energeia

spring 2012

energeia

spring 2012

energeia

editor Stephanie Connolly

staff Genevieve Allen
Nathan Goldman
Danielle Nelson
Ian Tuttle

faculty advisor Fawn Trigg

cover by Carlin Felt:
Portrait

contents

artwork

Explaining Jokes

Wesley Schantz

Hey there, handy clerk, young man, dear brother
Nicholas, how is it living alone?
Seriocomic heroic stereotype,
With the astrology books by your bed
For reading young wives' horoscopes, lying
To them, for them, with them, bidding husbands
Truss themselves in attic bathtubs, awake
Below while they wait out the flood asleep—
How is it smarting with the coulter brand?
Or was that your intention, bargaining
On burning first for the sake of the joke,
Buying an indulgence from him later?
Would you mind explaining, just between us,
Between trysts, how you lived so long ago
And still were fooling like we're doing now,
And still we're laughing at the resemblance?

Landscape/ *Carlin Felt*

Smoke in the Snow

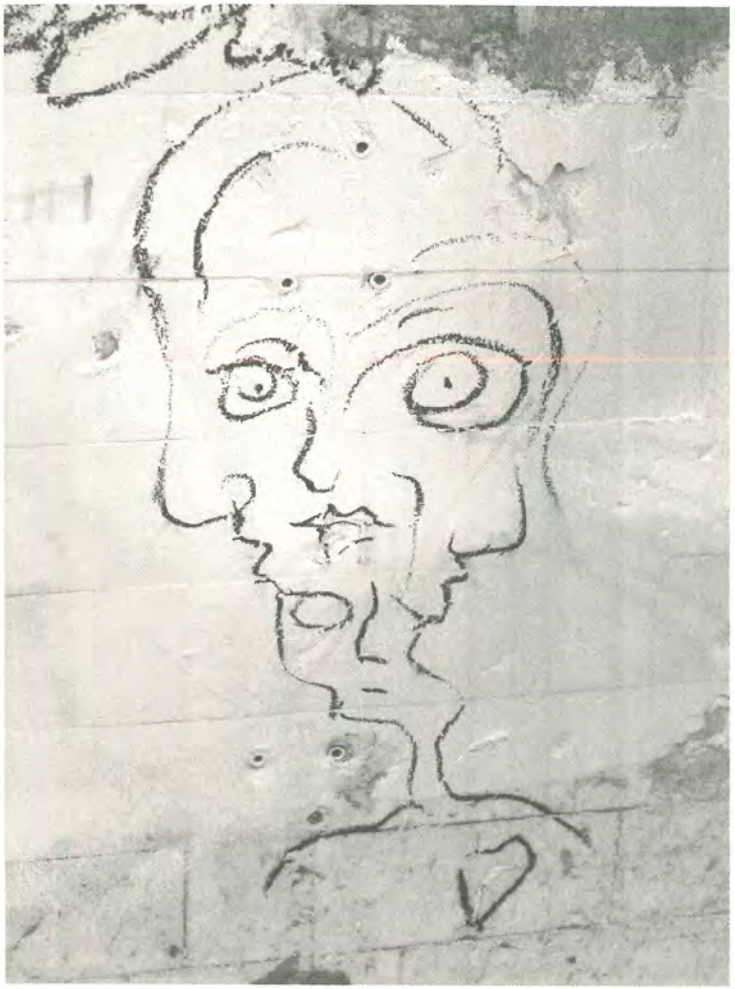
Ciara Barrick

We smoked filtered cigarettes in the grey daylight as the snow silently fell from its high precipice. You sniffled quietly, flipping the collar of your pea coat up to cover your ears. He rubbed his calloused hands together rapidly and rocked from his left suede shoe to his right. The blue smoke drifted straight up above our heads.

Watch the smoke drift through the town between the snowflakes, unique in each way you can see. Now it belongs to the cigars of three big-bellied, middle-aged Italian men. They lounge with their ankles resting on their knees and their cigars instruments of declaration. "No Giuseppe! He was with my daughter!" A car whizzes by and the smoke flutters further down the street. It's captured by the panting children underdressed on the wintry sidewalks as they exhale, their snot wiped with class along a lime green polyester sleeve. Dick chases Jane through the crowds before the bakery, little lungs expounding little tufts of cold smoke. Now it's flooding out of the bakery window and sirens are heard approaching from far off in the distance. A large woman, whose upper half is mostly chin, chest, and breast, bursts through the back door with a rolling pin raised above her head and a singed apron. The smoke billows out of the doors, up the street along the apartment building's brick walls. Now it belongs to a twenty-something, mascaraed ex-girlfriend

who holds a lighter beneath his love letter outside her window in the bitter air. Pieces of his passion float to the cement underworld, leaving only a trail of smoke for her to regret missing. A mustached Mexican pushing a dolly cart of crated crap from the market to his truck kicks up the pieces. A cigarette hangs safe and loose from his lips as his feet scuffle over some forgotten words. The smoke falls over his shoulders and into the espresso cups of three married women seated outside on a day far too cold but wishing to reminisce on days when snow kept them from class, not the carpool. The steam warms their faces but leaves their noses red.

We watched from the corner as you nudged me and offered me a light.



Le graffiti dans le Métro de Paris/ *Keeley Pratt*

Untitled/ *Henley Moore*

On the End of the First Book of Apollonius' *Conics*

Brendon Lasell

Near the beginning of his *Conics*, Apollonius cuts cones with planes to generate three different kinds of conic section: parabolas, hyperbolas, and ellipses. He shows that each of these sections can be understood by means of its relation to two straight lines, which he calls an *upright side* and a *transverse diameter*,[1] and an angle (the angle between the *ordinates* and the diameter). After completing the initial construction of these conic sections in Proposition 13, he demonstrates the next 37 propositions without referring directly to the cones they come from. Instead, he uses only the upright and transverse sides and the given angle to prove a variety of complicated theorems about parabolas, ellipses and hyperbolas. Only then, in Propositions 52 through 58, does he return to the cone. In these propositions near the end of the book he shows that it is always possible to construct a section of a cone with any given upright side and transverse diameter and any given angle between its ordinates and diameter.

Why did Apollonius end Book I in this way? In proving Propositions 52 through 58 he uses many of the propositions between 15 and 51. This might suggest that he needs to work through

[1] In a parabola we do not strictly speaking have a transverse diameter; we simply have a diameter.

most of the propositions in Book I to show that for any upright and transverse there is always a conic section. We might then understand the whole first book as intended to show this. But it turns out that he did not have to use any proposition in the *Conics* beyond 11–13 to prove 52–58. He could therefore have shown immediately after Propositions 13 that it is possible to find conic sections with any given upright and transverse side, and never returned to the cone after that.

We therefore have to ask again: why did he wait until the end of Book I to prove 52–58? Perhaps he judged that the constructions he uses in these propositions are better than anything he could have done immediately after Proposition 13. To show *that* something is true is different from showing *why*, and the constructions Apollonius uses may be better at showing us why there are conic sections with any given upright and transverse side. In any case, to explore this question it helps to compare the constructions Apollonius gives in Propositions 52–58 with the ones he might have given immediately after Proposition 13. Here are some constructions that use only Propositions 11–13.

The hyperbola

Let there be two bounded straight lines *AB* and *BC* perpendicular to each other, let *AB* be produced to *L*, and let there be a given angle *ABH* ; it is required to find in the plane through the lines *AB*, *BC* an hyperbola whose diameter will be the

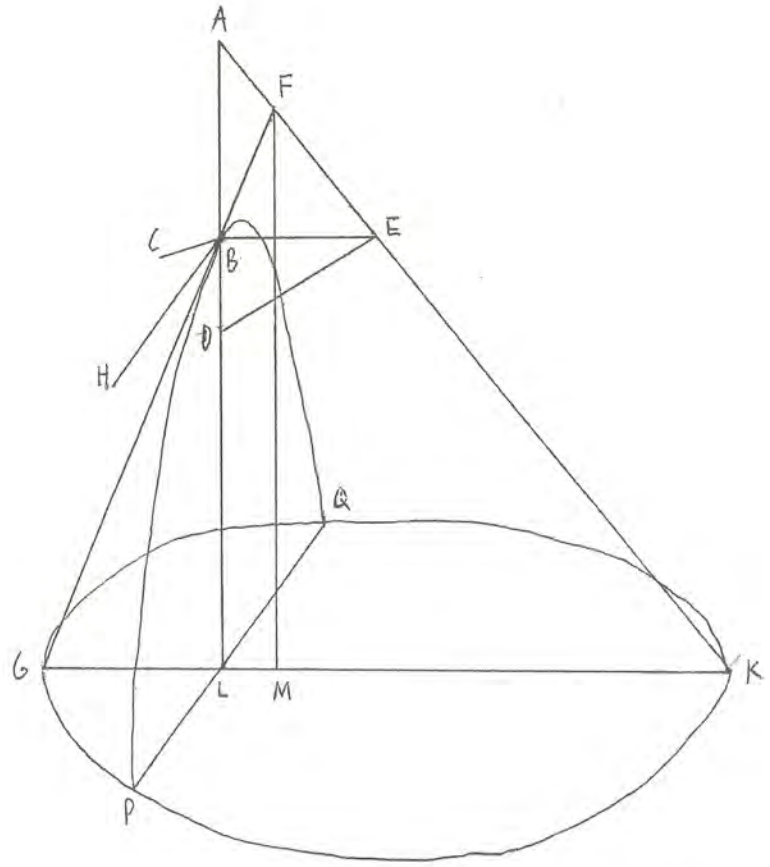


Figure 1/ *Brendon Lasell*

straight line *ABL* and vertex *B*, and upright side the straight line *BC* , and where the straight lines dropped from the section to *BL* at the given angle *ABH* will equal in square the rectangles applied to *BC* having as breadths the straight lines cut off by them from *B* and projecting beyond by a figure similar and similarly situated to the rectangle *AB, BC* .

Let *AB* be produced to *D* so that *BD* is equal to *BC* . Draw a line *BE* perpendicular to the line *BH* and not in the plane *ABH*. Let *AE* and *DE* be joined. Draw line *BF* from *B* in the plane through *AB* and *BE* such that angle *ABF* is equal to angle *BED* (which must be less than angle *ABE*, by Euclid's Elements I 32). Extend line *BF* beyond *B* to a point *G*. Draw a parallel *GK* to *BE* through *G* meeting *AE* extended at *K*. Let *AD*, extended if necessary, meet *GK* at *L*, and draw *FM* from *F* parallel to AD and meeting *GK* at *M*. Draw a line *PLQ* through *L* parallel to *BH*. Draw a circle *GQK* with diameter *GK* in the plane through *PLQ* and *GK*, and let this circle meet *PLQ* at *P* and *Q*. Let a cone be conceived whose vertex is the point *F* and whose base is the circle *GQK*.

Since the lines *PLQ* and *GK* are parallel to the lines *BH* and *BE*, respectively, and *BH* is perpendicular to *BE*, it follows that the line *PLQ* is perpendicular to the line *GK*. Since a cone, whose base is the circle *GQK* and whose vertex is the point *F*, has been cut by a plane *FGK* through its axis, and also by another plane *ABH* cutting the base of the cone in a straight line *PLQ* perpendicular to the base *GK* of the axial triangle *FGK*, and

the diameter *BL* of the section meets the side *FK* of the axial triangle at the point *A* beyond the vertex of the cone, it follows (by Apollonius' Proposition I 12) that the resulting section *PBQ* of the cone is an hyperbola whose vertex is the point *B* where a side of the axial triangle meets the cutting plane, whose transverse side is the line *AB*, and whose ordinates meet the diameter at angle *BLP*, which is equal to the given angle *ABH*.

Now angle *BED* is equal to angle *ABF*, and angle *ABF* is equal to angle *GFM*. Moreover, because *FM* is parallel to *BD* and *BE* is parallel to *GM*, angle *GMF* is equal to angle *EBD*. Therefore triangle *GFM* is similar to triangle *DEB*. Consequently,

$$GM : FM :: BD : BE.$$

Again, triangle ABE is similar to triangle *FMK*, and therefore

$$MK : FM :: BE : AB.$$

Therefore

$$GM : FM \text{ comp. } MK : FM :: BD : BE \text{ comp. } BE : AB$$
$$:: BD : AB$$
$$:: BC : AB.$$

But

$$GM : FM \text{ comp. } MK : FM :: \text{rect.}GM, MK : \text{sq.}FM.$$

Therefore

$$\text{rect.}GM, MK : \text{sq.}FM :: BC : AB.$$

But also (by I 12)

$$\text{rect.}GM, MK : \text{sq.}FM :: \text{upright side} : AB.$$

Therefore the line *BC* is equal to the upright side of the hyperbola *PBQ*.

Q. E. F.

The ellipse

Let there be two bounded straight lines *AB* and *BC* perpendicular to each other, and let there be a given angle *ABH*; it is required to find in the plane through the lines *AB*, *BC* an ellipse whose diameter will be the straight line *AB* and vertex *B*, and upright side the straight line *BC*, and where the straight lines dropped from the section to *AB* at the given angle *ABH* will equal in square the rectangles applied to *BC* having as breadths the straight lines cut off by them from *B* and falling short by a figure similar and similarly situated to the rectangle *AB, BC*.

We again set *BD* equal to *BC*, taking *D* on line *AB* or *AB* extended. We proceed as for the hyperbola, drawing some line *BE* perpendicular to *BH*, and connecting *D* and *E*. We draw *BG* below *B* such that angle *GBA* is equal to angle *BED*, and extend it above *BE* until it meets *AE* extended at *F*.

But in the construction for the ellipse, unlike in the case of the hyperbola, we need to make sure make *BE* is not too long. For to guarantee that *GB* extended will meet *AE* extended above the line *BE*, we need angle *GBA* (which is equal to angle *BED*) to be greater than angle *BAE*. If *BE* were too long, then angle *BED* would become too small. To know how long to make *BE*, we need the following lemma.

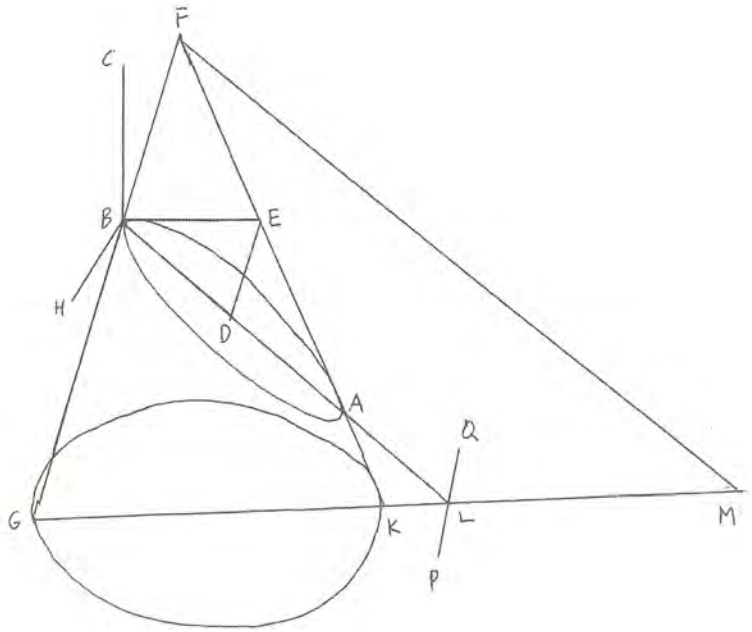


Figure 2/*Brendon Lasell*

Lemma:

If

$$\text{sq.}BE < \text{rect.}BD, BA,$$

then

$$\angle BED > \angle BAE.$$

Proof: If angle *BED* were equal to angle *BAE*, then triangle *BED* would be similar to triangle *BAE*, and so

$$BD : BE :: BE : BA,$$

and therefore

$$\text{rect.}BD, BA = \text{sq.}BE.$$

If *BE* were any smaller, then angle *BED* would be larger and angle *BAE* would be smaller, so that angle *BED* would be larger than angle *BAE*.
Q. E. D.

So we make sure to construct *BE* so that the square on *BE* is less than the rectangle on *BD* and *BA*. Note that once we construct the ellipse that the rectangle on *BD* on *BA* is the rectangle on the upright and the transverse, and this rectangle is (by I 15) equal to the square on the conjugate diameter. Therefore the condition of the lemma amounts to requiring that the line *BE* be less than the conjugate diameter of the ellipse we are constructing. This means that there is a limit to the shape of the cone that can provide us with a given ellipse: the cone must in a certain sense be broad enough. The larger the transverse diameter of the ellipse, the broader a cone we have to use.

The construction then proceeds just as in

the hyperbola case. Note that there is no need to break it up into different cases depending on whether *BC* is greater than or less than *AB*, as Apollonius does.

The parabola

In the case of the parabola, the construction is the same as for the hyperbola, except that we draw *FE* parallel to the diameter *BL*.

Piedra Negra Sobre Una Piedra Blanca

César Vallejo

Me moriré en París con aguacero,
un día del cual tengo ya el recuerdo.
Me moriré en París -y no me corro-
tal vez un jueves, como es hoy, de otoño.

Jueves será, porque hoy, jueves, que proso
estos versos, los húmeros me he puesto
a la mala y, jamás como hoy, me he vuelto,
con todo mi camino, a verme solo.

César Vallejo ha muerto, le pegaban
todos sin que él les haga nada;
le daban duro con un palo y duro

también con una soga; son testigos
los días jueves y los huesos húmeros,
la soledad, la lluvia, los caminos . . .

Black Stone Upon A White Stone

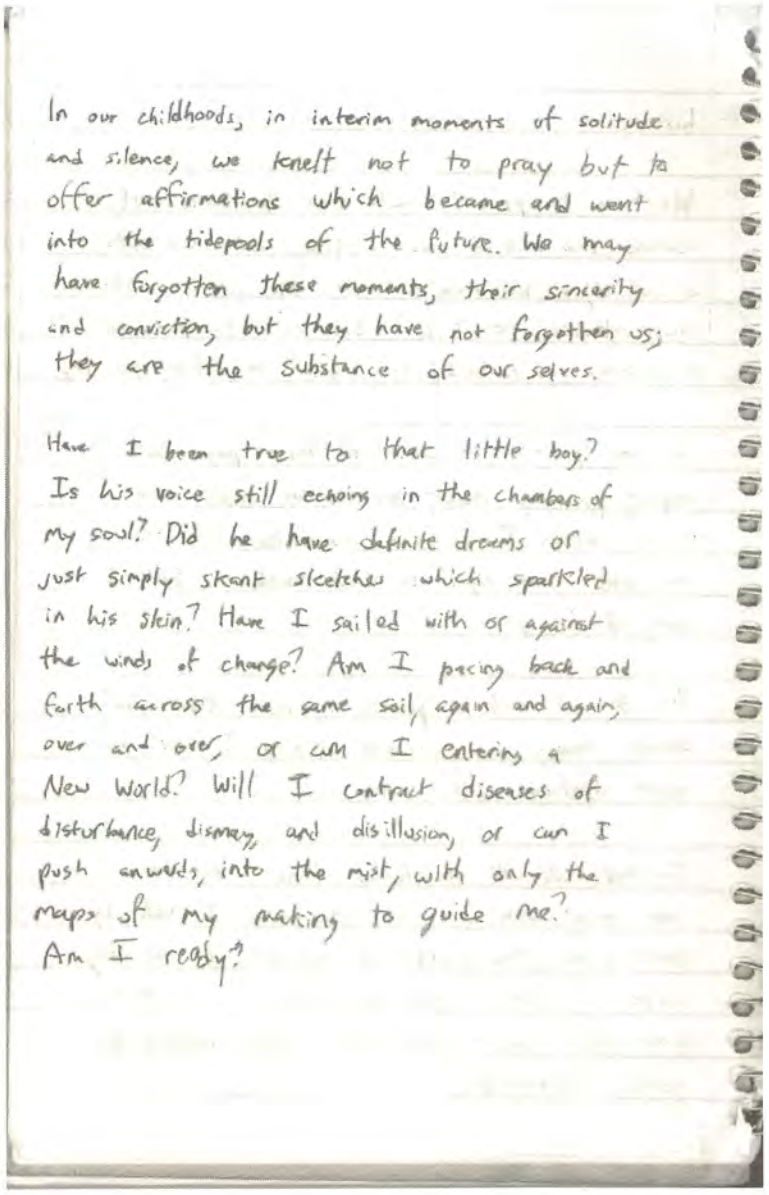
Translated by Daniel Rodriguez

I will die in Paris from the heaviest rain,
a day which I already have to remember.
I will die in Paris -I do not run away-
most likely a Thursday, like today, in November.

On a Thursday, for today, Thursday, prosifies
these verses, my humerus bones have been put on
poorly and, never like today, have I become sur
prised,
with looking down my road, to see myself anon.

Cesar Vallejo has died, he was stuck by
everyone for doing nothing at all;
they beat him hard with a stick and toughened

Him up with a rope as well; witnesses are
the days of Thursdays and all the humerus bones,
The loneliness, the heavy rain, all of my roads . . .



In our childhoods, in interim moments of solitude and silence, we knelt not to pray but to offer affirmations which became and went into the tidepools of the future. We may have forgotten these moments, their sincerity and conviction, but they have not forgotten us; they are the substance of our selves.

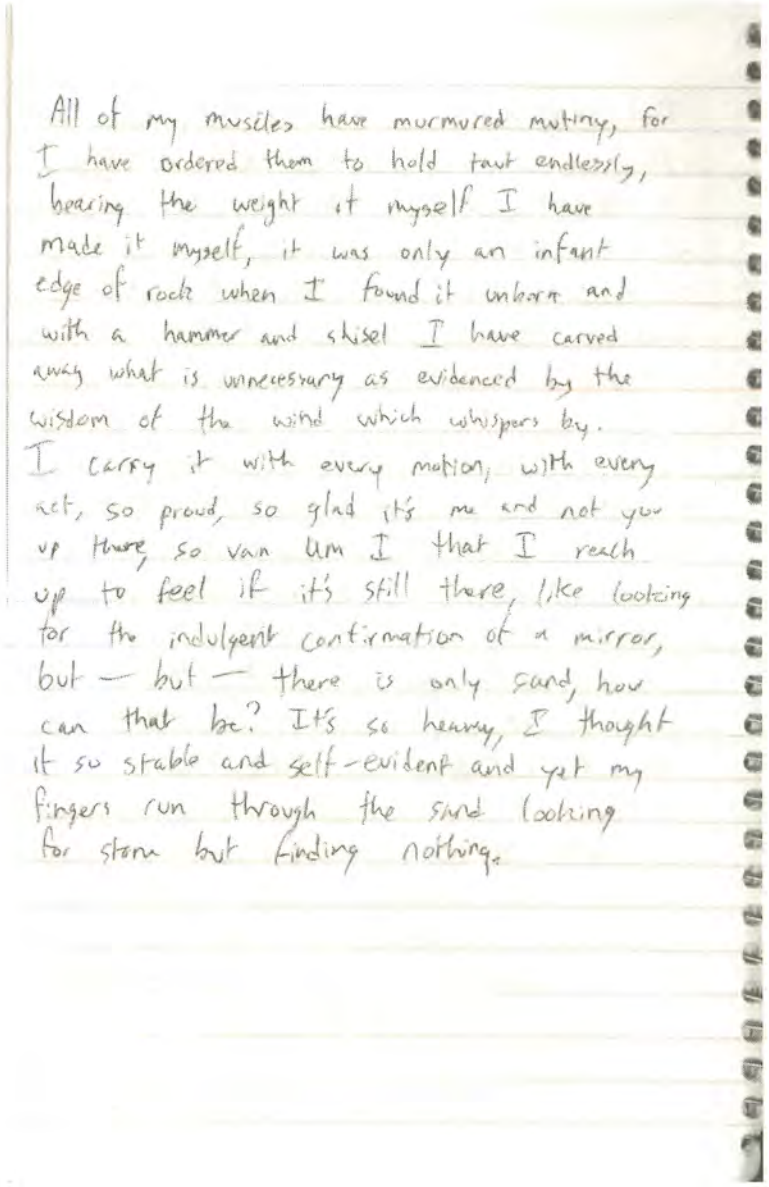
Have I been true to that little boy? Is his voice still echoing in the chambers of my soul? Did he have definite dreams or just simply scant sketches which sparkled in his skin? Have I sailed with or against the winds of change? Am I pacing back and forth across the same soil, again and again, over and over, or am I entering a New World? Will I contract diseases of disturbance, dismay, and disillusion, or can I push onwards, into the mist, with only the maps of my making to guide me? Am I ready?

Affirmations

M. W. Fogleman

In our childhoods, in interim moments of solitude and silence, we knelt not to pray but to offer affirmations which became and went into the tide pools of the future. We may have forgotten these moments, their sincerity and conviction, but they have not forgotten us; they are the substance of our selves.

Have I been true to that little boy? Is his voice still echoing in the chambers of my soul? Did he have definite dreams or just simply scant sketches which sparkled in his skin? Have I sailed with or against the winds of change? Am I pacing back and forth across the same soil, again and again, over and over, or am I entering a New World? Will I contract diseases of disturbance, dismay and disillusion, or can I push onwards, into the mist, with only the maps of my making to guide me? Am I ready?


All of my muscles have murmured mutiny, for I have ordered them to hold taut endlessly, bearing the weight of myself. I have made it myself, it was only an infant edge of rock when I found it unborn and with a hammer and chisel I have carved away what is unnecessary as evidenced by the wisdom of the wind which whispers by. I carry it with every motion, with every act, so proud, so glad it's me and not you up there, so vain am I that I reach up to feel if it's still there, like looking for the indulgent confirmation of a mirror, but — but — there is only sand, how can that be? It's so heavy, I thought it so stable and self-evident and yet my fingers run through the sand looking for stone but finding nothing.

Mutïny

All of my muscles have murmured mutiny, for I have ordered them to hold taut endlessly, bearing the weight of myself. I have made it myself, it was only an infant edge of rock when I found it unborn and with a hammer and chisel I have carved away what is unnecessary as evidence by the wisdom of the wind which whispers by. I carry it with every motion, with every act, so proud, so glad it's me and not you up there, so vain am I that I reach up to feel if it's still there, like looking for the indulgent confirmation of a mirror, but — but — there is only sand, how can that be? It's so heavy, I thought it so stable and self-evident and yet my fingers run through the sand looking for stone but finding nothing.

On Variation

VARIATION ON A THOUGHT
Notes (excerpt)

"The eternal silence of these infinite spaces FRIGHTENS ME."

This phrase—the force with which it wants to imprint itself upon our souls, and the magnificence of its form has made it one of the most famous utterances ever articulated—it is a Poem and not at all a Thought.

For Eternal and Infinite are symbols of the ineffable. Their value is entirely emotional. They act only on a certain sensibility. They provoke: the particular sensation of the impotence of our faculty to imagine.

Pascal introduces literature to the use and abuse of these terms which are very good for poetry and nothing else.

He composes this sentence with a symmetric arrangement, a sort of formidable image of equilibrium, apart from which he places in opposition (and, as a man is isolated, lost in the heavens, negligible and thinking) the phrase: ...FRIGHTENS ME.

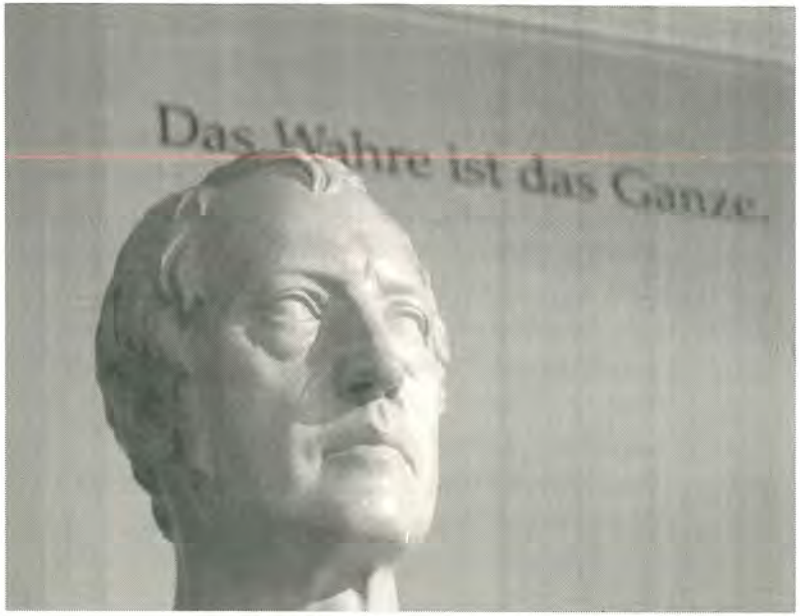
Observe how the inhuman which reigns in the heavens is established, represented by this form of grand verse, of which words of the same function are adjacent to each other and reinforce each other in their effects: noun and noun, silence with spaces; epithet with epithet: infinite manifests eternal.

This vast verse constitutes the rhetorical form of a system complete in itself, a "UNIVERSE"...

As for what is human, what concerns life, consciousness, terror, this is all held in one rebuttal: ...FRIGHTENS ME.

The poem is perfect.

—Paul Valéry



Das Hegelhaus in Stuttgart, Deutschland/ *Keeley Pratt*

Valéry's claim in his brief essay, Variation on a Thought, is that this pensée by Pascal is not a thought, but a poem. Valéry must know that this is, in the initial and factual sense, a lie—and yet he presses on. What justifies this claim? How does Valery think, read, and write in relation to Pascal? How should we?

In the very title of the essay, we intimate the boldness of his activity: Variation. Valéry restates the thought, proceeds to call it a "phrase" and then recasts it as a poem, making use of its words while abandoning their context and their original significance. It is of no importance that Pascal's book is entitled Pensées, not Poèmes; nor is it worth noting that the Eternal and Infinite have meanings and "values" beyond the "emotional," namely the mathematical and physical, the philosophical and theological. Liberated from factual fetters, Valéry reads, hears, and restates in the original thought something new—he finds a poem. We might call this a beautiful lie.

When we read Pascal's Pensées, we are readers of thoughts, not hearers of poems. We are good readers when we contemplate the meaning of a thought; we are average readers when we pause to confirm our comprehension; we are mediocre readers when we move on to the next thought, without any pause whatsoever. None of these readers speak the thought out loud, and so they are deaf to euphony. But Valéry dwells in Pascal's thought like a person infatuated with a poem. He copies the thought down and carries it in his back pocket for peeking at. He cannot help but cele-

brate the sounds on his tongue, letting the syllables tickle his throat and thoughts. Here he begins to hear the poem, recognizing emotional symbols, audible equilibrium and opposing imbalance, all knit tight in a careful construction. Valéry presses on, unsatisfied with mere appreciation and the passive acts of replication, recitation and memorization. He advances past absorption and reflection into the unknown by means of regeneration, a rebirth active and entire. The Variation is the child of this re-birth, the means by which Valery's process of hearing is reproduced in his reader's ear. The thought heard becomes a poem just as its reader becomes a hearer, admitting beauty and emotion, symmetry and symphony, life and breath to what was only ink on the page, black and dead. Two specific attributes of Valéry's Variation limit our conception of the activity of variation: hearing and attribution. By considering and broadening them, we will come to justify his claim, and appreciate his essay as a prime example of a genre, and perhaps art itself, rather than considering it merely a singularly interesting (or deluded) artifact.

First, hearing. We have seen hearing as a means towards interpreting Pascal's pensée as a poem, but more generally, hearing is listening, the basis of speaking and conversation. One does not need to literally hear a thought to listen and respond to it. Nor does the product of listening, a response, need to be a poem.

Second, attribution. This particular thought, this pensée, can only be transformed into

a poem by an essay like Valery's, which explicitly connects itself to its source before transcending it. But variation itself does not require this attribution, nor does the reader need to make the connection between the variation and it source, for it is often the case that the variation has become a source in itself. One might argue that all thought, all art, all poetry is variation. Milton is a variation on Dante, Virgil, and Homer before him, and each of these men harness voice itself; we cannot imagine Picasso without cave drawings; this pattern is not parasitism but progress, not deviation or defilement but the culmination of dialogue. Variation is creation.

In sum, Valéry's essay is indeed a variation on Pascal's pensée. Valéry understands what Pascal was trying to achieve, but he is not confined by it—it is a provocation. True thought, true creation begins in variation; it is indebted to its predecessors; it accepts and admires them while seeking its own place in humanity's annals. As thinkers, artists, and humans, we look to our ancestors to understand them and to admit their thoughts as the beginnings of our own. It seems we have found answers to our questions about Valéry's essay, but this is not our end—it is our beginning. We have been summoned to perform the activity of Variation.

Eiffel from the Pont Alexandre III/ *Michael Green*

Selections from *Du côté de chez Swann*

Marcel Proust

Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure. Parfois, à peine ma bougie éteinte, mes yeux se fermaient si vite que je n'avais pas le temps de me dire: «Je m'endors.» Et, une demi-heure après, la pensée qu'il était temps de chercher le sommeil m'éveillait; je voulais poser le volume que je croyais avoir encore dans les mains et souffler ma lumière; je n'avais pas cessé en dormant de faire des réflexions sur ce que je venais de lire, mais ces réflexions avaient pris un tour un peu particulier; il me semblait que j'étais moi-même ce dont parlait l'ouvrage: une église, un quatuor, la rivalité de François Ier et de Charles Quint. Cette croyance survivait pendant quelques secondes à mon réveil; elle ne choquait pas ma raison mais pesait comme des écailles sur mes yeux et les empêchait de se rendre compte que le bougeoir n'était plus allumé. Puis elle commençait à me devenir inintelligible, comme après la métempsycose les pensées d'une existence antérieure; le sujet du livre se détachait de moi, j'étais libre de m'y appliquer ou non; aussitôt je recouvrais la vue et j'étais bien étonné de trouver autour de moi une obscurité, douce et reposante pour mes yeux, mais peut-être plus encore pour mon esprit, à qui elle apparaissait comme une chose sans cause, incompréhensible, comme une chose vraiment obscure.

Selections from *Swann's Way*

translated by Jacob Garrett

For a long time, I'd lie down to bed at a good hour. Sometimes, scarcely after my candle had been put out, my eyes would shut so quickly that I'd not have the time to say to myself: "I sleep". And, half an hour later, the thought that it was time to search for sleep would awake me; I would want to put down the volume that I believed to have still in my hands, and to blow out my light; I had not ceased in slumber to make reflections upon that which I was reading, but these reflections had taken a turn a a little peculiar ; it seemed to me that I was myself of that which the work spoke: a church, a quartet, the rivalry between Francois I and Charles V. That notion would survive during some seconds of my waking; it did not shock my reason, but weighed like scales upon my eyes and impeded them from realizing that the candle was no longer lit. Then it would begin to become unintelligible to me, like after metempsychosis the thoughts of a previous existence; the subject of the book would detach itself from me, I was free to apply myself to it or not; at once I would recover sight and I would be well surprised to find surrounding me a darkness, sweet and restful for my eyes, but perhaps still more for my mind, to which it appeared like a thing without cause, incomprehensible, like a thing truly darkened. I'd ask myself what hour it could

Je me demandais quelle heure il pouvait être; j'entendais le sifflement des trains qui, plus ou moins éloigné, comme le chant d'un oiseau dans une forêt, relevant les distances, me décrivait l'étendue de la campagne déserte où le voyageur se hâte vers la station prochaine; et le petit chemin qu'il suit va être gravé dans son souvenir par l'excitation qu'il doit à des lieux nouveaux, à des actes inaccoutumés, à la causerie récente et aux adieux sous la lampe étrangère qui le suivent encore dans le silence de la nuit, à la douceur prochaine du retour.

J'appuyais tendrement mes joues contre les belles joues de l'oreiller qui, pleines et fraîches, sont comme les joues de notre enfance. Je frottais une allumette pour regarder ma montre. Bientôt minuit. C'est l'instant où le malade, qui a été obligé de partir en voyage et a dû coucher dans un hôtel inconnu, réveillé par une crise, se réjouit en apercevant sous la porte une raie de jour. Quel bonheur c'est déjà le matin! Dans un moment les domestiques seront levés, il pourra sonner, on viendra lui porter secours. L'espérance d'être soulagé lui donne du courage pour souffrir. Justement il a cru entendre des pas; les pas se rapprochent, puis s'éloignent. Et la raie de jour qui était sous sa porte a disparu. C'est minuit; on vient d'éteindre le gaz; le dernier domestique est parti et il faudra rester toute la nuit à souffrir sans remède.

Je me rendormais, et parfois je n'avais plus que de courts réveils d'un instant, le temps d'entendre les craquements organiques des boiseries,

be; I'd hear the whistling of trains which, further or closer away, like the song of a bird in the forest, noting the distances, would describe to me the expanse of the deserted country where the voyager hastens toward the next station; and the small path that he follows being engraved in his memory by the excitement that goes necessarily with places novel, with acts unaccustomed, with the recent chat and with the farewells bid under a strange lamp that follow still in the silence of the night, with the sweetness of the next return.

I would rest tenderly my cheeks against the lovely cheeks of the pillow which, plump and fresh, are like the cheeks of our childhood. I would strike a match so to look at my watch. Nearly midnight. That's the moment when an invalid, who has been obliged to leave on a voyage and must sleep in an unknown hotel, awoken by a fit, rejoices in making out under the door the rays of the day. What happiness that it's already the morning! In a moment the domestics will rise, he'll be able to ring, one will come to bring him succor. The hope of being relived gives him the courage to suffer. Just then he believes he hears some steps; the steps approach him, and then move away from him. And the ray of the day which was under his door has disappeared. It is midnight; someone came to put out the gas; the last domestic has left and he must remain all night in suffering without remedy.

I would go back to sleep, and sometimes

d'ouvrir les yeux pour fixer le kaléidoscope de l'obscurité, de goûter grâce à une lueur momentanée de conscience le sommeil où étaient plongés les meubles, la chambre, le tout dont je n'étais qu'une petite partie et à l'insensibilité duquel je retournais vite m'unir. Ou bien en dormant j'avais rejoint sans effort un âge à jamais révolu de ma vie primitive, retrouvé telle de mes terreurs enfantines comme celle que mon grand-oncle me tirât par mes boucles et qu'avait dissipée le jour, — date pour moi d'une ère nouvelle, — où on les avait coupées. J'avais oublié cet événement pendant mon sommeil, j'en retrouvais le souvenir aussitôt que j'avais réussi à m'éveiller pour échapper aux mains de mon grand-oncle, mais par mesure de précaution j'entourais complètement ma tête de mon oreiller avant de retourner dans le monde des rêves.

Quelquefois, comme Eve naquit d'une côte d'Adam, une femme naissait pendant mon sommeil d'une fausse position de ma cuisse. Formée du plaisir que j'étais sur le point de goûter, je m'imaginais que c'était elle qui me l'offrait. Mon corps qui sentait dans le sien ma propre chaleur voulait s'y rejoindre, je m'éveillais. Le reste des humains m'apparaissait comme bien lointain auprès de cette femme que j'avais quittée il y avait quelques moments à peine; ma joue était chaude encore de son baiser, mon corps courbaturé par le poids de sa taille. Si, comme il arrivait quelquefois, elle avait les traits d'une femme que j'avais connue dans la vie, j'allais me donner tout entier à ce but: la

I'd have wakings no longer than an instant, time enough to hear the natural creaking of the paneling, to open my eyes so to stare at the kaleidoscope of the darkness, to taste, by the grace of a momentary gleam of conscience, the sleep wherein was plunged the furniture, the room, the whole of which I was but a small part and to the insensibility of which I would soon reunite. Or perhaps in sleeping I had rejoined, without effort, a never returned to age of my earlier life, recovered such childhood terrors like the one of my great-uncle pulling on my curls that had been dispelled the day, - date of a new era for me, - where someone had them cropped. I had forgotten that event during my sleep; I recalled the memory as soon as I had succeeded in waking myself so to escape my great-uncle's hands, but for a measure of precaution, I'd completely wrap my head in my pillow before returning to the world of dreams.

Sometimes, just as Eve was born from Adam's rib, a woman would be born while I slept from a twisted position of my thigh. Formed from the pleasure that I was upon the point of tasting, I imagined to myself that it was she who offered it to me. My body which sensed in her breast my own heat would want to rejoin itself to her, I'd wake. The rest of humanity appeared to me distant after this woman whom I had left, who was there barely a few moments; my cheek was still warm from her kiss, my body ached from the weight of her waist. If, as it happened sometimes, she had the traits of a woman that I had known in

retrouver, comme ceux qui partent en voyage pour voir de leurs yeux une cité désirée et s'imaginent qu'on peut goûter dans une réalité le charme du songe. Peu à peu son souvenir s'évanouissait, j'avais oublié la fille de mon rêve.

life, I would give myself wholly to this aim: to find her, like those who leave on a voyage to see in person a long dreamt of city, and imagine to themselves that one can taste in reality the charm of the dream. Little by little her memory would fade away; I had forgotten the girl of my dream.

Trees/ *Carlin Felt*

Selections from "Heart Breaking Open: An Arc of Sonnets"

Aalin Bellinger

2.

So, Lord, it is to be by fire and night
Your pillar points through pain my faltering feet;
My proud eyes blanch blind at the fierce light
While flesh shudders at shock of crucible's heat.
With heart's high hope dispelled to dwindling dark
And fantasy flushed in truth's light cast clear,
Burned feet first find this desert rock too stark
To taste the hidden medicine trickling here.
O Lord, have I forgotten how You held me,
Through the soul-slapping waves of childhood's
day,
Strengthening my limbs in the cold sea,
While all the time my heart against You lay?
Just so, Lord, in this burning desert heat
Work out in me a strength of heart more sweet.

8.

O Panegia, teach me to detach
My clinging heart from this new desperate love;
Send me courage and method to unlatch
My miser chest locked in from Grace above.
Make me strong and free to let my soul
Flow in and out with a relation's tide,
To love my friend so deep and yet be whole
When circumstances call her from my side.
I wish to be there for her, but my need
Inflames my inner sense that gives and takes;
So while I yearn to follow close her lead,
I must carve my own way for both our sakes.
O Mother intimate with Christ your son,
Guide me how streams of love may rightly run.

9.

O Panegia, be with my close friend,
Whose glance unfathomed cuts me to the heart;
Take care of her to whom I'm blind to send
Swift healing, comfort, strength to every part.
Unguessable the grace that makes us two,
So different utterly, create a space
Where several harmonies of I and you
Blend, resonate, and hold their place.
And yet I, ignorant what storms or calm
Blow out or breath in peace to her domain,
Burn still to feel more keenly what the palm
Of her soul only ever could explain.
O Mother, from my depths receive this prayer,
To hold my unseen friend in your wise care.

14.

O Lord, my life lies open in Your hand.
You know, I know, my needs for love on earth;
Upon You and Your cross I cast my worth,
O Word by Whom was made all life and land.
I lie upon the sunny coats of sand
That with each lifting wave find sweet rebirth
And in this dance the dying breakers mirth
Sparkles I praise I start to understand:
The knowledge, Lord, that You are all in all,
In each particular and the cycling whole,
And the uniqueness of each beating heart
Your gift, is safe; mysterious, small,
Unfolding slowly in the growing soul,
The harmony fulfilling whole and part.

Croquet 1/ *Megan Faulkner*

Biology Lab/*Louis Petrich*

Stooping for Excellence in Iraqi Higher Education

Louis Petrich

Much of the talk about liberal education by those of us who wish to promote it at home and abroad tends in the direction of platitudes. A listener who did not know better from experience might think that liberal education itself were as boring as the promoting of it tends to be. How much worse is the risk of sounding trivial or impertinent when one's audience of initiates has merely to look out the window to see revolution spreading like brush-fires in the desert wind, while determined dictators try to stamp out the fires. Even the most interesting activities of liberal education lose their hold on participants when the local dogs of war are observed to be straining again at their leashes. Here at St. John's College, we do not bother ourselves about the dust of the chalk that our demonstrations of Euclid leave behind in our classrooms. But if we were given to worry about whether the College itself will be reduced to dust before the freshmen graduate, who would be demonstrating Euclid at the board? And what would those demonstrations truly be demonstrating?

Last year (2010-2011), at the American University of Iraq in the northeastern Kurdish city of Sulaimani, I taught freshmen Iraqis (mostly Kurds, some Arabs) to read Euclid, Darwin,

Galileo and other authors of mathematical and scientific books as part of the two-year core curriculum of liberal arts required of all students. Such a curriculum is unprecedented in Iraq, unless you go back about 1000 years. All of us who taught in the core had to become the defenders and promoters of its ambitious content. Each day that I taught there another layer of that ancient land's dust had to be wiped away from the books so that eyes distracted by the glare from outside events might be persuaded to read them with interest and care. Who could blame one of the Iraqi members of the University Board of Trustees for storming out of a meeting one time, saying, "Not another word about Socrates!" Even one of my American colleagues, a professor of business management, information technology (and mathematics), ended up using his copy of Euclid's Elements as a door stop to his office, thus to demonstrate that he concluded this great book was good for just this function under those conditions.

My office door continually swung open to admit one or more of my sixty or so students. They came to see me in groups of ten to fifteen if they wished to persuade me of something: We think your questions are too hard. If you want us to succeed you should ask easier questions. This was their way, as I learned, of negotiating potential conflicts: let one power present itself to the other power so that the lesser might recognize itself as such and respectfully defer to the greater. Sometimes I could find ways to defer in good conscience to reasonable demands: "I will give you

take-home exams from now on and you may consult the books and work together to answer the questions. If you still do not succeed, there will be opportunities for extra credit." (I do not know how we would have gotten by without extra credit. It functioned under my dispensation like grace to sinners.) At other times I told them they should have brought more of themselves into my little office—at which they exited to undertake their prescribed duties in good humor. The students astonished me to have preserved a sweetness of temperament through the bitterness of their history. They were quite impossible to cure of the kind of collaboration that we call "cheating" or "plagiarism," and which they call "friendship" or "using the internet." They possessed a great capacity for honor, accompanied accordingly with an acute sense for wrongs done them. Any weaknesses of character that they could turn to their advantage, they did, and some of my colleagues on the faculty paid a heavy price for weakness. It was best to stand while teaching them. You had to know where to look not to lose heart at the ever present prospect and evidence of failure. As they looked out the windows in distraction to the affairs of the world, I made my horizon the mission of the university, whose core was the liberal arts, and there I looked to measure my success.

The streets of Sulaimani witnessed daily demonstrations for months against the entrenched party interests, and occasionally the streets become violent. The two major Kurdish parties ordered their militias to occupy strategic positions

around the city to maintain order. A Peshmerga raid on an al-Qa'ida haven near our housing compound killed five terrorists, as if to remind the restive people not to overthrow their protectors. (The Peshmerga were once Kurdish mountain fighters who have evolved over the years into the professional military of the autonomous Kurdish region. The word conveys "those who stand before death with a knife clenched in their teeth.") We received daily security reports about what to expect and where not to go. Our contingent of body guards was doubled when Osama bin Laden was killed. They sat in the vans next to us, their AK-47's resting in their laps like the briefcases and book bags in ours. One of them was trying to learn some English, so I tried to make small talk. He was shy. We took different routes to the university for our security. My several students from Baghdad found all this boring by comparison to home. Sulaimani to them was like Peoria to someone from Manhattan. No bombs went off. One thing remained constant among students wherever they came from. Pressured by parents, relatives, and their own habits of mind to get the good grades and credentials necessary to become engineers, information technologists, or business managers, they demanded to know why they needed to read (for example) Charles Darwin. We are not going to become doctors or biologists, they knowingly declared. Will Darwin be on the exam? "Yes, you are being examined on this author," I replied. What kind of exam? "You may think of it as multiple choice, but you will supply the

choices." How many questions will we have to answer? "You may choose from among them to answer a few or just one—but do answer it well." There will not be enough time. "If there was enough time to make it possible for this conversation to have issued from species that have evolved from fish, there will be enough time for you to reflect on that process in the exam." I learned how to enjoy the students for asking me such questions. As Pascal says somewhere, the golden objects of learning are not always high and out of reach, but rolling around at our feet. It is only necessary to be willing to stoop for them.

Yet stooping without picking up a satisfactory answer and having to stoop again and again did not please them as sport. Why are you always asking us about things you don't know? How do you expect us to know? We are the students; you are the professor. (Indeed, the sign on my office door said, "Louis Petrich: Associate Professor in the Core." I shall not sit that high again.) They had a point, so I tried to answer the question they kept asking me, in one form or another, all the time: Why are we reading these books? "We read Charles Darwin not to become biologists," I professed one day, after giving much thought to the matter, "but to distinguish and appreciate the different paths that life has taken over the course of natural history. For example, there is the life of the social insects in the hive—materially secure, well-ordered, the struggle for existence decided in their favor. The path that we Homo sapiens have taken to regulate the awfulness of life—not to be

defeated by it—is a thing we call 'culture,' which unlike the bee hive is devoted to knowing the geometry of its spaces and to delighting in the beauty of colors and forms even in the face of dangers from all sides. Have you heard how Archimedes is reported to have died? He was so determined to finish the demonstration of one more geometrical theorem as the Roman sword hung over his head at the siege of Syracuse that he did not notice when it made its descent. (Quod erat demonstrandum, 212 B.C.) His preoccupation with geometry (which provided him the know-how for an occupation as a great engineer) is not merely an eccentricity. Preoccupations make us human, different from chimpanzees and rats, who learn to solve puzzles and negotiate mazes to earn their bananas and sweets. The choice that you face as students at this university of liberal learning is not between thinking forever like a biologist or an engineer. Your choice is between learning to think freely and bravely for yourselves, or not to think much at all. In either case, the sword is hanging there, yet for some things it has no edge. Think on those things. Does not Holy Scripture say as much? We are all being examined on the multiple choices we make among the higher, lower, and middle paths of life. The paths that life can take are available for our inspection in literature, philosophy, history, and science. What a pity if your shelves do not hold these books. How will you know the path to take?"

I apologize if my professed answer sounds

platitudinous. As I said at the beginning, this is hard to avoid. I am, after all, a believer in the answer, and yet I must report that my students continued to believe in pressing the question. And so we contested the matter of their education for a year. You will not read about our contest in the news, but when I hear people speak about the outcome of the war in Iraq, I know that our contest at the American University of Iraq is a part of that whole outcome, a good part.

Let me tell you about a young, veiled woman named Ziza, who always sat in the front row of our mathematics class. She never said a word, but paid strict attention to every demonstration and wrote down whatever I said or wrote on the board. At the end of the semester I collected the students' math notebooks, in which they were supposed to practice the art of demonstrating and to ponder its difficulties. Ziza used a ruler, compass, and different colored pencils to draw the diagrams and highlight the steps in the proofs, one after another throughout. Her notebook was a thing of manifest beauty. It was, in fact, a book, whose making had taken many more hours than I had intended, yet without any reckoning to me for credit of those hours, as others reckoned to me for much less reason. As I perused the pages of Ziza's craftsmanship I felt happy, yet without quite knowing why I should, for I could not say that she was learning to think mathematically on her own, rather than reproducing with great care and patience the thinking of others. When I turned to the first page to write something appropriate in

praise of her work and to encourage her to become more public in her learning, I saw in the center of the page a dedication, written in English and Kurdish in beautifully flowing scripts, and surrounded on the margins by the flourishing of geometrical figures that populate Book I of Euclid. The dedication said simply: To the Glory of God.

We often hear it said that liberal education is the pursuit of knowledge and beauty for their own sakes, as goods in themselves. That saying was not good enough for Ziza. I did not write anything on that page. I did not write anything at all in her book.

Many of my male students habitually carried prayer beads that they audibly fingered in class and everywhere else. I learned to ignore the sound, or to regard it as part of the exotic, like the call to prayer that loudly issued each day around noon from a mosque a block away from the university. I learned not to go to the washroom at that time—too many men crowding in to clean their hands before prayer. I wondered if the pursuit of knowledge and beauty is also a general calling to be followed by those who hear it and recognize the need to keep something in themselves clean for the purpose of pure learning.

One of my male students, Bouwar, a Kurdish nationalist, always dressed in traditional attire (the shrwal), an elegant, trim robe with a scarf-like belt around the waist, noble and assertive. He lacked only a scimitar to complete the image of the tribal leader and mountain warrior. (Weapons, by the way, were not allowed past the two entrances

through the concrete blast walls that surrounded the American University of Iraq. The signs proclaimed it, and the Peshmerga were stationed there to strictly enforce the ban. Otherwise, I should have other stories than this one to tell you.) Bouwar liked to interrupt my professing of the things we now know about nature to ask sharp, impatient questions that felt to me hostile to modern science, particularly to Darwin. What's the evidence for that? How do they know that? Is that a fact or just a theory? Do you believe that, Professor? Are there Moslem scientists who believe that? He also fingered the prayer beads as he questioned me. To my imagination, Bouwar could have been a superbly groomed Spartan, and I an infidel Athenian.

Bouwar wrote an essay for his history professor that he gave to me as well, since I had argued that Darwin turned biology into a kind of history. The title of his essay was: "The Great Deceivers." I instantly imagined that the essay contained an attack on Darwin and other theorists of modern science. By the second sentence I realized that much I had imagined about this young man was wrong. His thesis was that the prophets were all deceivers, Mohammed being the greatest deceiver of the lot. I was stupefied and in awe, since these are the kind of thoughts, which uttered, can get you quickly killed in that part of the world (and other parts, too, less quickly). As I read the essay I recognized where his pointed questions in class were tending. He was covertly digging for solid evidence to use against the authority of the

prophets. Concerned for his future well-being, I gave him and the class Galileo's "Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina" on how to read Holy Scripture in light of scientific discoveries, so that the oneness of truth manifested in nature and revelation might be maintained by a man of reason and faith.

The courage of those who calmly accept the uncertainty of how they will earn their living as students of the liberal arts ought to be all the little courage one needs to follow that calling for a while at the university. Surely this is much less virtue to ask of ourselves than we dare to ask of our Moslem brothers and sisters in the bright causes of enlightenment and liberty.

A letter that I shall keep among my remembrances of my year in Iraq was written to me by a young man named Bakir, an Arab from Baghdad, which a long time ago was the center of learning and wisdom in the West. But seven years ago, Bakir's father and uncle were murdered in Baghdad by a squad of Shiah during their attacks on the Sunni, and from their home the remainder of his family had to flee for their lives to Damascus. (I wonder where they live today, now that Syria has taken its turn as a place from which to flee.) I should mention that the students at the American University of Iraq all had stories to tell of death, torture, exile, imprisonment, or the fear of these things, stories that have been told before, so typically they did not tell them again, unless one were fresh or curious enough to ask. Bakir wanted to return to Baghdad some day to help make it great

A Faculty Picnic/*Louis Petrich*

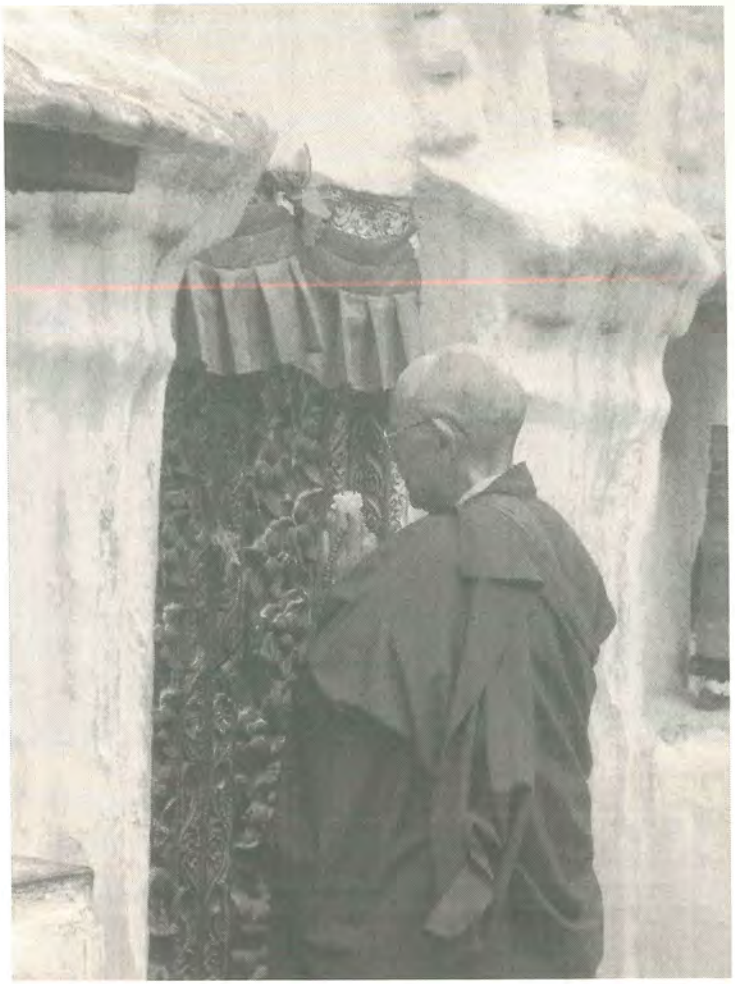
again. That was why he intended to study politics at the American University in Sulaimani, where he could also write for the school newspaper, join the debate club, and without fear give expression to his conspicuous thymos. He could not understand why he—Bakir, the future Sunni politician—should be forced to study modern life science, at the center of which he found a godless theory. This angered him. I asked the class to consider the motto above the oracle at Delphi: Know Thyself. Where does this self of ours come from? How shall we come to know it? What is its name? Is it bred into the genes of the only surviving species of the genus Homo, which some scientists speculate may have exterminated the Neanderthals and other related species long ago? Is that the story of who we are and why we are prone to anger and violence? Bakir began to listen to the arguments of life science when he saw the political connections, and so one day late in the semester he wrote me the following letter:

As long as you are our professor and are lecturing us for the purpose of a superior education, I would like to have a public debate with you at the university: you are with Darwin's theory and I am against his theory. Then both professor and student will have the opportunity to convince the audience about what we both believe. I don't want—like many students—to have a contradiction within myself. So if you publicly refute me and convince me, I will believe in this theory. I think you can understand my situation when I believe in something and one day an American professor at school comes to me and tells me that what I believed is wrong. Darwin shocked the world by his theory, and I was shocked to hear you say to me that I am not who I thought I was! And I lived my life with a lie. So, imagine my situation currently. What we are going to decide is very essential, Professor. If this is really a university where students are allowed to have challenging personalities, then I am glad to be one of these students. And I challenge you.

His words made me think of a Platonic dialogue and chivalric duel. I declined the format, and instead organized a class debate in teams of students on the question of Darwinism. The things that were said in that debate made an awful mess of Darwin. But one thing stood out from the mess. Bakir and his colleagues were not going to be persuaded of their origin from animals. They did not so much mind the idea of animals evolving from animals, but not human beings, not them. From this stance they would not budge. In some respects they were thinking like the pigeon fanciers in Darwin's opening chapter of The Origin who proudly believed that their fancy, prize-winning pigeons were each a special kind, instead of varieties of one species. I felt that this was closed-minded of them and that I had failed as their teacher. But I have thought more about Bakir's challenge and stance in that debate since then. His beloved Baghdad, like Socrates' beloved Athens, had gone down the tubes, so to speak, from much war and tyranny. But his human soul,

like that of Socrates, did not have to follow his city as it went down. In that messy debate about Darwin, the students did not allow themselves to be distracted from the soul's prizes by the recorded or purported events of natural history. To be free of stamping by the events of history—not to be stamped out by time—may that be a prize of the liberal learning that has begun in Iraq? We must hope so. Or else we must meet the challenge and teach them, as once, long ago, they taught us. That challenge is bigger than you think.

An abridged version of this essay was delivered as an address at a conference on liberal education in Tbilisi, Georgia in June of 2011.



Morning Prayers /*Shikshya Adhikari*

Croquet 4/ *Megan Faulkner*

Odd Enough to be Even

Robert Schuerman

I hardly have an inkling how a bird song sings so
sweet
When not one jot of ink gets penned upon a noted
sheet
Nor have I come to fathom, how a millipede ac-
cords
To navigate each step it takes to harmonize the
hordes
Nor do I fully see the sense, when my myriad
leggd' friend
Is by that song bird, made a meal, to meet his fate
ful end

And yet, an intuition, like some solitary sea
Attuned to be the many, in one single symphony
Plays upon my reason.. which, I've come to under-
stand
Calls the tune, invisible, to turn the world at hand
Leads across a bridge of time, in, this eternal land
Where paradox, meets metaphor
To find an irony
In every answer.. questioned by
The likes of me.. and you..

A Wholly Sonnet

I too awoke to see my world as wrong,
Like life entire was up and passing by
And so i wondered, had I lost the song?
Until I sought out somewhere I could cry
To tell how real the time is present, now
Its story grows while welling up inside
My need to pray.. but no, I don't know how.
Though still, my soul, itself, no longer hides
Its sound gives sense to all I fail to see
For everywhere I look, that's nowhere clear, But,
of a wholly what it means, to Be.
While this idea's beyond me, I draw near
To heed its call which sojourns with the wind
Though too, lies still, in wisdom for to lend.

Rebecca/ *Adam Maraschky*

energeia
st. john's college
p.o. box 2800
annapolis, md
21401