desire to have an answer with the idea that every answer gives rise to more questions and that an answer may complicate the question it's trying to address is something that philosophy tends to emphasize. I think philosophy is worth studying because it's a practice of never being satisfied with answers to the extent that we think the questions they answer don't need to be asked anymore. What's more, at its most interesting, philosophy also asks itself questions as to why it's satisfied with this kind of practice or way of life. Some answers to this self-questioning are more satisfying than others, but then that brings us back to the beginning again. At a minimum, though, philosophy is worth studying because it helps you learn how not to be satisfied with answers, which is harder than it sounds, and because it helps you learn how to ask the questions that develop that lack of satisfaction.

Q: Which work/philosopher/book/movie do you consider as a most influential, something that really made an inpact on your philosophy or life?

There are three books that really impacted me when I was an undergraduate and that I've never been able to get out of my head. In my first year, I read Plato's Symposium and was completely enthralled. I had never really read philosophy before and didn't know what to expect, but Plato's dialogue felt like reading a play or novel and I was amazed at how a mere conversation could have all the drama you'd expect from fiction like that. I was lucky, at least for my own interests, that the professor I had is someone who's interested in reading Plato by taking seriously the dramatic framework and other aspects that sometimes get lost if we focus just on the arguments themselves. After I had decided to become a philosophy major, I was in an seminar on Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit and thought I was losing my mind trying to make sense of the dialectic. Eventually, I came to enjoy that struggle, which convinced me that I wanted to continue studying philosophy beyond my undergraduate years. Finally, I was in a reading group with some undergraduates and faculty members devoted to Derrida's Politics of Friendship, which, among other things, showed me how philosophically creative you can be by reading philosophy carefully. It also forced me to think very seriously about why I was friends with the people I was friends with (some of whom were in the reading group with me), and this showed me in a way I hadn't fully dealt with before how seemingly abstract philosophical questions involve both the most important political issues and issues of daily ethical life.

Q: Why did you chose teaching or why do you like working with students? What does it mean to you?

At my Ph.D. program, people start teaching in their second year, so I was teaching quite a bit while

I developed my dissertation topic. The deeper into that project I got, the more I became convinced that philosophy is always about pedagogy, even if pedagogy isn't always philosophical. What I mean by that is that philosophy, at least in the Western tradition, is constantly concerned with persuasion, argument, and the force of these things. This concern isn't always direct, but I do think it's always working its way through any philosophical project. To the extent that this is the case, a philosophical text, argument, or person is trying to get its audience to understand its perspective, and really to get the audience to take up this perspective as its own. This can be done in a number of ways, some of which are problematic or even violent and others which are less so. In my experience, teaching, or teaching philosophy anyway, forces you to consider the ways in which a philosophical position can be taken up by others and whether those ways of taking it up are legitimate or at least minimally violent and why. In this way, teaching philosophy, even if what you teach isn't 'your' philosophy, is really also a philosophical practice, a consideration how an argument functions, how to present it such that others might be convinced of it without feeling or being forced to be convinced, how to know the difference between someone feeling they're being forced to be convinced and actually being forced to be convinced, and so on.

The other aspect of teaching philosophy that I enjoy is that I get to read books I love and talk about them with people smart people who are as invested in the possibility of making sense of it as I am. It's hard to beat that as a career. Students really push you to understand the material you teach much better than you would if you read it on your own, and that experience is a lot of fun.

Q: What is your favourite word in Slovak (haha)?

Not that I have much of a vocabulary in the language, but my favorite Slovak word is probably "áno," mainly because, to my Anglophonic ears, it sounds like the opposite of what it means, especially since I tend to say "ah…" a lot before actually speaking.

Q: What is the most important discovery you have made during your life, if you have any?

Probably the most important personal discovery I've made is the pleasure to be gained from reading, thinking, and writing. When I was young, I didn't always enjoy reading, but I think that had a lot to do with what I was forced to read in school at a young age. At about 12 or 13, I discovered some older and more contemporary adventure books and really lost myself in them. For a school project, I wrote a five-page poem of rhyming couplets about *The Lord of the Rings* as an allegory for World War II. I'm sure it was just awful, but it was a big thing for me to discover how much I could get out of writing. Then in high school, my English classes started assigning some of the famous novels and poetry in American and British literature and found myself amazed at what language could do and how what seemed to be just a story or poem could open up new ways of thinking about the world.

Is there anything what would you like to add or recommend to our students?

I guess don't read on screens or take notes on your laptop? I don't mean that in a condescending way, or at least I don't mean to mean it that way. I completely understand the various financial and other motivations to read stuff on iPads and Kindles, and I myself read more on my computer screen than not, but there are all kinds of studies coming out in the last few years showing that, when we read on screens, our eyes tend to jump around the text and we don't read slowly or carefully, which means we don't really follow what's been written. This kind of thing might be OK for short-form journalism or blog posts, where information gathering is the focus and the material isn't usually very long. However, reading slowly and carefully is a skill in that you don't just skim or look for the information you're hoping to find, but that you make sure what you're reading makes sense, which means that you're not just reading but thinking, too. There are also studies that suggest that people who takes notes by hand have more comprehension than those who take notes on their laptops. As someone with horrible handwriting, I sympathize with the desire to take notes in typed form, but it might not be worthwhile.

If you are interested in contributing to or joining ***il Ponte***, or want to learn more about us or any of the other groups, activities, or topics mentioned email at: barbarakelemenova@gmail.com