

## **Editor's Introduction**

### **by Paul Fagan**

This month's *Philosophy Pathways* offers two articles; with the first being an explanation of environmentalist thought from the perspective of Friedrich Nietzsche. The second is an article focusing upon two historic Russian philosophers and their views on the process of cognition.

Firstly, Jed Lea-Henry provides a paper that, apart from being an enjoyable read, very unusually combines the coupling of environmentalism and Nietzsche. It starts by furnishing the opinion of one commentator, namely David Deutsch, who believes that we should attempt to directly solve the problem of climate change by utilising technology: removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by developing artificial 'trees' provides one example. This opposes the current path of modifying the source of the problem and reducing the amount of pollutants entering the atmosphere. The commentator has some strong opinions here, and feels that humanity runs the risk of losing its ability to solve problems if those such as climate change are not tackled head on: philosophers from many backgrounds would have something to say about this stance. Furthermore, he also feels that notions of sustainability stifle humanity's progress and limit economic activity: environmentalists who adhere to the notion of *sustainable development* may disagree here.

After this, the author then goes on to provide his own argument as to why we have followed the path that merely modifies current behaviour. He firstly notes that international conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations are keen to apportion blame to countries for historic pollution, and by applying Nietzschean thought, this process may be explained by accepting that a people are primarily predisposed to castigate wrongdoers.

Overall, for me, this piece provokes intriguing questions that remain unanswered and would benefit from deeper philosophical scrutiny: for instance, would humanity really lose its problem solving ability if it embraced sustainability? And if we are so intent on punishing others, then why are the major polluters not also charged with developing the technology to remove the pollutants from the atmosphere?

The second article is written by two philosophers from Penza State University in Russia. I was initially curious as to the contents of this article, as apart from the Russian Anarchist Bakunin and philosophical insight gained from the literary works of Russian authors such as Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, I remain largely uneducated with regards to Russian philosophy. Now, although issue 215 of *Philosophy Pathways* focused upon Russian philosophy, I feel that my predicament may also be true of others in the western world, where

Russian philosophy may have been overlooked. Nevertheless, this piece may provide an introduction for some, to a new area of philosophising.

The authors describe how Russian philosophy has explained cognition by combining classical European philosophy, particularly the German variety, with the traditions of Eastern Christianity. However, as the foreign elements were ‘misinterpreted’, Russian thinkers developed approaches with their own distinct style.

The majority of the work recounts the philosophy of P. Yurkevich (1826-1874) who believed that the heart perceived ‘insights of the truth’ directly and intuitively, whereas the mind comprehended them through a logical process. His work was furthered by I.A. Ilyin (1883-1954) who developed a theory of intuitivism, where ‘the primary sin of philosophy is the compulsion of life to the logical laws’. Now, more detail concerning Ilyin’s thoughts would have been welcome here; nevertheless, the highlighting of these two philosophers may whet your appetite to seek further reading.

And so there you go. An edition of *Philosophy Pathways* is provided that does not follow a ploughed furrow and hopefully once again, provides food for thought.

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