

Introduction to *Zeal* 2/1

Bernard Prusak

John Carroll University

The overarching theme of this issue is captured by the second half of the title of Ryan Kemp’s Provocation & Occasion, “AI and the Struggle to Think Humanly.” Kemp’s essay considers both what it is to “think humanly” and why AI cannot do it for us. By way of example, some people, Kemp observes, need to write poetry “cause I have to.” It is missing the point to think that AI could do *that* work—and it is worth taking a moment to ponder just what the work in question is.

The issue also includes an author-meets-critics discussion of Jason Baehr’s *Deep in Thought: A Practical Guide to Teaching for the Intellectual Virtues* (Harvard Education Press, 2021).¹ To teach for the intellectual virtues is to seek to foster in students qualities of thinking such as curiosity, intellectual humility, and intellectual autonomy; attentiveness, carefulness, and thoroughness; and open-mindedness, courage, and tenacity.² How teachers might teach to those ends is one question; why teachers might do so is a second. AI makes the second question pressing. So does growing skepticism about the value of a liberal arts education.³

The inaugural iteration of the forum “Liberal Arts Starts & Circuitous Routes” features the stories of four people whose liberal arts educations launched them on unexpected journeys.⁴ All four stories suggest that the best answer to the question, “What is the value of studying *that*?” might be: “Wait and see.”

Finally, the issue’s second Provocation & Occasion, which might be better described as a diversion, focuses on interpretation and judgment, though in a dialogue modeled on Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* and concerned with the rules for offsides in soccer, i.e., fútbol. The takeaway is that there is an ineliminable element of discretion in the application of the rules. In other words, there is no escaping the need to “think humanly.”

This issue of *Zeal* is my last as editor. Robin E. Field, Professor of English at King’s College, assumes the duties for 2/2. I thank all my colleagues and friends on the editorial board and all the contributors to the three issues it has been my pleasure to see to publication.

¹ The book discussion was organized by associate editor Regan Lance Reitsma.

² See for an overview <https://www.ivalongbeach.org/academics/master-virtues>.

³ See, recently, Anemona Hartocollis, “Can Humanities Survive the Budget Cuts?” *New York Times*, November 3, 2023, online at [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com).

⁴ The forum was organized by associate editor Margarita Rose.