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THE ECLIPTIC OF RAMBLING MOTION

When I was a freshman and he was a sophomore teaching Greek, Mr. Bart loathed lecturers, or at least he said he did. He would have preferred being known as one of St. John's better students than one of our better lecturers. The Friday night of his lecture, while giving us one of his best of the past three years, Mr. Bart proved his point. His title was translation, and his subject matter is best described as an inquiry into our interest in language here at St. John's. We are all familiar with that photograph in the catalogue where the Program is all hooked-up by Straight-edge construction, but few of us are sure just what those straight lines represent.

Translation, Mr. Bart suspects, is an art, and an art like carpentry is an art. Blueprint:Original Text::Wood+Nails+Tools:Dictionary+Grammar+Rhetoric::The Chair:The Given Translation. At St. John's, with the treatment we give language, the last term of that proportion is found to be lacking. We do not have a finished translation in mind. We do not wish to supplant the existing ones. Our translation is done for the sole purpose of better understanding the text we translate. We are as the carpenter who builds his chairs from a superlative blueprint followed with difficulty. The carpenter begins with the assumption that his blueprint is the pattern from which a fine and beautiful thing can be built, and he builds and rebuilds until he feels satisfied with his attempt.

In translating toward such an end one very soon suspects that English lacks the necessary materials. Here and there are words, key words, which seem to have more meaning than one can give them. That is to say, for instance, that in εἶδος a word was found which joined the notion of 'that which a thing is' with the notion of 'that which a thing looks like'. Mr. Bart suggests that in the coupling of two such notions, the Greek was given a way of looking at things which to us is impossible. Such a coincidence does not exist between our words seeing and knowing. Considering further that one word, εἶδος, it also becomes clear that it comes out of Plato meaning more than it meant when he first used it; that in a sense, its definitions are changing and moving things; that one specific definition holds the word static for a moment, but that such a holding is imposed and hypothetical.

Mr. Bart believes that the process of defining is one belonging to a pure imagination which operates on a supra-dictionary plane. We are to allow our imagination to operate as the organic scientist allows his imagination to operate when he is confronted with a fact in nature till then not noticed. Our attempt is to avoid phantasy, that subjective kind of imagination which has the word mean what we want it to mean with no regard for its own existence.

In analyzing what happens in the process of observation within the organic sciences, several steps can be seen. We merely look to accept what is there, we attempt then to generalize, we hypothesize what we're not sure of,

and we experiment in hopes of verification. (We experiment, in other words, in hopes of getting as close as possible to the 'any' of the 'any equimultiples' of the familiar phrase, being aware in both cases that we face an infinite number of repetitions.) Consider here words as the analogue of the natural fact, the dictionary as the sum of experiments to date. Verification is the placing of one hypothesis as to the meaning of a word into a given context and seeing what happens. Hence we have Data:Hypothesis::Context:Definition. Hence also can the experiment in science be spoken of as a kind of translation, and from there the problems of the scientist and the translator draw closer. For instance, one might make a brilliant hypothesis as to the causes of disease, but until, say, germs were seen and their function guessed, such a hypothesis would be subject to serious question. In terms of translation such a problem could be expressed in our wondering whether the translator sees the entirety of a word's meaning: in 'idea' did Jowett see what can be seen in εἰδος? And the analogy goes still further: the scientist must say that the 'ecliptic of rambling notions' must not really ramble, while the translator says that the words of Plato must have more content than he is able to get from Jowett's equivalents; it can be admitted that mathematics but talks of the world in unworldly terms as it can be admitted that the specific context of a sentence can never be fully grasped; that we feel that our differential equations of the stars' motions must have some meaning can be thought of as the analogue of our feeling that Plato must have a notion that our efforts can reveal. And here both the scientist and translator must suspect that

predication itself is a myth, quake or laugh a bit at the thought, and return to wrestle with their Proteans.

II

In Book IV, in the telling of the story of Odysseus, Homer pauses to have Menalaus tell of his struggle with the Egyptian Proteus, the ancient one of the sea, a person of ever-changing shape. Menalaus must seize him and hold him firmly, while he changes form in hopes of freeing himself from Menalaus' grasp. Menalaus clings to each shape, never doubting that it is Proteus he holds. In the end, Proteus submits and tells Menalaus what it is he wishes to know. Perhaps here Homer has uncovered the process of understanding itself. In science, each fact is a Proteus to be fought with until it reveals its true self, or until we can identify it hypothetically, for our purposes, and quit that struggle for a new one. And here we see two sorts of hypotheses possible. We can think of them as a grid clamped on to the changing thing, a desperate attempt to stop what is ever changing. We can also consider the hypothesis as cause: ὑποτιθημι: not to impose but to suppose, to put something underneath. Then, with the latter view, hypotheses appear not pale but concentrated, a source of generation containing the substance of that around us. The idea becomes more clear when we suppose such a procedure to be the procedure of poetry. A poem has a story, and a story is a hypothesis about life. In Homer's story about Achilles we have but five days, and with such a concentrate Homer makes his meaning clearer than it possibly could be were we to know all of the facts.

At this point, an idea symbolized by the lines in the catalogue

photograph becomes clearer. In the dialectic of the seminar, the student is asked to translate his experience into the terms of the book, into an author's hypothesis about life. When the books are great ones, they contain a vocabulary which makes the student's own experience expressible in some new way. He understands more clearly, in knowing Plato's hypotheses, what the substance of his own experience is, what his experience means. As the student of dialectic must if he is to translate that meaning, the right meaning, into right actions.

DOUG BOYLE

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EDITORIAL

Le Week-End Retrouvé

For me, it all started with the name tags. After some one had pinned a blue one on me and I had mistakenly swallowed a cup of non-alcoholic punch, laddled out by a member of the class of '91 I found myself observing homecoming day and what followed after with an interested eye. Of the many alumni in the Great Hall, only a fraction had in actuality come home. These were the students of the New Program (an archaic word, come to think of it), returned to an emotionally charged locus full of reason, not yet age. It seemed painfully obvious that Sinclair Lewis' dictum, that only the more successful alumni return on such a day, applies to graduates of new vintage St. John's as well as to Yale men. Most of the recent graduates at the reunion looked most respectable and reasonably adjusted, in speech and dress, to a society which had not learned of distinctions between form and matter.

Perhaps it was a communion in mid-

dle class prosperity which made the rift between the Old and New not so apparent to the eye as in previous years. After my fifth cup of alcoholic punch, the entire hall seemed united in one continuum of conversational hubbub and gave the impression of any normal cocktail party, with all that this implies. Certainly, people from different years kept among themselves, certainly the matter of the conversations varied, but the general effect was not socially unadjusted, as many St. John's events were in the past. If the reception was an accurate symbol of the rest of Homecoming day, the New has shown the Old that it is as normal as the rest of our society.

The dance, on the same evening, tended to confirm this impression. I doubt whether I have ever attended a social affair in an institution of higher learning which was more staid. Owing to Mr. Klein's anti-liquor law, no intoxicating beverages were consumed on the dance floor. Yet, what was more surprising, there was not too much drinking outside the dance either. Parties in the dormitories were innocent of hard liquor to such an extent that there were no open Bacchic rituals performed at all. Many couples danced six inches apart; whatever remarks I overheard, even at three o'clock in the morning, made me suppose that people had been to a church supper, or, at best, a seminar. Whatever infractions against common morality occurred, must have happened discreetly. By four in the morning, all was dark.

The weekend of the 29th of October showed that a normal adult world (at the cocktail party) and a normal children's world (at the dance) can be produced here at St. John's by opportune chemistry. It demonstrated that we are able to conform to society here.

St. John's has refound itself in the bosom of 1949 normalcy, as far as social mores go. How good is this? That is another story.

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THE GRAPES OF WRATH

The editors of the *Collegian* have asked me to write this review because—so they said—they were interested to know what a European's reaction to this picture would be. This presupposes a difference of reaction between an American and a European. Ten years ago, when I had just arrived in this country, I saw the picture with a European's eyes; the other night I believe I saw it from an American's viewpoint. I find no difference. How could there be one? The subject matter of the picture, the problem it is primarily concerned with, has the same significance on either side of the Atlantic. Man at the mercy of economic forces let loose: where in the Western world could we find a people that would not immediately recognize this situation as its own?

(Because this is a picture about the fight of man against the action of economic forces, the Government Camp is a weak spot in its otherwise strong structure. The way the Government camp is presented, it seems to express the idea that in order to save oneself from the action of economic forces one has just to move over a little into the field where political forces are acting more beneficially. This may be morally desirable, but there is neither truth nor artistic goodness in it. If there existed a place where devil Economy and angel Politics could sit peacefully side by side, there would be no problem. If

the Government of the Government Camp were a true government, the first transient camp would not exist side by side with it; that it does exist makes the other one a fake or a fairyland, neither of which has any meaning in the context of this film.)

There are other thoughts, however, coming up when one sees this picture today, which could not arise ten years ago. Then, we had no concrete knowledge of the Nazi concentration camps. We knew the word, it had no reality for us. Since then, we have seen the photos, we have read the stories. I don't believe I was the only one whom the Transient Camps reminded of those more atrocious places. There are no gas chambers and no medical experiment stations in the Transient Camps; but is this really the all-important difference which exculpates us. I wonder just how much comfort an inmate of these camps would get from the assurance that he will be neither gassed nor used as a guinea pig. Also, we expect different things from a democracy which believes in the value of the individual, and a totalitarian regime which denies that value. It is true that such camps do no longer exist in this country; but they did exist ten years ago, that is, contemporaneously with Hitler's camps. Could it be that our unpreparedness for the war and our confusion regarding its real issues had something to do with the fact that these camps did then exist among us, that our state of mind was such as to make it possible for them to exist? And if the camps have by now disappeared, has the mental attitude which brought them into being disappeared together with them? Has our state of mind undergone the major revolution which would make it

(continued p. 7)

I

The ones who have no ulcers I would love
No healed or bleeding gashes, I would know
In polity with them I then would move
In that song in which flawless creatures go;
Only you who have a history I can touch
Who breathe and eat and sleep and think, deal with,
With ah forgive what awkwardness, without much
Music, and so I say as Faith is Faith:
If it is not love that I demonstrate
And locked from knowing, crudely take and give
I will give then and take and celebrate
For this lopsided harmony we have
Nor, or at least not really, dream to dwell
IN Avalon, with Helen and Israfel.
Onetime when we were beautiful we spoke
Fraternally, or stayed silent—yet as brothers
That was the time when out of all the others
It was you I was with, and you with me
Sometimes near morning when the moon is low
And floats on fog, it seems, I think of some
I love and broke with, and the heart is numb
Yet, and I think the hurt will never go.

BALLARD

II

My Lord was cancelled on the hill of skulls.
On Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene
And others came to where the corpse had lain
But it was gone despite the sentinels;
Despite the punctures by the spear and nails
The Temple stood restated out of ruin
He freely took, so that He might alone
Enable each to cure his cureless ills.
Domine: O Redeemer: In Your own
Foreverness, not in our fractured time
But in Your own perfection, look upon
These harming hands, this frozen pride-sick heart
Nothing can heal while they remain apart.
However slightly, from Your Holy Name.

BALLARD

Mr. Smith tell man not
that God in his own image
created man
and ordained him with
reason, intelligence and sense
and yet with all of this
man can not gain, nor
then proclaim
a glimpse of Him

If sin, missing the mark is
and freedom man has none
but to miss Him, then
an inferior world this creation.
But, freedom is in this
in man's right
to walk straight,
alone,
to Him.

It is not they who search
for they have found
But, we who haven't yet walked
So why should they walk for us
When it is each of us
who must walk
alone.

There is in this world
but two
God and man
of all others we guess
So who are those
who know of Him
and then tell us
"have faith"?

Should man believe
not knowing but fated
never to understand
But black in darkness shroud
like death?

Without knowledge God is darkness
ignorance, his prince, breeds doubt
and doubt blackens faith
breeding superstition and hate.
Knowledge confidence gives
and confidence smiles on the
growth of faith.

Is it too much to ask
to know the things you
are to believe?
Some say it can not be known
the things you should believe
but they rattle tales in the wind;
For what you can not know
can not be told
can not be written
but must be forever unknown.
For what you can not know
is what you can not believe.

Man seeks to know
and to realize fully.
He does not accept the
faith that slows,
For knowledge is in the essence
of things
and does not cling
to the faith that
kills.

P. GRIMES

IN THE ISSUE OF NOVEMBER 15, 1949

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absolutely impossible for such places
to exist? How far have we moved away
from the dogma that "the value or
worth of a man is, as of all other
things, his price - that is to say, so
much as would be given for his power"?
It may be that we are bungling the
post-war issues precisely because such
a change of mind has not occurred.

VICTOR ZUCKERKANDL

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ON A LECTURE ON PAUL

Once upon a time there was a
highway to Damascus. It was just an
ordinary road until one day a traveler
came along. He was on his way to buy
chains, but when he came to the place
of the brickmakers he stopped and said
to himself, "These are better than
chains." He began to erect a monument
to commemorate his decision, and while
he was doing so, others stopped along
the road and asked if they might help.
Many hands laid many bricks, without
plumb-line and without plan. That is
how the highway to Damascus came to be
called the road to confusion.

Why should a man, inspired
to be a herald of the realm of his
God, think it necessary to contradict
the law of his God? It had been
written that God gave law to a people
newly freed from slavery. Those
people needed a way of life, and their
God gave them a means to achieve that
life. Certainly Moses knew the pur-
pose of the law, and if Moses said the
law was means to health and life, why
should any contradict him with talk of
sin and bondage?

Once the contradiction has
been made, it must be supported, and

the safest support available is in the
use of interpretation. If the inter-
pretation is believed, the original
contradiction is forgotten. What has
once been said, what has once been
written, what has once been accepted,
has been heard, read, and accepted
incorrectly. Only the interpreter
knows the true meaning of all that has
been said, and written, and accepted.
Nothing is sacred. No one can think
and reason and understand; only the
interpreter is endowed with such abil-
ity. One interpreter builds upon
another, one interpretation is placed
upon another, and the whole structure
is top-heavy with twisted bricks. The
Tower of Babel has been rebuilt. When
will it come tumbling down?

HOWARD HERMAN

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ONE ASPECT CONCERNING

'PAUL, FORMERLY SAUL'

It seems to me that Mr. Smith's
inquiry is primarily concerned about
understanding the character of Paul as
a man of extended suffering, and also
as a symbolic representation of embod-
ied thought pertaining to the aware-
ness of a higher possibility in all
men which Paul termed "Spiritual
Man."

Regardless of any one person's
religion, and more so to those around
us who might aspire to be Liberal Art-
ists, whatever that might be, at least
some of the varied and numerous sub-
jects touched upon in Mr. Smith's in-
quiry certainly concern our own in-
quiry about the problems that daily
confront us, and give cause to our
wonder.

The inquiry is not concerned with

defending the subject, but rather with an attempt to understand his life and letters of humanity, which are concerned with the truth in man's relation to man and God. Consequently, through this inquiry, we tend to evolve towards what we hope will make us good men in common in the eyes of God. In other words, as Mr. Smith stated, Paul does not represent a system, but rather seeks after the truth of relations.

Briefly, what can I say about one aspect of this method of inquiry and its objective? In so far as this is an inquiry for us, someone might consider a doubtful position and reject religious dogma, and try to know these relationships and their consequences regarding truth by one's reason. However, this person must first of all believe (he need not have faith, due to the nature of his inquiry), that his inquiry will lead him towards some level of truth by the action of his own wonder and doubt upon his reason. Thus, from such a premise, he might arrive at conclusions either true or false within its own system of knowledge, and no longer be with any doubt, but still left wondering about whether or not this truth is based upon his own folly. Consequently, it would seem that he can only hope that the spirit of truth is really within him (in terms of Paul), or else hope that his inquiry will be acted upon by this spirit of truth in the future.

So, if we agree with this bit of reasoning in terms of the position of his inquiry, we realize that he has rationalized his way to seeking the truth of relations through hope, and not faith. This would seem to be a right step for such a person, who represents a common bond of humanitarian inquiry. But in order for this representation to be just, there must be

one further element in action.

It is well at this point to follow the spirit of Paul's truth of relations as a humanitarian, and consider what might be the primary motive of this spirit that will permit such a person the hope and guidance in his inquiry, and still be just in so doing.

It is a fact, that at times problems and opposing solutions arise for various groups of people, which would seem to engender a poisonous influence directed at the spirit of truth for all commonly concerned. When we consider man's relation to God, we must also remember that this spirit is also a relation of man to man.

Thus positions are maintained: Knowledge of the Law gives us only knowledge of God's wrath and our sin. The Law makes manifest our sin, but does not chastise us. The written Law is life for some and not constraint; for others it is a constraint and prevents them from seeing the Faith. For some it is given; for others it is received in their hearts. Some emphasize the Letter of the Law; some the Spirit of the Law. Etc.

And so it would seem that we become involved in these problems, that we sometimes fail to regard the element of Charity towards one's neighbour, which is common to most all religions, and applies to all men. Consequently, we should abide with this Charity, when such a person wonders and doubts in this type of inquiry, and hopes that the spirit of truth will act upon him, and show him the way. This much at least we all have in common without the initial problems which sometimes tend to disperse the effort of our inquiry.

However, is this way just; and would you want to be such a person? What do you think?

P. Westerbeke

VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

Sarcophagus of living trees:

*Indulging blood
The zero veins of Present's skeleton
Forgets;*

Defining growth

*The infant breathed
Throughout the wondrous forest
Of the Past.*

OR

*I love to find a petiole,
The petiole's for me;
But sirrah, sirrah,
Help me to find
The forest in the tree.*

C. R. POWLESKE (A Freshman)

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PINOCCHIO

Good stories are works of art which, like nature herself, need only to be experienced to be enjoyed. The Disney-ized version of *Pinocchio* is for me such a story, pleasant and enjoyable. That it is but a translation or more properly, a revision of the original, is not to be denied; for present purposes though, this problem is not my concern. What does concern me, rather than things about the story, is the story itself, as I witnessed it.

Pinocchio, in a state of absolute ignorance, sets out to become a real boy. Real boys are honest, courageous, and selfless; and so, to the attainment of this end, the services of *Jiminy Cricket*, peanut-sized man of distinction (moral), are enlisted. The action of the rest of the story undertakes to show us how *Pinocchio* arrives at his goal. The course is a

A TOMB

*A muse had died, a soul had bled,
A trinity once whole had severed its
connecting thread;
A flaming asteroid, a spark
Had screaming split the universe, sanguine
against the damning dark*

*What falling star was seen to burn
Again, its roaring flames to churn
Our memories searching our intellect,
sieved
For embers of fire having lived?*

*Sympathetic sparks may grow,
Reflected from some phoenix glow
Smoldering 'neath the ash of time,
To flare when kissed by a breath
divine.*

GEORGE ROBERT CONTOS

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familiar one. By nature he seeks self-fulfillment through possession; but experience reveals the shortcomings of this innate tendency to him. It is only through surrendering, through placing his frame of reference outside himself, that *Pinocchio* comes to be.

What are we to make of this theme? Somewhere Plato says that all men do what seems good for them. But what seems good need not necessarily be so. Like *Pinocchio*, we do make mistakes. But strangely, *Pinocchio* comes to know through experience what is really good for him; then he proceeds to love. On the natural level, it does seem true to say that knowledge precedes love. The joy of translating Plato comes only after the bore of learning Greek. Where God is concerned, though, this order is inverted. Christians, at any rate, must first love God before they can know Him.

This distinction between divine and natural brings us back to where

Plato left off. To choose the apparent instead of the real is sure indication of ignorance. With reference to right and wrong, however, it is pertinent to question whether vice has its root in the mind or in the will. The story of *Pinocchio*, I think, lends support to the former view.

For, as *Jiminy Crickett* and *Pinocchio* set out on the wicked road to virtue, one might anticipate future clashes between the two - going on the assumption, I suppose, that virtue and vice are ways of talking about the will in harmony with conscience or against it. As it turns out, surprisingly enough, *J.C.* either remains aloof, as when *Pinocchio* lies to the fairy princess; or else he is far removed, as when the stringless puppet selfishly gorges himself on Pleasure Island. That conscience should have significance only after and not before the committal of these wrongdoings implies the notion that vice is only ignorance. If so, then *J.C.*'s role is a comic and perhaps satirical one. But if not, then where in does the guilt lie?

JOHN J. COFFEY

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ANTI ANTI - GASTRONOMY

To the great delight of George Washington Carver, Greg, and the makers of Pepto Bismol, harpies have returned to their former positions of power in the Dining Hall. It seems that by this appointment, the administration is making its first step back toward the Golden Age. Their action seems successful in that students do not feel the urge to leave their work in order to go to the Dining Hall.

As is usual with so many St. John's metamorphoses, the harpies have lived up to their reputation. By dint

of great skill in the running of a dining hall, they have managed to turn out probably the worst food in St. John's history, even though hampered by lower food prices, more money from the students, and new machinery.

From reliable sources we have learned that the food coming into the Dining Hall is of the finest quality. It seems to the author a minor miracle that such a transformation can take place while the food is on its way to the tables. Could it be that the cook is on the payroll of the University of Maryland?

There are eight school months a year. Since each student pays four hundred and fifty dollars yearly for board the price of daily meals works out to be approximately two dollars. The seniors and other students who returned before school opened, found that it is possible to eat off campus very well for less than two dollars a day. Why can not the Dining Hall come anywhere up to this standard?

The situation is made more annoying when we discover that we are not allowed to eat off campus because, in the words of the great campus metaphysician: "It is clear for certain reasons that it is impossible to support the excellent staff and equipment that we maintain if only part of the student body eat on campus." As I see it, the excellent and extensive equipment has accomplished nothing insofar as the cause of edible food is concerned. It seems to me that one could lay off part of the staff and just not use some of the extensive equipment if a smaller group of people is being fed.

What the administration apparently does not realize is that St. John's is not a Rabelaisian society, so that the serving of tripe three times a day accomplishes no desirable results.

UGOLINO