

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

By Eric George

Morality and the mind, very profound topics for philosophical investigation and reflection, indeed for this issue of Philosophy Pathways we have one essay on the philosophy of mind and two essays to do with morality, all of which are from three very capable philosophers and from differing angles.

When academic thinkers have something of an intellectual sparring match between each other on a given subject, it is always interesting to obtain a third party opinion on the crossing of swords of such erudite champions. Interesting because, depending on whether this third party opinion is lent in support of one or the other champions, does much to truly offer some sort of extra layer of well-informed judgement on why one champion or the other is striking, parrying well enough or... isn't. In this way, the Thomist - Matthew Su, a philosophy and law student gives his thoughts on the interactions between philosophers James Ross and Peter Dillard in this paper, 'Ross Contra Dillard'. Su then is this third party observer, who in this paper, concerns himself with a defense of Ross' argument for the immateriality of some aspects of thought, from the 'determinacy' of formal thinking. The argument itself is defended against the objections of Peter Dillard, Dillard's objections are as Su notes, first, '...that Ross does not show formal thinking to be necessarily determinate, because alternatives are possible...'; and second, '...that Ross has not shown thought, even if it is 'indeterminate,' to be genuinely sui generis and thus Ross does not demonstrate that thought is immaterial.'. Peter Dillard's objections are in Su's opinion, however, ultimately, '...doomed to self-refutation.' An intellectually enjoyable insight into an informed thinker's opinions concerning Ross and Dillard, and their differing evaluations on the subject matter at hand. Su here presents some legitimate insightful judgements and evaluations on the interaction between two exemplary philosophers.

In 'Is it Immoral to kill animals?', Wyle Tan lays out his reasons as to why meat consumption need not be abolished, denying that the notion raised by animal rights activists (that killing animals for meat consumption should be abolished) is neither logically conclusive or morally compelling. Tan justifies this denial of this notion by plainly yet effectively, laying out critiques against the two primary contentions for the positive case by animal rights activists, these two contentions being: (a) 'Animals can suffer and we should minimize suffering of all beings' and (b) 'Animals have innate rights to life equal to human rights'. Tan's critiques are basically clear-cut and fundamentally rely on exposing certain self-contradictions that arise as a result of attempting to affirm the two contentions without first ensuring that such contentions are able to be defended sufficiently without inconsistencies arising from the defense, to begin with. Although not without noting a positive aspect of the supposed case of the immorality of killing animals for meat consumption, namely, that it has done much to raise awareness of the push for the humane treatment of animal welfare, an implication that could be seen to be affirmed in Tan's conclusion is that just because this is a good thing, it does not follow from this that therefore, the notion that killing animals for consumption is immoral, is thereby true. Tan highlights the need for a more subjective approach, where each individual is, 'left to decide on whether to eat meat or not according to our emotional response and a view of our ideal self.' A simple yet enjoyable and stimulating read.

Ivan Brian L. Inductivo gives his thoughts concerning sexual practices and morality in his paper, wittingly titled, 'Desensitization from a Gra(e)y Morality...'. Inductivo opens with his view that there is an attempt in the Fifty Shades of Grey storyline, to take a classic (and from this, innocent) princess 'Cinderella' motif and distort it, which not only makes 'an unconventional analogy' between the two but ultimately results in stripping down romance into nothing more than sexual deviancy. From this, the essential causes for concern for Inductivo in the paper are two-fold, first, that if philosophers and ethicists do not become more actively engaged with the public perception of morality as is expressed specifically through entertainment platforms (such as the novel-inspired movie in question, 'Fifty Shades of Grey') this removes vitally needed discussion required for properly informed evaluations of such perceptions. Second, that the desensitization of the public to something that could indeed be immoral or deviant, leads to the gradual acceptance of such things which as a result reformulates the moral consciousness of society to make something moral or non-deviant which is in actuality, not. Inductivo expresses that there is a link between the two concerns, and encourages philosophers and ethicists alike to become more actively engaged by implying a sort of duty-bound role that such informed academics have in relation to the public and their moral translation of current trends so that the public may become morally vigilant as a result.

My grateful thanks to Geoffrey Klempner for giving me this opportunity to be the editor of another issue of Philosophy Pathways. Now, without further ado, it is a pleasure and honour to present, Philosophy Pathways Issue 204.