

HUMANITIES

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES FALL 2018



Belief and Doubt in a Toxic Age



By Dean J. Scott Miller

I RECENTLY received an insidious email purporting to come from a credit union where my wife and I had formerly held an account. Although it contained suspicious typos, one threatening line stood out: if we did

not respond immediately, “all funds will be lost.” I reported it, and forgot it, until the next morning, when a follow-up email came from the same frauds, this time adding the twist that our “account” was now locked because someone had tried logging in from a foreign country, and our funds would vanish if we did not click the link. Admiring their persistence, I nevertheless imagined others with real money in their accounts, who had resisted the temptation the day before but were now confronted with this second threat to their funds. The fear of someone trying to steal their savings might have overcome their initial skepticism, to ill effect. Such phishing schemes and other contemporary scams erode our trust in institutions as well as people, and may eventually lead us to deeper levels of distrust and doubt.

We live in an era of eroding trust, not unlike other ages through which humans have suffered. During the early twentieth century, millions of immigrants from small European villages arrived in the United States through Ellis Island, having made the journey based on their belief in a hyperbolic vision of America. My wife’s ancestors were among those immigrants, and, as she describes it, their spiritual resilience made a tremendous difference in their lives, seeing them through their early struggles that included back-breaking work and suffered the loss of spouses and children to sudden illness or incurable disease. Those who abandoned hope frequently struggled even more. On the other hand, those who trusted in their vision, accentuating positive aspects of their new life, often gained financial stability more quickly, educated their children, and passed the blessings of belief in a better life down to their grandchildren and successive generations. Their challenge, like ours,

was to persist in their hope despite negative experiences that suggested their trust was too naive or even misplaced.

Sustaining our belief can be hard because it is not a sure knowledge, indeed cannot be, but is rather “knowledge hoped for,” a kind of trust that requires commitment in the face of contradictory evidence. In that sense, belief is a species of endurance, the endurance of imagination. Doubt is the reverse, the extinction of what belief imagines. This issue of *Humanities* explores the ongoing dance between doubt and belief as it plays out in the human experience. Faculty and alumni share insights about that dance, drawn from their studies, observations, and personal lives.

Although we often view doubt as something that diminishes as our belief grows, I see doubt as belief’s shadow, growing and shrinking in direct proportion: the stronger our belief and the greater we place our trust in something or someone, the larger doubt’s possibilities loom. Yet doubt may itself open up doors to understanding and knowledge. Sometimes doubt may lead us to confront false assumptions: we begin with a misgiving about a received truth and, through investigation, either discover our suspicions to be groundless or gain new insight. Hypothesis and conjecture drive science and research as preludes to new discoveries, and in the humanities, our own, idiosyncratic reactions to art or literature can take us into uncharted realms of discovery as we challenge traditional interpretations.

This journey of discovery, fueled sometimes by doubt of received wisdom and at other times by belief in a hunch, allows us to find greater beauty and hope in the world. The course of our lives is determined largely by the small decisions we make, some in faith, tiny wagers of belief placed on this or that principle that we hope will eventually prove fruitful, and others in doubt, suspicions that may protect us but that can also block our growth. All learning proceeds from a delicate balance of doubt and belief that allows us to suspend final judgments and decisions in spite of contrary evidence.

We live in a toxic age where the hard work of respecting different views and establishing truth has been abandoned for dismissive polemic and spin, which goes against the very grain of the learning process and can confine us in a state of perpetual ignorance. As lifelong student of the humanities, and as observers of humanity, we trust that there is goodness, even divinity, in ourselves and in others. Maintaining that belief may sometimes require a good deal of tenacity when we witness phishing scams or other, more extreme, acts of inhumanity, and we can be sorely tempted to abandon our faith in ourselves and others. But we can also cultivate the practice of trust in and love for humankind, and choose to be skeptical of the false logic that suggests our temporary inhumanity negates our fundamental humanity.

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HUMANITIES | FALL 2018



15 Education That Shapes and Forms

Texts, even texts of the abyss, can be important witnesses and transform us into “individuals of insatiable compassion.”

By Michael Kelly

18 Doubting Toward Faith

Doubt inspires growth by requiring us to persist, improve relationships, and “essay” our questions.

By Corry Cropper

20 Moments of the Sublime

Beauty and terror often combine to reveal moments of the sublime—in both Victorian Christmas ghost stories and downhill skiing.

By Leslee Thorne-Murphy



2 | RESPONSE

Have something to add to the conversation? Send us your feedback!

4 | PERSPECTIVE

San Andrea della Valle

6 | ANTHOLOGY

Belief—Bringing Sixteenth-century France into the Digital Age—President Worthen Goes to Cambodia—Toward a Latter-day Saint Sense of Spiritual Learning

12 | HUMANITIES REVIEW

Department Notes: Faculty across the College of Humanities incorporate the “spiritually strengthening” Aim of a BYU Education into their curriculum in a variety of ways.

22 | RETROSPECTIVES

Honored Alumni: Kelli Barbour, Thomas Griffith, Melissa Dalton-Bradford, Hayley Smith—Faculty Farewells—Alumni Update: Kristen Blair

24 | VOX HUMANA

Skepticism and Belief

25 | CROSSROADS

All Part of the Journey

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

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Response to “When the Movie Is Better Than the Book”

I'D LIKE TO SEE Dr. Cutchins's list of movies that are better than the book because such is certainly the case with *The Wizard of Oz* and *Dr. Zhivago* (you can't really hear the *balalaikas*!).

—ERIC DEMETER

DEAR ERIC,

There are many films that could have been mentioned, but the ones I listed in last year's Education Week class were

1. *Casablanca* partly because the stage play on which it is based is not great, but the film is excellent.
2. *Ben Hur* because the epic nature of the book is portrayed in amazing ways in the film.
3. *Rear Window* because the story upon which the film is based is rather one-dimensional, and the film most definitely is not.
4. *The Day the Earth Stood Still* because of great special effects and the fact that the film has a political dimension that the story does not touch.
5. *The Wizard of Oz* (agreed) because of singing, dancing, music, and other elements that the books can't hope to match.

—DENNIS CUTCHINS
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

I first heard about IC as a freshman in 1993. I was corresponding with a friend who was on a mission in Spain. Although our letters had a wide range of subjects, one of them was how to survive the cultural inverse of going to BYU. We grew up on the East Coast before Big Love or Proposition Eight or regular use of the internet. We were used to being Mormon in a time and place where no one really knew or tried to define what that meant for you, except maybe at church, where the emphasis was on celebrating common values among a lot of difference.

One of my friend's first tips to adjusting to campus was to get an IC card. He said the cinema was one of the best of its kind and, remarkably, free if you took the right classes. Given the language requirements in my majors, it wasn't hard to get the card, and saving money on entertainment was welcome on a student budget. I enjoyed IC movies and the experiences peripheral to viewing.

I often went with roommates in later years and we, like the other IC regulars of my generation, came to expect “Superman” in the projector booth—a young man with thick glasses and biceps and short wavy hair. Seeing who was in line at the beginning of the movie even became the subject of a short composition assignment.

I eventually took a French and Italian cinema class. While becoming familiar with the iconic films in those languages—*The 400 Blows* (Truffaut 1959), *Two Women* (De Sica, 1960)—we learned about basic cinematic terms and the theory that one of the main differences between US and foreign film was emphasis on direction versus depth or, as I would put it, a judgmental versus perceptive way of storytelling. I'm not sure if that's an entirely fair characterization, but what I think I enjoyed about IC [most] was feeling part of a larger world—the only international experiential learning I could afford—and having that world presented in a shaped but not overly structured or conclusive way.



Want more thought-provoking discussion with fellow BYU Humanities alums? Connect with us between issues of *Humanities* on social media!



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.

50 Years of Memories—Happy Golden Anniversary, International Cinema!

THANK YOU for the recent article on International Cinema (IC). I enjoyed learning about its history and am excited to hear about the new minor. Although watching movies for a class and watching for pleasure are different experiences, seeing a film is a nice way to spend homework time.

APRIL 2018

APRIL 18 Asian studies major and Korean minor Emily Schaffer was selected to be an International Student Peace Ambassador for North and South Korea. <http://bit.ly/HumPeace>

MAY Professors Dana Bourgerie, Norm Evans, and Carl Sederholm were reappointed as department chairs in Asian & Near Eastern Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Arts & Letters, respectively.

JUNE Professor Daryl Lee was appointed the new department chair for French & Italian. Thank you to Corry Cropper for nine years of service in this capacity.

JUNE 11–21 The College hosted the second annual Humanities and Belief Workshop, Defining and Refining the Scholar of Faith.

AUGUST The Linguistics and English Language Department formally changed its name to the Linguistics Department. Linguistics also announced a new editing and publishing major.

AUGUST 17 Dean J. Scott Miller delivered a Convocation address, <http://bit.ly/Aug2018>
Convocation

AUGUST 20–24 Fifteen faculty from the College of Humanities presented at 2018 BYU Education Week.

AUGUST 30 The Arabic Flagship Center became BYU's newest center on campus, with Kirk Belnap as director, Rita Cortez as managing director, and Matt Bird as coordinator. <http://humanities.byu.edu/arabicflagship/>

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 7 International Cinema hosted an outdoor double feature on the KMBL Quad for their Fall Semester Kickoff. Thank you to everyone who helped celebrate 50 years! For more, visit ic.byu.edu.

SEPTEMBER 21–22 The BYU Humanities Center hosted the symposium

I came back to Utah after the IC season was over this year, but your article might inspire me to brave the young crowd and go there again in the fall. Meanwhile, I'll enjoy how the cinema and BYU professors have shaped my movie-viewing and how films from around the world (in local libraries) can make a lack of summer travel not seem quite so isolating.

—REBECCA PACKARD, BA ENGLISH '01

ATTENDING IC provided some of my most poignant and specific memories as a BYU undergraduate in the '80s. Don Marshall handed out the schedule to our humanities class every week, and I pencilled the titles and times into my Day-Timer with anticipation. Every film was a luscious visual and intellectual feast (and a great cheap date as well).

Mostly I remember the impact of particular moments in the films; I was changed permanently by what I experienced. Retreats to the restroom to process my emotions, great conversations with fellow filmgoers, and thinking for weeks and months afterwards about what I had seen were some of the ways that IC films affected me. Now as I teach my own humanities students, I encourage them to explore the world through international film and to recognize the cinematic excellence they can find if they know where to look. I'm so grateful for IC because it opened my mind and introduced me to cultures and ideas I never would have known about.

So glad to celebrate it this year!

—SUSAN THOMAS
ADJUNCT ENGLISH FACULTY, BYU-IDAHO

FROM 1985–1991, I saw two to three films a week (minus the 18 months of my mission). IC informed my view of humanity and of the world at large. My experience was visual, visceral, personal, and spiritual. I consider myself a world citizen, and IC helped shape

much of who I am. The art and experience of cinema is no small thing in opening our minds and hearts to information we would otherwise have no way to experience. I have loved and continued to visit IC throughout the years. Happy birthday, IC. Thank you for many, many years of bringing insight, beauty and joy!

—LUZ LEWIS PÉREZ, BA HUMANITIES, '91

OVER MY FOUR YEARS at BYU, I went to IC more than 40 times. That may not be a lot for some people, but for never taking the IC class and doing it out of love for the movies and experience, I would say that's pretty good! I even went enough to get two t-shirts! I love IC because it expands your mind toward the world around you. You get to experience cultures from everywhere in the world, from people of every race, ethnicity, religion, and economic status. It transports you and helps you understand the challenges others face. It makes you think how blessed you are to not have to cut sugar cane for 12 hours a day to feed your family (*The Price of Sugar*, Haney, 2007), or smuggle goods across the Iraqi border to pay for medicine for your ailing brother (*A Time for Drunken Horses*, Gohbadi, 2000), or figure out how to tell your socially awkward coworker in your chocolate shop that you love her (*Romantics Anonymous*, Améris, 2010). Although I probably should have been studying some nights, some of my favorite memories from BYU are the movies I saw at IC. I still watch international movies to this day. Thank you to all of the great movies and to 50 wonderful years! I can't wait till I can come back to Provo to see my next IC movie!

—AARON TOONE, BS MANUFACTURING
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY
WITH MINOR IN CHINESE '18



"Vulnerability: Crisis & Transformation"
<https://humanities.byu.edu/ctrsymposium2018/>

SEPTEMBER 25 In a launch event celebrating the publication of parts 3 and 4 of Volume 3 of The Book of Mormon Critical Text Project, professor Royal Skousen and fellow researcher Dr. Stanford Carmack discussed their

continued research on the original language of the Book of Mormon, <http://humanities.byu.edu/royalskousennolvol3/>.

SEPTEMBER 27 Asian & Near Eastern Languages professor Van Gessel received an Imperial decoration from the government of Japan for his contributions to international relations with

Japan and promotion of Japanese culture, <https://humanities.byu.edu/gesselimperialdecoration/>

SEPTEMBER 28 The annual Nan Osmond Grass Lecture was given by Tracy K. Smith—winner of the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry in 2012 for her book *Life on Mars* and current, two-term Poet Laureate of the United States.

OCTOBER 2 Dean J. Scott Miller delivered the Devotional, "Humble Uncertainty," https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/j-scott-miller_humble-uncertainty/

HOMECOMING WEEK, OCTOBER 8–12 Thomas B. Griffith, Melissa Dalton-Bradford, and Hayley Smith garnered three out of six 2018 University

Alumni Awards, <http://homecoming.byu.edu/university-awards>.

OCTOBER 11 Kelli Barbour delivered the annual Alumni Honoree Lecture, "From There to Here." For more, see [page 22](#).

OCTOBER 25 English professor Deborah Dean delivered the annual Barker Lecture, titled

"Genre Approximation, Acquisition, and Appropriation."

OCTOBER 31 The English Department hosted an all-day read-a-thon of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as part of the National Endowment for the Humanities' Frankenreads international celebration commemorating the book's 200th anniversary.

DECEMBER The Italian and French choirs each hosted a night of Christmas caroling, along with the longstanding and loved Noël en France and German Adventsingen celebrations. Watch for more language choir events in 2019!





San Andrea della Valle

DURING WINTER SEMESTER 2018, Rome was my classroom. For more than three months I guided nearly eighty BYU students through what must have seemed a never-ending cavalcade of ruins, ancient temples, museums, and Roman Catholic Churches. These visits offered me the opportunity to teach in some of the best preserved and most beautiful religious spaces on earth. We were able to gaze upward through the Pantheon's sublime oculus, watching as sunlight, rain, and even snow passed through its nearly three-story diameter. We visited darkened churches filled with precious works of art that were unnoticed by the faithful praying in wooden pews nearby. Returning to these spaces throughout the semester and at different times of day, we were also able to experience and record them in a wide range of changing light.

One of my favorite sites to visit is the Baroque church of San Andrea della Valle. Dedicated to St. Andrew, the first apostle and brother of Peter, Rome's key saint, the church is located in the heart of the congested city. It was built by Giacomo della Porta and Carlo Moderno in the beginning of the seventeenth century and features a deeply satisfying façade designed by Carlo Rainaldi from 1655.

Two of Rome's best artists were commissioned to decorate the ceiling. In a style heavily indebted to Michelangelo, Domenichino painted the four pendentives representing the four gospels. His rival, Lanfranco, was commissioned to paint the ceiling of the dome, which he filled with an ecstatic and energetic swirl of clouds and angelic beings that spiral upward toward the light and heaven itself.

At the right time of day, San Andrea and its painted ceiling are filled with a warm, golden light that permeates the space and has the ability to make even the coldest and wettest days feel a little sunnier. While this church represents a very different architecture of worship for us, it has the power to bring one, like Lanfranco's painted figures, a little closer to the divine through its beauty, symmetry, and harmony of forms. Not a bad place to have class. Right?

—JAMES SWENSEN,
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ART HISTORY,
COMPARATIVE ARTS & LETTERS

LEXICON

belief

[\ BĒ- 'LĒF \]

noun. a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing

DEFINING BELIEF IN THE HUMANITIES: a lexical analysis can yield insights about the relationship between belief and the humanities. Such an analysis could begin with a survey of “belief” definitions in major English dictionaries.

Let’s begin by examining the noun “belief” in Samuel Johnson’s 1755 *Dictionary of the English Language*. Johnson’s six definitions of “belief” include credit given to secondhand knowledge, faith as a theological virtue, religion itself, persuasion or opinion, and a creed containing articles of faith.¹ Definitions two through six for “belief” in Noah Webster’s 1844 *American Dictionary of the English Language* closely follow Johnson’s entry. However, in his first definition, Webster expands the primary meaning of “belief” using terms from law and logic:

A persuasion of the truth, or an assent of mind to the truth of a declaration, proposition, or alleged fact, on the ground of evidence, distinct from personal knowledge; as the belief of the gospel; belief of a witness. Belief may also be founded on internal impressions, or arguments and reasons furnished by our own minds; as the belief of our senses; a train of reasoning may result in belief. Belief is opposed to knowledge and science.²

Webster’s complementary opposition of belief/faith to knowledge/science can provide the study of humanities with an ambidextrous approach to language, literature, and culture.

The first definition of “belief” in the online *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) makes no distinction between faith and belief: “the Christian virtue of faith”.³ Although Latter-day Saints sometimes make a doctrinal distinction between belief and faith, their synonymous function is evident in the opening phrase of the Articles of Faith: “We believe.” Definition 4b in the OED ties belief to the humanities discipline of philosophy: “A basic or ultimate principle or presupposition of knowledge; something innately believed, a primary intuition.”

Perhaps the most insightful understanding of belief with respect to human beings and the humanities comes from Calvert Watkins’ 2011 *American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European Roots*. The reconstructed phonetic root for the word “belief” in Indo-European languages is *leubh-, and its reconstructed semantic gloss is to “care, desire, love.” In other words, “belief” and “love” have the same etymology. Our sacred beliefs provide a loving foundation for secular studies of humankind in the academic domain of humanities, which was previously known as “philology,” the love of words, the study of languages, and the love of the Word.⁴

—CYNTHIA L. HALLEN, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF LINGUISTICS

1. bit.ly/JohnsonDictionary

2. bit.ly/WebstersDictionary

3. bit.ly/OEDbelief

4. bit.ly/philologydefinition and <http://bit.ly/humanitydefinition>

ON-SITE

Bringing Sixteenth-Century France into the Digital Age

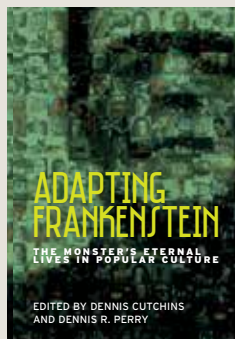


SPRING TERM 2018 Christopher M. Flood, assistant professor of French in the Department of French & Italian, received a grant from the College to conduct a digital humanities research project on sixteenth-century French religious pamphlets. Thanks to the grant, he was able to take two students, Caleb Dame and Garrett Sebra, to Paris to photograph the rare pamphlets in libraries, including the the Bibliothèque de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français, shown here.

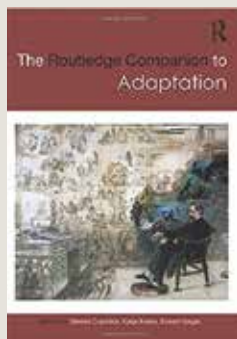
Dr. Flood and his students are now transcribing the photographed pamphlets in preparation for computer-aided textual analysis and posting on a new website dedicated to the polemical literature of the Protestant Reformation in France.

If you would like to donate to an inspiring learning opportunity for students in the humanities, please visit give.byu.edu/humanities.

CHRISTOPHER M. FLOOD



Dennis Cutchins and
Dennis R. Perry



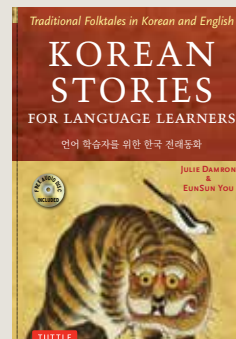
Dennis Cutchins



Lynn Williams



Jill Terry Rudy



Julie Damron

President Worthen Goes to Cambodia

SPRING TERM 2018, President Worthen, Sister Worthen, and Vice President Sandra Rogers paid a visit to Cambodia to learn firsthand about the BYU Humanities Center-sponsored Cambodian Oral History Project. The project, directed by Asian & Near Eastern Languages chair and professor Dana Bourgerie, is in its third year and has collected more than 1800 interviews, especially with those who were affected by the turbulent Khmer Rouge period.

While in Cambodia, President Worthen's group accompanied BYU interns Jordan Denkers and Linda Nguyen as they conducted an interview in Phnom Penh. They also visited Siem Reap where they met with local project peer leaders and had a chance to tour the historic temple complex Angkor Wat.

For more about this project, visit bit.ly/silentCambodia. To listen to some of the oral histories, visit Cambodianoralhistories.byu.edu.

Dr. Bourgerie also appeared on BYU Radio's Top of Mind program March 20 to discuss this project. Visit bit.ly/CambodiaTopofMind.



FROM THE WORLD OF HUMANITIES

IN HIS 2017 UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE talk Elder David A. Bednar paraphrased Elder Dallin H. Oaks and highlighted some of the issues that arise because of BYU's unique mission to balance both academic and spiritual progression. Elder Bednar encouraged "BYU faculty and other employees to offer public, unassigned support of Church policies that are challenged on secular grounds."¹

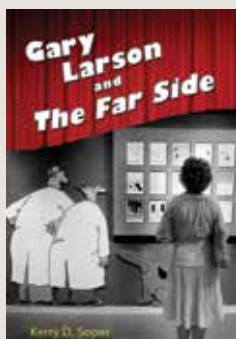
The faculty and students in the College of Humanities answer this call by incorporating their knowledge of the humanities into their understanding of the gospel and by searching for and sharing gospel truths they find in the books, music, and art that they study. They also reach out through public humanities efforts like lectures, media, public school visits, and community collaboration. The motivation behind these studies and efforts is to share the unifying messages of human nature, struggle, and faith that are studied and loved by those in the humanities.

Public humanities in a BYU context is more than just analyzing or explicating text or art for a public audience. It carries with it a desire to broaden and enrich the definition of humanity itself.

English professor and Founding Director of the BYU Humanities Center Matthew Wickman provides an example of public humanities on the following pages. We hope you enjoy these many examples of public humanities and invite you to tell us how you practice humanities in your community!

—EMMA EBERT, BA EDITING & PUBLISHING '21

1. David A. Bednar, "Walk in the Meekness of My Spirit." (speech, Provo, UT, August 28, 2017): https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/david-a-bednar_walk-meekness-spirit/.



Kerry Soper



Chris Crowe, 2nd ed.



David B. Honey

doubt [ˈDAʊt]

NOW THAT you've learned a little about "belief," did you know there are more than forty direct references to "doubt" and its variants in the Standard Works?

Don't believe us? Check out the Education in Zion Gallery-sponsored study, "References to Emotion Words in the LDS Standard Works," <http://bit.ly/EIZDoubt>.

Heather M. Seferovich



Toward a Latter-day Saint Sense of Spiritual Learning

“COULD SOMEONE ACTUALLY DO THAT? COULD I?”

These are familiar questions to me, and probably to most people who seek inspiration. They indicate things brought to mind we had not previously considered, and that may require us to leave our comfort zones or undergo a trial of faith. For that reason, I associate these questions with a peculiar compound of feelings: excitement and anxiety; joy and terror; anticipation and dread.

Three years ago, I experienced a wave of these feelings as I pondered teaching a course on literature and spirituality. The idea intrigued me, moved me and even frightened me a little. But few models for such a course exist in the secular field of literary studies where I dwell professionally. To teach this subject, and potentially write about it as a scholar, would mean stepping out a long ways on a slender limb. And even if it held, I wasn't sure my balance would.

One can resist spiritual promptings. But I have learned, am trying to learn, not to. Three years later, I have taught this course three times. It's the richest intellectual (and, yes, spiritual) experience I have ever had in the classroom. It has opened new horizons to me as a scholar and helped me better understand how spirituality works and why it sometimes confounds our habits of thought. I now have a fuller grasp

of why spirituality often brings those heart-stopping questions, those supercharged feelings.

By their nature, spiritual experiences are neurologically and psychologically intense. Nineteenth century Latter-day Saint Apostle Parley P. Pratt once observed that the gift of the Holy Ghost invigorates our “physical and intellectual” capacities and “strengthens and gives tone to the nerves.” Modern scholars of spiritual experience, even those who are nonreligious, confirm Pratt's insights. They explain spirituality as a mixture of heightened thought and feeling, a quickening of perception, memory and imagination, a vehicle of self-transcendence, an agent of transformation.

Spirituality draws us out of ourselves and moves us to do difficult things. Religious people believe it brings us closer to God. No wonder it often puts one's heart in one's throat.

Bearing these qualities in mind, we can better appreciate the irony in Brigham Young's famous counsel to Karl G. Maeser. At the newly founded Brigham Young Academy, now Brigham Young University, Maeser was told he “should not teach even the alphabet or the multiplication tables without the Spirit of God. That is all.”

Right. Simple as that.

The LDS Church's new teaching curriculum for 2018 brings such admonition into ward and branch settings. Though more structured than Young's counsel to Maeser, it nevertheless injects spontaneity into lesson plans and tailors weekly instruction to the needs of individual congregations. As the Church presents it, this curriculum "affects how we prepare, teach, counsel and learn together, and receive and act on inspiration."¹

Its aim is to initiate transformation, not (just) positive feelings—conversion, not (just) learning. Its success turns on whether we as individual Latter-day Saints expand our capacities of thought and feeling, discern new opportunities for service and growth, extend our range of experience, deepen our compassion—in short, become something more than we presently are.

Such an approach blurs the lines between teaching and learning. It brings to mind the saying attributed to Marion G. Romney: "I always know when I am speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost because I always learn something from what I've said." Applied to Young's mandate it means that teachers must teach what they do not yet know; what is most essential is always a little beyond the scholar's current level of expertise.

Admittedly, the teacher-scholar in me finds this enigmatic—a little like being a fisher called to catch men.

Or a lame man commanded to walk. Most readers are familiar with this story:

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The [lame] man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked.²

For me, this story lends form to some core principles of a spiritual education.

The man's initial reply to Jesus ("Sir, I have no man ..."), though brief, reveals his cultural understanding (the legend of the angel troubling the water) and his capacity to reason: Because he cannot get in the water first, he cannot be healed.

In effect, like a good student, the man is versed in common wisdom and he knows how to put it to work. In essence, his reply to Jesus captures what we know and how we apply it, the common substance of what university administrators call a "course objective" or "learning outcome."

Learning outcomes are all the rage in higher education. But in this story, they get in the way. Like a diligent student with a clear plan, the

man is too precise about what he needs. Someone must help him into the pool, that being the necessary step, as he imagines it, to healing. This is what he implicitly asks of Jesus: to be placed in the pool, and hence to be healed according to his expectations.

What then do we make of Christ's invitation that the man "Rise, take up (his) bed, and walk"? More pointedly, what do we make of the man's response to that command?

A spiritual education
begins the moment
we discern an invitation
not only to know more,
but also to know
differently.

The story effectively communicates, between the lines, a moment of monumental change, a paradigm shift in the man's understanding. It appears to ensue less from the persuasive effects of what he already believes than the transformative prospects of something he had not considered. It isn't that he hadn't entertained the idea of walking, as that wish seems to have been the reason he was waiting by the pool. But it hadn't occurred to him to try it in quite this way, with Christ acting as the motivating force and him suddenly perceiving in himself an unforeseen power to respond.

Hence, as he rises and walks, he acquires an ability to rethink his cultural inheritance and his capacities. He is "made whole" because he is not empowered to walk only: he is also able to perceive, understand and act in new ways.

In my experience, any student, any teacher, is like the man lying beside the pool of Bethesda, at once empowered and hindered by what he knows. A spiritual education begins the moment we discern an invitation not only to know more, but also to know differently. When the Spirit informs our learning, similar to Christ's invitation to the man at the pool, we undergo something transformative that is consistent with the diverse aims of a spiritual education. It simultaneously enlarges our intellect, strengthens our faith, develops our character, and inspires us to serve. It engages, and helps shape, the whole person.

This process is never one we can fully anticipate. More expansive than a single learning outcome, it always takes us at least a little by surprise.

To be a teacher of spiritual experience, one must first be a student of it. This is less about adopting pedagogical techniques than being open to inspiration and, with it, the prospect of change. It means cultivating an ability to respond to a peculiar kind of feeling and an inclination to act on what one knows—indeed, before one fully knows it: "Could someone actually do that? Could I?"

It means believing that you can before fully understanding how.

—MATTHEW WICKMAN, PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AND
FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF THE BYU HUMANITIES CENTER

This article was first published December 31, 2017, by Deseret News, as part of an ongoing opinion series exploring ideas and issues at the intersection of Faith and Thought. Reprinted with permission.
<https://bit.ly/spirituallearning>.

1. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. "A New Direction for Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society Sunday Meetings," <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2017/11/news-of-the-church/a-new-direction-for-melchizedek-priesthood-and-relief-society-sunday-meetings?lang=eng>.

2. John 5:2–9

QUOTE

"I once heard of an Italian farmer who memorized all of Dante's *Divine Comedy* so that he could reread the poem in his heart as often as he needed or wished when he was out working in his fields. Many Hindus have memorized all or parts of the *Bhagavad Gita*. In my own case, I have memorized poems by Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, and T. S. Eliot, among others. We want to have these poems in our minds and bones when we stumble and need good words to get us back on our feet."

—JOHN E. SCHWIEBERT, PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCERPT FROM *LITERATURE AND BELIEF*, VOL. 37.2

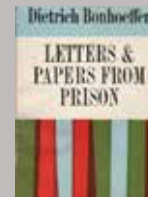
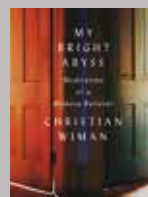
MARK PURVES

associate professor of German & Russian



I propose the following: 1. Alma wished to be angel—to “cry repentance unto every people.” Then he said he sinned in his wish. Why would he say this? Tolstoy provides the answer to this question in *War and Peace*.

2. People close to us are leaving the Church. Interestingly, these brothers and sisters were once eager in their convictions. Perhaps their problem is one of gusto. Anton Chekhov's play, *Ivanov*, explores how past enthusiasm explains present disillusionment, a helpful frame for understanding our disaffected friends and family members.

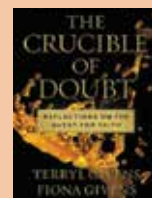


One title I'd recommend is Christian Wiman's *My Bright Abyss*, which is a poetic and deeply thoughtful series of reflections on belief amidst the conditions of modernity. A second is Lauren Winner's *Still: Notes on a Mid-Faith Crisis*, a gorgeously written memoir about life and faith after the initial ardor of conversion has cooled. Finally, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers from Prison* is an alarmingly timely reflection on the complexities of remaining Christian in the face of religious complicity with authoritarianism.

JASON A. KERR
assistant professor of English

EARL K. BROWN

associate professor
of linguistics



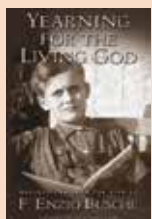
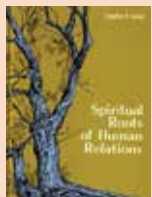
The Crucible of Doubt: Reflections on the Quest for Faith by Terryl and Fiona Givens helped me realize that I need to evaluate my assumptions, something one often doesn't think to do.



For this issue of *Humanities*, we asked faculty to tell us about the books, plays, poems, and art they lean on to strengthen their faith.

NANCY CHRISTIANSEN

associate professor of English



Some of the best books for bolstering my faith have been

1. Stephen R. Covey's *Spiritual Roots of Human Relations*;
2. Frederick W. Babbel's *On Wings of Faith*;
3. F. Enzo Busche's *Yearning for the Living God*; and
4. Leon R. Hartshorn's *Remarkable Stories from the Lives of Latter-Day Saint Women*.

HANS-WILHELM KELLING

professor of German



Goethe, in his famous tragedy *Faust*, depicts a university professor's search for truth. God carefully guides him, as He does us, in his quest and finally leads him to enlightenment.

CYNTHIA L. HALLEN

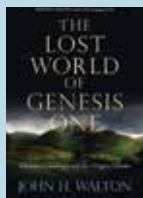
associate professor of linguistics



In *The Collected Poems of Emily Dickinson* several of Dickinson's poems are another witness of the Savior. For example, "I shall know why – when Time is over" assures that someday Christ will explain the purpose of our mortal anguish (Dickinson F215). "Perhaps you think Me stooping" testifies that the Lord bent "as low as Death" in order to raise us up through His love (Dickinson F273). "A word made Flesh is seldom" compares the sacrament of human language to the condescension of Christ (Dickinson, F1715).

YOUR TURN!

What literature or art helps you build your faith? We want to hear from you. Email humanitiespr@byu.edu to be included in the Spring 2019 issue of *Humanities*. Submissions may be edited for length, grammar, appropriateness, and clarity.



The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate by John H. Walton convincingly argues that we must read Genesis 1 as a ritual text rather than as an ancient history; we must recognize that the revelation of Genesis 1 was not given to update the Israelite pre-scientific view of the cosmos. Walton's argument is that if we do not enter into the culture that produced Genesis, we cannot avoid reading it anachronistically. Using his knowledge of the Hebrew Bible and, particularly, of ancient Near Eastern culture, he shows us how to enter in.

resident senior research fellow
Wheatley Institution

JAMES E. FAULCONER

DAVE EDDINGTON

professor of linguistics



Yongsung Kim's *The Hand of God* painting captures the essence of Christ's atonement. He extends his hand through the canvas to rescue all who will recognize they are drowning in sin and are willing to accept his hand and be lifted to salvation—to be received into his smiling presence.

the Screwtape Letters
C.S. Lewis



DEPARTMENT NOTES

Faculty across the BYU College of Humanities incorporate the “spiritually strengthening” Aim of a BYU Education into their curriculum in a variety of ways.

HCOLL 480R Humanities and Belief

HOW DO WE LIVE OUR FAITH as thoughtful believers?

A dozen undergraduate students met once a week during the winter semester of 2018 to discuss this question. Miranda Wilcox, associate professor of English, facilitated the discussions. Some of the things they read and listened to that enriched their journeys of faith follow.



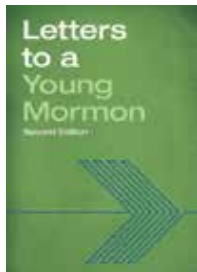
Patrick Mason

Planted: Belief and Belonging in an Age of Doubt (Maxwell Institute & Deseret Book, 2015)

Joel: As Mason says, “we do not have to devalue anyone’s very real and profound

spiritual encounters or do away with expressions of authentic spiritual knowledge, but in our collective ministry perhaps we would do well to also acknowledge and find language for the diversity of religious experience already present among us” (37). We simply need to expand our vocabulary to assure those that can’t say with a surety that they too are still welcome and able members of the community of Zion.

Naomi: One passage really struck a chord with me: “Oftentimes, simply having a conversation with someone who needs to talk through personal questions is enough. . . . But most people don’t really want to be solved. They want to be heard, valued, and as much as possible understood” (7). I really want someone to listen to my doubts on faith and my doubts on life.



Adam Miller

Letters to a Young Mormon (Maxwell Institute & Deseret Book, 2018)

Claire: As Miller discusses in his book, it is so easy for me to get caught up in the stories of everyone

around me and begin to tell them to myself as well. I create certain expectations for how

my life should be and become frustrated when my life goes in a different direction. I’ve recognized that when I stop fighting what God wants for me and accept His story, I am happy and able to progress.

Garrett: Sometimes we wrestle with troubling questions or try to understand what it means to be Mormon, but Letters to a Young Mormon shares, “When God knocks, don’t creep up to the door and look through the peephole to see if he looks like you thought he would. Rush to the door and throw it open” (53).



Ashley Mae Hoiland

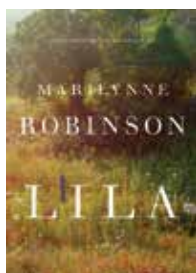
One Hundred Birds Taught Me to Fly: The Art of Seeking God (Maxwell Institute, 2016)

Amelia: Thanks to Holland, I have realized that, like her, I am not in crisis, but I

am an explorer. I especially appreciated her discussion of creativity and its importance in the development and expression of our faith.

Stacy: She is someone who clearly loves the gospel but is also comfortable with spiritual experimentation. Reading about her experiences helped me to think more deeply about how I can create my own spiritual journey and how to go about shaping and reshaping my spirituality.

Lydia: What is most beautiful to me, even more than her spare, fresh prose or her simple, breathtaking stories, is the very act of creation of this book, and the way it says to each of its readers, “What do you have to say? How can you say it? Your voice matters!”



Marilynne Robinson

Lila (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014)

Jacquelyn: Even though my life does not even remotely resemble Lila’s, a lot of the concepts she dwells on, like

loneliness and existence and sorrow, are things that I think about frequently. I particularly love this insight about ministering to each other: “When you’re scalded, touch hurts, it makes no difference if it’s kindly meant” (253).¹

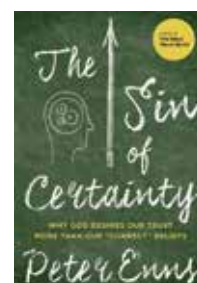


Brian Doyle

“Two Hearts,” Leaping: Revelations & Epiphanies (Loyola Press, 2003)

Sarah: I think all too often we forget that actual human emotions are all part of being eternal beings.

This essay reminded me that it’s okay to be angry or upset or some emotion other than happy and joyful. I get so tired of people having to express joy in everything they do, even when things are unfair.



“The Sin of Certainty with Peter Enns,” Maxwell Institute Podcast #54 (<https://mi.byu.edu/mip-54-enns/>)

Taylor: Enns’s invitation to reconsider moments of doubt not as crises but as opportunities to learn more

fully about God resonated with me. I believe that a big part of the reason so much of life feels incomplete and fails to fully satisfy is because it is intended to turn us toward what is complete and what can fully satisfy: namely God and Godly attributes.

Emma: I was particularly interested in Enns’s idea that “doubt is only the enemy of faith when we equate faith with certainty.” I find that the more I humble myself and learn that I really have no idea how powerful God is, my faith is opened up and becomes much more vibrant. In the absence of certainty, I can become more driven in my questions, allowing doubt to fill in newly found empty spaces in my testimony. ■

1. For more from Marilynne Robinson, turn to page 2 in this issue’s supplement from the Center for Studies of Christian Values in Literature.



CL CV 241 Greek and Roman Mythology

SINCE FALL 2016, assistant professor of classical studies Seth A. Jeppesen has incorporated an assignment into his Greek and Roman Mythology course that he calls the “Faith and Learning Forum.” Using the Top Hat app and its anonymous discussion feature, Jeppesen asks students to submit responses to prompts that encourage them to think about ways in which the material of the class connects to their own religious beliefs, which they may then discuss at the beginning of each class if desired. According to Jeppesen, students are “not forced to think spiritually about a topic that isn’t natural to them,” but instead given points based on participation, with only five out of 15 total responses required to receive full credit.

This new approach has indicated a significant shift in student opinions regarding the degree to which the course is both spiritually strengthening and intellectually enlarging. Below is one example of a prompt from Jeppesen followed by two responses from his students, shared with permission.

Week 8 Prompt

In LDS doctrine, we make a distinction between foreordination (being chosen before this life to do some important work for God’s kingdom) and predestination (being saved in advanced despite one’s actions). Of the difference between these two concepts, Neil A. Maxwell said “[Foreordination] clearly underlines how very long and how perfectly God has loved us and known us with our individual needs and capacities. Isolated from other doctrines, or mishandled, these truths can stoke the fires of fatalism, impact

adversely upon agency, cause us to focus on status rather than service, and carry us over into predestination.”¹

In Homer’s *Iliad*, fate, divine will, and human agency are all forces that compete for control over the individual lives of the mortal characters. How do our beliefs regarding foreordination but not predestination compare to the system that you see at work in the *Iliad*? How does this comparison enrich your own beliefs about the nature of God?

Quinton: I think that in some ways these concepts in the *Iliad* do exemplify the concepts of foreordination and predestination. However, I think the point must be made that, while similarities can be drawn between these concepts, foreordination is not a force that “competes for control over an individual” like fate and divine will within mythology. Like Elder Maxwell stated, foreordination is simply a proof that God knew us so well before this life. Foreordination does not force us to do anything; we may have been chosen to do something great for the building up of God’s kingdom before this life, but that does not mean that we are coerced to accept that role when on earth—that is where agency comes into play. This lets me know that God cares about us enough to let us grow by making our own decisions instead of forcing us to do what He knows is right.

Olivia: In the *Iliad*, fate is seen as some nebulous power that is inescapable and does not respect the choices and wishes of those whom it affects. Foreordination is the opposite. Based on our decisions and righteousness in the previous life, we are sent to earth with a certain purpose. It relies on our ability to maintain the faith that we had in the premortal life, as well as how well we use our agency. I see foreordination as more of a gift, a reward for our faith. It is not set in stone, however, and we do not have to accept the gift if we do not want to. It’s like everyone’s favorite quote, “Decisions determine destiny.” Fate is the opposite. Regardless of how moral and good a person is, they will receive whatever fate they will receive, and a man is powerless to reject it. This comparison makes me eternally grateful that God is mindful of our agency and wishes, and that we will receive whatever destiny we deserve. He understands who we were before we were born, as well as who we are on earth, and gives us a mission that is tailored for our personality and faithfulness. ■

1. Maxwell, Neal A. “A More Determined Discipleship” (speech, BYU, Provo, UT, October 10, 1978): <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1979/02/a-more-determined-discipleship?lang=eng&r=1>

Humanities Center Colloquium Roundtable

THROUGHOUT FALL and Winter semesters, the BYU Humanities Center offers weekly colloquia that feature humanities faculty research and, often, the intersection of that research with faith. Last April, professors and students in attendance participated in a roundtable discussion that spanned many gospel topics, including crises of faith. Excerpted below is part of that conversation.

Rob McFarland: I find that as we talk about teaching in the context of faith, faith is not the only place students are coming from. So, how do you come to a place of engaging *these* students—I mean, the purpose of our classes, they’re not Sunday School classes, and we’re not there to say, “We all have this great thing, and we’ve tied it up in a clean bow.” Art, any good art, is going to be messy. How do you bring the things that you’re studying to your students in crisis?

Matthew Wickman: Part of the problem is how we categorize and differentiate the simple from the complex: the gospel is simple, we say, and the things we teach here at the university are difficult. The reality is, both are complex: lived religion is full of nuance. Acknowledging how this is so, and what this means for one’s own journey of faith, is part of the answer.

Valerie Hegstrom: I think it’s valuable, in the moments when this is important in class, to just remind your students that you’re a believer. I’ll just say that. “I’m a believer, and now let’s talk about this.” I mean, I think if you reassure your students, however you say it, that, “I’m seeking after whatever thing you’re supposed to seek after in the thirteenth Article of Faith, and now let’s talk about how we can apply that in this context,” they’re reassured that you have struggled but at the end of the struggle have come out still inside of the “Good Ship Zion,” or whatever. I think that helps students.

Jacquelyn: Having been through plenty of these faith crises/had a lot of friends in crises, friends who have left [the Church] at this point, I’ve thought a lot about this over the past couple of years. I feel like it’s hard because, as you’ve acknowledged already, there are problems with condoning certain types of questions [in class] and there are problems with mixing different students. So, each situation is unique. But for me, it’s very helpful when doubts or questions are acknowledged kindly and when the idea that we can come

talk one-on-one with a professor is made apparent to students who need it.

I think sometimes there's a sense of distance or maybe that we're not supposed to be sharing these questions or problems with professors, particularly if they seem like very "believing" professors. There's this sense of "I'm not going to be accepted; I'm not going to be understood." But as I've gotten further into school, I've recognized that most of my professors have come up against similar problems as the ones I'm facing, and that's been comforting. I wish I'd known that earlier.

Morgan: I feel similarly to Jacquelyn. I took a Feminist Theory course from Brandie Siegfried last semester, and we talked about The Family Proclamation and unpacked it. It was really helpful for me to have a "bridge" kind of drawn out for me [between faith and scholarship]. And then there were other things that I brought to her personally that I didn't feel comfortable bringing up in a classroom setting. So, I guess professors who feel like a "safe place" help me understand I can go to them, without my standing at the school being jeopardized because I have questions.

Conor: I think the best way to "encapsulate" the way I feel about [crises of faith] is the story in Mark where the man brings his son to Christ [to be healed], and Christ says, "Do you believe?" The man says, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). Expressing that simultaneous belief and unbelief is what's been most helpful to me, partially because that's the space that I inhabit.

And if that's not where you're at, then you shouldn't say that because authenticity is important. But it seems that that's a place most people reach to one degree or another. Honoring, as Matt Wickman said, both the complexity of faith and the complexity of questions and crises is what has been most "bridging" for me, when that [balance] has been able to take place in the classroom.

McFarland: [laughs] Nobody has this problem in engineering.

Bourgerie: I'm always surprised at how students often think that I haven't gone through or thought about certain things. So, sometimes I'm really open about my questions. Otherwise, they really do imagine you as someone who sails straight through and never had a question, like you're somehow gifted with this idea of perfect faith. But I think if they know that, "Yeah, I've thought of those questions too, and here's how I've worked through them. . . ." I've been more explicit than I used to be when I talk about my testimony because I used to assume students would understand we all struggle, but that's not always the case.

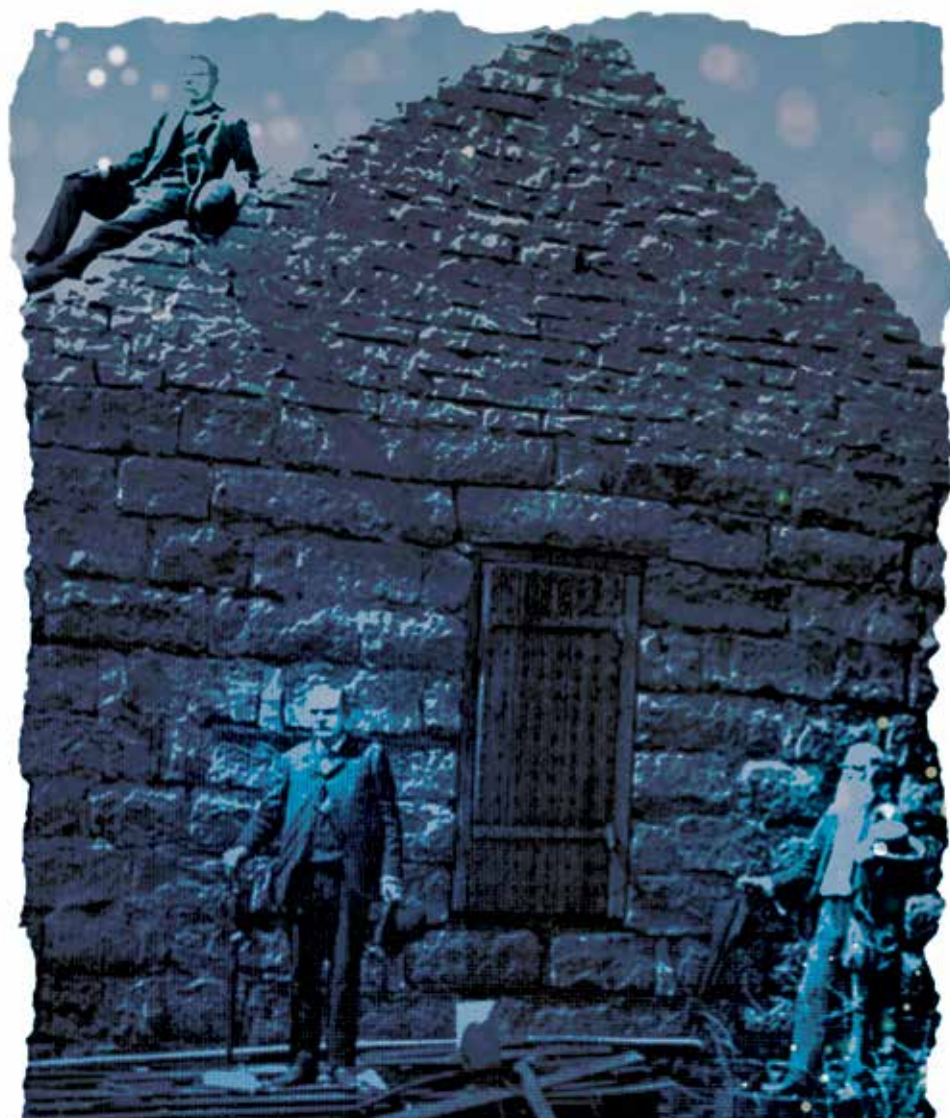
McFarland: That's a really hard thing to think about, what Valerie said about balancing those reactions and to "out" ourselves as believers, make sure everyone's clear on that, and then "out" ourselves as unbelievers and make sure they're clear on that. Part of our job is to show students that there is this dichotomy, and there is nuance. It's a hard thing.

Bourgerie: We all go through a hard journey sometimes with faith, and just because you're looking good at the moment doesn't mean you haven't gone through a hard time. I think that's okay to talk about, and I talk about that very openly with my students. ■

Education That Shapes and Forms

by Michael Kelly

Texts, even texts of the abyss, can be important witnesses and transform us into “individuals of insatiable compassion.”



“Jail at Liberty, Missouri,” Photograph. J. H. Hicks, 1888. (Church History Library, Salt Lake City.)

I RECEIVED the invitation to speak at the 2018 August Convocation just a few minutes after my family and I arrived in Independence, Missouri, this past July, and that setting has clearly shaped my thoughts. Our first stop the next morning was the Liberty Jail site, where Joseph Smith and several companions spent the winter of 1838–1839. That damp, depressingly dreary dungeon is representative of one of the darkest and most trying periods in the history of the Church. However, the revelations recorded in sections 121 through 123 of the Doctrine and Covenants also show how darkness can be infused by glorious light that illuminates vast spiritual vistas. Those sections in the Doctrine and Covenants are excerpted from an inspired epistle that the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions wrote in March 1839. In my very first Russian literature class, one of the most influential teachers in my life, Dr. Gary Browning, shared with us an additional statement from that epistle that I find to be particularly poignant given the trying circumstances of imprisonment.

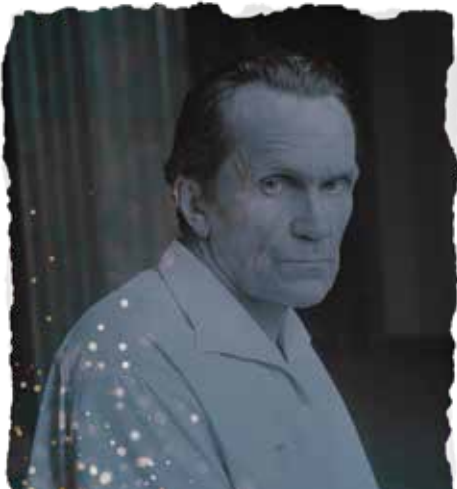
The Prophet wrote:

Thy mind, O man! If thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity—thou must commune with God.¹

I have reflected on that statement a multitude of times in the ensuing years, and I share it every semester with all of my literature students. While the need to stretch our minds as high as the utmost heavens may seem self-evident, the Prophet’s admonition to contemplate the darkest abyss may seem less clear, and I invite you to reflect on possible reasons for that exhortation.

When people first learn that I teach Russian literature, some of them express condolences as they assume that I spend a lot of time with gloomy and depressing texts that plunge us as readers into a frightening chasm of human misery and degradation. Many of the texts indeed are dark, but I have often found that, against the backdrop of the darkest abyss, of tragedy and unfathomable human suffering, the divine potentials of the human spirit are at times etched perhaps even more clearly. For me, such texts often reveal the capacity of integrity, hope, and compassion to illumine even the darkest corners of human existence.

I appreciate the Russian word for “education,” *obrazovanie*. It is formed from a root meaning “shape” or “form.” I am deeply grateful for the way in which texts, even texts of the abyss, shape and form who I am and at times even transform me. I would like very briefly to share with you three of those transformative texts and the questions with which they invite me to grapple. As I do so, I invite you to reflect on the ideas, the texts, and works of art you cherish and the questions they have raised that have inspired, challenged, and helped to shape and form you.



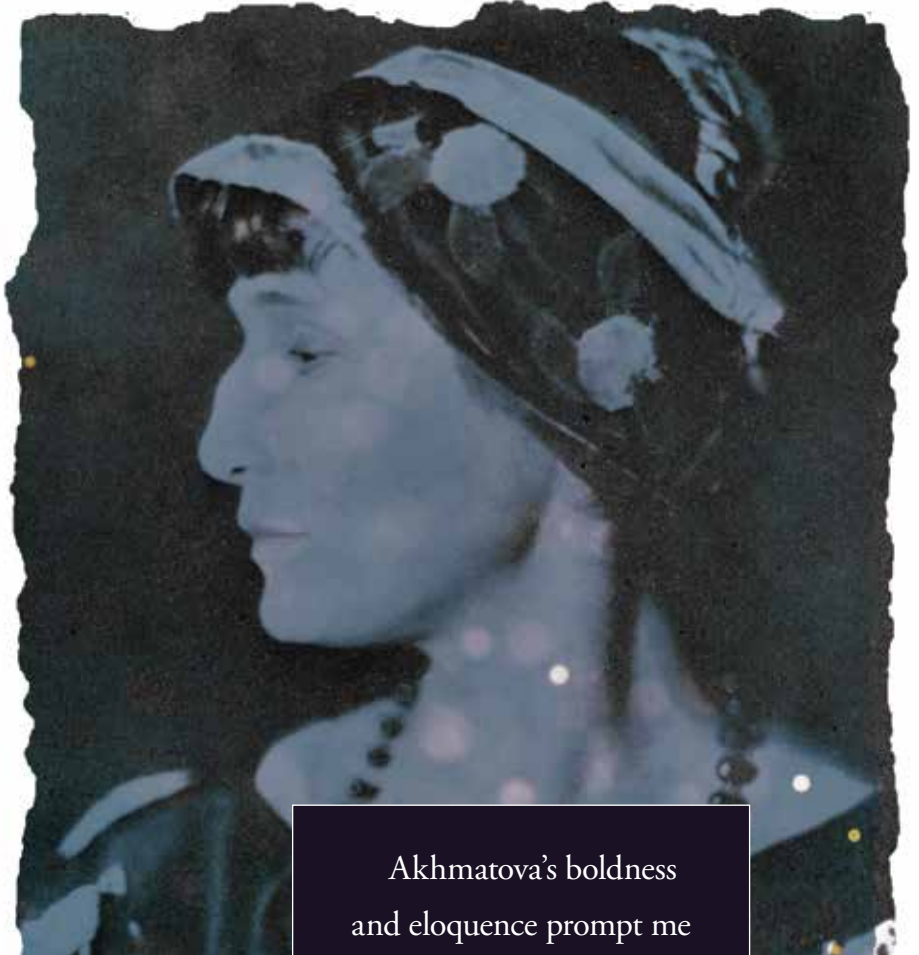
Varlam Shalamov

Varlam Shalamov spent approximately seventeen years in prison labor camps with extremely harsh weather and working conditions, and he witnessed almost unimaginable cruelty. His experiences inspired a remarkable collection of short stories. A central theme in several of the stories is the importance of personal integrity as a survival tool. In his story “Prosthetic Appliances,” a number of prisoners in camp are forced into isolation cells, but they first are compelled to undress and hand over any prostheses. All the prisoners except for the narrator have some kind of device, whether it be an artificial limb, back brace, a porcelain eye, and so on. When only the narrator has yet to be locked up, the chief guard, giggling uncontrollably, turns to him with this taunt.

“That one, then, gives us an arm, that one a leg, another an ear, another a back, and that one an eye. We’ll collect all the parts of the body. And what about you?” He carefully looked me over standing there naked. “What will you give up? Will you give up your soul?”

“No,” I said. “I won’t give up my soul.”²

The authorities could deprive Shalamov and the other prisoners of virtually everything, but not of their souls. For me personally, this passage is unforgettable. It poses the question as to what intellectual and spiritual resources we possess that no one can take from us. What is uniquely ours? How can these resources sustain us through the trials and challenges of our own lives? This story of the abyss has inspired deep reflection as to how I can acquire the determination and the strength, regardless of circumstances, to retain my integrity and never to surrender my soul.



Akhmatova’s boldness
and eloquence prompt me
to pose questions as to
how I can more articulately
raise my voice in the face of
injustice and suffering.

Anna Akhmatova

Anna Akhmatova, one of Russia’s greatest poets of the twentieth century, was not arrested herself during the era of the purges in the Soviet Union, but her only son was arrested four times. After his arrest in 1938, she frequently stood in lines outside the prison trying to get packages to him, and she did this for a period of seventeen months. She dedicated her poem “Requiem” to all the women who stood in those lines and agonized over their loved ones. The opening passage of the poem is a brief segment in prose describing an incident while she stood in line.

Once, someone “recognized” me. Then a woman with bluish lips standing behind me, who, of course, had never heard me called by name before, woke up from the stupor to which everyone had succumbed and whispered in my ear (everyone spoke in whispers there):

“Can you describe this?”

And I answered: “Yes, I can.”

Then something that looked like a smile passed over what had once been her face.³

For all the pain and heartache she described, Akhmatova was grateful that she could stand as a witness of the agony of these suffering women and serve as a voice for her people. I am intrigued by the number of twentieth-century Russian writers who on occasion refer to themselves as witnesses. Akhmatova’s boldness and eloquence prompt me to pose questions as to how I can more articulately raise my voice in the face of injustice and suffering. They inspire me as well to speak of truth and virtue and ultimately to stand as a witness “of God at all times and in all things and in all places.”⁴



Fyodor Dostoevsky

The nineteenth-century Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky unflinchingly examines the difficulties and tragedies of the human condition. In his novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, he plunges us into a world in which nearly unfathomable cruelty and evil are perpetrated against children. One of the Karamazov brothers, Ivan, experiences such dismay and despair over this innocent suffering that he wonders if the only solution may be to curtail moral freedom and responsibility so individuals can no longer inflict pain on each other. In contrast, another leading character, Father Zosima, embraces an incredibly expansive view of moral responsibility. He counsels, “Take yourself up, and make yourself responsible for all the sins of men. . . . Make yourself sincerely responsible for everything and everyone.”⁵ That idea has perplexed and troubled numerous readers. In what way, after all, could we bear responsibility for another’s sins? Father Zosima elaborates by suggesting that angry words that we

speak could plant a bad seed in another person, and our lack of restraint could, therefore, lead to another’s sin. He further teaches that if we fail to let our light shine or to set the proper example, we bear some guilt for others’ failings. “If you had shone, your light would have lighted the way for others, and the one who did wickedness would perhaps not have done so in your light.”⁶ In his novels, Dostoevsky espouses the idea that we cannot retreat into an insular world of individual righteousness, for we bear responsibility for emanating light through our compassion and lovingkindness toward others. He advocates that we humbly strive though “active love” to alleviate the suffering that surrounds us. In my mind, the essence of a Christian life for Dostoevsky is to strive continually to be individuals of insatiable compassion, to bear one another’s burdens in humility and meekness, and to view ourselves as being responsible for the salvation of all people by preserving within us, as Father Zosima suggests, “the image of Christ, that it may shine forth like a precious diamond to the whole world.”⁷ I will ever be grateful for the ways in which Dostoevsky, while exploring the darkest abyss, helps me to expand my vision of my moral responsibility toward others and compels me to consider what it truly means to love my neighbor and to demonstrate genuine compassion.

To sum up these ideas on integrity, the importance of standing as a witness, and compassion, I would like to cite the concluding remarks of our great American writer William Faulkner in his acceptance speech for the 1949 Nobel Prize in literature. He said:

I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet’s, the writer’s, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past. The poet’s voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail.⁸

As you embark on your various family, spiritual, community, and professional pursuits, my hope is that, through your ongoing engagement with the humanities, the ideas, texts, and works of art that already have become or will yet become transformative for you—including those that explore the darkest abyss—will help you throughout your lives to endure and prevail with integrity, honor, courage, and a soul you refuse to surrender, that your inexhaustible voice will serve as a witness that will help others to prevail, and that your lives will be constant reminders to those with whom you interact of the power of insatiable compassion and sacrifice so you truly can be instruments in the hands of God in helping to lead His children to salvation.

Michael Kelly is an associate professor of German & Russian and delivered this speech at the College of Humanities August 2018 Convocation.

1. History of the Church 3:295

2. Varlam Shalamov, «Sobranie sochinenii v chetyrekh tomakh», tom 1 [Moskva: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1998], 592; the translation is mine.

3. *The Complete Poems of Anna Akhmatova*, trans. Judith Hemschemeyer, ed. Roberta Reeder [Boston: Zephyr Press, 1997], 384.

4. Mosiah 18:9

5. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky [New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002], 320.

6. 321–22

7. 316

8. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1949/faulkner/speech/>

DOUBTING TOWARD FAITH

by Corry Cropper

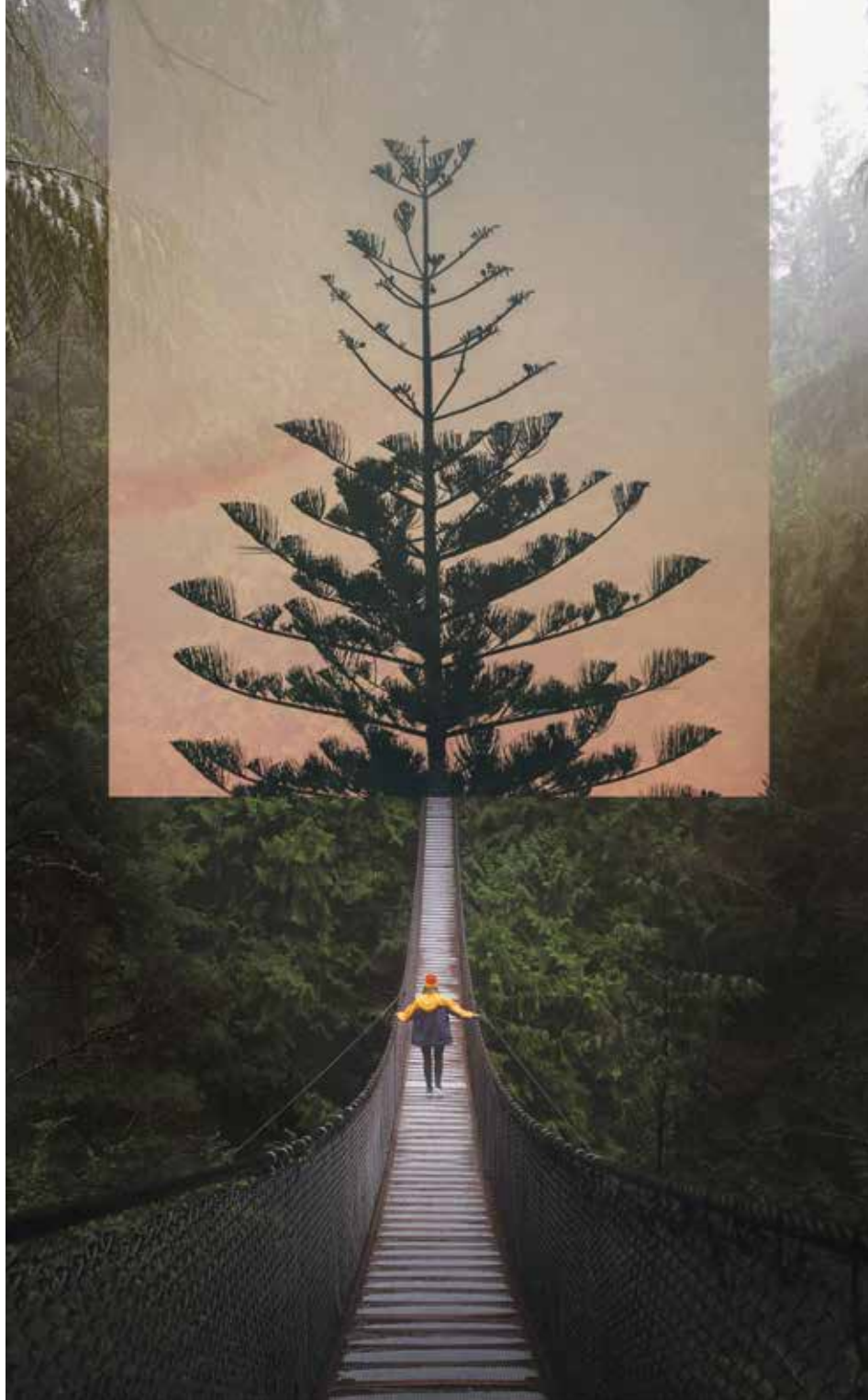
Doubt inspires growth by requiring us to persist, improve relationships, and “essay” our questions.

IN THE CHURCH (and this is probably true of most religions) we tend to vilify doubt. But the opposite of doubt isn't faith—it is sight. Paul writes, “For we walk by faith, not by sight”¹; and in Hebrews and Ether we read that “faith is things... not seen.”² I would go so far as to argue that without doubt (that sick feeling of thinking there is no God), without confronting what Jacob calls the “Monster of death and hell”³ (another way to say life without God), then it is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to feel relief and to have gratitude for Christ that leads to a real change of heart.

In other words, confronting the stark coldness of a world without God makes belief a heart-changing and life-changing event.

One of the clearest scriptural examples of doubt is found in the story of the resurrection in John, when Mary Magdalene goes to Christ's tomb and discovers it empty. Despite the fact that Jesus had repeatedly taught his followers that he would rise up, she insists that grave robbers have taken the body: “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him!” When angels ask her why she is weeping, she

responds, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.” Even when she sees Jesus, though probably looking through tears, she mistakes him for the gardener, pleading, “If thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.”⁴ The most moving part of this chapter is that despite Mary's doubts, despite her insistence that Christ's body has been taken away, and despite her reluctance to believe or acknowledge the resurrection, Christ still appears to her, to this doubter, before appearing to anyone else! Only



when the risen Lord calls her by name does she recognize him and embrace him. This is the miracle of grace played out in narrative: a woman who should have known about the resurrection has doubts, but Christ reaches out to her as an individual, calls her by name, and lifts her—as he will do with Thomas later in the chapter, and as he does with each of us, I think, in a similarly personalized way.

We tend to think that the only way to know spiritual truth is via transcendent emotional

The famous passage in Doctrine & Covenants 9 is, I think, frequently misread. We tend to forget that Oliver's problem wasn't that he didn't pray enough; it was that he didn't think enough! "Study it out in your mind."⁶ Reason and critical thinking skills are gifts from God, just like our emotions, and they remain equally important when seeking faith. Too much reason may lead to cynicism, but too much reliance on a burning bosom may lead to superstition.

I think if we spoke of faith and experience instead of knowledge, people with questions would still feel they had a place with us.

experience. When I was a missionary, I always quoted Moroni 10 as a model for *knowing*. I wish I had quoted Alma 32 just as often. Alma offers another way to come to faith and knowledge. He invites his listeners to try an experiment: live the gospel, plant Christ in your hearts, and watch.⁵ As you reach out in service to your neighbor, is your heart filled? As you go to the sanctuary, do you find some of your anger fading? As you recognize God's mercy, are you less bitter about the wicked who prosper? Alma says, "live it," live Christianity, and if your charity increases and your heart is filled, then you know it is good.

And this, really, is what happened to me. I remember sitting in a room where a young man was receiving a blessing. His family and neighbors were all there. After the blessing they embraced the young man, one by one. Then, if memory serves, we ate a lot of food. I remember thinking: "There is a lot I don't know, but I know this is a good thing. Blessings, weddings, and committee meetings about food storage all allow people to be together, to share fears and hopes, to serve each other, to embrace each other as Mary embraced the Savior, to eat together as Jesus did with Thomas."

By trying an experiment on the word, by practicing Christianity, and by studying sacred texts, I began to recognize goodness around me, to feel goodness, and to embrace faith.

So here is my theory: the presence of doubt implies that the doubter values faith! Someone who rejects God doesn't think or worry about doubt. Doubt is faith's partner. The more I experience doubt, the less I worry about it because I have experience with it. Each time I find an answer or work through doubts, I grow in assurance that I will be able to work through it the next time.

I like the sixteenth-century French essayist Michel de Montaigne for a lot of reasons. I admire his willingness to accept his limitations and embrace his weaknesses. Even though he invented the genre, I like that his essays don't have a clear thesis and don't repeat the introduction in the conclusion. I like that he courageously called out the hypocrisy of his own people when it came to colonialism and the religious war between Catholics and Protestants.

What I like most about Montaigne, however, is not his clever criticism of religious conflict, but his examination of certainty. He cites a number of examples and concludes: "Man is a marvelously vain, fickle, and unstable subject, and on whom it is very hard to form any certain and uniform judgment."⁷

And if humans are constantly changing and unstable, they can't *fix* something as great as an omniscient God.

In his essay on certainty and religious knowledge, "The Apology for Raymond Sebond," Montaigne argues against both the senses or emotions and against reason: "Seeing the senses cannot determine our dispute, being full of uncertainty themselves, it must then be reason that must do it; but no reason can be erected upon any other foundation than that of another reason; and so we run back to all infinity." He continues, "I do not believe that purely human means are in any sort capable of [attaining certainty of the divine]." And he quips that, "The impression of certainty is above all a certain testimony of folly and of extreme uncertainty."⁸

And yet, despite our human weakness and over Montaigne's warning, in the Church we insist on speaking of testimony and knowing. This stems, in part, I think, from the models provided by the three and the eight witnesses. But note that they use language of the visual to describe why they *know*.

We, have *seen* the plates which contain this record, wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have *seen* the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been *shown* unto us by the power of God. An angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and *laid before our eyes*, that we *beheld* and *saw* the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we *beheld* and bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our *eyes*.⁹

This testimony, this knowing, is based upon seeing. And since faith and sight are opposites, this is not faith. It is a very different kind of testimony than what we share on fast Sundays. Crucially, what saves us is neither knowledge nor testimony. Rather, the scriptures plead for us to have faith in Christ and, through this faith in Christ, to change our hearts, minds, and lives. I wish our culture of certainty were a bit different. I think if we spoke of faith and experience instead of knowledge, people with questions would still feel they had a place with us. And, based on the scriptures and Alma's and Paul's definition of faith, it would be more honest.

What I can testify of is a different sort of knowing: of knowing something in the way I know a friend or a family member. Christianity is about a relationship. Even though I am a changing and unstable human being, I can have a relationship with Christ. I can come to understand grace and know Christ by reading the Bible and Book of Mormon, and by experimenting on the word.

And who better to experiment on the word than students of the Humanities?

Corry Cropper is a newly appointed associate dean in the College of Humanities and professor in the Department of French & Italian. This article is adapted from an address he delivered at the 2018 Humanities and Belief Workshop for PhD candidates in the humanities.

1. 2 Corinthians 5:7

2. Hebrews 11:1 and Ether 12:6

3. 2 Nephi 9:10

4. John 20

5. See Russell Hancock's discussion of this topic here: <http://geoffsn.blogspot.com/2012/08/russell-hancock-on-testimony-and-church.html>.

6. D&C 9:8

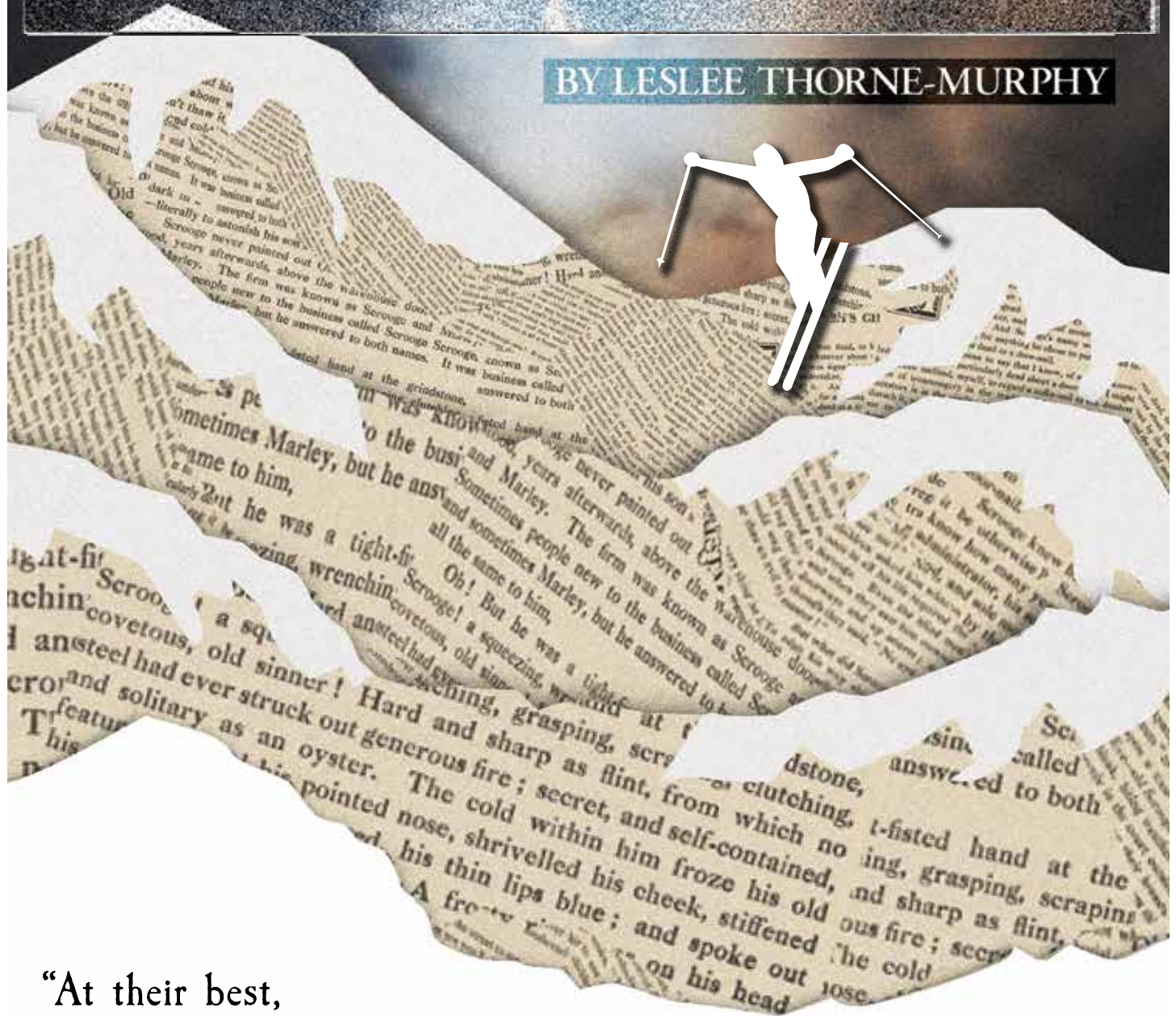
7. http://essays.quotidiana.org/montaigne/tha_men_by_various_ways/

8. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3600/3600-h/3600-h.htm#chap12>

9. The Testimony of Three Witnesses, <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/three?lang=eng>, emphasis added.

Moments of the Sublime

BY LESLEE THORNE-MURPHY



“At their best,
Victorian Christmas ghosts
spook us into a better spiritual state,
just as skiing down a slope combines
the beauty and terror of the sublime
in a way that invites awe and reverence.”

Beauty and terror often combine to reveal moments of the sublime—in both Victorian Christmas ghost stories and downhill skiing.

I TOOK UP SKIING as an adult in order to join my children and husband on the slopes. It was a daring move, if I may say, since I've never been a natural athlete and I happen to have a severe fear of heights. Even now, the moment before I pitch down a run is an exercise in managing terror. My fear is offset only by awe at perceiving my insignificance in comparison to the landscape—cascading ice-packed peaks, evergreens holding their shape under layers of snow, an occasional glimpse of a raptor ascending a thermal in the bitter cold. I've come to value those moments poised at the top of each run, where I exist between sheer beauty and terror. In those moments, I'm living the concept of the sublime.

Of course, to an experienced athlete my launch down each slope appears almost laughably simple and safe—a cautious skier carefully carving her way through measured S-curves down an intermediate run. In my mind, however, I am facing the possibility of death or dismemberment with every curve, at the same time that I am glorying in the landscape, the speed, the immensity of it all.

Few experiences lift me out of my own head like skiing. I must be fully present to manage the emotional and physical intensity, and this means that my mind is temporarily cleansed of clutter—whether or not the leftovers will suffice for dinner, how many hours the student exams will take to grade, how to help my son with perennially perplexing math problems, and all the other concerns and regrets that insist on haunting me daily.

So what does this have to do with humanities and belief? I came to my career through a love of reading, an activity that I find unexpectedly analogous with skiing. The lines of a poem can make me catch my breath. Entering the mind of a character in a novel entices me to leave behind the quotidian worries that drain so much time and energy. Encountering an innovative idea in an essay requires me to alter my perspective.

Lifting myself out of my very limited mortal perspective is an experience I cherish as deeply spiritual. I'm rarely so attentive to the divine beauties of this world as I am when teetering precariously at the top of a ski slope. Those are moments when humility and reverence are nearly tangible concepts. I'm never so alive to the virtue of leaving self behind and serving others as I am when reading, teaching, and studying. As Robert Browning's flawed but sympathetic Fra Lippo Lipi suggests,

Art was given for that;
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out.¹

Let me tell you about a few of the moments when “lent” minds have shaped the experiences my students and I have had lately.

Last fall I had the opportunity to teach a course on Victorian Christmas literature, a topic that provided ample opportunity to explore concepts of belief and faith alongside folk traditions and secular concerns. It might be surprising to learn that ghost stories were a staple of nineteenth-century Christmas celebrations, hearkening back to ancient Roman and folk customs regarding the winter solstice. Charles Dickens was following suit when he first envisioned Scrooge's nighttime visitors.² In our class we read Dickens, and we also read about ghostly Christmas trees, rollicking trickster spirits, and unnerving child-ghosts. These tales could be terrifying, but somehow experiencing that discomfort prepared us to encounter devotional literature from a different and, I believe, spiritually rewarding perspective.

In Elizabeth Barrett Browning's touching meditation on Mary, mother of Jesus, she imagines what it might have been like to cradle a napping infant Christ while meditating on his future. As Mary envisions ghostly spirits worshipping her son, her own “spirit . . . dilateth with the woe / Of His mortality” (53–4). Her maternal pain plays counterpoint to her devoted wonder as she searches for a term of endearment appropriate for her divine child, “Ah King, ah Christ, ah Son!” (117). He is her helpless infant son; he is her eternal Saviour; his death will redeem the mother who gave him birth.³

Mary's motherly “woe” is echoed in Elizabeth Gaskell's “Lizzie Leigh.” Annie is a farmwife mourning her husband whose dying words on Christmas morning have freed her to perform a holy quest—to seek their long-lost daughter who had borne an illegitimate child and disappeared into the life of the streets. Purposefully echoing Christ's parables of the prodigal son and the lost coin, Annie journeys to recover her child. Her eventual discovery exorcises the guilt that had haunted the mother for years and reminds us that Christmas is an advent, a commencement of a new spiritual life, no matter what has come before.⁴

At times Annie's quest mirrors the quest of the wise men as depicted by T. S. Eliot in “Journey of the Magi.” Eliot's spare Modernist aesthetic gives the journey an almost uncanny sense: the wise men had “[a] cold coming . . . of it” as they faced grimy travels and “refractory” animals (1, 6). They found their epiphany, the Christ child, but their discovery did not end their travels either physically or spiritually. Returning to once-familiar lands, they found “an alien people clutching their gods” (42). Their estrangement leaves them processing the enormity of a new dispensation.⁵

Reading this literature alongside Christmas ghost stories brought a whole new set of perspectives on Christmas worship into our classroom discussions, so that we could see our own Christmas memories and beliefs anew. And that is the point. At their best, Victorian Christmas ghosts spook us into a better spiritual state, just as skiing down a slope combines the beauty and terror of the sublime in a way that invites awe and reverence. Ideally, we all seek opportunities to cultivate spiritual and intellectual epiphanies that surprise us out of our complacency and disencumber our minds in preparation for receiving revelation.

The students in the Victorian Christmas literature class curated an exhibit in the Special Collections library this last December, titled “From Shrieks to Shenanigans: How to Celebrate a Truly Victorian Christmas.” Their accompanying digital exhibit is available online: victoriantchristmas.byu.edu. And if, by chance, you are interested in being spooked and inspired by Victorian Christmas literature, please feel free to send me an e-mail (lesleetm@byu.edu). I would be happy to send you a list of our class readings, all of which are freely available online.

Leslee Thorne-Murphy is a newly appointed associate dean in the College of Humanities and associate professor of English.

1. Robert Browning, “Fra Lippo Lipi,” *Robert Browning's Poetry*, Eds. James F. Loucks and Andrew M. Stauffer, New York and London: Norton, 2007: 304–6.

2. *A Christmas Carol*, first published in 1843.

3. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “The Virgin Mary to the Child Jesus,” *Elizabeth Barrett Browning: Selected Poems*, Eds. Margorie Stone and Beverly Taylor, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview, 2009.

4. Elizabeth Gaskell, “Lizzie Leigh,” *Household Words: A Weekly Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1850, pp. 2–6. Ed. Emily Hilton, *Victorian Short Fiction Project*, 14 December 2018, <http://vsfp.byu.edu/index.php/title/lizzie-leigh/>.

5. T. S. Eliot, “Journey of the Magi,” *Poetry Archive*, 2005–16, <https://www.poetryarchive.org/poem/journey-magi>.

PROFILES

From German Literature Student to Perinatologist in Africa

Kelli Barbour, the College of Humanities 2018 honored alumni speaker, spoke on her journey “From There to Here.”



THE WORD “DYNAMIC” came to mind as Dr. Kelli Barbour spoke to her audience in the Joseph Fielding Smith Building on October 11. That descriptor, along with her many other titles—MD, MSc, MA—was hard-won through a lot of work and inspiration.

Barbour recounted her unique education and stated, “Ever since I was a little girl, I knew I wanted to be a physician.” But achieving her goal would not be as straightforward as she thought. Upon graduating from BYU with a degree in microbiology and a minor in German, she felt a strong desire to put her study of medicine on hold and instead study the humanities. Within eighteen months, she finished her master’s degree in German literature and was

headed to California for medical school. But even med school wasn’t straightforward for Barbour. By her third year, she had traveled the world to conduct research and was beginning her second master’s degree, this time in global health science. “Most people are a little confused when I tell them I spent six years in medical school,” she said to chuckles from the audience.

Now, Barbour has achieved her dream job, in which she teaches half of the year at the Baylor College of Medicine and does clinical work half of the year in Africa. Passionate about her background in the humanities and how it has helped her career, Dr. Barbour said, “I want people to know that science and the arts are not antagonistic towards each other.”

—ZANDER SMITH, BA ENGLISH, '20

College of Humanities Alumni Garner Three out of Six 2018 University Alumni Awards



The Honorable
Thomas B. Griffith,
Alumni Distinguished
Service Award

BYU LEFT an indelible mark on the Honorable Thomas (Tom) B. Griffith, a judge on the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit: At BYU, he learned that reason and revelation work in tandem, that one without the other is incomplete. Griffith’s engagement with the world of law and politics is eclipsed only by his and his wife Susan’s commitment to the restored gospel and their family. A native of Washington, DC, the city’s tumult of ideas and argument never left Griffith, and, except for a time as BYU’s general counsel, Griffith never really left the city. After earning a law degree at the University of Virginia, he was a partner in a DC law firm; became the Senate’s chief legal officer; worked on rule of law initiatives in former communist countries; and, soon after returning to BYU to work in its administration, was appointed to the bench by President George W. Bush. In addition to his Church service, he sits on the advisory board of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship at BYU.



Melissa Dalton-Bradford,
Service to Family Award
FOR MELISSA Dalton-Bradford and her family, abroad has become home. After she and her husband

Randall completed undergraduate and graduate degrees together at BYU, the pair went forth to serve in the world. Over the last 28 years, the two have raised their four children in eight different countries, including Singapore, Norway, Switzerland, and France. Because of this, Dalton-Bradford is fluent in four languages and is currently learning two more. These experiences have fueled Dalton-Bradford’s artistic ventures: she’s published a number of books, articles, and poems; performed as a vocalist in multiple countries; and presented at events worldwide. Dalton-Bradford works hard to serve her community on an international level. She has brought her writing and language skills to the table as a founding member of two global organizations, one of which is Their Story Is Our Story, a fast-growing humanitarian community devoted to documenting and sharing firsthand stories of refugees worldwide. Visit <https://tsosrefugees.org/>.



Hayley Smith, Young
Alumni Distinguished
Service Award

HOW HAYLEY SMITH came to found Lifting Hands International (LHI), an international program mobilizing thousands of volunteers to meet the wide-ranging needs of refugees, is as inspiring as her achievements. As a BYU student struggling with an eating disorder, Smith coped by focusing on Arabic, a language she fell in love with after pulling a book off a shelf of the Provo Library. To develop her passion and augment her BA in English, Smith studied in Morocco, Egypt, and Jordan; did an MA in Middle Eastern Studies in London; and taught high school Arabic for Boston Public Schools. Tragedies she witnessed among refugees in Greece inspired her to action. Today Smith works with LHI to undertake diverse tasks like filling shipping containers with clothes, running a refugee center in Greece, providing solar lights in Iraq, and furnishing homes for new arrivals in Arizona. She credits BYU, a study abroad, and caring mentoring professors for igniting her interest in the world, and the Lord for guiding her onto her present path.

RETIREMENTS



Asian & Near
Eastern
Languages
Mark Peterson



Center for
Language
Studies
Agnes Welch



English
Sirpa Grierson



English
Kristine
Hansen



Office of
Digital
Humanities
Harold
Hendricks



Spanish &
Portuguese
Orlando Alba



Spanish &
Portuguese
Fred Williams

To Mourn with Those That Mourn: Compassion as an Answer to Questions

SOMEWHAT RECENTLY, I visited a professor in the Department of Philosophy to ask a question about the class I was taking at the time. We approached a topic that was eating away at me: human suffering. I haltingly spoke to him of cruel and heartbreaking circumstances debilitating many around me, and in response my professor cried. He answered not with a concrete answer carved out of imperatives but with his own stories of suffering, with a willingness to feel along with me.

This moment, no more than an hour on the fourth floor of the JFSB, has come to represent to me something quintessential about a study of the humanities. More than that, though, it has come to represent the beauty of a study fortified and illuminated by faith. At the time of this conversation with my professor, I was spiritually sick. I was bitter and angry and very much aching for reconciliation between the faith of my heritage and the questions that were troubling me. I felt, as William Butler Yeats describes, “the world’s far more full of weeping than [we] can understand.”¹ I wanted a defense, preferably written out in logical premises, explaining *why*. What I gained from my professor wasn’t an answer with the clarity or the verbal articulation that I wanted, but it was an answer. It was an answer of a sort that listens, feels, and travails with the seeker. My answer was the feeling of compassion.

In my study of the Humanities, I have learned about this compassion in a variety of ways, ultimately informing my belief that God’s grace gives us the strength to ask and feel the weight of unanswered questions. The compassion my professor offered me I have come to see as the compassion that Heavenly Parents offer us. Consider an account of compassion articulated in the book of Moses:

And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Enoch, and told Enoch all the doings of the children of men; wherefore Enoch knew, and looked upon...their misery, and wept and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity; and his bowels yearned; and all eternity shook.

And as Enoch saw this, he had bitterness of soul, and wept over his brethren, and said unto the heavens: I will refuse to be comforted.

Many times in my studies here, I have felt that an increase in knowledge is an increase in sorrow. I have “looked upon [the] misery” that is so prevalent in the human story and “yearned,” in a way like Enoch, to understand how to make sense of completely senseless circumstances and the sometimes apparent absurdity of mortal experiences. I certainly understand a “bitterness of soul,” and “refus[ing] to be comforted.” But consider the next statement in this profound story:

But the Lord said unto Enoch: Lift up your heart, and be glad; and look.²

God the Father then goes on to teach Enoch about the story of humankind, the narrative of existence. In collaboration with a study of philosophy and literature, this story has and continues to give me spiritual healing. My journey of reconciliation between faith and intellect is certainly alive and ongoing, but I have found that its vivacity is what gives it meaning. By looking closely at human experience, I am learning to look and to believe.

We as students of the humanities are taught to appreciate both details and a larger view. That skill allows us to understand multiple perspectives and opinions and to respect complexity. It allows us to live how Austrian poet Rainer Marie Rilke counseled: “Have patience with everything that remains unsolved in [our] heart. Try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books written in a foreign language.”³

But a study rooted and grounded in faith adds even more to that love and quest in the pursuit of questions. A study rooted in faith gives us a foundation, an open sky of life to draw on and to look to. The compassion my professor gave to me opened my heart to begin to understand the power of this unique union: compassion that stems from faith is not hopeless. It doesn’t end with simply mourning for the heartache in the world, though this is certainly part of it. This kind of compassion also

trusts the ultimate source of compassion: the God who weeps. His love is deep and sincere and true, but it is planted in the good earth that allows us to “look up” and around to grace.

I have wrestled with a lot of questions. I am still wrestling with a lot of questions. But the gift I am taking with me as I leave BYU is a deep love for questions. I can love them because I approach them from a foundation. I have an anchor in Jesus Christ, and that makes all the difference. The compassion that we gain as we study about the human experience is just the beginning. What we need to elevate that compassion is devotion to the God who weeps with us. I believe that compassion will allow us to love questions, to nurture them in a garden of faith, and to grow beautiful minds prepared for everlasting life.

Philosophy alumna Kristen Blair delivered the April 2017 Convocation student address printed here. For more, visit <https://humanities.byu.edu/embracing-the-other/>

1. Yeats, William Butler. “The Stolen Child.” Poets.org. <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/stolen-child> (January 18, 2019).

2. Moses 7:41 and 44.

3. Rilke, Rainer Marie. *Letters to a Young Poet*. Trans. Reginald Snell, Dover: Dover Publications, 2002.

2. Goodreads.com. https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/7906.Rainer_Maria_Rilke?page=2 (January 18, 2019).



Asian & Near
Eastern
Languages
Bruce Beaman



English
Soren Cox



Linguistics
Glen Probst

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

How did a study of humanities at BYU affect your life? How do you apply the humanities daily? We'd love to hear about the classes, teachers, books, ideas, or experiences that have made a difference to you.

Please share your story in fifty to two hundred words, and we will consider it for publication in a future issue of the magazine. Send your story to humanitiespr@byu.edu. Submissions may be edited for length, grammar, appropriateness, and clarity.

Skepticism and Belief

Studying the humanities helps develop the quality of skepticism, and skepticism can lead to stronger faith in the gospel.

By Thomas B. Griffith

I AM A SKEPTIC BY NATURE. My given name is Thomas after all. Which means that doubt is my instinctive reaction to a story that the Lord helped someone find their lost keys. (Of course, my inclination to doubt doesn't stop me from praying for *my* lost keys. Consistency can be a hobgoblin.) For the most part, skepticism has served me well. As the dramatist Wilson Mizner observed, "[D]oubt is what gets you an education."¹

The study of the humanities is especially helpful in developing this useful quality of skepticism. Harold Macmillan, the former prime minister of Great Britain, was fond of quoting one of his tutors in the humanities:

"Nothing you learn here at Oxford will be of the slightest possible use to you later, save only this: that if you work hard and diligently, you should be able to detect when a man is talking rot. And that is the main, if not the sole purpose of education."² The most important period of my formal education came as a humanities major at BYU, where I was first taught to use the tools of skeptical analysis that are at the heart of the university experience as it has been formed over the last millenium. And that experience has changed the world for the better. As President Henry B. Eyring pointed out, "Universities . . . are probably . . . as good a way we know of to find truth."³

Disciple-scholars are skeptics. I remember hearing Jacob Neusner, the prodigious scholar of Judaica, speak these words in an address at BYU: "Skepticism and critical thinking are friends, not enemies of religion. . . . Man is made in God's image. And that part of man which is like God is . . . the mind. . . . [W]hen we use our minds, we not only serve God, we

also act like God. . . . [I]n seeking reason and order, we serve God."⁴

I am a believing Latter-day Saint because of my skepticism, not despite it. Skepticism requires that I take into account the totality of the human experience, including spiritual realities. Terryl Givens uses an example from astrophysics to make this point. From the most rigorous calculations, we know that there is overwhelming evidence that we cannot detect 90% of the physical universe. Dark matter and dark energy are neither perceptible nor observable by any scientific instrument or human faculty. Yet unless we posit their existence, the equations we use to make sense of what we can

observe don't work. Similarly, although we can't detect spiritual realities directly, the life I experience doesn't make sense without acknowledging that another plane of existence is there, like dark matter and dark energy, threaded through the fibers of space and time.⁵

The Book of Mormon is my portal to the spiritual reality of which the material world is just a part. And my belief in its worth is grounded in the studied application of skepticism. The scholarship on the Book of Mormon over the last several decades is remarkable and points largely in one direction: the book is an ancient record cobbled together by multiple authors, none of whom lived in the nineteenth century. There are arguments to the contrary, I know, but I cannot come up with a more plausible explanation for its origin than Joseph Smith's claim—shocking at first to us skeptics—that an angel gave him a record written by ancients upon golden plates that he translated through miraculous means. The book is simply too complex, too sophisticated, too profound and bears too many

markings of the ancient world for me to believe that it could have been the product of the fertile imagination of anyone living in the 19th century, especially a barely literate farmboy. No skeptic should dismiss this view without having first read Terryl Givens's *By the Hand of Mormon*⁶, Grant Hardy's *Understanding the Book of Mormon*⁷, Royal Skousen's work with the original dictated manuscript of the Book of Mormon⁸, Kent Brown's description of the Near Eastern setting for its opening scenes⁹, and the outpouring of publications from Jack Welch¹⁰, to pick out just five of the many talented scholars who have applied critical skills to the study of the Book of Mormon.

Because I find there is a compelling argument that the Book of Mormon is what it claims to be, my rational, reason- and order-seeking mind must acknowledge that there is a spiritual world beyond the material world that I can see, touch, and measure. When I give myself over to the reality of that spiritual world, something wonderful happens. I feel the Savior's love, His presence, and His influence. I am better able to see His hand at work in my own life and the lives of others. And I recommit myself to making the Church a place that more clearly reflects a Christ-like love for humankind than we have yet achieved.

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

1. Wilson Mizner Quotes. BrainyQuote.com, BrainyMedia Inc., 2018. https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/wilson_mizner_109329, accessed October 30, 2018.

2. Quoted in Larry H. Peer, "Beethoven's Kiss: On the Odd Reasons for Brigham Young's Excellent University," *BYU Devotional Address*, Dec. 2, 2003, <http://speeches.byu.edu/reader/reader.php?id=4350>.

3. Sharon Haddock, "LDS Leader Speaks on Learning, Religion," *Deseret News*, Feb. 28, 2009.

4. Jacob Neusner, *The Glory of God Is Intelligence: Four Lectures on the Role of the Intellect in Judaism* (Brigham Young University, 1978), 1–4.

5. Personal correspondence with the author.

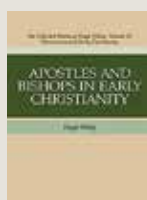
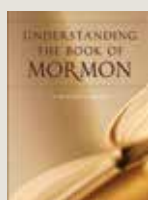
6. Oxford University Press (2003).

7. Oxford University Press (2010).

8. See, e.g., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (Yale University Press, 2009).

9. *From Jerusalem to Zarahemla: Literary and Historical Studies of the Book of Mormon* (Religious Studies Center, 1998).

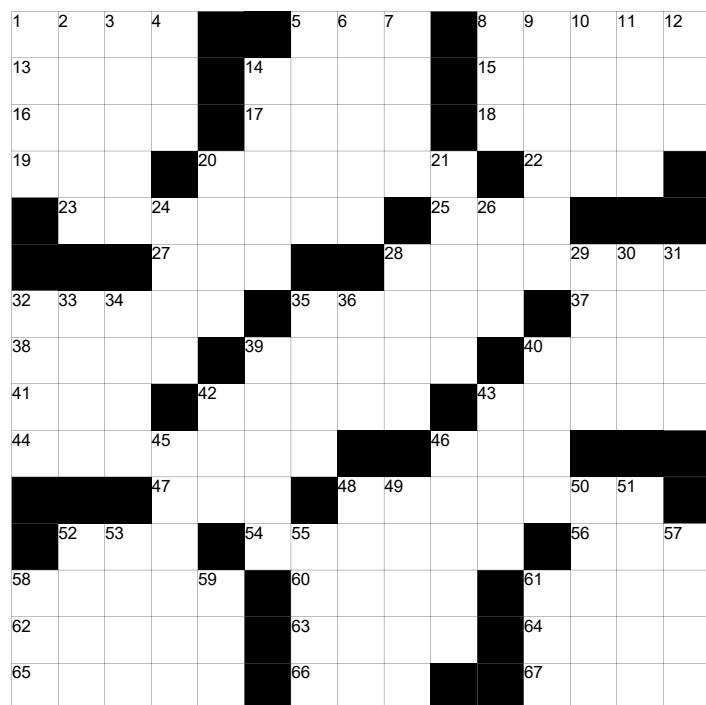
10. See, e.g., "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10 (1969): 69–84; *Chiasmus in Antiquity* (1981); *King Benjamin's Speech* (1998); *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount* (1990); *The Legal Cases in the Book of Mormon* (2011).



See pages 10–11 for more recommended reading.

All Part of the Journey

By Fred Piscop

To check your answers, visit us online at humanities.byu.edu/magazine.

ACROSS

1. Places for gloss
5. Recent USMA grads
8. A pattern that's difficult to break
13. Lightbulb symbol in comics
14. __ shed
15. Lower in status
16. J. Scott Miller
17. __ Akhmatova
18. Like raisins, vis-a-vis grapes
19. Cul-de-__ (dead end)
20. Brews, as tea
22. Soccer fan's cheer
23. Alphabet constituents
25. Org. for M.D.s
27. First word of the Lord's Prayer
28. Pupil
32. Oscar or ADDY
35. Epic poem attributed to Homer
37. Female deer
38. Newly dedicated temple (in Italy)
39. Atlantic or Indian
40. Glowing review
41. Poet's "before"
42. Ice __
43. __ beings
44. Opposite of questions
46. Architect I.M. __
47. __ polloi (the masses)
48. Necessary skill for tightrope walkers
52. Get mellow
54. Fibonacci __
56. On the __ (fleeing)
58. Did a blacksmith's job
60. A, __ "apple"
61. Predestination
62. Round __
63. Hair __: some men's deepest fear
64. Disney World transport
65. Deep cavern
66. White Monopoly bill
67. First __

DOWN

1. Tupperware toppers
2. Standard of perfection
3. Dove symbol
4. __ Andrea della Valle
5. Nonsocial type
6. Voice mail prompts
7. High-five sound
8. "I've __ it up to here!"
9. Study __
10. __ out (eject from a plane)
11. Words of understanding
12. Popular talks
14. Source of French fries, slangily
20. Wall support beam
21. The devil
24. Ran like mad
26. Puddle stuff
28. Thailand, formerly
29. Dutch cheese
30. Star that brightens, then fades
31. College freshman, usually
32. Square footage
33. Showing signs of use
34. Iowa city north of Des Moines
35. Cool desserts
36. Place to graze
39. __ root (perfume ingredient)
40. Totally destroy
42. Corp. head
43. Make well again
45. Car, slangily
46. Architects' drawings
48. Buffalo nickel beast, really
49. Crop up
50. Barton who founded the Red Cross
51. Bother persistently
52. Melville's ill-fated whaler
53. Elapse, as time
55. __ Alto, Calif.
57. Internet sensation
58. R.R. stop
59. __ Moines, Iowa
61. Bouquet-delivering co.

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THERE ARE MANY “big questions” in the disciplines that make up the College of Humanities, as well as wide diversity among our faculty, students, and alumni. As the cover suggests, our College comprises a spectrum of what might be seen as an ever-growing “family.” Members of this family each have unique, if incomplete, answers to those questions.

Given the recent Church focus on home-centered worship, we share herein some of the approaches our College family takes to the question of balancing the study of humanities with belief. Whether you easily recognize bits and pieces of past issues in the collage on this issue’s cover or are one of the many students who are new to our pages (including the several editorial and design students who are continually elbows-deep in this magazine’s inspiring learning “incubator”), our goal as a College and publication at BYU is always to integrate spirituality with scholarship. It is what makes us unique among humanities institutions.

To all of our alumni, we consider it a privilege to enter your homes and—we hope—your heads twice per year.

To those who already meet among friends to discuss the ideas in our field and our faith, we hope to be a positive contributor to your discussions.

As the Church and university undergo changes, we are ever commanded to *ponder*, as well as to *gather*. Here’s to making *Humanities* magazine both a resource for reflective thought and a gathering place. No matter your situation, we welcome your feedback.