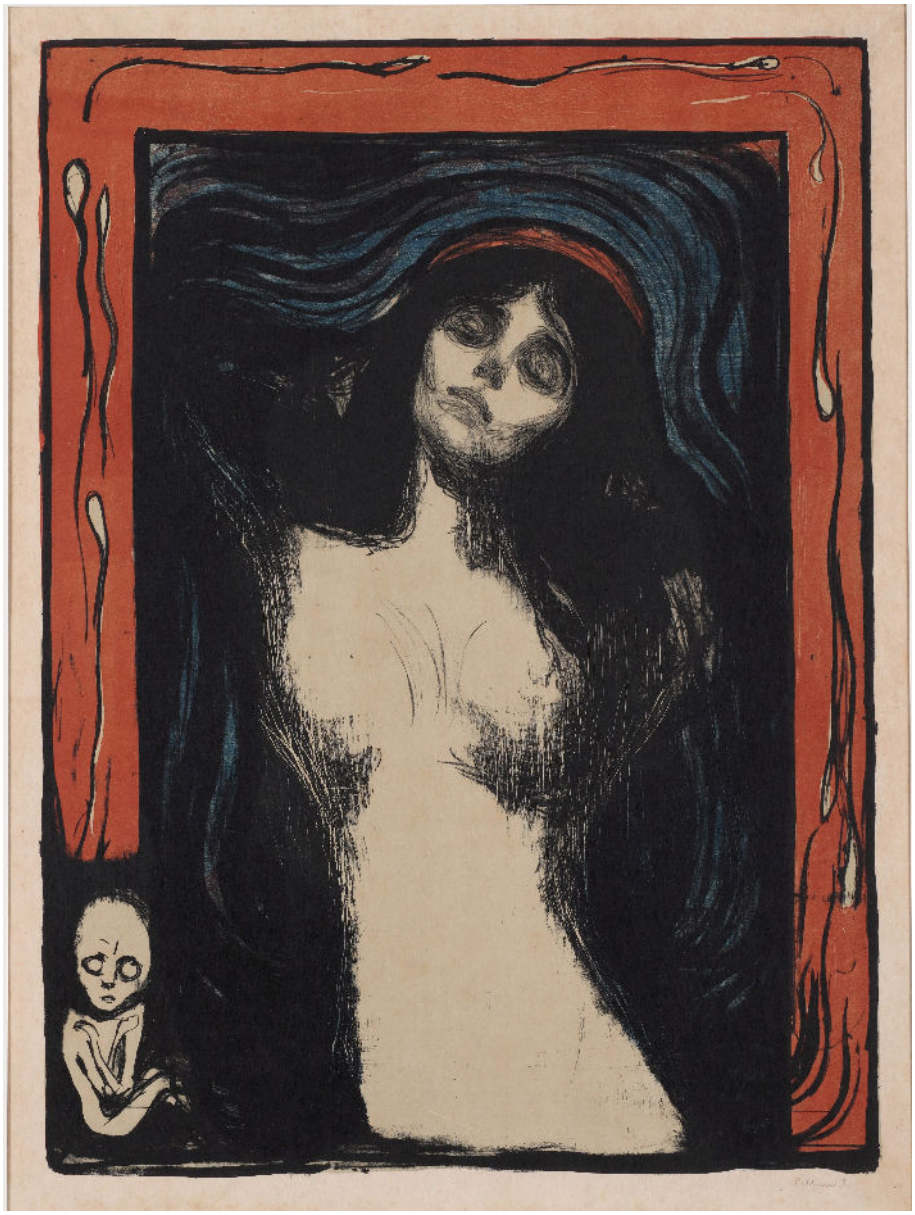
Il Ponte

BISLA student periodical



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Editorial

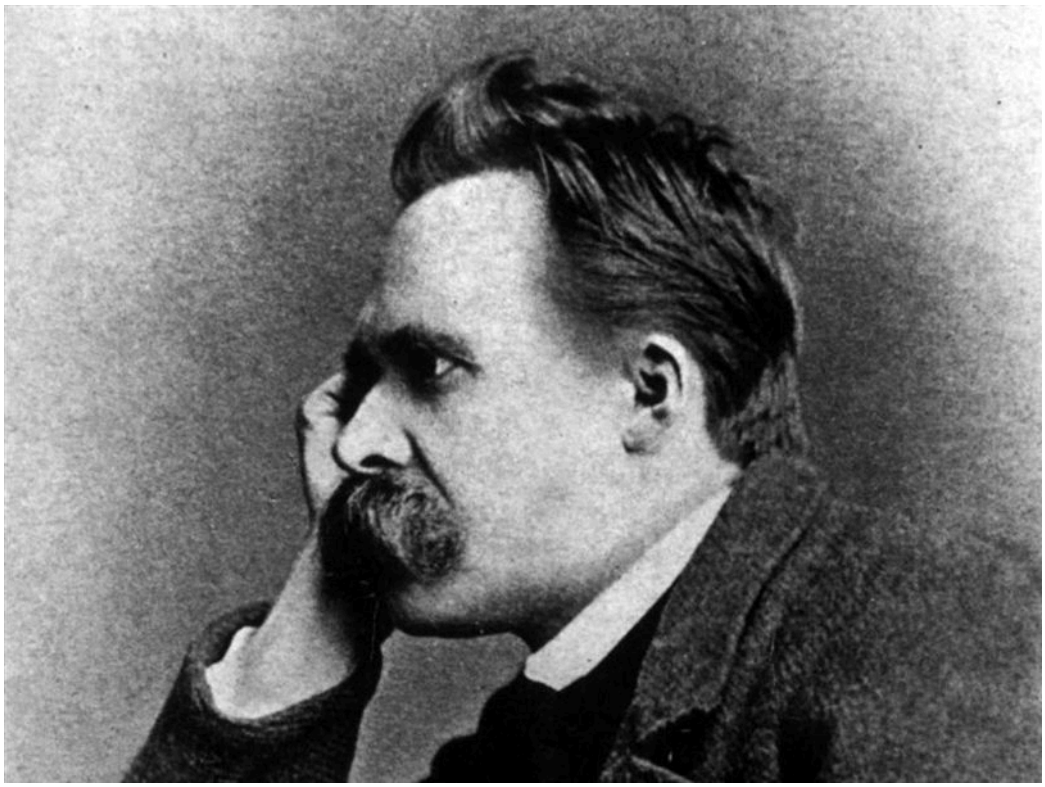
Barbara Kelemen

“That does not mean that existence has no purpose. On the contrary. As death creeps closer, the value of life increases. You must learn to say "Yes," Josef. But say "yes" to every minute of life. Be passionate. Be a free thinking spirit. Rise above your limitations. Be the Ubermensch.”

(exert from the movie When Nietzsche Wept)

I believe that the strong ideas as much as the brave actions, have the potential to change the world only if they are also able to evoke strong emotions. Either they are capable of making us burst into tears or to laugh and experience this weird state of euphoria when you get the feeling that the whole world lies right in front of you and its endless diversity suddenly becomes an exciting adventure yet to be discovered. For me, Nietzsche is exactly like this. He makes me laugh and cry at the same time. I consider him to be the most admirable and the most hated philosopher of all time. I am aware of the huge criticism being constantly described to his name, even some opinions that don’t agree with him being called a philosopher, however I have never came to truly understand those people and I think that if you are able to accept his poetical language and the fact that you are going to be constantly unsure about what he is trying to say, he will just talk from your heart. Poetry is not easy, but neither is life and that is why I believe that if you read Nietzsche you read the life itself. Maybe not easy and apparently difficult with the taste of tragedy being constantly played somewhere in the background, but do not forget- it is only appearance. The real Nietzsche is a comedy. He tricks you and makes you feel that everything is lost. And at the end, when the hope is almost gone, there he is, laughing and coming down to people, showing us that it is only a comedy and the only way how to carry on with this apparent heaviness on our backs is to realize that at the end, it is all in our hands.

May the will to power be with you.



Contra, Contra Nietzsche

By Noble

Is it more popular to love Nietzsche or hate him?

Hard to understand, easy to misinterpret, what this article attempts to do is offer a new (perhaps trifocal) lens by which to affix in on the multi-faceted, many-hued jewel of Nietzsche's work, past the critics, slander and libel perpetrated upon what I consider the single most prolific philosopher since Lao Tzu.

I find that amidst "academia," Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (FWN) is ridiculed for being a madman at best; at worst, used as a construct for nihilism. Many negative associations have become synonymous with his name from anti-Semitic, to misogynistic, to syphilitic (the last charge of syphilis now being highly debated, considering his conditions did not fit the criteria of such an affliction). The BBC documentary, "Human, All Too Human" paints an over-all glum portrait of Nietzsche, which conveniently did not feature Walter Kauffman, passionate translator and champion of the concept that Nietzsche is eternally misunderstood in "western thought."

This article will offer some alternatives to some core arguments against Nietzsche's person—his sanity, philosophies, and life choices, and will argue that his life was consciously lived as a performance art, rife with individuation, satire, and self-references—an unashamed tragedy and comedic journey through the humble and noble truths of existence.

> "Esteeming humble truths-- It is the sign of a higher culture to esteem more highly the little, humble truths, those discovered by a strict method, rather than the gladdening and dazzling errors that originate in metaphysical and artistic ages and {human beings}. At first, one has scorn on his lips for humble truths. But truths that are hard won, certain, enduring, and therefore still of consequence for all further knowledge are the higher..."
> --Human, All Too Human
> (Translated by Marion Faber and Stephen Lehmann)

First and foremost, seriously, most people take Nietzsche too seriously. With levity are most misunderstandings of Nietzsche's work alleviated; his most glorious existentialism and wisdom revealed. Imagine a late 19th century George Carlin hilariously and eloquently criticizing all under the sun (masters, slaves, men and women) putting the responsibility of life on every individual. Or perhaps Nietzsche could be seen as the philosophers version of Mark Twain his contemporary and certainly a humourist inspiration to Nietzsche. Saying the unsayable, the politically incorrect, the anti-status-quo, though not toward the aim of some arbitrary effect was Nietzsche's objective to change the very paradigm of philosophy for the future—a world of "free spirits."

> "He who would learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and walk and run and climb and dance; one cannot fly into flying."
> --Thus Spake Zarathustra

In the charge of Nietzsche's misogyny, I direct our attention to "Combating Misogyny? Responses to Nietzsche by Turn-of-the-Century German Feminists," an article written by Barbara Helm, Published in, "The Journal of Nietzsche Studies 27 (2004) 64-84."

To quote liberally:

University of Tübingen
and Max-Planck Research Centre for Ornithology, Andechs, Germany

Feminist Reception of Nietzsche, Twice

Following the appearance of his works in the 1880s, Nietzsche was publicly accused of being a "hater of women" ("Frauenhasser"), "despiser of women" ("Frauenverächter"), "enemy of women" ("Frauenfeind"), and "Antifeminist." Feminist literature has habitually referred to him as such, and males, too, debated Nietzsche's misogyny, taking sides with or against women. Collections of his quotations concerning women can still be unsettling, although some of his most polemical remarks are now interpreted as puns, metaphors, or perspectival experiments. Yet, feminist philosophers have clearly been able to find plenty of resources in Nietzsche's writing. In the last two decades, their interest in his philosophy has increased and become more diverse. Via French deconstructivist thinking, Nietzsche's philosophy returned to the fields of political theory, epistemology, aesthetics, ethics, and embodied philosophy. Simultaneously, the historical relations between women and Nietzsche have received renewed attention, reminding today's readers that feminist ambivalence toward Nietzsche is no invention of our time.

This article focuses on the historical female reception of Nietzsche in Germanophone countries, where even the earliest "Nietzsche circles" comprised "socialists and young women." In contrast to today, German universities were almost inaccessible to women until 1908. Some privileged females received education abroad, but most of the sources used here were written by "self-made" women and published in women's journals and pamphlets that have slipped into oblivion. By the turn of the century, Nietzsche was so popular among women that he was regarded as "philosopher of women" (Weiberphilosoph). In pre-war Germany, Nietzschean arguments dominated debates over women's sexuality. Women who bobbed their hair and held allegedly "nihilistic views" were called "Nietzscheanerin." Referen ces compiled by Krummel indicate how widespread his thought was: while embroidering, bourgeois women asked bystanders to read from his books; girls in cooking classes cited Nietzsche in each other's poesy books. The author Gabriele Reuter reports that she learned about him from an older woman in a Catholic convent, and that for her, as for many women, Nietzsche's writing came as a revelation.

A particular pet-peeve of mine is the insistence on the part of interpreters to misnomer the concept of the Übermensch from what would literally and more accurately be translated as “over human beings,”-- from “Über” and “Mensch,” respectively—to the colloquial, patriarchal, and unidimensional, “Superman” edifice, almost a direct subversion of the original term, Übermensch. In a place where Nietzsche could have easily used the

German word for man, “Mann”, which he employed in discussing the origins of the master morality in, On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic, Nietzsche chooses to use the German idiom “Mensch” to a universalist effect. In Zarathustra, (Nietzsche) is a man that is speaking to “Menschen.”

Der Mensch ist ein Seil, geknüpft zwischen Thier und Übermensch,—ein Seil über einem Abgrunde. Ein gefährliches Hinüber, ein gefährliches Auf-dem-Wege, ein gefährliches Zurückblicken, ein gefährliches Schaudern und Stehenbleiben. Was gross ist am Menschen, das ist, dass er eine Brücke und kein Zweck ist: [...] Seht, ich bin ein Verkündiger des Blitzes und ein schwerer Tropfen aus der Wolke: dieser Blitz aber heisst Übermensch." — Vorrede, §4.

For the charge of madness on Nietzsche’s part, I say this: what genius has existed hitherto on this Earth that has not also been called mad? How many quotes on the marriage of madness and genius can be found with the most preliminary of Google searches? If Nietzsche were alive today he would be making music with Bjork! Nietzsche was like a Victorian, conscious hip-hop artist, or low-key-reluctant pop star. He kept his drug life to himself and purposefully assuaged fame. His moustache was a mask to hide his beauty and ugly contempt for the way society had been and was continuing to turn toward nihilism. Had he been born 100 years later his likeness would grace the t-shirts of hipsters world-wide, and certainly he would have achieved the notoriety of his impersonator, Foucault, as opposed to posthumous veneration.

In Foucault’s case, Michel lived more debaucherously, madder, and more afflicted, in that he had far more instances of “behaviours” up to and including self- mutilation and suicide attempts; I would argue Foucault was amoral to a hedonistic archetype. Foucault owes his success to Nietzsche, though figured out quickly how to achieve fame in his own lifetime—that is—pertain to the hedonistic nature of humanity, which not even Nietzsche’s transvaluation of values alluded to. Even Nietzsche, espouser of amoralism wouldn’t have been so amoral as to do one-fourth of the things Foucault is now venerated during his lifetime for. I take Foucault as a Modern Art revision of a Renaissance portrait painted by the romantic Nietzsche. I argue that because Nietzsche maintained morals more akin to an aesthetic whilst simultaneously inheriting the Dionysian spirit, his craziness became more easily concealed-- in that it wasn’t all that crazy, actually.

In the charge of madness I say what makes a man mad? Perhaps the crowning achievement of Nietzsche’s madness is epitomized in the age-old “horse” anecdote. A crazy man sees a horse being beaten in the streets and loses his shit a little bit, at the spectacle. In today’s world such an action would be applauded if not made viral on YouTube. In the charge of madness I say Nietzsche was conscious as to the performance art piece that was his life. He not only wrote poetically, He lived poetically. He not only waxed eloquently on dancing and the power of music to uplift spirits, he frolicked and produced a remarkable body of over 50 musical compositions. He spoke intimately about madness, he practiced it. If anything, Nietzsche would be less

trustworthy had he not been "crazy." Carl G. Jung, Freud, and psychoanalysts down the line admittedly owe their "science" to the meticulous madness Nietzsche, perhaps the greatest "new psychologist."

> "… all superior men who were irresistibly drawn to throw off the yoke of any kind of morality and to frame new laws had, if they were not actually mad, no alternative but to make themselves or pretend to be mad" (Daybreak,14).

Let us not even mention the fact that Nietzsche would have been systematically poisoned with mercury in treatment of his "syphilis" during the 10 plus years of his slow death following his collapse in the "horse" incident.

So perhaps more important than whether or not Nietzsche was mad, is who calls him mad-- who would seek to benefit from the destruction of his image and legacy? Let us try the aristocratic elite, whose philosophy was catastrophically and solely becoming capitalistic, backed by the science of materialism, all leading unequivocally toward our current enduring state of nihilism-- all paradigms Nietzsche specifically and systematically dismantled in ever increasing grace and poeticism across the lexicon of his publications. It may even be surmised that Nietzsche prophesized his own alienation when he left his post as Professor of Philology at Basel, due to "health reasons."

In fact, Nietzsche had been hyper-critical of the state of philosophers and philosophy in Germany at that time. In Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of History, Christian Emden cites a note made by Nietzsche from May 1868, entitled, "On Academic Philosophy." This note demonstrates Nietzsche's foresight in the fact of political interests dictating both the philosophers and philosophies within the institutions of higher learning. Let us examine what Nietzsche noted as the "…mainly disastrous…" "Usefulness of academic philosophy…" At this point, in Nietzsche's view, the purveyors of science (via materialism) and history (via the elitist, imperialistic winners of wars) became the murderers of those with the virtue—"to live philosophically," KGW III/4, 29 [197]). I argue that Nietzsche understood the game of the elite and wanted no part of it, which was something that the elite was more than happy to grant the comedic critic, ahead of his time by 100 years. I argue that at this very point did the death of existentialism as philosophy itself, die by the hands nihilism—the natural apotheosis of Capitalism.

To Nietzsche's seeming anti-social behaviour I ascribe a dutiful and romantic loyalty that lent Nietzsche a broken heart. He suffered with the rest of the world, was proud of it and made a better person by it—more philosophical, more human, more passionate and wilful. Instead of casting away to the mountains forever he tried his (reportedly) eloquent hands at love. Not only did Nietzsche try love, he tried it in one of the most poetical ways possible—a trio. Now once again we find Nietzsche, not to mention the equally astute Rée and Salomé, over 100 years ahead of their time with concepts such as "threesomes" not gaining social acceptance until the 1960's. With the dissolution and ultimate heartbreak of his unconventional love affair, Nietzsche had every reason to slip into the deepest abyss of despondency. As put by William Beatty Warner in, "Love in a Life": The Case of Nietzsche and Lou Salome,

> "…{this} episode must be thought of, not as a measured application of philosophical 'theory,' to living 'practice,' but as that which comes between The

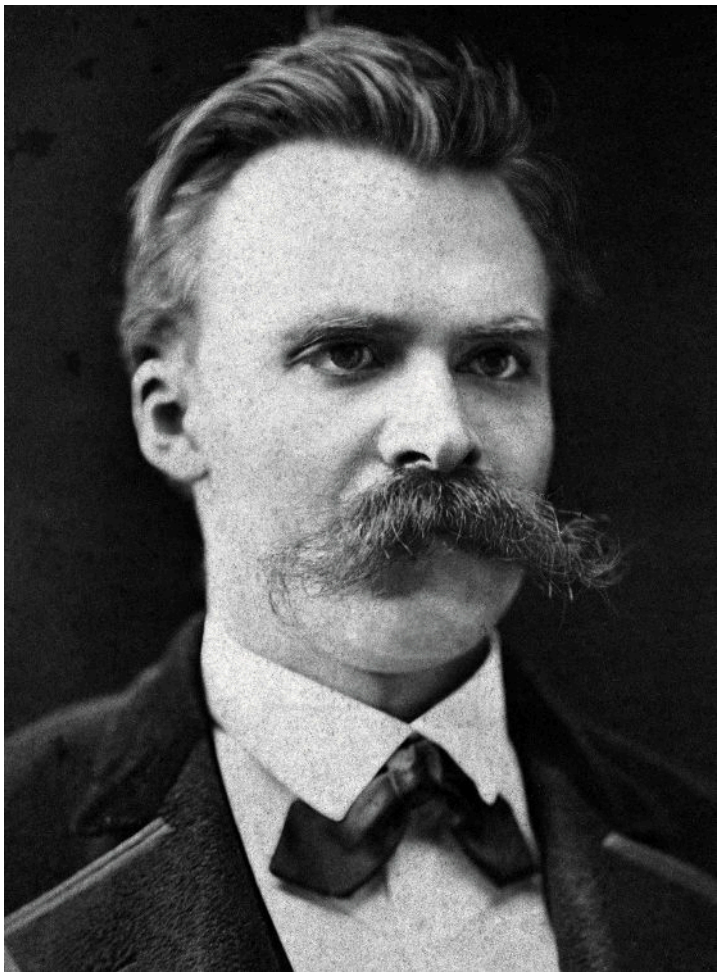
Gay Science and Zarathustra, not as a bridge, but as a fissure, a violent displacing, a challenge, a mockery and—even a joke. The fact of love, as traumatic experience, has interrupted the writing of philosophy, and then collaborated in its revision.

I often refer to Nietzsche as the Nikola Tesla of philosophy, for many reasons, one being the certitude that his philosophic inventions could never be accepted by the power elite (Ironically, both had a system of "free energy" of sorts, Tesla's literal, Nietzsche's metaphorical). Had Tesla had the courage of Nietzsche, to at least try love, who knows if he would have continued to invent, invented better, stronger and faster, stopped inventing altogether, or simply killed himself. In the case of Tesla we find he adamantly swore to celibacy and claimed his genius stemmed from that fact. Likewise, he took the prospect of love as a great distraction to his life's work for humanity. I find Nietzsche having exalted himself past even the grandeur of Tesla's morals here— whereas I pity Tesla's love affair with his dove (which Tesla himself claimed he loved like a woman), I empathize with Nietzsche having love and lost; more importantly lived, producing and creating for the objective betterment of humanity in spite of his personal tragedy. Whereas any less of men would have fallen to any manner of sloth, avarice, lust and escapism, we find the herald of the Übermensch having produced ten of his over fifteen works, not to mention his published and unpublished notes, lectures, letters, poetry, and musical compositions after his time with Lou and Paul in 1882. From 1882 to his collapse in 1889, Nietzsche produced at least three lifetimes of work, which afterwards an eleven year hiatus and eventual death could be more easily understood. Nietzsche was consistently known by his friends as a relentless, over-worked perfectionist, yet soft-spoken, yet impassioned to the point of being alight; yet, somehow, embracing of the shadows cast by himself and humankind.

Nietzsche leads us by example to live not as he lived, for he claimed to be but a herald of something greater. FNW teaches us not what but why and how to write. We must think and write in aphoristic, poetical, seemingly contradictory statements to attain clarity in the multifaceted, many-hued jewel of existence… or not! Herein rests my most profound critique of FWN: he had no martial art, no yoga, no physical expression of his fire and lightning. It is no small wonder that his body atrophied the way it did in the years leading to his death in 1900. Had he been born 100 years later, Nietzsche would have kicked it with Bruce Lee, and still be alive and kicking today, alas, to the snakes, lions and eagles with the could-haves…

Nietzsche calls forth for the will to will (to power). Those with no will die slow. Those with mediocre will, sustain. Those with true will thrive. What is the will but the spite of the parasitic nature of the universe—the dark fact that when we look out into the cosmos or in into the consciousness, what we see is mostly black. Or is it? Now we are seeing more, seeing smaller, seeing deeper, as if one day we will see the very Aether. What alternative to do we have to being a parasitic force upon life? How is mutual symbiosis not the very definition of a certain utopia? Hitherto, save for a few including FWN, thinkers have forgotten the objective of philosophy… what would possibly be the objective of philosophy other than a veritable techno-philosophical utopia? Nietzsche claimed much of himself ("Why I Am So Wise", "Why I Am So Clever", "Why I Write Such Good Books" and "Why I Am a Destiny". -- out

of truth, though his humility was lain in his understanding that he was but a harbinger, the prelude to a philosophy based, utopic-future-super folk. So that now, a true Nietzschean could never be Nietzschean! A true Nietzschean creates her own philosophies; then finds resonance of her mind, body and spirit in her surroundings-- individualistic but social, connected but autonomous.



Nietzsche calls forth for the very revaluation value. Even his own values!
So I tell youse my fellow Earthlings (Menschen)!
Abandon all faith, hope, trust, and love!!!
And with what are you left to live in this dearth of the very values that make life worth living?
Faith is come unto technology-manifesting creations.
Hope is come unto energy-quantum electrogravitic biomimicry.
Trust is come unto observation-recording with no judgements necessary only data.
Love is come unto gratitude of life-reacting to life's complexities in ever-increasing will to thrive.
And shall we accomplish our golden goals out of guilt to what we have done to our world and ourselves?
How do we get over ourselves? Can we turn a hitherto virtue into the greatest sin to life, and likewise turn a hitherto turpitude into our greatest motivation?
Henceforth, guilt is the unmentioned sin, no more!
Conversely, what greater virtue and galvanizer of will do we have other than our spite?
In spite of life… and death… we thrived as a species in mutual symbiosis with the Earth, Universe and our own consciousness.
There is but one debate left for philosophy-- nihilism vs. existentialism.
Nihilism is to capitalism as existentialism is to utopia.
The death of philosophy was to capitalism as the death of god was to science.
The revival of philosophy is with the simple objective of utopia.
Philosophy is existentialism.
The only answer to our current, capitalistic, materialistic, nihilistic paradigm is, at last, not the death of these systems by philosophizing, rather, the obviousness that these modalities are but prototypes to an unavoidable subversion of parasitism.
Henceforth, let youse will speak thus: philosophy shall be the triumph of the Earth!

--Thus Spake Noble

K.O.(TLEBA) Slovakia (Post Election Non-Fiction)

Mário Lapoš

For majority of old people election day is like an erection - it comes once every 4 years and lasts only until they slide inside once. After that the fun is over and days go by in moderate fashion. Their choice, however, will last for another term, which they might not even see to the end. This harsh rhetoric was used to encourage young and often uninterested voters to take heed of current situation. From Youtube celebrities to music bands and businessmen a palette of various personas advocated change. Did they succeed?

I wrote the part above on Saturday, 5th of March, 2016, the day of parliamentary election. I was sure, that the elderlies, lured into Prime Minister Fico's broad embrace by free train rides and lowered VAT on certain basic groceries, held the key to his success and our despair. I have never been so wrong.
On Sunday, 6th of March, Slovakia woke up to worldwide headlines announcing Mr. Fico's disappointing result and a dangerously far right-wing party Ľudová Strana - Naše Slovensko (People's Party-Our Slovakia) winning 14 seats. The talk of the internet and streets had suggested it was the youngsters (first-time voters) and quasi-revolutionarees who mobilized on the edge of rightist movement. Since we live in democracy we have to respect their vote. The only thing we can do is identify the source of their crooked thinking and defend the values of Western democracy.

People's Party-Our Slovakia members are public admirers of the Slovak State

(constitued by Josef Tiso on Adolf Hitler's urging in 1939. Tiso then participated in transporting jewish population to the camps). Yet, some of them go as far as denying holocaust. One of the largest rallies organized by the Party took place in June 2015 on the occasion of refusing Syrian war refugees asylum seeking in the European Union. Marián Kotleba, the bald-headed head of the hairless party (Fun Fact: Donald Trump has more hair than all members of the People's Party combined), greeted thousands of his supporters by wishing them "beautiful white day" after which number of different orators claimed the superiority of white race and Slavic ancestors, before threatening to burn the EU flag.
So much for the introduction to the People's Party-Our Slovakia world.

The leader of People's Party-Our Slovakia, the governor of Banská Bystrica municipality, Marián Kotleba is the result of two specific and aggressively milked pre-election issues: the refugee crisis and stagnating education.
The former has been a favorite talking point of the Prime Minister - Róbert Fico, who is a sound critic of European Union's inability to solve the crisis. The opposition took advantage of Fico's inability to solve the latter issue. Both sides quarrelled and accused each other of abusing the subjects in favour of their, then ongoing, political campaigns. And you know what they say: where two are fighting, the third wins.

Fico's harsh rhetoric towards EU and refugees supported Kotleba's much controversial and edgy remarks about muslims. Hence, an alternative (far-right alt) surfaced for those who shared Fico's stance on the crisis, but were refusing to vote for him, because of his many scandals from the past (alleged corruption in the department of health and ties to oligarchs money). Kotleba's politically incorrect rhetoric appealed to young adults and first-time voters who, probably, had hard-time understanding political lingo and jargon of (more) traditional and professional, parties. For example, 31,8% students in Slovakia's 3rd largest region (in terms of population) Žilina would vote, or voted, Kotleba's People's Party-Our Slovakia. Eva Babitzová, candidate for party Šanca (Chance), remarked during one of many TV debates, that "the need for education reform is apparent from latest polls reporting, that students would vote for Mr. Kotleba" while standing next to the man.

We need to be at least as bold as Babitzová in upcoming years. Simultaneously, we have to be less bald. Know the difference!

Me, Myself, with Time

Sarah Abou Abdallah

24/02/2016

January 20, 1976, around 582 civilians died in a massacre carried out by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on my hometown Damour. The civilians, who were not killed, were kidnapped or forced to flee; subsequently, their deserted homes were given to the Palestinian refugees.[1] Damour, which was once home to around 25,000 people before the massacre, is a part of Greater Beirut and is a few kilometers south of the capital. To this day, it is famous for its sandy beaches, massive banana fields, and 19th century deserted silk factory. Apart from these picturesque attributes, Damour has fallen victim to many sieges, massacres, and has been occupied by various forces throughout history. However, the incident that I can identify with most (being a direct descendent of the people who lived through it) is the one that took place exactly forty years ago.

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My mother, Emilie, was one month shy of eleven-years-old at the time of the massacre. She says that if you were to ask her what she had had for lunch yesterday, she'll most probably not remember, but ask her anything about January 20, 1976, she'll recount it vividly as though it were happening right now. My mother's childhood home consisted of two adjacent parts: one of which was comprised of two floors and the other part, which came as a gradual addition to the house, consisted of only one floor. As a safety precaution, people were advised to keep as many ceilings between their bodies and the sky. The family used to sleep under the kitchen table on the ground floor of the two-story half of the house. On a January evening of that same year, Emilie asked my grandmother Catherine if they could all sleep in their own beds as she had a sore back. Grandma conceded. The beds were in the one-story half of the house. Catherine, at that time, was the sole caretaker of her five children as my grandfather Mikhael was on police duty during most of the war.

As they slept in the comfort of their own beds with only one ceiling protecting them for the sky, an air raid commenced. One of the bombs forced its way through two ceilings and a kitchen table. Family intact, yet shaken, ears buzzing and home half destroyed, they waited till daybreak for the air raids to stop.

As the morning shed its light onto the mangled town of Damour, Catherine told her children that they were going to run as fast as they could to her brother's house. They were not allowed to grab any of their belongings because she didn't want anything to slow them down. Catherine stood in front of the main door outside of her dilapidated home. She locked the door, put the key in her pocket, and kneeled in to kiss it. Mom said that it seemed as though her mother knew that she was never going to see the house again. She then turned around to face her children and told them to all run ahead of her and that she will be right behind them to pick up anyone who might fall. Emilie then asked her, "Who will pick you up if you fall?" and Catherine told her, "Never mind me, be quiet and start running." As they ran, they crossed paths with people who went seeking refuge in the St. Elias church.

They got to her brother's house and found that most of the extended family and some neighbors were already there. The house was still intact and everyone was gathered in the basement. A few days had passed, and then came January 20.

That afternoon, they were all sitting in the basement when armed men broke down the door and came right in. Apparently, the people hiding in the church knew about the approaching forces and managed to escape to another seaside town. Only an unknowing few were left to face the oncoming tragedy.

The armed men escorted Emilie and her family and the others to the courtyard of the church of the Virgin Mary. My mother's cousin, a police officer named Maroun, objected and asked the men to return his gun to him. They asked him his name, and once they learned it, and for a reason that none of us knows to this day, they took him away from his family to the back of the church. Weeks later, he appeared in the newspaper, stabbed to death and lying on his side. That was how the family learned of his death.

At sundown, they were herded onto pick up trucks and driven all the way to Sabra in the rain. They were kept in a cold basement and some hostages, one of whom happened to be my mother, were taken outside at unpredictable times. When a man asked her to go with him, Emilie turned to face her mother and asked her what she should do. Catherine said, "Go with them. If you don't, they'll kill us all."

She was escorted down a hallway, up two steps and into a room that had one window facing the door she came through. The room consisted of one desk facing the entrance, at which a man was seated, a chair in the middle of the room facing the desk, and a single bed to the right side of the entrance. She sat down in the chair and was asked if she knew anyone who was fighting against them in Damour, she said no, they pressed the question and she kept on saying no. They yelled at her, hit her in the back with a rifle and she still said no crying now and begging them to let her go. They then took her back to her mother.

The hostages used to get an hour of sunlight everyday. There was one time when a PLO soldier walked up to my mom and asked her if she knew a man whose name she would not disclose to me. Her instincts told her to deny knowing the man being asked about even though the man in question was her cousin. The soldier then said, "Good. I'm going to kill him when I meet him. Him, and his whole family." He then asked her where she was from. She said, "Damour." He said he knew someone from there, a good friend called Mikhael Abou Fayad. She froze then asked, "Can you get to him?" He nodded. She continued, "Tell him that Emilie is here. Her siblings and her mother too." He replied, "You're his daughter aren't you?" She nodded.

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My father, Joseph, on the other hand is ten years older than my mother, and, in a way, luckier. He was also born and raised in Damour but wasn't in the country at the time of the massacre. He was in Bahrain with his mother to attend his brother George's engagement celebrations. They got held up in Bahrain for two months since no planes were flying in to Lebanon. During that time, all the phone lines were dead; therefore, contacting the rest of the family in Lebanon to know if anyone survived was not an option.

When they landed in Lebanon, they were lucky that Joseph's brother, Raymond, worked at the airport and welcomed them with the good news that the whole family was safe and well and had moved up north and away from the targeted areas.

My dad worked for a whole year for an American telecommunications company called NCR in Beirut during the day, and in the afternoon, sold smuggled soap and bananas with some other men in the city. At times, a famous Lebanese playwright, actor, singer/songwriter called Ziad al Rahbani used to join them at the stand and would boost sales with his presence.
As the problems escalated in Lebanon, NCR decided to close its Lebanese office and open one in Saudi Arabia. At that point, my father had to decide to either stay in Lebanon with no job and no proper way to support his family, or to move to Saudi Arabia. He did the latter and stayed there for twenty-one years during which he married my mother and subsequently moved to Australia in an attempt to start over.
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2006, the year I finished sixth grade and was very excited about moving to my school's upper campus, as I was now one of the "big kids", was also the year the war between Hezbollah and Israel tore up the south of Lebanon.
I remember coming back home from the grocery store with my father on a hot summer day to find my mother chain smoking as al Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah announced the war on T.V. She went back to the grocery store and bought some flour, water, oil, and a lot of canned food. "You can never know how long a war will last," she said.
The Australian embassy kept on calling my father telling him about every boat scheduled to move Australian citizens visiting/residing in Lebanon to safety. He kept on rejecting the embassy's help and said that the family was fine in Lebanon.
I overheard my parents argue about leaving many times. The lower the war planes flew overhead, the higher the sound of their engines grew, the louder my parents argued, until one day when my mother got her way.
The embassy called my father warning that the boat leaving in the morning was the last one scheduled to help Australian citizens. He told my mother that it was up to her and that if she really believed that leaving was the best thing to do for the family, then she should do it, but he was going to stay behind.
The next day, Dad dropped us off at dawn at the Beirut port. My three sisters and I, each carrying one backpack with all our belongings, cried as my father drove away. Mom reassured us that we will be back in no time and that we were only going on a vacation. I asked her, "Mom why are we leaving? All of my friends are staying here." She told me, "It's the only thing I can do right now to make our situation better."
So we left.
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I find that these three snippets of my family's history portray the ways the situation in my country has affected each of my parents' individual identities and perspectives, and in turn, my own. Marianne Hirsch, a professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, has coined the term post-memory, which is when a person lives in the shadow of the memories of his/her predecessors.[1] I find that the way I was taught to see the world is affected by my parent's understanding of it. Growing up, they did certain things to protect me and to shelter me as a direct effect of their past and their own mistakes. It was a tough shell to crack, to be able to move away from their protective ways and to venture out on my own, especially considering my mother and her past and the things she had witnessed first hand.
Back in 2006, when we had to flee the country with my mother and without my father, I felt a form of divide between their understandings of self-preservation. After the interviews I conducted with each one of them, was I able to tap into their ways of seeing

things. My mother, to this day, is still traumatized by what she saw and endured and always says, “I want you to have everything I never did and more.” This is why she took us away when my father and friends stayed behind. She refused to let us see what she saw and to feel the way that she feels even after all this time. My father on the other hand was finally able to establish himself in Lebanon and I feel he refused to let anything take that away from him. He couldn’t see himself starting over somewhere new after he was forced to do it twice before.
Even after the religious divide that the state of war dictated, and even after my parents were direct victims of that divide, they sent my sisters and I to a British Quaker school to ensure that we get introduced to people of different backgrounds and religions and from different walks of life. They were always set on allowing us to immerse ourselves in different cultures and to be tolerant of different understandings and views on the way the world is “supposed” to work.
As a result of this all, I now identify as secular and I recognize the need for dialogue, empathy, and understanding the “other”.

It’s a Runner’s Runner’s World

Mário Lapoš

Everyday people go out of their way to risk injuries and illnesses. What is more, they do so consciously, willingly and on purpose. Often, if not always, it comes without a reward. Yet, suspiciously positive words ‘joy’, ‘happy’, ‘alive’ come up when you search Twitter for posts about this particulars activity. And I am not talking about Pub Crawl...

Former foreign correspondent for Associated Press Christopher McDougall wrote international bestseller ‘Born to Run’ about forgotten tribe in Mexico called Tarahumara. Never heard of them? Excellent, because you were not supposed to!
They are the most ordinary people with the most extraordinary running skills and behaviour. Hidden deep within Copper Canyons Tarahumara have no access to brand new Nike shoes with supportive, responsive and flexible cushioning and who knows what other types of technologies, neither they drink vitamin water, nor energy smoothies and I could go on and on about stereotypes of 21st century uber runner. Tarahumara run in DIY sandals, dressed in skirts and tank tops, usually after alcohol frenzy night, and 100 mile tracks (Boston marathon is 26.2 miles long) easily under, 20 hours. If they had Twitter, their posts would be overflowing with words ‘joy’, ‘happy' and ‘alive'. Why? Because they were born to run. And so were we, writes McDougall: "when our ancestors finally did make their first cave paintings, what were the first designs? A downward slash, lightning bolts through the bottom and middle--behold, the Running Man."

We used to run to survive and we are alive thanks to it. Today we love everything, that makes us live and, most importantly, feel alive. Now, fellow students, professors and readers put on any kind of sport shoes, light but warm clothing, and go for a run. If you can’t, remember sh*t Norwegians say: “There’s no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes” (Hat tip to David Nikel for the phrase. Check out his blog lifeinnorway.net for more witty Scandinavia).

Why study Philosophy?

Dominik is my friend that I met in Hong Kong, while studying psychology. He is one of the most brilliant people I've ever met, maybe because of his similar interest in psychology and philosophy at the same time. Dominik studies psychology in Scotland, and he spent several years traveling around the world and living in places like New Zeland and Nepal. Since I've always had very pleasant and inspirational conversations with him I decided to invite him to contribute to our journal and ask him few questions about philosophy.

Why do you study Philosophy?

Because I like doing philosophy and enjoy engaging in it in daily life. In fact, I believe that everyone engage in some philosophy by very own approach to life. Doing philosophy provides the essential framework for life in general, like studying a school can provide it for a future career. And for this it seems natural to me to study philosophy, or rather to study various ways of doing philosophy.

Which areas of philosophy do you find most interesting and why?

I don't like categorizing and categories in general – which apparently already moves me to one of them, namely continental philosophy. So this is my main interest in terms of philosophical schools. And from this area preferably philosophy of existence and atheist type of existentialism.
However, if you would ask me about the field of interest, I would go for moral philosophy (ethics).

Which philosopher do you find most interesting and why?

Well… with greatest humbleness – myself. Why? As if I understand philosophy mainly as the inquiry how to live a life, then naturally everyone shall be interested in his own life & way of living it in the first place. Despite of my enormous respect to all great philosophers and their works, here it really fits what already Nietzsche said: "Do not follow me; follow yourself." [The Gay Science, p. 99]

Which philosophy book or article do you find most interesting and why?

The word "most" (indicating some kind of peak) makes it very difficult for me to pick up one single work, as I approach the essential philosophical works rather as a mountain range of one's understanding, that is supposed to be climbed up and overcome… So, mine one would consist in works of Plato, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Jaspers, Sartre, Žižek, Halík – and probably many others. If there are fundamental ones, then it will be Einführung in die Philosophie ("Introduction to the Philosophy") by Jaspers, Fear and Trembling by Kierkegaard and Thus spoke Zarathustra by Nietzsche.

Write a quote from a philosopher or book you find interesting.

The one mentioned above (originally ascribed to J.W. von Goethe with regard to his Werther):
"Be a man and do not follow me – but yourself! But yourself!"
[F. Nietzsche, The Gay Science, p. 99]
*The Interview was originally given to our philosophical journal The Objector back in Hong Kong.

D. F. Weinhold aka The Captain, 27th Nov 2015

Part II. VIRTUE ETHICS: A 'VALUE COMPASS' IN THE POST-MORAL WORLD

[INTRODUCTION]

Virtue ethics has been commonly re-acknowledged in the second half of the previous century, promoting the idea of reversing the current moral philosophy back to ancient Greece, namely Aristotle and his notion of virtuous and ethical living, which offered a concept of ethics fundamentally different to those that developed in Europe in the following centuries – particularly by understanding the role of ethics as the way of fulfilling and maintaining the potential of human's life.

Although Aristotle's ethics was remarkably linked up to the general worldview of his time and so relying on the belief the purpose of human life, the philosophers endorsing the approach of virtue ethics based of Aristotle's concept argue that it is fully applicable even nowadays, albeit the worldview has radically changed.

In the following text, I aim to expound the general concept of virtue ethics, following by comparison of its ancient and modern version and finally, to explain why it can be fully effective even in the modern times.

[EXPOSITION]

Over the previous century, the idea of universally valid moral values and the purpose of morality has been questioned more than any time before, following not only from facing the horrific reality of worldwide military conflicts and totalitarian regimes but also from the fact that Western traditional moral philosophy seemed to be somehow lost, stuck in the crisis of own identity. Two main moral systems, utilitarianism and Kantian ethics, dominating so-far in Europe and related cultures, played a role of some sort of cultural heritage, but simultaneously were confronted with a problem aptly expressed by G. E. Anscombe: how can morality function as a law-like system without religious grounds that would guarantee validity of its requirements by existence of the 'universal lawgiver'?

But what is the main difference between the ethics then and now, in the modern age? When I mentioned changing core principles, this is what I meant – as their approach to ethics, brilliantly described in the works of Plato or Aristotle, could be briefly summarized maybe as "ethics without morality". This means that ethical rules had in the Greek society fundamentally different role to the present one. Then, people did not see moral requirements as something necessary in terms of natural (or super-natural) law, but rather as a guidelines for living a good, flourishing life and the way to achieve happiness and the highest pleasure.

For the Greeks – as Aristotle taught - virtues and ethical views were right to follow as that was the way how to practice their rationally as a basic human feature, by following which one could reach the purpose of own existence, which lies in the highest good ('summum bonum') consisting in the state of 'eudaimonia' (commonly translated as 'blessedness', or happiness and well-being) which should be the aim of effort of any human being and can be reached by virtuous life, which follows from exercising reason as a characteristic human property. A virtue ('arete') plays a role of a quality that lets its possessor to be excellent at her purpose.

As I mentioned before, this way of

thinking corresponds with general worldview of that time; every entity had some purpose the 'goodness' of it was assessed mainly with regard to fulfilling this purpose. An example of the virtue may be strength for a load-bearing mule, or visibility of a lighthouse. Virtues are set up accordingly to the purpose of an entity, so for humans it might be what leads them to state of eudaimonia, i.e. happiness or flourishing. This is the reason why to follow them and live ethical live, as it is in every one's own interest.

Ethical rules, therefore, were treated as good advices, rather sufficient that necessary conditions for a flourishing life, and generally not violating any universal principles or laws at all – hence, also not imposing the guilt or punishment if were not followed. The only what would have been thought about someone who would deliberately choose to violate them, is that he was acting irrationally.

As we can see, this is a radically different approach to ethical views that "classical" Western morality got used to, mainly for the sake of Christianity and religious beliefs linked to moral commitments. This is also what already Nietzsche criticized, suggesting to turn back to the pre-Christian era to ancient Greece and rejecting traditional morality as a "slavery of human spirit", while he denied that it would actually refer to some objective concept of universal good or evil, but rather as relevant to fulfilling some specific aim or purpose of oneself.

Even though Nietzsche's endorsed personal ethics somehow different to the Aristotle's one (for instance he would apparently argue that there is no universal purpose or the state of 'highest good' at all), but still would rather favour the original Greek's ethics, at least as an alternative concept of ethics in order to deny classical moral philosophy.

And besides differences between him and Greeks with whom he is used to be compared, such as Aristotle, as well as Callicles from Plato's works, he promoted an important view that he perhaps based on ancient Greek's philosophy, and which I already mentioned with reference to Anscombe (although she came with it much later), namely that morality without genuine religious beliefs loses its grounds and sense. She suggested that without knowing more about our psychology, and thus some "natural purpose" to which we could aim our effort and relate our moral claims or requirements, we shall also adapt Aristotelian ethics.

This idea was later elaborated by Philippa Foot, who held and endorsed the view called virtue ethics, following directly from Aristotelian approach and suggesting similar way of living, or ethical reasoning. Foot argues that even after the downfall of Aristotelian worldview, the virtue ethics as the way of fulfilling our basic human function, i.e. rationality, is sufficient and thus this approach, originating in pre-scientific world, can find its justification even in scientific or post-modern world (the first based on empirical psychology, the second then on contemporary philosophical inquiry).

[EVALUATION] When we look at the ancient ethics from our perspective of 'modern times', we need to remember not to let our understanding of this concept be affected by the "common view" on morality of most of our contemporaries, namely that the subject of morality is not any good or evil in terms of human- independent values, and that there is not any category or concept of "good" and "bad" features unless they are related to the vital aim of human effort, namely an excellence of living in terms of practicing a "good" life which leads to the ultimate happiness. Someone could argue that the instrumental role of moral requirements is rather similar to other

moral externalist theories such as utilitarianism, but I think that it is important to be careful at this point as the pursuit of potential happiness or pleasure as a potential explanation for acting morally is distinct to virtue ethics view where the 'right' behaviour simply resonates with very own nature of a being, an with regard to humans is rational but not as a calculation, but in order to achieve one's purpose and the highest good, i.e. the state of eudaimonia. The fundamental difference is in the way of setting up the value, as for Aristotle being ethical meant fulfilling the purpose given already in human nature, while later externalist views derive ethical values from the final goal but do not consider ethics as being identical with it, i.e. not being contingent but equal in some sort of "direction of value", in contributing in becoming the ideal state of being which is eudaimonia, happiness.

And as Philippa Foot shows, this is not dependent only on Aristotelian pre-scientific worldview as it is still arguable to understand "goodness" in this purpose-relevant way, principally for considering it as species-relevant, i.e. with regard not only to goodness of an individual but whole species, following her idea of 'autonomous species-dependent goodness' in terms of enhancing qualities that each single member of any species have in common (including humans) and that enable him to live 'flourishing' life in the way the species does. The fact, that the original idea of purpose in this sense may find its definition and criteria even after the collapse of Aristotelian pre-scientific and establishing our contemporary scientific worldview. A good example of it may be provided by human psychology which may provide even scientific grounds for following that or other action with regard to the ultimate purpose of 'flourishing life'. For instance, in positive psychology, the 'flourishing' life is understood as the one with an optimal human functioning, which consists in goodness, generativity, growth and resilience. The ethical principles aiming to achieving this kind of purpose would then work similarly to the Aristotelian ones; as a guidelines for living an excellent life, when not acting upon them would appear simply irrational as the agent would be harmful herself in the first place.

[FURTHER ANALYSIS] If we carry on in further analysis of virtue ethics and different approaches suggested within its frame, I would like to return to comparison of Nietzsche's view to the original one of Aristotle. In the comparison – and following the previous part regarding the worldview of ancient Greeks – it seems clear now what I want to point out. Although the general idea of "ethics without /universal/ good or evil" is common for both views, there is a significant difference in attitudes; Aristotle, on one side, believed in the final purpose of human life, namely specific state of happiness which should be achieved and maintained, whereas Nietzsche by many his remarks actually shows that for him there is no ultimate of finite purpose of being (besides of overcoming oneself and her "crude" humanity, and becoming a "free spirit") and according to him, one should continuously extend own happiness or, rather, build up own satisfaction and achieve, hence, more and higher of this "goodness" than others. There is no final purpose, amount or limit, says Nietzsche – and if there was, our final aim should be to overcome it. Whereas for Aristotle the main goal of ethics was to truly fulfil the potential of human nature and maintain it as a harmonious state, for Nietzsche this potential consisted in overcoming human nature and human purposes itself – with no enslaving mental boundaries in 'moral' values, following only those that aim to

fulfill the potential of an individual's life and to result in flourishing of the human spirit in the way which would finally – as Nietzsche suggested many times in his flowery metaphorical style – establish a new way of living, above all of the old ways and values, and hence, would create the 'over-man' ("der Übermensch"). But this approach also aims to expand, rather than maintain, once achieved value and the limit of excellence.
Nevertheless, the main framework of understanding ethics as the way how to live an excellent life and becoming more "self", more true, and meaningful, but without consideration of law-like moral requirements, resonates in both, pre-scientific Aristotle's, romantic Nietzsche's, as well as modern (for instance Foot's) virtue ethics.
[CONCLUSION] Thus, in spite of the fact the original concept of Aristotelian ethics highly relied on pre-scientific worldview and the belief in the ultimate purpose of every human being, following the analysis above which shows that the idea of 'purpose' of a human being is justified even in our modern era, namely by focusing on nature of the human psychology. Therefore, I believe that the approach of virtue ethics can be fully used even within contemporary scientific framework of the world, and also that it has not lost at all its potential to be an appealing alternative to the traditional systems of moral philosophy.

Everything you need to know about Jesus according to Hegel's Spirit of Christianity & its Faith

Emma Jasmin Viskupic

Continuing on the same not as last month, I will talk about Hegel and his vision on, let's be real, everything. Since BISLA is liberal institution with many disciplines, I believe that the topic of Christianity is more than intriguing for its students. I have been lucky enough to study *Hegel's Spirit of Christianity & its Faith* in the second year of my studies, which opened my horizons in a way I have been viewing religion and Christianity as such. So sit back, relax and read on dear ladies and gentleman.

Again, as everything, Hegel saw everything trough his unbearably tragic lenses of separation. Majority of modern problems were based on a dichotomy and religion as well. Hegel first examines the settings to which Jesus was born to. The Old Testament as we know it was also the history of the Jewish god and the settings and moments that shaped Judaism. The key concepts of the Judaism were based on opposition, division and separation: moments in the Judaic history like Abraham and the flood symbolized deep destruction and created a disbelief in history, therefore creating a separation from the nature, making people perceive it as an extreme danger. There was a shift from tranquil co-existence with nature to a destructive hostility. The reaction of the people was to dominate the nature, rather to reconcile with it once they found land to live on. From this point of, the nature became "de-divinized" leaving the people vulnerable and alone. The Jewish history and the Old Testament contain two good examples how to dominate the nature, Noah who built the arch and also his approach as an idealist who believed that trough God

the nature will be dominated – God as the master of all. Second was Nemrud, who actually dominated the nature by building a tall tower to protect his people from nature.
Hegel understands these two examples as a framework of domination, preventing the reconciliation between man and the nature – the first separation – entailing other separations: the divine & the human, God & men. Nature id therefore perceived as hostile and needed to be dominated, becomes prohibited to be idolized. Second and third separations were between man and divinity and man and a man.
This was just a brief description of the environment to which Jesus was born as a form of unification of all those dichotomies. Jesus and his teaching are aiming for reconciliation – Nature, God and social bonds. Jesus' intervention was not a form of reform or a doctrine – he targeted the roots of Judaism.
He fought against the legality of Christianity – the institutionalized form of religion into morally richer form of religion based on love. He tried to rise above the law, oppose the objectivity & heteronomy of Judaism which was based on laws and commands of the God. We can see the Kantian influence in Hegel's understanding of Jesus who promoted virtuous disposition and moral attitude against the objectivity and positivity of the Judaic law. Kantian morality was based on an individual's disposition to rise above own interest – become selfless (think of categorical imperative). Jesus was therefore creating a relationship not grounded in domination and servitude, as the Old Testament used to.

Interview with Matej Navrátil

Since this semester you are teaching a course about Identity for 2nd year students, we would be interested to hear something about your identity: Why did you choose IR?
Just to correct you, I would not reduce the issue that I am interested in only to IR. In Slovakia the IR discipline goes under the header of political science. So rather than talking about IR, I would refer to my field of interest to be political science, with focus on European studies, world politics, IR thoughts and probably my most favorite - organization theory.

What is there about that subject that makes you interested in it?
In general, I would say I enjoy working in academia. It gives you freedom of thought, if you work hard you become recognized and it is weirdly nice feeling to see your name printed in the book as an author. I like organization theory especially because it opens for new perspectives. The whole field of organization studies started in economic studies and management and it transcended through various social scientific fields and lately it offers new perspective to study of political science. It provides for new perspectives not only in European integration, but from time to time also in personal life.

Are there any books/movies or people that really influenced your career or you find very inspirational?
And you forgot to mention journal article s… but there are lots of them . You know, there were many formative things which shape my understanding of social

reality and my place in it. To learn from people is a continuing process and I believe that books and articles I've read, movies I've seen or people I've met are pieces of puzzles that eventually form my understanding of Self and the world we live in.
But to answer your question, I admire work done by organization theorists like Johan P. Olsen, James March or my tutor Jozef Batora, then I enjoy reading articles from Iver Neumann or Erik Ringmar. If I would be recognized only from half as these scholars are, I would consider myself to be successful.

Which were your favourite subjects back at high school?

That was some time ago, but it was History, Civic education and of course P.T.

Did you have any particular dream career you wanted to pursue?

Yes, I had a dream to become MD for a while, but than Chemistry classes came along. And that encounter was not pleasant.

What are some positives & negatives about living in the Slovakia according to your experience here and abroad?

I haven' t spent much time abroad to be honest, but what I observed while in Norway is that we have to reform educational system and advance the status of teachers and researchers in our society. And sometimes I feel that Slovak society acts like primordial one, i.e. it is caught in a net of homophobic, chauvinist and cleric sentiments; and it lacks critical thinking and historical memory. On the other hand, this gives an opportunity to become respected in certain field or even expert on some problematic, while in strongly institutionalized countries like Britain for instance, this would be tremendously difficult .

Is there anything you would like to say/ recommend to our students?

Yes, work hard, be kind and amazing things will happen.

COLUMNISTS:
MÁRIO LAPOŠ
EMMA JASMIN VISKUPIČ

EDITORIAL STAFF:
BARBARA KELEMEN
SAMUEL HÝRAVÝ
TOMÁŠ BADIN

PUBLIC RELATIONS:
MÁRIO LAPOŠ

GRAPHIC EDITOR:
TOMÁŠ BADIN

EDITOR IN CHIEF:
BARBARA KELEMEN
barbarakelemenova@gmail.com

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.