



HUMANITIES

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

FALL 2021





Branding & Belonging

by J. Scott Miller, Dean

RECENTLY, BYU AND the College of Humanities have been engaged in talks about branding—rethinking who we are and how we want to communicate that to the broader world. As we

consider the fate of our current logo (a stylization of Michelangelo's paved oval pattern filling Rome's Piazza del Campidoglio and now the Joseph F. Smith Building courtyard), I have been thinking about the role logos, symbols, and brands play in our lives.

From the time I first saw ancient Fremont pictographs on boulders near my hometown, I have been fascinated with the miraculous power of images that stand in for words or ideas. Learning to read Japanese only reinforced this fascination, and I am happy to be in a college that teaches a panoply of scripts, including Greek, Korean, Chinese, Arabic, Hebrew, Devanagari, Cyrillic, and more.

The miracle of writing involves tremendous labor, both to invent and to acquire as a skill. We draw a sign (or, in the case of the Incas, knot a cord) and expect it to stand in for something otherwise spoken aloud. Given that sounds have multi-dimensional attributes, writing is a poor substitute for speech. But we are a clever species, and the variety of our writing systems reflects marvelous innovation as we convert sounds into signs, or even recover long-lost scripts. For example, Mayan was finally cracked when linguists found chocolate residue in a mug labeled “chocolate” (*kakaw*).¹ Unfortunately, pure sound transcription alone denies us important differentiations between similar sounding words (is the sound /rɪjd/ referring to the written word *read*, *Reid*, or *reed*?), and, as this example suggests, we have yet to invent a perfect writing system.

Our cleverness with scripts is reflected in our fondness for brands, crests, flags, and other emblems—shorthand for belonging to company, family, or nation—that invite us to focus our attention in a simple, even stylized, way. These very basic symbols reduce complicated organizations into forms that can be visually compelling but lack depth and nuance,

short-circuiting true understanding. Symbols can also rob us of a clear sense of context and meaning and can efface crucial differences.

During my time as dean—in addition to receiving wonderful praise on behalf of our faculty, students, staff, and alumni—I have also been called a racist and an elitist. Both stung. I felt that I had been essentialized, stripped of my multi-dimensional and uniquely complex identity, and given a one-dimensional label that allows for no nuance, no individuality, and no humanity—only affiliation with a phrase used as shorthand for “bad.” Those so labeling me willfully chose epithet over imagination. It takes real imagination to see people in three dimensions; on the other hand, both commercial media and also civil strife do not flourish unless we are willing to see things in basic, often binary, terms.

Oversimplifying complexity is the dark side of branding; like tweets or sound bites, it demands brevity over accuracy, stylization over detail. Fine for shoes, but in the world of human interaction, it can often lead to or even promote enmity. Wars often arise from a sense of righteous indignation or in reaction to the unbearable humiliation of being insulted or dismissed by another. Once war begins, both sides motivate soldiers to fight by getting them to think of the enemy in essentialist, often dehumanizing, terms. Peace, on the other hand, seems to prevail when we seek to imagine others richly—accepting, even welcoming, individual nuance and complexity.

We should constantly consider the import of symbols and phrases we use to describe others, as well as those we associate ourselves with. In one way or another, as we seek to be identified primarily by the name of Christ, we must face this enigma: How can we be open and loving in a world where people cannot imagine the complexity and divinity of those with whom they disagree? While symbols have their place, we should be wary of the “lazy” communication that symbols can offer. As we interact with others in a dizzying array of contexts, may we invoke a more productive kind of communication that involves greater imagination for human possibility, mutual understanding, and grace. ☪

1. <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/mayan-chocolate>



CONTENT

HUMANITIES | FALL 2021

6

STATE OF THE DISCIPLINE: COMPARATIVE ARTS AND LETTERS

WOMEN IN HUMANITIES

12

16

CARAVAGGIO AND CHRISTIANITY: FINDING NEW MEANING

WILLA CATHER'S VISION AND GRACE

18

- 2 | LEXICON
- 3 | READER RESPONSES
- 4 | HUMANITIES IN THE NEWS
- 10 | PERSPECTIVE
- 20 | ALUMNI UPDATES
- 21 | FACULTY PUBLICATIONS
- 22 | HONORED ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
- 23 | DISTINGUISHED FACULTY AWARD
- 24 | VOX HUMANA
- 25 | CROSSWORD

Publisher J. Scott Miller
Editor Joshua J. Perkey
Editorial/Design Team Heather Bergeson, Kate Fawson, Julie Irvine, Hannah Scott, Madison Selcho, Savannah Taylor, Emma Webb
Illustrator Rebekah Mecham
Photographer Lupita Herrera
Editorial Advisor Scott Hatch

HUMANITIES magazine is published twice per year for alumni and friends of the BYU College of Humanities. Copyright 2021 by Brigham Young University. All rights reserved.

Feedback? We would like to hear your views, your memories of campus, or an update on your life since leaving BYU. Please email humanitiespr@byu.edu

For information about giving to students in the College, contact Dean J. Scott Miller at 801-422-2779 or scott_miller@byu.edu.

BYU College of Humanities
4002 JFSB
Provo, UT 84602
801-422-2775
humanities.byu.edu

humanities [/hyu'mænədiz/]

NOUN. THE STUDY OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN, THE COMPLEXITIES OF HUMAN LIFE, AND THE NUANCED CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HUMAN LANGUAGES, CULTURES, INSTITUTIONS, AND CREATIVE WORKS.

—Adapted from an article by Andrew Rees, student fellow of the Humanities Center (2015)

HUMANITIES. HOW FITTING that a word with multiple meanings defines the human race; we are so different from each other that it would be impossible for any one of us to perfectly understand another. The unifying theme of the study of the humanities is found in its root word. From philosophy to classic French literature, the humanities speak to what it is to be human—helping us to understand humanity on a wider, deeper scale. The humanities are the gateway to understanding *humanity* in all of its meanings:

Humankind. As we better understand humankind's cultures, plight, and actions, we begin to care for them and become one with them.

The state of being human. As we understand what it means to be human, we can better understand other people.

Kindness, or the quality of being humane. Understanding the humanities will ultimately make us more humane.

A broad education in the humanities can preserve and enhance our humanity in so many ways—for example, by giving us powerful tools for critical, analytical, and independent thinking.

Critical Thinking to Decipher Hyperbole

We live in the age of hyperbole. Surely, *–est* has become one of the more common suffixes in our vernacular. Thinking that something is *best*, *biggest*, or *fastest* seems harmless, yet is it? Or could such thinking encourage exaggeration and hyperbole? Such thinking is rarely examined closely or honestly.

Our humanities education enables us to look beyond hyperbole for truth. It is an education that teaches students to see other ideologies and races not as best or worst, but as unique and distinct.

Analytical Skills to Understand Moral Ambiguities

A humanities education teaches us to navigate moral ambiguity. Who is right? Who is wrong? Moral ambiguity is woven throughout history. Without the analytical abilities cultivated in a study of humanities, it is easy to ignore such ambiguities. Honest observers should not assume that they are exempt from fault, yet we do it every day. Studying the humanities helps us overcome these assumptions, accept the moral ambiguity of the world, and strive to understand it.

Independent Thinking to Overcome Groupthink

The humanities teach independent thought. This independence empowers students to recognize bias and cognitive dissonance. It enables them to identify the logical fallacies that often accompany groupthink. Paul A. Kottman asserted that “without education in the humanities, we might act altruistically . . . , but we would not be articulating such values; hence, we would not make explicit reasons for organizing our lives accordingly.”¹ Questioning our values is one of the best ways to strengthen them. A study of the humanities urges us to ask questions and seek answers.

Increasing the humanity of society is the direct result of understanding the humanities. Yes, we are all human. Yes, we do need the humanities. And yes, the humanities can save us.

1. “How Humanities Can Save the World,” 2014, lareviewofbooks.org/article/humanities-will-save-world

TIMELINE

MAY

English professor and Maeser Distinguished Faculty Lecturer Chris Crowe gave the forum “A Novel Idea: How Genre Evolution Sparks Creativity.”

JUNE

Retiring Asian and Near Eastern Languages

professor Daniel Peterson became an executive producer on his new film *Witnesses*.

English professor John Ben-nion received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association for Mormon Letters.

Associate Dean Corry Cropper and French & Italian associate professor Christopher Flood received MHA 2021 Best Book on International Mormon History award for their publication *Mormons in Paris: Polygamy on the French Stage*.

Three BYU classical studies students, Michael Kerr, Jackson Abhau, and Madeleine Staples, placed in the annual Maurine Dallas Watkins Greek and Latin Translation contest.

BYU hosted the 13th annual Central Utah Writing Project Summer Institute.

AUGUST

Twelve faculty from the College of Humanities presented at the 2021 BYU Education Week.

English professor Brian R. Roberts received the Karl G. Maeser Research and Creative Arts Award.

Spanish associate professor Cherice Montgomery received the Douglas K. Christensen Teaching & Learning Faculty Fellowship.

Linguistics associate professor Wendy Baker-Smemoe received the

“STUDYING THE HUMANITIES at BYU was transformational for me in two principal ways. First, reading great literature and minor-ing in another language (Japanese) taught me to think deeply and to think differently. I learned to read texts critically, reflect on their meaning, and strengthen my ability to express my thoughts. And I learned to think about group context and implied meaning in ways that I would not have experienced as a native English-speaker. Second, my teachers at BYU showed me how literary works—such as Dante’s *Inferno*, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Kierkegaard’s *Fear and Trembling*, or Dostoyevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*—could draw on and amplify the truths of the restored gospel. Such texts transformed me and continue to inspire me and shape my spiritual life. And the way BYU faculty taught the Humanities deepened my conversion and taught me that our faith encourages us to “seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom” (D&C 88:118). Studying the humanities through a BYU education taught me that our faith not only allowed such exploration but was strengthened by this exploration when pursued with spiritual purpose.”

—ELDER CLARK G. GILBERT,
CHURCH COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

We wanted to hear about opportunities you have had to apply what you’ve learned from studying the humanities. What skills—such as commu-nication, translation, cultural navigation, research, relationship building, or empathy—have been most valuable to you? What stories, tips, or ideas can you share?

Here’s what you shared with us anonymously.

MY PHILOSOPHY DEGREE helped me learn how to think criti-cally. In the past year, it felt like there were endless opportunities for people to argue about the many issues we were confronted with amidst ever-changing circumstances. Being able to think objectively helped me to stay grounded.

MY TRAINING IN writing at BYU has been invaluable to me. I love expressing myself through writing letters, journal entries, and notes. As I’ve had two missionaries in the field during 2020–21, I have found that I love writing to them and have tried to inspire them through my letters.

AS A CHINESE language and literature major, I spent a great deal of time at BYU building my proficiency in a foreign lan-guage and deepening my understanding of a foreign culture. Now, as a resident physician in Los Angeles, not only have I been using my Chinese language skills, I have had to apply the same framework of language learning to an independent study of Spanish, which I had not previously studied but now use extensively at the LA County Hospital.

MY BYU HUMANITIES degree has been invaluable in helping me navigate several thorny issues that have cropped up in the past few years. I am not only able to recognize the many sides

of an issue but also to critically analyze opinions and facts to reach an informed and fair conclusion. More importantly, I have been able to apply gospel principles to my decisions.

IN MY CAREER, I eventually became a product designer and found my humanities studies surprisingly applicable. I can’t overstate how valuable a copyediting class was.

I MAJORED IN secondary English teaching, and I am currently a high school literature teacher at a private school. In the past few years, I have taught novels to my students that I read for the first time in college. I developed a deep interest in the novels of Jane Austen back then, and I often share what I learned with my own students.

MY HUMANITIES EDUCATION has been advantageous through-out my life, regardless of year or circumstances, in teaching my children and making sense of the world around me. I see deeper meaning in things, and my testimony of the gospel is strengthened through the connections I find between religious and mythological beliefs. I am a fantasy writer, and my knowl-edge of humanities has helped me create the fantasy world I write about and its numerous cultures. Plus, the humanities feed my soul!

Wesley P. Lloyd Award for Distinction in Graduate Education.

Comparative Arts and Letters assistant professor Elliot Wise received Early Career Teaching Award.

Comparative Arts and Letters professor Kathryn Isaak received the Adjunct Faculty Excellence award.

SEPTEMBER

LDS Philosophical Theology Project held its inaugural conference meeting at BYU.

German and Russian associate professor Michelle Stott James presented the 2021 P. A. Christensen lecture, “Visions of Peace: The Interrogation of Violent Resistance by 19th-Century German-Language Women Authors.”

OCTOBER

Former Young Women General President Bonnie L. Oscarson presented the Honored Alumni Lecture, “The Journey That Began under an Apricot Tree: A Life of Learning through Literature.”

NOVEMBER

German and Russian associate professor Laura Catharine Smith published her coedited volume *Linguistic Preferences*.

Spanish professor Lynn Williams gave the 2021 James Barker Lecture.

DECEMBER

Merry Christmas from the College of Humanities!



FOR 14 YEARS, I ran an American affiliate of an Italian company. Coworkers drew me into conversations wherein even passing knowledge of Pellico, Plato, Dante, etc. allowed me to build closer relationships. Even the International Cinema experience has been useful.

GREAT COMMUNICATION WILL never go out of style. No matter what the venue or mode of transmission, the ability to articulate ideas clearly, thoughtfully, and compassionately is still the paramount feature of positive human relations.

MY HUMANITIES EDUCATION has always given me empathy, cultural appreciation, and the ability to navigate difficult issues and remain open to new ideas. I continue to translate German poetry as a hobby; it's always nice to escape the vicissitudes of life through the beauty of poetry!

I HAVE FOUND countless opportunities to use my skills in writing, research, cultural navigation, and relationship building, in professional capacities as an ESL teacher, adjunct faculty member, and RWC manager—and in many personal situations in my life. The College of Humanities has blessed my life in countless ways.

MY DEGREE HAS helped me in all areas of my life. By studying literature and arts from various cultures and ways of thinking, I was introduced to a wider world view. I am able to feel and express empathy more readily in situations where I might not agree with another person. I am an author, so my degree has also helped me in my career as I attempt to continue the legacy of great classical artists by leaving footprints of light in the world.

The views and opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the faculty, administration, or staff of the BYU College of Humanities. Submissions may be edited for length, grammar, appropriateness, and clarity.

Retiring BYU Professor Opens New Doors with *Witnesses* Film

PROFESSOR DANIEL PETERSON (Asian and Near Eastern Languages) is wrapping up his time at BYU, but his work continues as his new movie *Witnesses* hits theaters. *Witnesses* tells the story of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon. Professor Peterson and his wife, Deborah, were executive producers for the movie. Peterson said, "I had long been deeply interested in the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, and my involvement in this effort has been an unexpected joy for me."

—HEATHER BERGESON (ENGLISH '22)

Q&A with Alumna Alyssa Baer

GRADUATING AT THE top of her class, alumna Alyssa Baer proved herself an accomplished student through her work in the public health major and her minor in digital humanities and technology. Her many accomplishments during her undergraduate career earned her widespread recognition and the honor of being a student speaker at BYU's 2021 commencement.

Baer received recognition as a Ballard Scholar for Social Impact and the 2020 BYU Health Promotion Student of the Year. She committed herself to research and service opportunities during her time at BYU, especially through her many leadership positions at BYU's Center for Service and Learning. Baer traveled to Zambia, Africa, as part of a program evaluation internship with a local nonprofit organization called Mothers Without Borders. She also wrote her thesis for the BYU Honors Program based on her experiences and work there.

—SAGE WHEELER (PUBLIC HEALTH '20)

Steve Moody Explores How We See Identity, Unity, and Diversity

AT BYU EDUCATION Week 2021, Dr. Steve Moody (Asian and Near Eastern Languages) gave a lecture series titled "Who Are We? Perspectives on Identity from Sociolinguistics and the



Gospel.” He focused on how we define and understand identity in the context of both academic research and eternal truths. Moody taught that understanding our identity includes discovering how unity and diversity relate to each other. Our individual identities are socially constructed from those sources based on our interactions, history, and culture. Diversity exists because of our individual identities—which consist of the qualities that make us unique. As Moody suggests, who we are can be a lot of different things. So what does the gospel teach us about individual and group identities? Moody said, “If we’re going to become one in Zion, does that entail stepping away from the individual things that make you unique?” He then mentioned that there is more to our religion and our identity than a list of dos and don’ts: “The qualities that define Zion are not minute things. They are basic, more fundamental commandments. You have to forgive others. You have to love others.” These characteristics require ongoing effort; this effort means we are constantly learning and growing. “Our identity puts us in a position of progression.”

—JULIE IRVINE (EDITING AND PUBLISHING ‘23)

Matthew Wickman Gives a Spiritual Workshop on Poetry, Christ, and Conversion

PROFESSOR MATTHEW WICKMAN (English) said the questions he takes to Christ are his personal spiritual workshops where Christ “turns his mind to bigger and more important things.” Wickman gave a lecture at BYU Education Week 2021 where he introduced this principle of workshoping our questions with Christ by looking for him in modern poetry. In his lecture, “Finding Christ in Modern Poetry,” Wickman discussed how poetry could “shed interesting and moving light on how we encounter Christ in the world” and in our lives. Christ knows how we feel, and He knows the efforts we make to reach Him. Christ uses our experiences to create personal spiritual workshops that help us learn how to find Him more readily in our day-to-day lives. Wickman concluded, “Christ is the ultimate answer to every question, large and small.”

—JULIE IRVINE (EDITING AND PUBLISHING ‘23)

2021 P. A. Christensen Lecture: To Win the Fight for Peace

DR. MICHELLE STOTT James (German and Russian) delivered the 2021 P.A. Christensen lecture, titled “Visions of Peace: The Interrogation of Violent Resistance by 19th-Century German-Language Women Authors.” In her lecture, she described three authors—Berthe von Suttner, Bettina von Arnim, and Gisela von Arnim Grimm—by illustrating the “visions of peace” in their writings.

Dr. James pointed out that peace is a choice, and it brings salvation. She encouraged listeners to choose to utilize the power of Christ and change their hearts to be worthy of Zion. Only then can small groups and communities create spaces for these authors’ visions of peace.

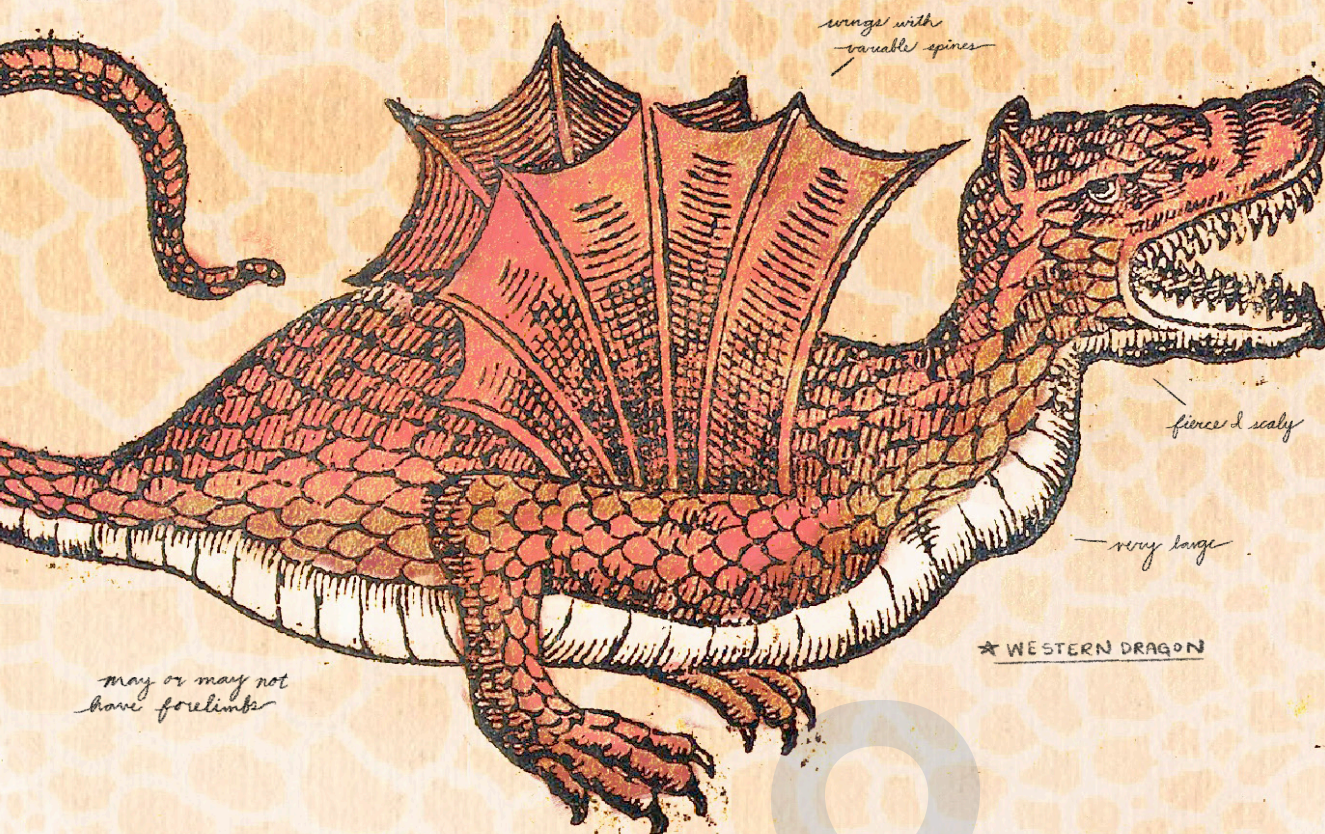
—SAVANNAH TAYLOR (EDITING AND PUBLISHING ‘22)

Classical Studies Students Shine at National Greek and Latin Translation Competitions

THIS JUNE, THREE BYU classical studies students placed in the annual Maurine Dallas Watkins Greek and Latin Translation contest, which is run by the Eta Sigma Phi Honorary Society for Classical Studies. Two of those same students also received the Edward Phinney Book Prize for receiving a perfect score on the College Greek Exam. These competitions involve advanced undergraduate classics students from around the nation competing in translation and language skills. At the Maurine Dallas Watkins contest, Michael Kerr took first overall in Intermediate Greek, Jackson Abhau took second overall in Koine Greek, and Madeleine Staples took third overall in Intermediate Latin. Kerr also won the Phinney Prize in 2020, and Staples took home the same prize this year.

—HEATHER BERGESON (ENGLISH ‘22)





COMPARATIVE ARTS & LETTERS

STATE OF THE DISCIPLINE

by Joshua J. Perkey, Manager of Digital Media
and Communications, College of Humanities

A LOT CHANGES in a department over time, and that has certainly been true in the Department of Comparative Arts and Letters at BYU. Today, the department includes comparative literature, classics, interdisciplinary humanities, art history, Scandinavian studies, and a master's degree in comparative studies. To give you a sense of how the department has changed and its vision for the future, I interviewed Kerry Soper and Carl Sederholm, the incoming and outgoing chairs of the department, along with Julie Allen, the department graduate studies coordinator. Their responses are both intriguing and enlightening.

How has the department changed in the last 30 years?

Kerry: The biggest change for the interdisciplinary humanities section of the department has been a gradual shift away from a sort of high culture and civilization approach to our material (the greatest hits of Western culture) to a more expansive treatment of cultures in the plural sense: minority cultures, popular cultures, and non-Western traditions. This is reflected both in the faculty's eclectic fields of study and in the way we teach our courses (getting away from a "coverage" model of key works of high art and moving towards more in-depth, thematic explorations of all kinds of cultural texts).

Carl: The transition from Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature to Comparative Arts and Letters was sparked by the addition of art history, which moved into the department in 2015. To me, that change in name captures the idea that we are trying to become something more focused than just an amalgam of disciplines.

Kerry: Right. You might describe it as cultural studies with a little more sensitivity to issues of class, race, and gender so that it doesn't ignore the contributions of authors and artists who had been left out—including women, cultural minorities, pop culture, cultural studies, and a more comprehensive critical way of thinking about the cultural work performed by the humanities.

no wings

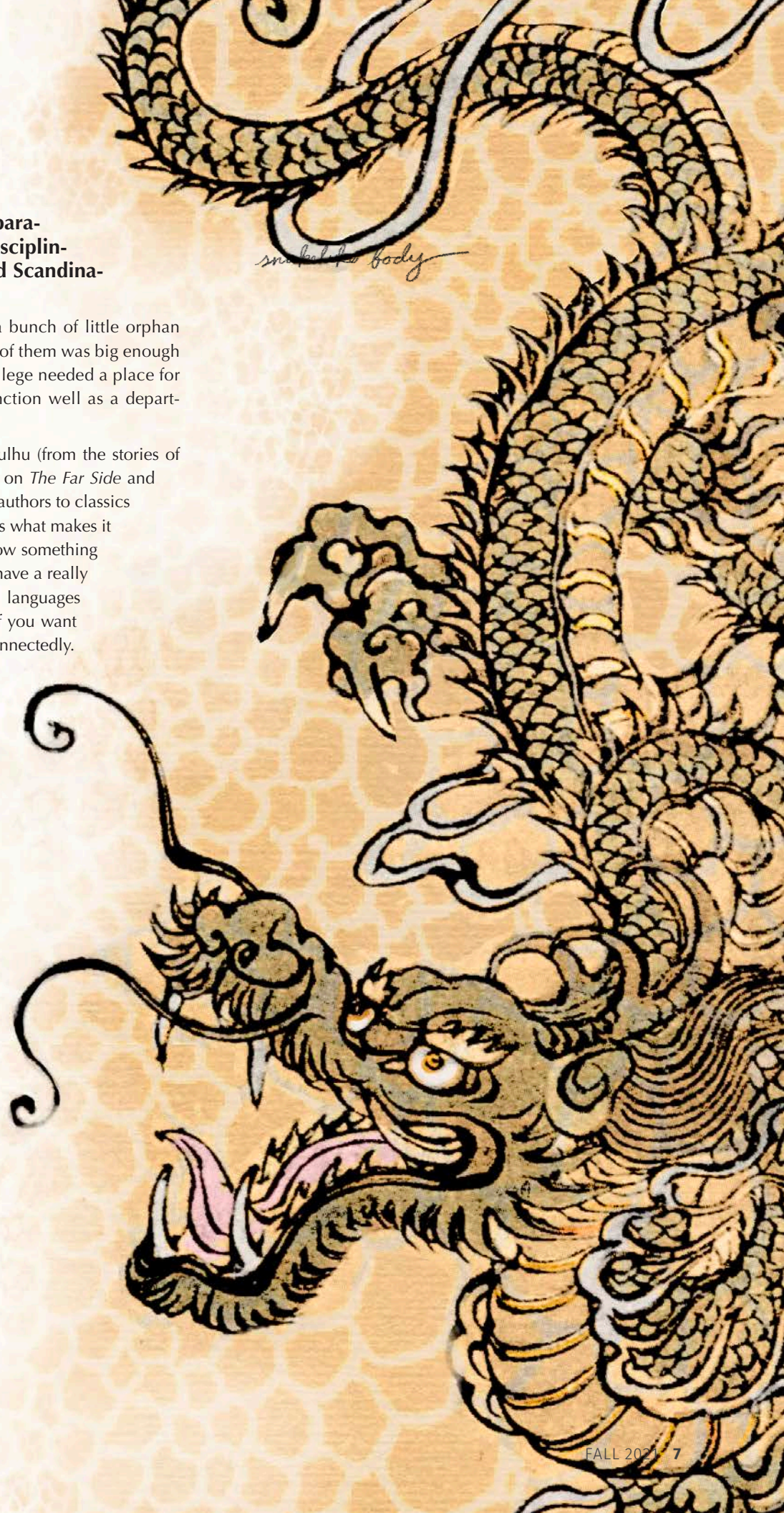
The department includes comparative literature, classics, interdisciplinary humanities, art history, and Scandinavian studies. Why?


KERRY: The department consists of a bunch of little orphan programs that needed a home. None of them was big enough to justify being a department. The college needed a place for these smaller, similar units. They function well as a department within the college.

Julie: It includes everything from Cthulhu (from the stories of H. P. Lovecraft) to Kerry Soper's work on *The Far Side* and from Marlene Esplin's work on LatinX authors to classics and art history. It's a grab bag, but that's what makes it so amazing. You have people who know something about just about everything, and you have a really broad representation across eras and languages and genres. So it's kind of the place if you want to know things, broadly and interconnectedly. If you want to do a deep dive into French, you obviously go to that department. But to see French in conversation with all these other traditions, then you come to ours.

Carl: We're held together by a common commitment to students, primarily. Secondly, we're held

★ EASTERN DRAGON





Evolution of Comparative Arts and Letters A Department by Any Other Name

1972 *Humanities and Comparative Literature*

1980 *Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature*

2015 *Comparative Arts and Letters*

together by a commitment to understanding. It sounds simple, but in understanding art or understanding text (or whatever we're trying to examine), that commitment emerges out of how different we all are. The classicists are committed to students in the same way the art historians are—because of their strong desire to serve students.

Kerry: In another version of the multiverse it could have gone wrong, but because the faculty have that shared commitment and have also emphasized collegiality to a high degree, they make it work.

Carl: It's remarkable that you can have such a diversity of people just basically showing up and caring about the same things every day. I love that.

Describe what “comparative work” means.

Julie: A lot of people do comparative work without realizing they're doing it. Take English, for example. They compare poets and compare genres and often read literature in translation and literature originally written in English. But those aspects don't always get any context. In our department, we look at those textures and compare context.

Here's another example. I'm teaching a class right now where we compare the origin of dragons. We start in Asian cultures, analyzing what dragons look like, and we look at the reverential mythologies of draconic ancestors. Then we consider Western traditions and biblical references in the Hebrew Bible to jackals and snakes and whales that become *dragon* in English, then St. George and the Dragon, the Beowulf story, and other ways that dragons are demonized as sort of devilish in Western tradition.

So, we have this basis of these two traditions and within them, multiple national traditions. Then, we look at the way dragons are depicted in 20th- and 21st-century literature

across national lines. German, Swedish, British, American, or Australian authors—anyone else we can find.

We do formal analysis, but we also take into account where authors come from, what kind of language barriers they're working with, and what kind of medium they're working in. We compare all those things and try to get meaning out of that comparison. We're trying to make meaning in that juxtaposition of difference.

What's the value of a degree in Comparative Arts and Letters specifically, and in the Humanities in general?

Carl: The value that I express to students is about what transfers. Reading closely transfers to other realms of life. Writing clearly or persuasively transfers to critical thinking.

Kerry: Those transferable skills will last them a lifetime. They may forget about a particular artist or book. But critical, thoughtful, moral, ethical ways of thinking will impact them deeply and will improve their lives in all realms—from being a parent to an employee to a reader to a citizen. Our college has emphasized Humanities+ aggressively. (*Humanities+ is a program that helps students translate the value of their studies into professional contexts.*)

And this has been a good thing, because we're more responsible now to our students in terms of the vocational benefits and strategies for making careers out of their humanities major. Research clearly shows that, especially mid-career and beyond, you will do better than your peers if you have that breadth of knowledge, critical thinking skills, and an ability to write well.

But I think we don't want to let go of the inherent value of studying the humanities in making us better human beings. More moral people, more critically thinking, ethical people. Better citizens and better members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In addition to critical thinking in an abstract academic sense, you're talking about empathy and developing social intelligence.

Carl: I agree. We have this sort of relentless need to say how financially successful everything can be, or how much money you're going to make, or what are you going to do with that. But what are the transferable skills? What can you take from what we study and use in other contexts? I also tend to focus on connection—how all of our study helps us connect with other people. I want to understand why they said what they said, so I can empathize with them, come around to their point of view, or challenge their point

of view. I don't just want to receive it passively. That's my role as a professor as I see it—helping students navigate meaning.

Julie: We also try to get them to see the humanity and the divinity of other people. Helping them to value that is one of the less tangible skills but probably one of the most important ones that we teach, by exploring the human condition and trying to get people to care.

What is unique about teaching the humanities at BYU?

Kerry: We can teach difficult subject matter in a gospel frame or with the help of the Spirit. We're similar to any faculty on BYU campus that way. But because BYU is a research institution, we also have the freedom to introduce students to challenging theories, cutting-edge kinds of scholarship, and even difficult texts, and we invite our students to research in a way that's both challenging and faith affirming.

Julie: When you think about what the humanities means, you come right back to the gospel. We recognize the divine importance of people and their experiences through art, music, literature, poetry, and film. BYU strikes a productive balance between the need to have practical skills for employment and the need to have a holistic understanding of God's children.

Think about Doctrine and Covenants 88. We're commanded to know about "things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass." We're supposed to know everything. And I feel like Doctrine and Covenants 88 tells us that everything is connected. It's all part of this bigger creation. The Department of Comparative Arts and Letters takes that holistic approach.

Any parting thoughts?

Kerry: In terms of all of our interactions with students, we strive for them to be positive, to know that we care about them, that we're invested in their future, and that they've been improved because of their time spent with us.

Carl: When people ask students what they will do with their degree, the answer should be "What am I becoming with my skills?" That's the most important thing. What are we becoming? What are our students becoming? That's such a great target that supersedes a lot of the other stuff. I really want the focus to be on that.

Julie: It's kind of amazing how an interdisciplinary training really makes students better art historians and better classicists and better humanity scholars because they focus on more than their one little thing; they have to see that thing in its context. As faculty, we're trying to help students develop appreciation for all the work of God's hands, an appreciation for the value of that work, and the people's lives that it represents. I would hope they come to recognize how integral the humanities are to the gospel, how integral values like empathy and compassion and love are to the humanities, and how connected those are to the gospel. I think humanities skills are really what will save the world. 🌟

Fantasy Dragon, illustration courtesy of Rebekah Meacham (illustration 22)



RETURN TO STUDY ABROAD

by Madison Sélcho (Journalism '22)

WHEN I STEPPED off the plane in Israel, I had no idea of the impact that country would have on me. Walking through the tunnel from the airplane to the airport, I read the words printed on the wall: “Welcome to Israel. Your life will never be the same.” My time in Jerusalem was life changing. I experienced falafel, a warm, round food that’s fluffy on the inside, crisp on the outside, with hints of cilantro and parsley that make your mouth water on rainy days in the Old City. I discovered that the piercing but beautiful sound of the call to prayer waking you up at four in the morning will be the first thing you miss. Above all, I learned that the people who live on the other side of the world from me are incredibly kind, and that Jerusalem is a place where the Savior and His teachings live. Studying abroad is a life-changing experience that the Kennedy Center and the College of Humanities make possible through financial, teaching, and networking resources they have developed over decades.

Study abroad programs under the direction of the Kennedy Center began in 1965 in Salzburg. “The program ran from February to May and included skiing the Alps, a Beatles concert, and studying behind the Iron Curtain in Budapest and Prague,” says Aaron Rose, Kennedy Center coordinator of international study programs.

Since then, study abroad programs have expanded to many countries around the world. In conjunction with the Kennedy Center, the College of Humanities (through Humanities+*) has helped students find study abroad and internship opportunities to prepare them for post-graduation careers.

During the fall of 2021, the college sponsored and provided financial backing for programs in London, Morocco, and Spain. If circumstances allow, students will have the

opportunity during the winter and summer of 2022 to study in a variety of locations, including England, Scotland, Wales, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, and France. Rose explains, “The International Study Programs office wants to see students reaching the aims of a BYU education in a culturally diverse setting.”

When I stepped back on the plane to come home after eleven weeks in Jerusalem, I finally understood what the phrase on the wall of that airport tunnel meant. I held on to the friendships I made, and I pondered the lessons I learned and the new person I’ve become. Studying abroad is so valuable in helping individuals expand their minds and world-view; it’s a journey that really does impact one’s life. Truly, “your life will never be the same.” 🌍

**Humanities+ is a program that helps BYU Humanities College students build bridges between their humanities majors and their careers.*



Photographs courtesy of J. Scott Miller, Zachary Nutall, Alyssa Lyman, McKay Christensen, Ty Duffy, and John Beniston.



WALKING WHERE ENGLAND'S WRITERS WALKED

by John Bennion, Emeritus Professor of English


I FIRST TOOK literature and writing students on a hiking tour of England in 2003; I ended up going four more times. During winter semester, the students studied the British novel. In spring term, they read Victorian poems and essays, and hiked about 200 miles through the landscapes where British writers lived, including the Lake District for William Wordsworth, the Midlands for George Eliot, Dorset for Thomas Hardy. The experience

centered on a reflective journal that students wrote in every day, integrating their personal experiences with what they read and discussed in life-changing ways. For example, Kimberly, who thought that right and wrong were always clearly delineated, began to see that some issues are not so easily judged. Kurt, a natural loner, discovered ways to make connections with other people. Claire learned to see poetry in everyday life. Brooke

faced an operation for a brain tumor when she returned from England; the tumor was benign, but the operation could damage her hearing. She was reading *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and had thought that when our group went to Stonehenge, where Tess's story ends, she would receive clarity about her life. Instead, she realized that total clarity is impossible, and that writing for self-understanding is a continual process. ☼



WOMEN



IN HUMANITIES

by Julie Irvine (Editing and Publishing '23)

illustrated by Rebekah Mecham (Illustration '22)

As women have increasingly contributed their time, talents, and mentorship to the humanities, the field has evolved to reflect the unique contributions women make. In the following stories, eight faculty members (one from each department in the College of Humanities) share their admiration for women who have helped redefine the humanities—and what it means to be human.

Annette Baier



Annette Baier (1929–2012) was an inspiration to me as a woman in philosophy. She was a David Hume scholar, and she taught moral philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh for much of her career. As a moral feminist philosopher, Annette brought a strong and much-needed female perspective to the field. She understood that humans

are feeling, social creatures, and that we need interconnectedness for society to flourish. Her take on moral psychology and what it means to be good focuses on relationships and caring instead of the abstract laws about right and wrong that are common in traditional philosophy. Women are consistently underrepresented in our field, but Annette's generosity showed me that mentoring and community can help women thrive in philosophy. Annette was from the generation of women who were still fighting to have a place and a voice, but she came out of that struggle warm, inclusive, and interested in supporting other people.

Katie Paxman

PHILOSOPHY

Katie Paxman

chair of the BYU Department of Linguistics and English Language. Diane never offered advice unless I asked, except once. The demands of work and family must have shown on my face that day, because she encouraged me to fully embrace my role as a mother amid my passion and enthusiasm for my career.

Twenty-one quick years later, I am now an empty nester and still a professor in the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages. I have followed in Diane's footsteps in a few areas, including internationalizing internships and examining the effectiveness of self-assessment strategies in language learning. I'm grateful for Diane's professional and personal example. Her advice helped me navigate priorities, accept sacrifice, and more. I look up to her for living a personal and professional life that exemplifies Emily Dickinson's poetry:

If I can stop one Heart from breaking
I shall not live in vain
If I can ease one Life the Aching
Or cool one Pain
Or help one fainting Robin
Unto his Nest again
I shall not live in Vain.

Julie Damron

Julie Damron

ASIAN AND NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES

Diane Strong-Krause



I arrived at BYU over 21 years ago, energized from successfully completing a PhD in Linguistics. Although optimistic about professorship and motherhood—my three young children ranged in age from five months to six years old—I soon became overwhelmed by the demands of that balancing act. On occasion, I crossed paths with Diane Strong-Krause. She was a successful professor and mother who also served as the

Amy Einsohn



Amy Einsohn (1952–2014) embodied the spirit of editing. Though I didn't know her personally, the interactions I had with her via editing forums and mailing lists have inspired

me in my career as an editor. One of the most influential things I learned about editing from Amy is the importance of seeing a need and being willing to contribute my time and expertise to help fill that need. In fact, one of Amy's greatest contributions to editing started as a response to a need. Amy wrote *The Copyeditor's Handbook: A Guide for Book Publishing and Corporate Communications* because she saw the need for a self-learning resource that editors could use to become better at their craft. Now, 21 years after the publication of the first edition, *The Copyeditor's Handbook* is used by editors around the world. Amy considered herself just another editor, and I'm sure she

didn't aspire to write *The Copyeditor's Handbook* when she was starting her career, but her work has shown me that we can accomplish great things by simply asking, "What can I do to help other people?"

Suzy Bills

LINGUISTICS

Suzy Bills

Jeannine Blackwell



The woman who has most deeply impacted my scholarly life is Jeannine Blackwell, now retired from the University of Kentucky. Jeannine was a founding member of Women in German, an academic group that I joined as a new faculty member. Already one of the most well-respected scholars in the field of early German-language women's literature, Jeannine took me under her wing when she discovered that we shared research interests. As

I was establishing myself as a scholar, she offered me expertise, insight, and endless mentoring. When

we started the Sophie Project—an online database at BYU of early German-language texts from female authors—Jeannine was one of the main resources to whom I repeatedly turned. She was also of inestimable help when we established the Sophie website, once again offering suggestions and insight about our project. Much of what I have achieved as a scholar has at its foundation the direction I received from Jeannine Blackwell.

Michelle Stott James

GERMAN AND RUSSIAN

Michelle Stott James

Christine de Pisan



Christine de Pisan (1364–c. 1430) was one of the first European women to make a professional career out of writing. She was Italian by birth, but her family moved to Paris in 1368 for her father's appointment as astrologer-physician in the French court. When Christine was widowed at the age of 25, she took up the pen to support

herself, her two children, and her widowed mother—and to reclaim her husband's estate. She received commissions for poetry, literary criticism, a manual of military strategy for men, a moral treatise for women, and a history of the late King Charles V. In addition to securing a career for herself in a male-dominated world, she promoted the employment of other women by hiring them to copy and illuminate her manuscripts in an all-female workshop. Christine's arguments on the worth of women are best expressed in her *Le livre de la cité des dames* (*The Book of the City of Ladies*). In this work, she recounts a vision she had of three female allegorical figures—Reason, Rectitude, and Justice—who help her build a metaphorical city to provide refuge for women and defend them from men's insults against their intellectual capabilities, morality, bodies, behavior, and potential.

Jennifer Haraguchi

FRENCH AND ITALIAN

Jennifer Haraguchi

Geertruydt Roghman



When I began my study of Dutch Golden Age domestic imagery, the works of Geertruydt Roghman (1625–c. 1650) immediately and completely absorbed my attention due to their unprecedented perspective on women. These innovative images powerfully

magnified and ennobled women's work. Roghman's art focused on women intently performing tasks such as sewing, spinning, cooking, drawing, and cleaning. She used unique viewing angles and the monumentality of the figures to draw attention to each task, thus emphasizing the valued labor of women and their heroic contributions to Dutch society. Although Roghman came from a family of Amsterdam artists, it was highly unusual for a woman to design and engrave prints. Hence, her signature is a remarkably bold proclamation of her artistic genius as inventor of these unique compositions—compositions that influenced artists such as Johannes Vermeer and Pieter de Hooch through the rest of the seventeenth century. Perhaps Roghman's greatest contribution was teaching men how to view and depict women in a respectful and admiring way.

Martha Peacock

COMPARATIVE ARTS AND LETTERS

Martha H. Peacock

European "view-from-the-top" poems—inspired me to climb Mt. Buçaco to stand where she stood and see the cities, rivers, mountains, and ocean her poem describes. Like many women scholars today, Lacerda integrated her writing with her family, studies, and religious devotion, as well as her disappointment, loss, and achievement.

Valerie Hegstrom

SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE

Valerie Hegstrom



Marie de France

"Marie ai num si sui de France." My name is Marie, and I am from France. This enigmatic introduction to her *Fables* is almost all we know

about Marie de France (c.

1155–1215). She is among the most influential women writers of Medieval Europe and is credited with establishing the literary genre later known as chivalric romance, yet we know very little about Marie herself. She was a French noblewoman who lived and wrote in England in the late 12th century and was associated with the court of Henry II. She may have been King Henry II's half-sister and abbess of Shaftesbury, another Marie who was then abbess of Reading, or perhaps an entirely different Marie.

Marie was well educated, at least trilingual (French, English, and Latin), and produced an expansive collection of popular literature through her work as an author and translator. Her works include the *Lais*, *Fables*, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, and possibly *The Life of St. Audrey*. Marie was mindful of being a female author in a field dominated by men. Her chivalric poems include female characters who were unusual for their time—women who were complex, lovely, and flawed. Marie wrote and inspired literature that was both complicatedly and refreshingly human.

Juliana Chapman

ENGLISH

Juliana Chapman



Bernarda Ferreira de Lacerda

During her lifetime, Bernarda Ferreira de Lacerda (c. 1595–1644) was the most famous woman writer living on the Iberian Peninsula. Because of her epic poem *Hespaña libertada* (1618), prominent

Spanish writers corresponded with and dedicated poetry to her, and Portuguese authors invited her to pen the initial octaves of each canto of their own epic poems. Lacerda married young, and eight years later her husband died, leaving her widowed with six children. She continued to write poetry after her husband's death, composing in Spanish, Portuguese, Latin, and Italian at a time when women could not attend university.

In 1634, Lacerda published an early collection of landscape poems about the forest and mountains of Buçaco. I have traveled to Buçaco three times because of Lacerda's work. Her poem, "*En todo el mundo no hay ojos . . .*"—one of the first early modern

Caravaggio & Christianity: Finding New Meaning

Caravaggio's work inspires us to dig deeper and look beyond our typical relationship with Christ.

by Julie Irvine (Editing and Publishing '23)

WHEN WE THINK of religious artists from sixteenth-century Italy, we might think of Michelangelo or Leonardo da Vinci. Their artwork, often centered on Christian themes, was reverent and included elements we would typically expect from religious artists. For example, Michelangelo's painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel depicts significant scenes from the Old Testament and the life of Christ. Similarly, Leonardo's *The Last Supper* illustrates another meaningful event in Christianity. One artist, though, challenged the norms of religious artwork by adding elements from his own life into his paintings. In doing so, he enhanced our understanding of Christian art.

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio was famous—or infamous, to some—for the contrast between his extraordinary religious artwork and his controversial lifestyle. Convicted of murder and living as a fugitive at the end of his life, Caravaggio was hardly the model Christian. Despite his questionable lifestyle (or maybe because of it), he painted deeply moving and symbolic Christian artwork.

Professor Matthew Ancell (Comparative Arts and Letters) spoke on this topic in a lecture given at the 2021 BYU Education Week. Ancell explained that Caravaggio's work adds renewed meaning to our understanding of Christ today.

Caravaggio used details in his paintings that would have been familiar to sixteenth-century lower-class Italians in order to help viewers connect with Christianity in a more accessible way. For example, in *Madonna di Loreto*, he painted dirty feet and humble clothes on two peasants who came to worship the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child. The integration of dirty and divine would have shown his audience that their worship wasn't limited by their social or economic standing. To us, that contrast between the everyday and the divine proves that we can come as we are to the Savior.

Caravaggio utilized a combination of sacred elements and coarse settings to represent important religious scenes in many of his paintings. For example, *The Calling of Saint Matthew* shows Matthew receiving his apostolic call from the Savior in the middle of a dark room while Matthew and other men are gambling at a table. A gambler himself, Caravaggio drew on his own experiences to help other Christians reevaluate who Matthew was when Christ called him to be an apostle. This juxtaposition between humanity

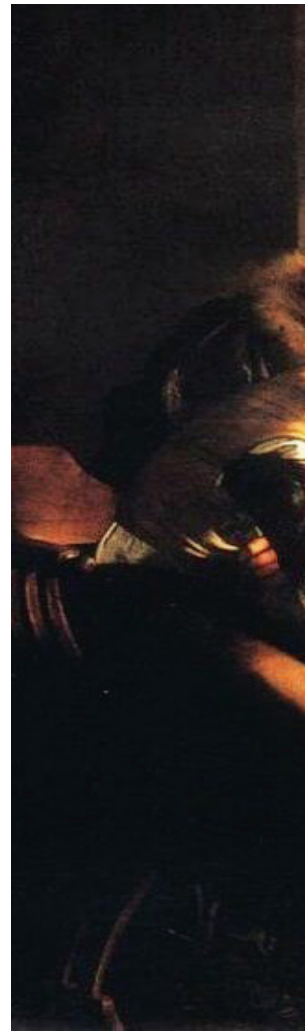


Conversion on the Way to Damascus
(1600–01)

and divinity reveals that Christ met people on their level. Further, Caravaggio seemed to suggest that Christ invites us to rise with Him above the degeneracy of society.

"Despite all of the things Caravaggio did in his life, he seemed to be a believing Christian in need of redemption," Ancell observed. Caravaggio's art addresses that need for redemption and celebrates the intersection of the imperfect and the holy. He encourages us to examine the significance in the space between those opposites. We can see this in the painting *The Conversion on the Way to Damascus*, which portrays Saul during his conversion. Saul is painted lying on the ground, arms outstretched, having fallen from his horse. Caravaggio depicts Saul's transcendent conversion experience amid the confusion of the horse, a groom, and an awkward jumble of limbs and Roman attire. Saul, however, seems to be beyond the confusion. He reaches upward, outside of the frame. "Divinity is outside the frame, but it completes the picture," Ancell remarked. Saul reaches toward divinity, toward the intersection of the imperfect and the holy. In that reaching, Saul finds conversion to Christ.

Caravaggio's artistic approach adds to our understanding of Christ in a way unique from either Michelangelo's or Leonardo's





The Calling of Saint Matthew
(1599–1600)



The Martyrdom of Saint Matthew
(1599–1600)



The Incredulity of Saint Thomas
(1602)

art. He captures the rugged details of reality in his paintings and expands our understanding of how we interact with the Savior. His paintings teach us that not only does Christ welcome everyone, but He also looks beyond our circumstances and calls us to our potential. This inspires us to dig deeper and look beyond our typical relationship with Christ. Caravaggio painted humanity—dirty feet and gambling included—into his religious art and showed us that we can find Christ in our own lives, flaws and all. 🙏

Willa Cather's Vision and Grace

by John J. Murphy

AS A SECOND-GENERATION American from a blue-collar family, whose parents never graduated high school, I found college to be emancipating. Thus I became a teacher to share the far-reaching world the arts and humanities offer. Our society, our country, might be better if we in the humanities would “shout, and . . . draw large and startling figures”¹ as Flannery O’Connor said in her defense of the Christian vision. During a recent symposium in Rome to promote novelist Willa Cather in Europe, I was dismayed to find that the conference yielded little evidence of the author’s significance and was more or less limited to esoteric presentations by scholars devoted to their pet interests. There was little awareness of the need to shout, to describe Cather’s bold European immigrants, colonists, and missionaries.

Cather once told an interviewer that “descriptive work” is “the thing I do best,” which first attracted me to her fiction. Her landscapes generate what Emily Dickinson called *circumference*, expanding vision as a stone tossed in water expands circles. Inspired by a diverse set of exemplary writers and artists, Cather’s Nebraska prairie and Southwest become magical. In *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927), rain glittering on mesas and sunrise in distant mountains hearken “the first Creation morning . . . when the dry land was drawn up out of the deep, and all was confusion.” My introduction to the undulating prairie of Cather’s Nebraska was Homeric, as in *My Ántonia* (1918); its grass, “the color of wine stains,” became “the country as the water is the sea.”

Circumference in Cather, like all good things in the humanities, expands vision because it is informed by extensive knowledge. Bernice Slote described it as “apparent simplicity, actual complexity,” moving “outward from this time and place.” Slote referred to a “secret web” threading American writers like Emerson and Henry James to Shakespeare and the Romantic poets, and to Flaubert, Daudet, Tolstoy, Turgenev. Jim Burden in *My Ántonia* dissolves into nature like an Emerson persona; the lovers’ story in *O Pioneers!* (1913) owes much to Dante and Keats; “The Enchanted Bluff” (1909) is a variation on Turgenev’s “Bezhin Meadow.” A Latinist, Cather repeatedly refers to Virgil’s *Aeneid*, and adapts the worldview of Dante’s *La Divina Commedia* to both the *Archbishop* and *Shadows on the Rock* (1931). Cather collapses disciplines, grouping Beethoven, Shakespeare, and Leonardo as equal players in “the game of make-believe.” The influence of great works of art and music on Cather’s texts is a wellspring for Cather scholars.

Likewise, spiritual mystery, explored later by O’Connor, beckoned Cather. In *Shadows*, Count Frontenac, contemplating death, believes that “his spirit would go before God to be judged . . . because he had been taught it . . . and because he knew that there was something in himself . . . that this world did not explain.” The ongoing offering of grace and vision, what theologian Karl Rahner describes as “God’s self-communication to man as a free being,” complements Cather’s characterizations. In *My Mortal Enemy* (1926), Myra Henshaw is transformed when seated against a cedar on a

headland above the Pacific. The afternoon light beats down “as if thrown by a burning glass,” and Myra’s sense of guilt and hope for forgiveness seems to intensify in the setting sun, which like the cedar is a Crucifixion symbol.

Cather was not without strong opinions on the movements of her day. In a 1923 essay, Cather denounced “Americanization,” discrimination against immigrants, suppression of foreign languages, decline of cooking and craft, and the “eclipse” of humanities by the contemporary pressure to study “mercantile processes.” Claude Wheeler, the doughboy hero of *One of Ours* (1922), who escapes to war (and death) in France, assumes that Americans “were always buying and selling, building and pulling down,” and were “a people of

CIRCUMFERENCE IN CATHER, LIKE ALL GOOD
THINGS IN THE HUMANITIES, EXPANDS
VISION BECAUSE IT IS INFORMED BY
EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE.

shallow emotions.” In *The Professor’s House* (1925), protagonist Godfrey St. Peter mourns society’s obsession with science, arguing that “art and religion . . . have given man the only happiness he has ever had.” In a 1945 letter to a friend, Cather comments that “the atomic bomb has sent a shutter of horror (and fear) through all the world.”

Willa Cather’s world is populated by large and startling figures illuminating life in meaningful ways. If you aren’t familiar with her, I highly suggest you give her works a try; if you know her already, she’s worth further exploration. 🌟

-
1. O’Connor, Flannery, *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose*, ed. Sally and Robert Fitzgerald, NY, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970.
 2. Slote, Bernice and Richard Giannone, “Willa Cather: The Secret Web,” *Five Essays on Willa Cather*, ed. John J. Murphy, North Andover Massachusetts: Merrimack College Press, 1974.

JOHN J. MURPHY,
EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH



*Image of Willa Cather from Philip L.
and Helen Cather Southwick Collection,
Archives & Special Collections, University
of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries.*

RETIRING

JOHN BENNION joined the BYU Department of English in 1989. He trailblazed both the British Literature and Landscape and the Wilderness Writing programs and put experiential learning on the map. He has been an advisor to *Inscape* for years.

GREG CLARK taught at BYU since 1985. His courses included rhetorical criticism, history and theory of rhetoric, visual and aural rhetoric, nineteenth-century American literature, jazz and literature, and the Harlem Renaissance. Students appreciated his high expectation and attentive regard.

LYNN HENRICHSEN, a professor in the Department of Linguistics, began teaching at BYU in 1992. During his career he received numerous academic awards,

and in BYU's Department of Linguistics, he served in numerous citizenship and administrative capacities, most notably as department chair.

MARK JOHNSON joined BYU in 1987 in the Department of Art as an art historian. He taught ancient and medieval art history and researched Roman and early Christian art and architecture. He truly enjoyed helping students gain an appreciation for classical art.

DANIEL PETERSON joined the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at BYU in 1990. An eloquent speaker, gifted teacher, and colorful raconteur, he is beloved by students and colleagues. He is a Renaissance Man whose prodigious breadth and depth of knowledge spanned

Islamic history, philosophy, literature, and religion, as well as classical languages and Latter-day Saint church history and doctrine.

PHIL SNYDER taught an impressive range of courses on a wide variety of topics related to British and American literature, Western studies, and autobiographical studies since 1988. He enjoyed taking classes on field trips to his ranch in Salem, Utah.

DENNIS PERRY has taught in the American literature section for 21 years. He served in University Writing and on scholarship, graduate, and symposium committees. He is known as a gentle and generous colleague.

Photo courtesy of Annie Spratt on Unsplash.com

IN MEMORIAM

CARL DIXON ANDERSON, professor of Spanish and Portuguese, passed away in March 2021 in Provo, Utah. Dixon dedicated his life to honoring and serving God; his wife, Patricia Anderson, and family; and the many communities he helped. Dixon received his master of arts and doctorate in romance languages and literature from the University of Texas at Austin. He began a distinguished career as a professor at BYU, including directing the first study-abroad program to Mexico and writing textbooks. Dixon's magnum opus was his textbook, *Patterns of Spanish*. He was a masterful teacher, a gifted thinker and writer, and absolutely dedicated to his family, to his students, and to the gospel.

PAUL ROGER THOMAS, professor of British literature, passed away in July

2021 from complications related to cancer treatments. Paul graduated from BYU in 1964, completed his masters in English at the University of Virginia, and received his PhD in English focused on medieval literature from the University of York. Paul joined the BYU faculty in 1980. He was a medievalist and a pulpit pounder for all things Chaucer. We will miss his generosity, singing, pedagogy, intellectual curiosity, unquenchable enthusiasm, and booming laughter.

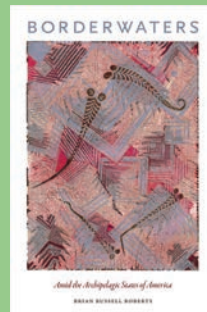
GORDON KENT THOMAS, a British romanticist, retired from the department in 1992 and died in August 2021. Like his brother Paul, Gordon donated his body to the University of Utah Medical School. Thomas was a thoughtful teacher and an accomplished Wordsworth scholar. He took students on study abroad to

Grasmere. After he retired, he served missions with his wife, Catherine, who retired as a BYU religion faculty in 1999. His life proves our teaching can touch others' lives for good.

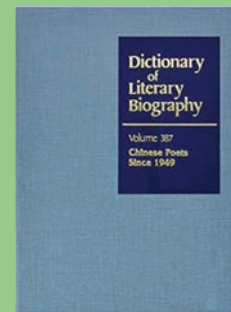
RICHARD CECIL LOUNSBURY, professor of classics and comparative literature, passed away in August 2021 in his native Calgary. Richard joined the faculty as associate professor in the Department of Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature in 1982 and retired as a professor in 2013. Although he retained his residence in Provo, he spent most of his retirement in Canada caring for his widowed mother until her death.

DAN MUHLESTEIN started teaching full-time in the BYU Department of English in 1993 after earning a PhD at Rice University. Students remember him as a teacher who made theory almost enjoyable or at least understandable. He has a talent for using texts to illuminate the gospel, and the gospel to invigorate the secular world.

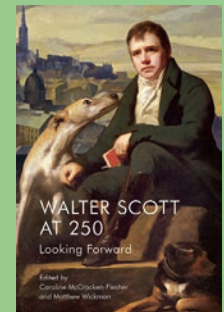
BRUCE YOUNG has, since 1983, taught undergraduate and graduate courses in Shakespeare, Renaissance literature and drama, English drama to 1800, and the early British literary history survey. He is known for his thoughtful, reflective teaching.



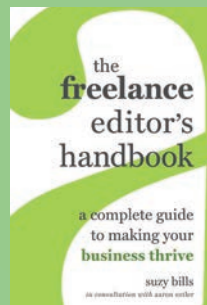
*Borderwaters:
Amid the Archipelagic
States of America*
Brian Roberts



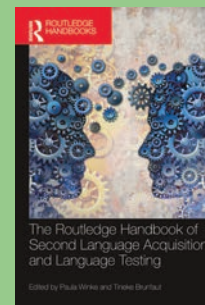
*Dictionary of Literary
Biography: Chinese
Poets Since 1949*
Steven Riep



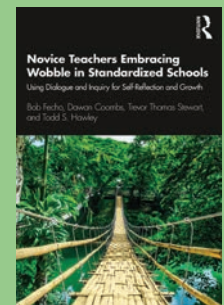
*Walter Scott at 250
Looking Forward*
Matthew Wickman



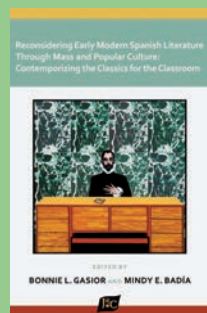
*The Freelance Editor's
Handbook: A Complete
Guide to Making your
Business Thrive*
Suzy Bills



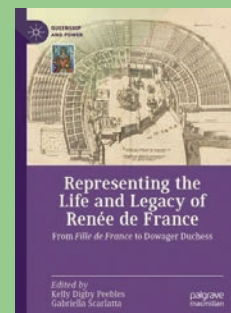
*Routledge Handbook
of SLA and Language
Testing*
Troy Cox and Dan Dewey



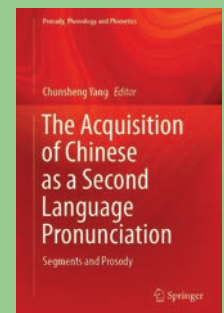
*Novice Teachers
Embracing Wobble in
Standardized Schools*
Dawan Coombs



*Reconsidering Early
Modern Spanish Literature
through Mass
and Pop Culture: Con-
temporizing the Classics
in the Classroom*
Valerie Hegstrom



*Representing the Life
and Legacy of Renée
de France: From Fille
de France to Dowager
Duchess*
Robert Hudson



*The Acquisition of
Chinese as a Second
Language Pronunciation:
Segments and Prosody*
Rachel Yu Liu

CROSSWORD ANSWERS (from page 27)

ACROSS 1. geez, 5. sleek, 10. aged, 14. our, 15. porgi, 16. sola, 17. argo, 18. aural, 19. only, 20. doomscrolling, 23. egal, 9. killerrapp, 10. a song, 11. gong, 12. ell, 13. day, 21. sax, 22. ilk, 25. bo-gus, 26. orate, 27. serac, 28. Mr. Ott, 29. atm, 30. cager, 31. oiled, 32. blurs, 34. twindemic, 35. oh no, 39. isolated, 44. KOP, 45. fee, 46. punge, 47. trees, 48. seam, 49. Reno, 50. slam, 51. pena, 52. dote, 53. erne, 54. read, 55. oft, 56. ply, 61. Etna, 62. tyme, 63. comas, 64. deed.

DOWN 1. goad, 2. euro, 3. ergo, 4. zoombomb, 5. space, 6. lour, 7. erro, 8. equal, 9. killerrapp, 10. a song, 11. gong, 12. ell, 13. day, 21. sax, 22. ilk, 25. bo-gus, 26. orate, 27. serac, 28. Mr. Ott, 29. atm, 30. cager, 31. oiled, 32. blurs, 34. twindemic, 35. oh no, 39. isolated, 44. KOP, 45. fee, 46. punge, 47. trees, 48. seam, 49. Reno, 50. slam, 51. pena, 52. dote, 53. erne, 54. read, 55. oft, 56. ply, 61. Etna, 62. tyme, 63. comas, 64. deed.

The Magic of Lifelong Learning through Literature with Bonnie L. Oscarson

by Madison Selcho (Communications '22)

Bonnie L. Oscarson gave the 2021 Honored Alumni Lecture for the BYU College of Humanities.

BONNIE OSCARSON'S LIFELONG journey of learning through literature began under an apricot tree in Bountiful, Utah. Underneath that tree, she opened her favorite books and was carried away to countless worlds. "There is magic in literature. I found that I could be transported in time and space to different places and cultures," Bonnie said. "I could understand what it felt like to be an orphan or a grandfather or a princess in a fairy tale." Books taught her critical lessons throughout her life that led her to earn a degree in English and embrace church callings.



Learning from Literature at All Stages of Life

"I was blessed to be born into a home with parents who loved learning and who encouraged their children to read and learn, and they modeled it themselves," Bonnie said. Growing up with parents who encouraged her to read created a passion within her. "It was a joy, and I just learned to relish entering other worlds." At BYU, she took to the best books and professors, and loved pursuing her degree. She met and married her husband, and they decided to start a family; then she paused her college studies to focus on raising her children. One Sunday years later in Houston, Texas, she saw a flyer on the church bulletin board that said she could get her degree online. Bonnie had an overwhelming feeling that she should finish her degree in English literature, which was scary, but she did it. She loved her coursework, and earning that degree was the springboard for many more adventures.

Studying Literature Prepared Her to Serve

As her life unfolded after graduating from BYU, Bonnie saw clearly why she had needed to finish her degree. For one thing, learning Swedish prepared her to be called with her husband as temple matron for the Stockholm Sweden Temple. There, she trained new workers, instructed sisters in receiving their endowments, and spoke in wards throughout Sweden. A few years later, when she was called as Young Women General President, she wrote many talks and articles and shepherded them through relentless vetting. She recognized how her prompting to finish her degree and her subsequent immersion in studying and writing about great literature prepared her to take on such callings.

Learning through Literature is for Everyone

One of the most important lessons Bonnie discovered through literature is that learning is an ongoing journey. "Reading and literature have always been a joy and an escape and have filled my life with thoughts and experiences I could have had in no other way. Literature has made my life richer and more meaningful," Bonnie said. "My opportunity to learn from scholars and teachers in the College of Humanities has helped me be more compassionate, have more empathy, more awareness of the world. Those learning experiences have changed me in ways I cannot begin to name." Bonnie's pursuit of learning began in fictional worlds under an apricot tree, but her lifelong journey taught her that you can find magic and meaning in every part of your life. ☸

Photographs courtesy of Lupita Herrera (Photography '22)

Professor Chris Crowe Delivers Karl G. Maeser Distinguished Faculty Lecture

by Heather Bergeson (English '22)

Addressing the campus community, Professor Chris Crowe spoke on the importance of understanding both the convention of genre and how to bend those conventions to create deeper meaning.

PROFESSOR CHRIS CROWE (English) received the 2021 Karl G. Maeser Distinguished Faculty award—the highest award BYU gives a professor—and spoke on his teaching and writing career at the May 25th, 2021, university forum. In addition to this award, Chris has previously received the Karl G. Maeser Excellence in Teaching Award, the Nan Osmond Grass professorship in English, and a Karl G. Maeser Research and Creative Arts Award.

Chris began his lecture by reflecting on contemporary art exhibits he had visited with his wife, who helped him understand the meaning and significance of these untraditional art works. While he acknowledged a “low-brow, traditional view of art,” he said, “When I think about my various encounters with what I call non-traditional contemporary art, [they] have generated more thought, discussion, and interest than all the paintings and sculptures I speed-walked past in the Louvre combined.”

Just as contemporary art often pushes its boundaries, young adult novel writing pushes the boundaries of what is considered a “novel.” As a scholar of young adult novel writing, Chris has seen many genre-bending novels emerge over the years.

To demonstrate what a genre-bending novel looks like, Chris gave two examples from his own work writing young adult historical fiction novels. When he first conceived the idea for his most recent novel, *Death Coming Up the Hill*, he faced significant challenges. In the early drafts, Chris realized that the novel had a fatal flaw: it was boring. To breathe new life into the manuscript, he examined how he might bend genres.

He thought about how numbers appeared throughout the story of a teenage boy living in the United States during the Vietnam War. “One of the few things I liked about it was the odd [recurrence] of the number seventeen.” Seventeen also happens to be the number of syllables in a haiku. Chris decided to revise his novel to be a series of 976 haiku poems.

“The challenge of writing and revising an entire novel in 976 haiku stanzas breathed life into my dead manuscript and eventually at least one publisher considered it a novel,” he said. “So how did all the strange modern art . . . influence me? Well, if I hadn’t already been familiar with all the genre-bending, boundary-blurring art that came before, I could not have conceived something like this weird little haiku novel.”



After the success of his haiku novel, Chris decided to set his current novel project during the Vietnam War as well. The story focuses on a young soldier who is declared MIA. Chris reflected on his process beginning the novel: “I wondered how many genre traits I could leave out of a novel and still have it be a novel. Could I write a story that approximated an impressionist painting? Could I use broad, vague brushstrokes that make sense [and] that omit essential traditional novel elements? Could I trust my readers to fill in the gaps?” The result of his experimentation has been a series of 115 free verse poems written from the perspectives of 30 different people whose lives were in some way affected by the missing soldier. Chris concluded the forum by having a handful of his students and colleagues perform excerpts from his novel.

For Chris, consciously mixing genres and bending rules generated a new type of novel. Once authors or creators understand the constraints of a genre or a medium, they see the countless possibilities that come from breaking traditional rules, pushing old boundaries, opening new doors for innovative opportunities, and effecting deeper meaning. 🌟

Virtue Politics and the Humanities

Studying the humanities provides a better way to do politics

by Thomas B. Griffith

HUMANITIES MAJORS DEVELOP their own responses to The Question that concerned parents, curious friends, and wary prospective employers: “What are you going to do with a degree in the humanities?” My favorite answer is too snarky to be persuasive: “I’m going to be a human!” Whichever answer to The Question you created, consider the alternative by James Hankins, Harvard’s renowned historian of the Italian Renaissance: “I’m going to help save the Republic!”

In Hankins’s recently-published book, *Virtue Politics: Soulcraft and Statecraft in Renaissance Italy* (Harvard, 2019), he shows that 14th-century educational reforms that created what we call the humanities had as their primary objective not simply the refinement of our sensibilities, but the creation of leaders who understand that “the real source of sound politics [is] the virtuous soul of political leaders and citizens.” The study of the humanities would “unleash . . . the power of a dynamically balanced and ordered soul, in control of its passions and appetites, impelled to virtuous action by knowledge and love of the good.”¹

The hero of the story is Petrarch who, along with his fellow humanists, was reacting to an existential crisis of confidence in the civil and ecclesiastical institutions of the day. While Machiavelli and later constitutional theorists shared a dark view of human nature that focused on ends over means, Petrarch and his colleagues believed that institutions and government structure could not of themselves lead to good governance. Only moral leaders could.² The study of the humanities was originally based on the premise that “character counts” in our political leaders. The moral of this story is clear: our study of the humanities is more than a way to better understand and enjoy the arts. It is a call to action.

Not long ago, the mantra “character counts” was a prominent feature of our political discourse. Policy outcomes mattered, but the character of our leaders mattered even more. At least that was the argument many Republicans used to explain their opposition to President Bill Clinton, who championed much of their agenda: the most powerful protection for religious freedom ever enacted by Congress; a balanced budget; free trade; welfare reform that emphasized work; a crackdown on crime; more demanding academic and disciplinary standards in schools. None of these policy outcomes was important enough to support a president whose character they viewed as flawed.

That was then. Today, “character counts” is strangely absent from our political conversation, lost in the hyper-partisanship that the Framers warned was the greatest threat to the Constitution they crafted. They called it “faction,” and their bulwark against its

corrosive effect was only in part institutional. Separated governmental powers were key, but more important yet was a citizenry and leaders who practiced “virtue,” by which they meant not only moral probity, but setting aside partisanship for the common good.

At its most fundamental level, the study of the humanities not only helps develop “personal qualities of character and intellect,”³ but it requires us to take seriously the lived experience of others. It calls for empathy and reasoned engagement with people different from us but who deserve our respect simply because they are children of God. These are some of the most important tools used in the practice of “virtue politics.”

What might virtue politics look like in our current toxic political climate, dominated as it is by tribal appeals to confirmation bias and where compromise for the sake of unity draws death

threats rather than praise? It looks like the charge given to us by President Dallin H. Oaks: “On contested issues, we should seek to moderate and unify.”⁴ By that measure, much of the current political engagement by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints falls short. Emeritus General Authority Elder Lance B. Wickman has noted, “Too many of our people seem to have traded their religion for their politics.”⁵

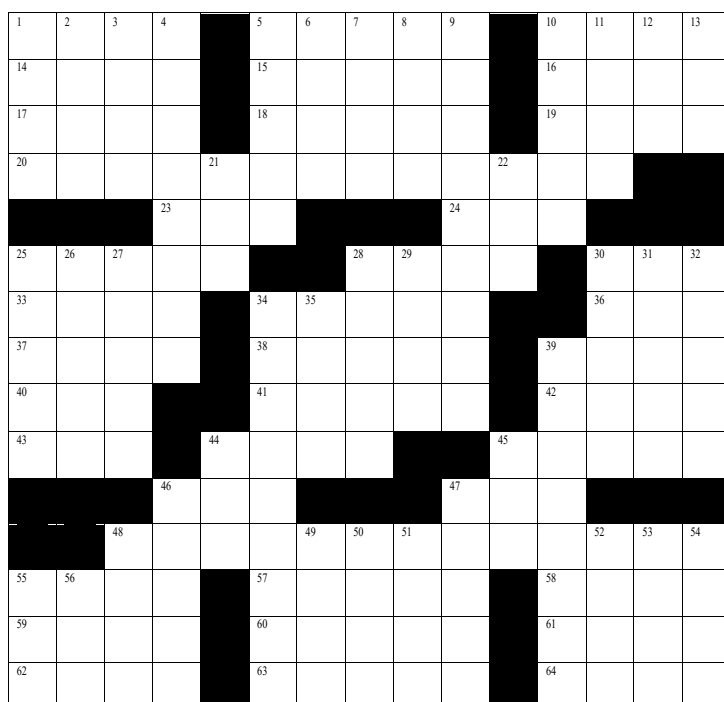
Elder Wickman’s troubling diagnosis reminds me of something I heard during a remarkable gathering of scholars that Truman Madsen had assembled at BYU in 1978 to discuss various

aspects of Latter-day Saint belief and practice. Robert Bellah, the acclaimed sociologist of religion, concluded his sympathetic discussion of our Latter-day Saint community with an indictment that struck like a clap of thunder out of a blue sky: “Mormons often criticize the larger society in which they live and contrast it to their own vigorous community. How many of them realize that their own current . . . political views and actions may contribute to the wasteland around them?”⁶

Are Elder Wickman and Bellah right? Have we traded commitment to kindness for a political style that divides our nation?⁷ If so, how do we break out of this prison? Theologian Remi Hoeckman says that to repent is “to rethink everything from the ground up.”⁸ The humanities were created to help us do that rethinking and use what we learn to change the way we do politics. ☸

OUR STUDY OF THE
HUMANITIES IS MORE
THAN A WAY TO BETTER
UNDERSTAND AND
ENJOY THE ARTS. IT IS
A CALL TO ACTION.

Thomas B. Griffith is a BYU College of Humanities graduate and former judge on the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit. He has served as BYU general counsel and as the nonpartisan legal counsel to the US Senate.



Check your answers on page 21

ACROSS

1. Word elicited almost daily in 2020
5. Smooth and shiny, often referring to cars or hair
10. Like French cheese
14. What Vasco da Gama would have shouted when he found gold
15. Breed resulting from corgi and pug
16. Scriptura
17. Affleck Best Picture winner (2012)
18. Related to hearing
19. "___ the Good Die Young" (Billy Joel song)
20. Spiraling into internet hell in 2020
23. Nusret Gökçe a.k.a. Salt ___ (meme)
24. Fraction of a joule
25. Babe Ruth's first MLB team
28. The oldest of the four gospels
30. Corn hardware
33. Provo neighbor

34. ___ al fromaggio (Italian cheesecake)
36. Gallic garlic
37. Apparel
38. Drub
39. Ice hut (var.)
40. Public transp. option in Provo
41. ___ physical condition (ready for competition)
42. "Prophet, ___, and revelator"
43. "I'll be there in just a ___!"
44. Gordian ___
45. Not Chevys
46. Two peas in a ___
47. Abbr. on a business card
48. Danger of a 2020 gathering
55. Abbreviation beneath an old phone's *O*
57. Free-for-all fight
58. Ripped to pieces
59. "You're a Grand Old ___"
60. Silly, often used to describe questions
61. Sicilian smoker
62. Olde ___ shoppe
63. They can be medically induced
64. Dastardly ___

DOWN

1. Prod
2. French—but not English—coin
3. "Cogito, ___ sum"
4. 2020 remote meeting intrusion
5. The final frontier
6. Scowl
7. "I wander" in ancient Rome
8. Equal in Abidjan
9. What Space Invaders was for the Atari console
10. "It's a great deal; you can get it for ___!"
11. Member of the Twelve, Gerrit
12. Shelf bracket shape
13. See 32-down
21. John Coltrane instrument (abbr.)
22. Tick off
25. ___ Basin, Idaho, ski resort
26. Speak in General Conference
27. Ridge of glacial ice
28. What respectful rookies called Giants' legendary right fielder Mel
29. Vaporous prefix with -sphere
30. Hoopster
31. Lubricated
32. With 13-down, what each 9 to 5 felt like in 2020
34. Feared medical double whammy of late 2020
35. "What a disaster!"
39. What people exposed to COVID-19 in 2020 were required to be
44. Famous supporters stand at Anfield
45. Bank penalty
46. Removal of opponents by an autocrat
47. Orchard denizens
48. Line of stitches
49. Self-proclaimed "Biggest little city in the world"
50. Poetry event
51. "Que ___!"; Spanish for "What a shame!"
52. Shower affection on
53. White-tailed sea eagle
54. "___, ponder, and pray"
55. "How ___ have I gathered you"
56. A single layer of a hoarded 2020 item

VOX HUMANA ENDNOTES

- 1,2,3. James Hankins. *Virtue Politics: Soulcraft and Statecraft in Renaissance Italy*. Cambridge: Belknap Press (2019), 62, 37, 37, emphasis added.
4. Dallin H. Oaks. "Defending Our Divinely Inspired Constitution," April 2021 general conference.
5. Personal conversation. Used with permission.
6. Robert N. Bellah "American Society and the Mormon Community," *Reflections on Mormonism: Judaean-Christian Parallels*, ed. Truman G. Madsen, Provo: Brigham Young University, 11, 1978. (Emphasis added.)
7. I address this challenge more fully in my article "A Mormon Approach to Politics," *BYU Studies*, byustudies.byu.edu/article/a-mormon-approach-to-politics.
8. Quoted in Trish Harrison Warren, "How My Faith Shapes My Understanding of Racism and History," *New York Times*, November 14, 2021.

BYU COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

Dean, J. Scott Miller,
scott_miller@byu.edu

Associate Dean, Frank Q. Christianson,
frank_christianson@byu.edu

Associate Dean, Ray T. Clifford,
rayc@byu.edu

Associate Dean, Leslee Thorne-Murphy,
leslee_thorne-murphy@byu.edu

Associate Dean, Corry Cropper,
corry_cropper@byu.edu

College Controller and Assistant Dean, Jared D. Christensen,
jared_christensen@byu.edu

Liberal Arts Advisement Center Director and Assistant Dean, Sherami Jara,
sherami_jara@byu.edu

Manager of Digital Media and Communications, Joshua J. Perkey,
josh.perkey@byu.edu

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

Asian & Near Eastern Languages, Dana Bourgerie,
dana_bourgerie@byu.edu

Comparative Arts & Letters, Carl Sederholm,
carl_sederholm@byu.edu

English, Lance Larsen,
lance_larsen@byu.edu

French & Italian, Daryl Lee,
dlee@byu.edu

German & Russian, Grant H. Lundberg,
grant_lundberg@byu.edu

Linguistics, Norman Evans,
norman_evans@byu.edu

Philosophy, David Laraway,
david_laraway@byu.edu

Spanish & Portuguese, Jeff Turley,
jeffrey_turley@byu.edu

DIRECTORS AND COORDINATORS OF ACADEMIC CENTERS AND PROGRAMS

American Studies, Brian R. Roberts,
brianrussellroberts@byu.edu

Center for Language Studies, Ray T. Clifford,
rayc@byu.edu

Chinese Flagship Center, Matthew B. Christensen,
matthew_christensen@byu.edu

English Language Center, Ben McMurry,
ben_mcmurry@byu.edu

Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Cecilia Peek,
cecilia_peek@byu.edu

European Studies, Heather Belnap,
heather_belnap@byu.edu

Global Women's Studies, Valerie Hegstrom,
valerie_hegstrom@byu.edu

Humanities Center, Matthew Wickman,
matthew_wickman@byu.edu

Office of Digital Humanities, Michael Call,
michael_call@byu.edu

Study of Christian Values in Literature, Ed Cutler,
ed_cutler@byu.edu

For information about giving to the college, please contact any dean, department chair, director, or coordinator. Thank you.

WHAT DO YOU see in this photo? The painting by Minvera Teichert? The woman viewing the painting? The artist? You might see all three, and you might even see yourself.

That invites an interesting question about our interaction with art specifically and with the humanities generally. When we look at a piece of art (or literature, or listen to music, and so on), do we just observe and enjoy it, passively entertained? Or do we seek meaning and understanding in the story and our relationship to it? Both approaches have their place, of course, but deeper reflection enriches our lives and often elevates our perspective in a way that benefits all those in we influence.

As you review this issue of *Humanities* magazine, you might ask yourself, “What do the humanities mean to me? And what role do the humanities play in my life?” 🌟



Share your story with us in 50–200 words and we will consider it for publication in a future issue of the magazine. Email humanitiespr@byu.edu. Submissions may be edited for length, grammar, appropriateness, and clarity.

COVER PHOTOS

Minerva Teichert (1888-1976), *Miracle of the Gulls*, c.1935, oil on canvas, 69 x 57 inches, Brigham Young University Museum of Art, gift of Flora Sundberg, 1936.

Lupita Herrera (*Photography '22*), *What She Sees*, 2021, photographs (front and back cover), model, Rebekah Mecham (*Illustration '22*).