Report on the APA Berry Fund grant for Phi on New York

In May 2018, I was awarded a $1,000.00 grant from the APA's Berry Fund for Public Philosophy. This grant was to support the establishment of Phi on New York, an online ‘magazine’ where New York-based philosophers could write essays, editorials, white-papers, and précis on issues and questions of relevance to the lived experience of New Yorkers. The goal of the magazine was to provide a forum for philosophical discussion concerning life in the city and critical analysis of the city’s various institutions (political, social, cultural, educational, etc.).

The inaugural issue of the magazine went live in the summer of 2019, featuring an essay by Linda Martín Alcoff on how the speech of victims and the oppressed needs to be ‘echoed’ in order to effect lasting change; an argument from Ian Olasov for New York City to transition from taxing income to taxing wealth; a reasoned plea from Jennifer Scuro for New York’s transit system to become more accommodating to the needs of the non-able bodied; and a discussion of principles of political ecology and environmental justice from Omar Dahbour. Additional pieces are currently undergoing the editorial process, and still others have been pledged.

My aspirations for the project remain high, although reaching the point where an inaugural issue of the magazine was ready to go live proved far more challenging than I had thought it would be. Establishing the digital platform and creating the infrastructure of the site was simple enough (with the help of a professional web master!); securing suitable submissions from philosophers was where matters became more difficult. Many fewer contributions were actually submitted than promised, even after repeated exchanges, and of those that were submitted often needed considerable editing to fit the needs of a non-technical, public-facing magazine.

The magazine is, I believe, a useful, perhaps even necessary platform for philosophical engagement on the local-level, and I intend to see it grow into a sustainable enterprise. This will likely require a more concerted effort in outreach and promotion. To that end, I will be presenting a report on this project at the upcoming Public Philosophy Network conference in East Lansing, Michigan; I am also in the process of scheduling a web-interview on meaningoflife.tv. Perhaps an APA guest blog post would be useful as well.
Grant Expenditures

Web design expertise (low bono): $250

Hosting/site operational fees: $450

Content management/editorial work: $300

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