WINTER 2024

BYU College of Humanities

HUMANITIES

LANGUAGE

Photos by David John Arnett (TOP), courtesy of J. Scott Miller (BOTTOM)

Bilingual Peacemaking

by J. Scott Miller, Dean

I recently had the occasion to travel to Baku, Azerbaijan, in connection with our adding Azerbaijani to the list of 70+ languages we teach regularly in the College of Humanities. Along the way, after a stopover in Frankfurt, I overheard, on the early morning airport bus, two women speaking German to one another, both with unique accents unfamiliar to me.

Curious, I turned around to find a mother with two children talking to another woman traveling alone. I came to learn, from my passive eavesdropping, that the mother was Azerbaijani and the other woman Indian. Both were living in Germany, both traveling to Baku, and as they conversed in German, a tongue native to neither (nor to me), they bonded over children and travel and their immigrant experiences, and then parted to proceed on their journeys after warmly sharing contact information over their phones. How often, I wondered, does this scene of strangers connecting across language barriers repeat itself every day, all over the world?

I soon experienced it myself. As I navigated my way around my hotel and a nearby market, I used smiles, hand gestures, and a few Russian words from past study. Moreover, knowing that English is a distant third language in Baku, I had prepared myself by learning two simple phrases in Azerbaijani: "Hello" (*Salam!*), and "Thank you" (*Çok sağ olun*). No matter how impoverished our exchange of information, I ended every conversation with *Çok sağ olun!* At first, I did so with a question mark at the end, inviting the person I was speaking with to correct me. That often led to an impromptu lesson in pronunciation and sometimes a warm smile. After my pronunciation improved, people responded more naturally. I felt a sense of triumph, even belonging, when I returned to a market stall on the second day to buy more items and received an approving smile from the owner when I said *Çok sağ olun!* more fluently. I sensed he was pleased, and I was grateful for his tutoring. Ours had not been a profound, intellectual, or complex verbal exchange, but I had connected with a stranger in a moment of linguistic play.

Two nights later, when I described to an Azerbaijani official the range and number of languages we teach at BYU, he was amazed, and asked (using a tongue not his own) if our large number of language courses were training for the missionaries who are sent all over the world. We explained that, rather, they were offered largely to serve those who had already been on missions when they returned to BYU, since they did not know where they were going until the call came. "You mean they only start learning the language right before they leave?" he exclaimed. "That is remarkable!" As an afterthought, he said, "Learning another language is very good. When you speak one language, you are one person; when you speak two languages, you are two persons." I was struck by the thought and reflected on my experience at the market stall and realized that, for a brief instant, my use of simple Azerbaijani had allowed me to become a new creature—an expanded version of myself.

> **"The gift of tongues manifests itself . . . in the moment we connect with others."**

Learning another language is valuable not just because it allows us to order a meal, book a hotel room, or find our way around new places. Those are, after all, tasks we can increasingly delegate to our phones. But there is a reason the Lord refers to language employed in His service as the *gift of tongues.* The human ability to create and use language, to memorize rudimentary phrases in another tongue from phone apps, or even to acquire fluency over years of language study, are singular achievements that underscore the miraculous capacity of the human brain. We are exceptionally clever at investigating the mystery of how language works and developing ways to help people learn other languages. But the *gift* of tongues manifests itself not in erudition nor in near-native fluency, but rather in the moment we connect with others. It is a gift because, through divine grace, we are able to use tongues not of our own to bond with people whom we might otherwise ignore, or even avoid. When we learn a new language we open the door to new relationships, gain access to a new community, and enlarge our perception of the human experience.

We are, through most of our lives, strangers in a strange land, and that makes us yearn for connection and belonging. In a post-Babel world, there are those who would use our ignorance of others, fostered by language barriers, to exaggerate difference, stoke enmity, and promote chaos that furthers their own self-serving designs. When we learn another language, we increase our capacity to understand others and to build bridges of understanding with brothers and sisters whom we currently do not know. Whenever we seek to use what language we may possess to reach out to others, the gift of tongues can help us become the bilingual peacemakers this world so desperately needs. ■

Associate Deans Grant Lundberg and Ray Clifford, left, and Elder Paul Picard, right, meet an official from the Azerbaijani Institute of Theology.

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The back cover features the word *language* in Korean, Hebrew, Turkish, Hmong, Spanish, and Fijian. These are just a few of the over 70 languages taught in the BYU College of Humanities.

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Connecting Memory and Place

by Erik Odin Yingling (Early Christian and Roman Art)

"For the imagination can embrace any region whatsoever."

"When we see in everyday life things that are petty, ordinary, and banal, we generally fail to remember them, because the mind is not being stirred by anything novel or marvelous."

—Written circa 90 BC by the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, a rhetorical treatise on the art of memory. His name is now forgotten.

From Roman antiquity to modern neuroscience, memory championships, and the tales of polyglots, experts have understood the power of associating new memories with specific places. This memorization strategy is often called the method of loci, the art of memory, or the journey method—so called because the mind imagines new memories as vividly as possible in specific locations to which the mind can "journey" at a later moment.

This photo shows a student whose journey has taken him to a Chinese market. Like a boulder plopped into a brook, he remains while new people and culture flow all about him: Chinese characters incandesce with the light of luminaires as eyes are drawn to specific shops along this journey. A kaleidoscopic array of lights reflect upon shops filled with fruit and many other foods; their fragrance attracts the hungry and curious alike. Most locals saunter about, revealing body language at home with the comforts of the night market. Some people laugh, some buy, and at least one savors some tasty morsel. Now consider the student. He is not the only one wearing a backpack, but his peach-colored features make him stand out as much as his height. With hands placed in pockets, shoulders bent, and a gaze drawn partially inward, he seems observant and contemplative. For him, the market is new and worthy of deeper reflection.

"MEMORY . . . . IS A PRECIOUS PART OF BEING HUMAN."

His journey into a foreign market contains all the hallmarks of what the Roman mnemonists insisted made ideas memorable: a journey through an artful, novel, sensory-rich setting where each foreign phrase or concept was secured to a real home and place. Whether through travel or creative flights of the imagination, this scene might encourage us to fashion vivid and novel memories—remembering that memory is not simply the mind's encyclopedic inventory of facts. It is a precious part of being human, a living soul with a unique identity and journey.

Visit to outdoor Muslim Market in Xi'an, China. May 27, 2019.
Photo by Jaren Wilkey / BYU Photo

language

['leɪŋgwɪdʒ]

by John Talbot (Poetry, Greek and Latin Translation)

Language. You would think a poet (of all people) would be all for using it to express his feelings. But a grieving Alfred Tennyson, mourning the sudden death of his best friend, was wholly halfhearted about entrusting his feelings to language:

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel:
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.[2]

It is one thing to feel words failing us when we want to speak of grief, love, or the experience of God. (They fail me now as I try to write about language itself.) It is something else, though, for Tennyson to feel himself sullied by language's betrayals and obfuscations. Like the humans who use and abuse it, human language is fallen[3] and in need of redemption.[4]

Meanwhile, though, even fallen language is not without resources, even if they are only half measures:

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;[5]

Tennyson's own language is literally "measured":[6] four beats and eight syllables to a line, all the lines bundled into stanzas of four lines each, each stanza neatly encased in outside rhymes (lines 1 and 4), which themselves enclose[7] still tighter inside rhymes (lines 2 and 3). The expression of his misery is not at all spontaneous and unfiltered.[8] Here is language painstakingly measured, cut, lathed, and joined.

The immediate "use" of such measured language is to shape[9] speech into a stable structure to support the poet in his grief: he wraps himself in words "like coarsest clothes against the cold."[10] But Tennyson has done much more than that. Setting his words into rhythmic motion, arranging its sounds into chiming sonic patterns, he has lifted language into the realm of music, "music heard so deeply / That it is not heard at all, but you are the music / While the music lasts."[11] Language—even the everyday language of us everyday people—is music waiting to happen. In its best moments

Footnotes

1 *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. "language (*n.*)," www.merriam-webster.com.

2 Tennyson, *In Memoriam A. H. H. OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII: 5*, 1–4.

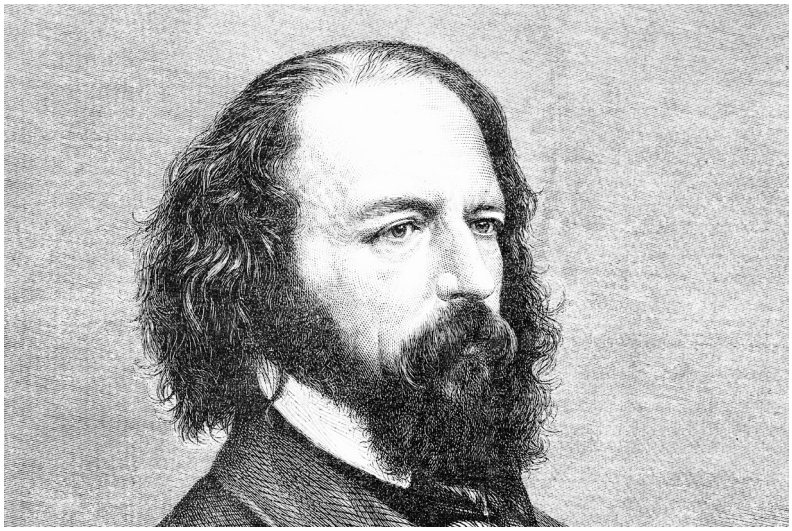
3 The notion of the fallenness is tied to the wiggliest bit of our fallen bodies. What, asks the apostle James, is the most destructive body part? It is the tongue, which he calls "a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body" (James 3:6 [New International Version]; *Hē glōssa pūr, ho kosmos tēs adikias en tais melesin hēmōn*). The Greek word he uses, *glossa*, means both *tongue* "part of the body" and *tongue* "language." Romance languages preserve the same relation via the Latin *lingua* (tongue): thanks to the Norman conquest, it gives us English *language.*

4 A contestable claim; the book to read is Geoffrey Hill's *The Lords of Limit: Essays on Literature and Ideas*; the sharpest rebuttal is Donald Davie, "Fallen Language," *London Review of Books* 6, no. 11 (21 June 1984).

5 Tennyson, *In Memoriam*: *5*, 5–6.

6 Poetic *meter* (from a Greek root for *measuring*, via Latin and French) is where language and music (which is *measured* sound) overlap.

Noun. The words, their pronunciation, and the methods of combining them used and understood by a community.[1]



Alfred Lord Tennyson, poet laureate of the United Kingdom. 1809-1892. Antique illustration. 1867. / Adobe Stock

(whether prose or verse) language touches a plane of order and timelessness that seems momentarily to redeem it. To achieve such intimacy with language is at the heart of the humanities. In a fallen world, what could be more useful than to make contact with the eternal?

Not that Tennyson was deceived into thinking that for all his own intimacy with words, he or any other mortal could entirely redeem human language. Its pleasures and beauties are bound up with its slippages and duplicities, like wheat growing up with the tares. So we cannot rest satisfied with language but must (for now) live in patience and hope, as Tennyson well knew. It is hard to miss the chastening glint in the final word of this line: "measured language *lies*"[12] (emphasis added). H

In Memoriam A. H. H. OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII: 5

by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold;
But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

7 In a poem concerned with wrapping (line 9) and enfolding (line 11), Tennyson's outer rhymes wrap around, or enfold, the inner rhymes. Consult Christopher Ricks', *Tennyson* (New York: 1972), page 228.

8 Nobody should fall for the ersatz Romantic notion that language is true and heartfelt when spontaneous yet somehow false when crafted and measured. The opposite is more often true.

9 The Old English word for poet, *scop*, whose first two letters are pronounced "sh," is cognate with modern English *shape*. A poet is a *shaper* of language, a craftsman. The modern English *poet* derives from the Greek verb *poieō* "to make, fashion, give form to." The Scots word for *poet*, *makar*, literally translates like the Greek: "maker, shaper, fashioner."

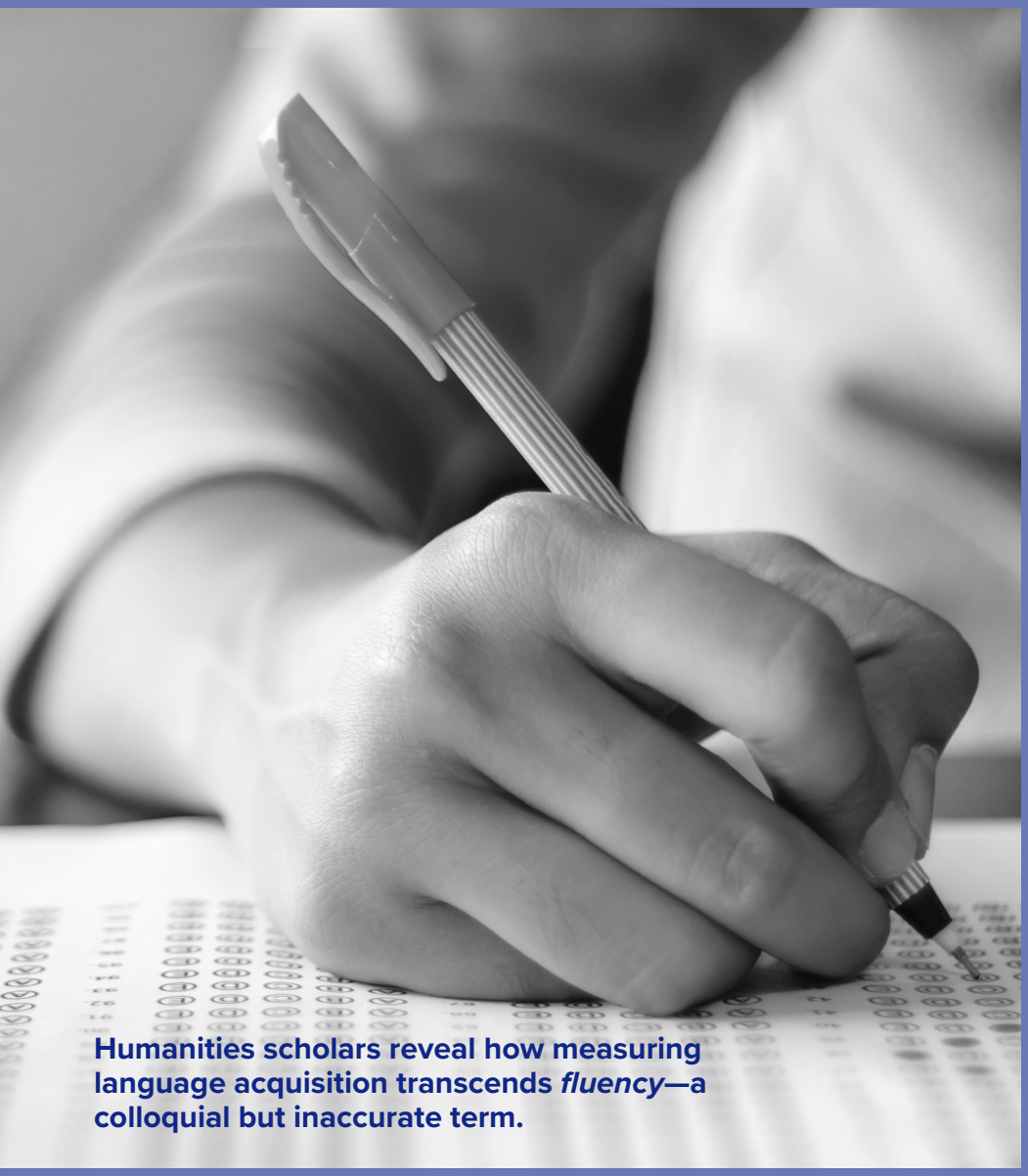
10 Tennyson, *In Memoriam: 5*, 10.

11 T. S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages." Nothing can touch music for its immediacy, but there is a good argument to be made that language can more nearly approach the motions and melodies of music than music can approach the discursive precision of language.

12 Tennyson, *In Memoriam: 5*, 6.

VARIETIES OF PROFICIENCY

by Lydia Hall (Interdisciplinary Humanities ’23) and Ellie Smith (English ’23)



Humanities scholars reveal how measuring language acquisition transcends *fluency*—a colloquial but inaccurate term.

Photo by EduLife Photos / Adobe Stock

“I WANT TO BE FLUENT.”

This is a common response to the question “What is your goal for your second language?” Each semester, thousands of students enroll in language classes in the College of Humanities, aiming to become fluent in their target languages. From an academic language acquisition standpoint, fluency, while an admirable goal, is a vague term. For example, the chair of the Department of German & Russian, Professor Jennifer Bown (Second Language Acquisition), explains that fluency “is based on an individual’s speech patterns, including rate of speech, number of pauses, filler words, and hesitations.” Fluency only represents part of holistic language proficiency. At the basic level, language proficiency is composed of a person’s ability to speak fluently, form complex ideas and sentences, and communicate accurately in the language.

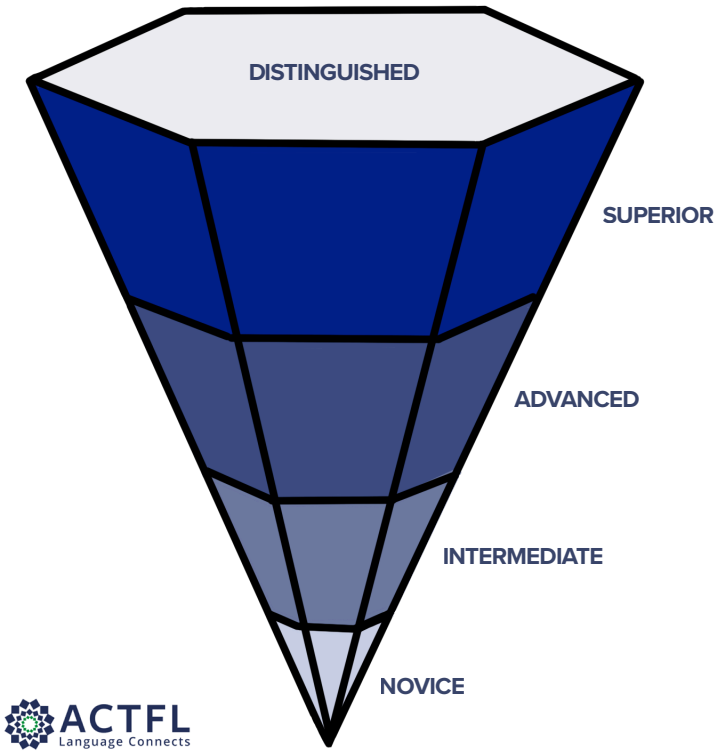
“All right,” the student says. “I want to be proficient.” But measuring a person’s ability to use language proficiently varies from language to language and across learning contexts. As Assistant Professor Michael Child (Portuguese, Second Language Acquisition)

says, "We can't get at proficiency directly; we can only measure its secondary effects." As the easiest secondary effect to notice, fluency often hogs the spotlight and overshadows other aspects of proficiency. In a study about the correlation between fluency and proficiency across five different languages, professors at BYU found that fluency can categorize learners broadly. Bown, one of the researchers, says, "Fluency can actually be a proxy for proficiency." However, more comprehensive measurements of proficiency provide more specific and applicable feedback for language learners. At BYU, professors refine the way proficiency is measured and defined to assess students' capabilities and help them grow, improve educational methods, and promote bilingualism as a connecting and empowering lifelong ability.

VARIETIES OF TESTING

One way BYU faculty measure proficiency is using the language proficiency guidelines set by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), which categorizes language learners into five major levels (from lowest to highest): Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished. Three categories—Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced—are further divided into Low, Mid, and High sublevels. Students wishing to have their ACTFL proficiency measured take two standardized tests, the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and the Writing Proficiency Test (WPT), which each provide a report from ACTFL that certifies students' proficiency levels and outlines weak areas that students can work on to reach the next sublevel.

These reports help students and professors understand the strengths and weaknesses in their language proficiency. As a certified OPI trainer through ACTFL, Associate Professor Troy Cox (Language Learning and Assessment) works to integrate these OPI results into his classes. He creates curricula that use the Aims of a BYU Education, essential job skills, and ACTFL guidelines to identify weak areas and build proficiency beyond the classroom. As he explains, starting with the ACTFL proficiency guidelines and designing curriculum that pushes students towards excellence in those areas has much better results than teaching a bunch of topics and then formulating a test. Cox says, "The way you assess becomes the de facto teaching and learning philosophy." The OPI and WPT identify both proficiency and areas to improve upon, creating continued growth rather than complacency in students and professors alike.

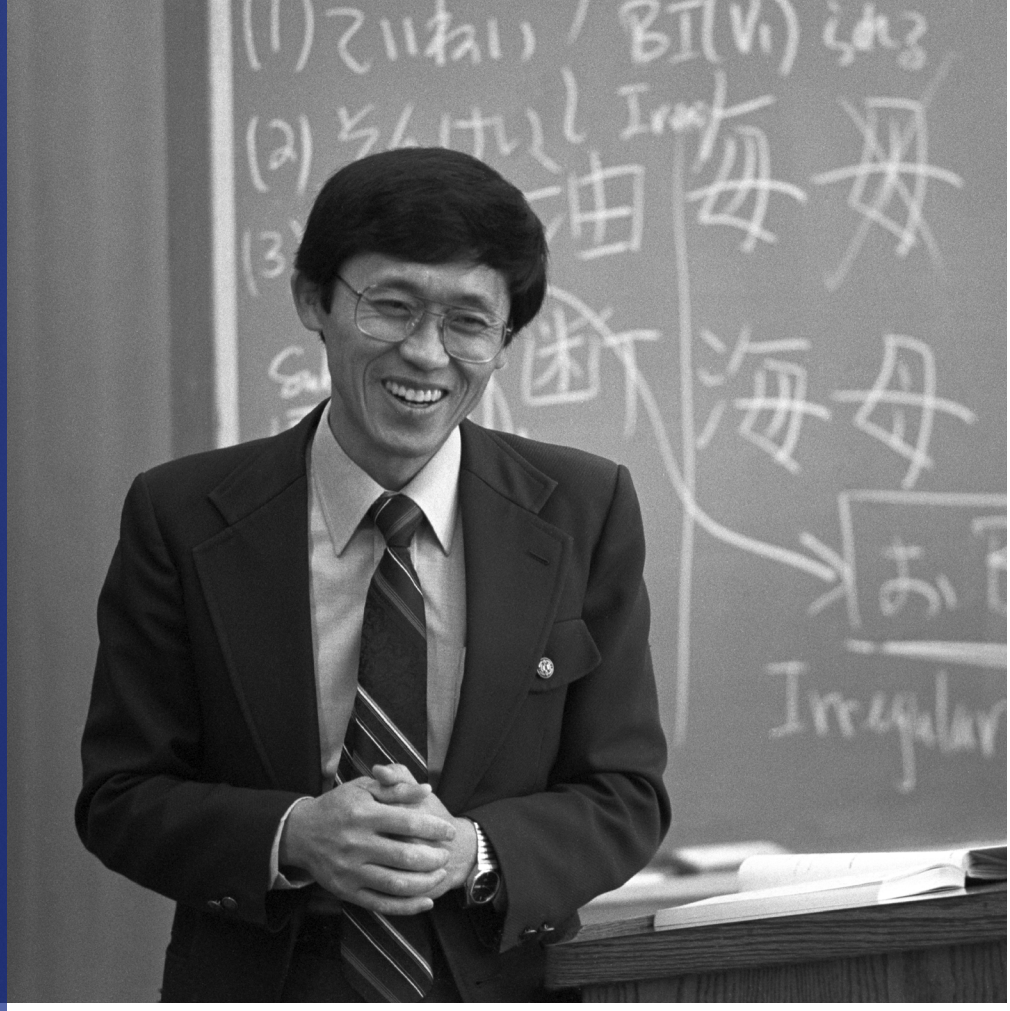


While the OPI and WPT help professors and students understand their current language skills, the tests also are a tool for students as they pursue their future careers. Assistant Teaching Professor Lauren Truman (Spanish, Dual Language Education) says the certification they receive after taking these tests helps students assert, "I can do what I'm specialized in, and I can do it in a global economy." These tests are required to receive a language certificate, which helps students verify their skills to future employers, and are encouraged for those who major or minor in a language.

The OPI and WPT are helpful to both professors and students; however, self-assessment is often more feasible and economical. Associate Professor Matthew Wilcox, the associate director of measurement and evaluation for the Center for Language Studies, and his team designed LASER (Language Ability Self-Evaluation Resource) to foster self-motivated, lifelong language learning. In describing the program, which is free for students, he says, "It's not a standard test; it's for you to assess your ability, help you find the gaps, and then for instructors to use that to improve student learning."

LASER consists of two parts. The first set of questions gathers students' language learning background and asks them to self-assess their proficiency. The second part of the test gives writing prompts in the target language calibrated to the student's earlier responses. To achieve this, Wilcox's team designed LASER to look for patterns in the writing—word count, type-token ratio, mean length of utterance, fluency, and number of pauses—to determine the test-taker's command of the language. Free testing allows self-motivated individuals to continue honing their skills outside of class and helps professors know how to improve their students' proficiency.

While LASER evaluates proficiency with writing samples, and the OPI uses speaking and listening skills, the College also engages in other types of language evaluation. For example, Greek Exams consist of 40 multiple choice grammar and translation questions, with no writing, speaking, or listening elements involved. These nation-wide exams,



Japanese Class. October 4, 1988. Dr. Masukazu Watabe. Photo by Mark Philbrick / BYU Photo

hosted by the Classical Association of the Middle West and South, determine proficiency in ancient Greek for college students across the country. In both 2020 and 2021, BYU students took home the Phinney Greek Prize for achieving perfect scores on the test. Fluency of speech in a dead language is practically impossible, and ultimately unproductive as a tool to measure proficiency, when the learner only encounters the language in the classroom, research, or translation. However, gaining proficiency in these ancient languages allows history and art—*The Iliad*, for example—to be preserved for speakers of other languages to enjoy.

PROFICIENCY IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

Language learning also occurs outside the classroom, so BYU students often enter language classes at varying levels of proficiency. Amy Irvin, Technology and Assessment Coordinator for BYU's English Language Center (ELC), says, "Different groups of students experience different challenges when trying to improve their language proficiency." Students from a grammar-heavy background, such as dual-language immersion programs, tend to struggle in conversational settings, but excel in writing. Students who have a conversation-heavy background, such as returned missionaries or heritage learners, tend to have a good grasp of conversational language and be comfortable speaking, but are more uncertain of grammar principles and writing.

Some students, such as Lexy Duncan (Psychology, French Studies '23), studied a foreign language in primary or secondary school before coming to BYU. Duncan studied French in high school and developed a genuine love of the language. She says, "After all that time in school, I could read and write okay, but my comprehension and speaking abilities were severely lacking." She then served a French-speaking mission in Montréal, Canada. Though lacking the structure of a classroom, her mission offered authentic experiences with native speakers from across the francophone world, including Haiti, France, and Québec. She says, "Classroom experience largely contributes to my language abilities because I like the structure, and I like being able to master topics before moving on. However, authentic experiences such as missions and study abroad programs helped me solidify and practice what I learn, which I can't always do in the classroom."

In addition to study abroad programs, another resource available to BYU students who want to experience their language on a daily basis is the Language Immersion Student Residence (LISR) program. In the LISR students can earn experiential learning credit, learn about another culture, and practice their language skills all from the comfort of their apartment. Students in the program live in apartments with two other language learners and one native speaker of their target language. The students speak in only their target language at home, ensuring that they each get plenty of practice speaking and listening.

Assistant Professor Steve Moody (Japanese Linguistics) and Assistant Professor Shin Tsuchiya (Japanese Language Acquisition) conducted a study on social interaction in the LISR's Japanese House and analyzed how varied proficiency levels affected the learning environment. They found that many of the students were proficient enough to communicate but created unnatural phrases in their target language. These phrases communicated meaning in an understandable way but sounded strange to native speakers. Though this kind of speech is sometimes called "abominable fluency," these students are responding to the demands of their environment quickly and effectively—which is an important element of proficiency.

Another group of language learners at BYU are heritage learners—students whose parents' first language is not English. Truman explained the wide range of experiences that

heritage learners face when learning their parents' or grandparents' language. Some families try not to speak their first language after immigrating in order to assimilate into the United States' culture, especially since most schools teach in English. However, stunting proficiency in the first language in favor of the second is ultimately a disadvantage to the child. Truman says, "All the research shows that the more you build your first language, the better your second language is going to be." Other heritage learners have well-developed speaking and listening skills, but struggle with grammar and spelling. Heritage learners, returned missionaries, and dual immersion and classroom students each enter BYU with different strengths and weaknesses. College of Humanities faculty create a welcoming environment and provide opportunities for students to increase all aspects of their language proficiency.

BILINGUAL LIFE

Building language proficiency often starts with *relexification*, meaning seeking a one-to-one relationship between the words of the learner's mother tongue and their second language (*Hola* means *Hello* means *Bonjour* means . . .). With consistent practice, neural pathways in the brain develop until the learner can draw from two full languages to express themselves. "Bilinguals are qualitatively different," Child says. "They are not just two monolinguals in one person. The way that languages are organized and stored and accessed in the brain is different than when you just have one language system, because you have two language systems."

Assistant Professor Ellen Knell (Associate Director for Curriculum and Instruction, Center for Language Studies) and Assistant Professor Jeffrey Green (Linguistics) are trying to measure when that second language system emerges in Chinese learners' brains. Language learners are not always aware of their own knowledge because of latency between when they connect words and definitions and when they recognize or vocalize those connections. This latency, combined with the complexity of the brain itself, means that researchers who want to measure when language learning begins approach measuring proficiency differently than those who study more advanced learners.

In Knell and Green's study, participants' brainwaves and brain oxygen levels were measured by an electroencephalography machine (EEG) and monitored with functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS). Each participant was shown a series of Chinese words, then had to identify if each word was real or made up. Though the data is still being processed, Knell hopes that the brainwaves will move in specific ways when shown a real word and move differently when presented with a false word, indicating early language learning.

Once people have learned to identify real and false words, built their skills from basic conversation to more advanced grammar, and have command of the language, they often swap back and forth between their languages as the situation requires—a process called code-switching. In the past, code-switching was derided because it was thought that people who code-switched did not speak either of their languages well, but research shows the opposite. Truman says, "Bilinguals are incredibly good at language; so good that they can navigate two languages within the same paragraph and know when to switch and when they cannot switch."

> "As frustrating as it is to not be able to translate a word into your native language, it means that your brain is carving out its own little niche, and that's sort of a beautiful thing."

The only thing that bilingual people have more trouble with than monolinguals is trying to find that word on the tip of their tongue. Cox says, "As frustrating as it is to not be able to translate a word into your native language, it means that your brain is carving out its own little niche, and that's sort of a beautiful thing."

THE NATURE OF PROFICIENCY

Learning in diverse contexts such as classes, missionary training, study abroad programs, and practice sessions with friends and media leads to individualized versions of the language, what Truman calls an idiolect. A Spanish learner might choose to speak with a Colombian accent but borrow words from Spain and Mexico, creating an idiolect of Spanish unique to that person. Not everyone likes this kind of linguistic freedom, and some insist that learners adopt a specific accent or avoid certain usage. Child says, "People have an idea that language is perfect, and there's one way to speak, and that's not true." Languages shift and grow as they are used, accommodating whatever a person needs and providing more with every effort to become more proficient.

BYU students enter and exit language classes with different interests, accents, backgrounds, and proficiencies that reflect their individual lives and needs. College of Humanities faculty know that understanding proficiency improves our ability to learn and improve our language abilities whether that is through customized suggestions from tests, such as LASER or the OPI, or through immersive experiences in other cultures. As we become more proficient in our second language, we unlock the door to new concepts, cultures, and connections, ultimately expanding our worldview, preserving our history, and enjoying the breadth of human experience. H

THE QUESTION OF IDENTITY IN 19TH-CENTURY FRANCE

by Ellie Smith (English '23) and
Garrett Gunnell (English '25)

Delve into French culture through depictions of Mormonism in *Marianne Meets the Mormons.*

During the 19th century, France became intrigued by Mormonism—or rather, by the *idea* of Mormonism.[1] French citizens found Mormonism so compelling that they produced pop culture media about the new religion in the form of plays, musicals, literature, lectures, periodicals, caricatures, and political cartoons. Professor Heather Belnap (Women in 19th-Century French Art and Culture), Professor Corry Cropper (French), and Professor Daryl Lee (19th-Century French Culture and Literature) partnered to write about this cultural phenomenon in their book, *Marianne Meets the Mormons: Representations of Mormonism in Nineteenth-Century France*.[2] They argue that, when the French imagined Mormonism, they were primarily attempting to use this foreign religion to understand their own shifting culture.

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

The impetus for the book began 10 years ago, when the three professors started presenting papers at conferences together on the topic of Mormons in 19th-century France. They combined their different approaches to give their project more depth than a single-authored project would have yielded. Cropper worked on the plays and novels of the era, Lee focused on the political stakes of the period, Belnap brought in her expertise as an art historian, and their combined work grew into a book.

The pandemic forced the trio to move from on-site research into writing and provided them the time to work jointly on their book via Zoom and Google Docs. Lee says, "We wrote so much of this book in tandem, poring over sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph in those sessions. We often rewrote and overwrote each other, one starting a sentence and another finishing it."

Over the course of the project, they formed close friendships. Lee notes that while the collaborative process took longer than an independent project might have, it created a stronger finished product. He says, "We covered more terrain, avoided more blind spots, refined our interpretations and analysis in concert, shared the logistical burdens of finding images and getting rights more equally, and helped each other get what we wanted from the press by joining forces." All three professors appreciate how much they learned from each other and plan to continue working together in the future.

MAKING SENSE OF A SHIFTING CULTURE

Marianne Meets the Mormons traces how the French attempted to make sense of their shifting culture during the 19th century. The change from a constitutional monarchy to a republic in 1848, the return to an empire in 1852, and the advent of a parliamentary republic in 1870 led French citizens to question their social and cultural norms. Many began asking radical new questions, such as who should regulate marriage: the Catholic Church or the state? Should divorce be legal? Should women be allowed to have a political voice?

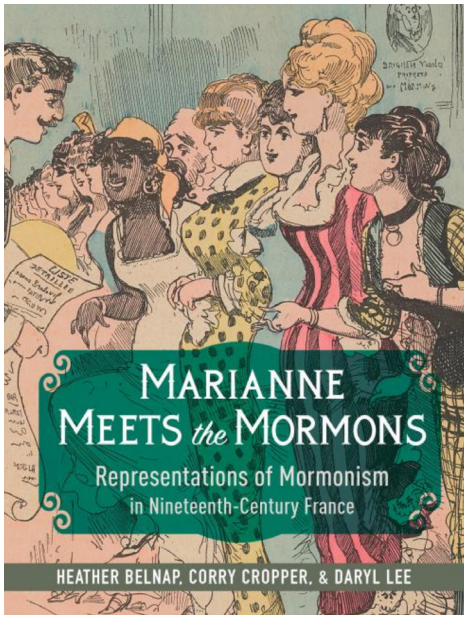
"What we're looking at in the book," says Cropper, "are the different permutations of the idea of Mormonism in France: how it's treated and misused and inflated, and why the French needed that." He suggests that the French viewed Mormonism as equivalent to narrative or folklore, a story that they could use to make sense of the world.

The book title, *Marianne Meets the Mormons*, points to the encounter between the French and a small, far-off religion. Marianne symbolizes France in much the same way that the Statue of Liberty, or perhaps Uncle Sam, symbolizes America. She is seen as a figure who has the responsibility to nurture and protect the French.

Photos of Daryl Lee (LEFT), Heather Belnap (CENTER), and Corry Cropper (RIGHT), courtesy of the authors.

FEMINISM AND MORMONISM: UNEXPECTED BEDFELLOWS

The religious beliefs, economic practices, family structure, urban theories, and social systems of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints made it the perfect vehicle for French critics to use when debating their own new social ideas.



French feminists pointed out Mormon polygamy as an intriguing and secure lifestyle. It was common in Europe for men to have many mistresses who had no official place in the home, so the idea of elevating the statuses of these women by accepting them as wives was radically feminist. They considered the title of wife more secure and honorable than that of a mistress, who could be discarded on a whim. Cropper notes, "Olympe Audouard, a conservative French feminist, argued that Mormonism was superior to the widely accepted practice of French men having multiple mistresses. The latter led to abandoned children and women while polygamy gave women a status and children were cared for." French feminists used Mormonism to critique the degradation of the French family.

The French began looking deeper at the lives of Mormon women after seeing that not only was polygamy accepted by the Church but interracial marriage as well. In the cartoon "Docks du mariage: Grand choix d'épouses" ("Marriage docks: Big selection of wives"), women of various ethnicities are presented as suitable wives. The artist invokes the idea of French colonialism through the "quirky" practices of Mormons, who married irrespective of race, just as the French colonized many Asian and African nations to gain access to their resources.

French politics were influenced by Mormon lifestyles, both in their diplomatic relations and relationships between French citizens. For example, women received the right to vote in Utah on August 1, 1870, which concerned French men. One cartoon from the period shows Mormon women armed like soldiers, more bellicose than their feeble, broom-wielding husbands. This cartoon, ostensibly depicting Mormon women preparing for war with the US government, can also be understood as a reflection on the contemporary movements in France that sought to give women access to education, political clout, and financial independence.

UNDERSTANDING THEMSELVES THROUGH HUMOR

While many French depictions of Mormons were used humorously, the deeper meaning becomes clear in context. As Belnap says, "Our book exposes certain underlying anxieties about the social order and politics of life." Cartoons and plays are not just for entertainment; as Cropper says, they "help people navigate their own contradictions and their own challenges." Belnap reminds readers to "understand the function of wit and satire as a French tradition. It's a kind of national idiom." H

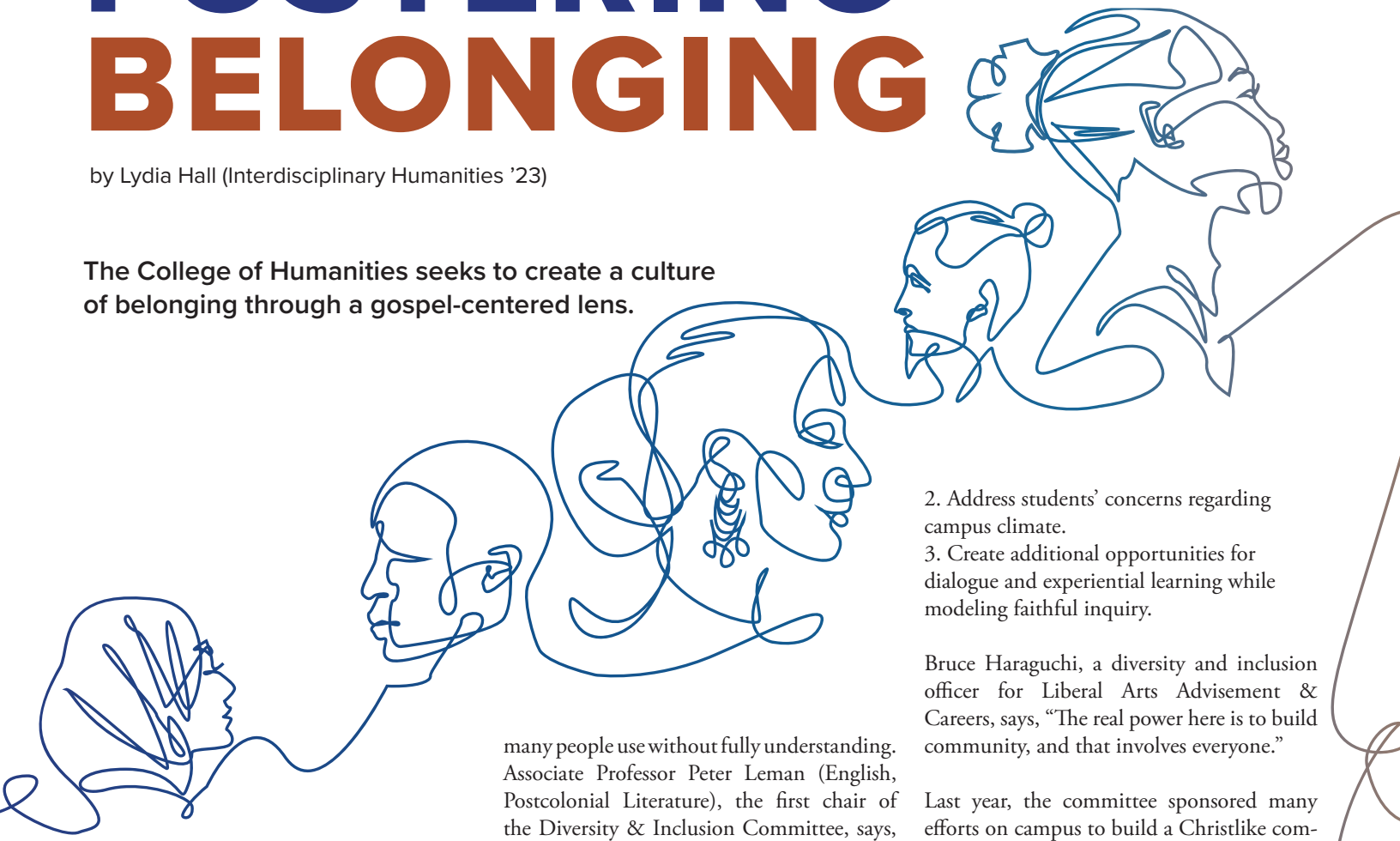
ENDNOTES

1. The authors use the term "Mormonism" because that was the term referenced during the historical period in France.
2. Heather Belnap, Corry Cropper, Daryl Lee, *Marianne Meets the Mormons: Representations of Mormonism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2022), 90.

FOSTERING BELONGING

by Lydia Hall (Interdisciplinary Humanities '23)

The College of Humanities seeks to create a culture of belonging through a gospel-centered lens.



Immediately after President Worthen announced that the Committee on Race, Equity & Belonging completed its campus survey in February 2021, the College of Humanities created the Diversity & Inclusion Committee to implement the suggested changes. In the two years since the survey was published, the Diversity & Inclusion Committee has overseen and facilitated efforts across the College to create spaces where students of all backgrounds feel safe, know their value, and learn from one another's unique experiences in humility and love. As disciples of Christ and participants in BYU's mission to "reflect devout love of God and a loving, genuine concern for the welfare of our neighbor," members of the College of Humanities choose to foster unity when much of the world focuses on division.

Many universities, including BYU, use the terms *diversity*, *inclusion*, and *equity.* These terms are often used without being defined; as a result, they have become buzzwords that many people use without fully understanding. Associate Professor Peter Leman (English, Postcolonial Literature), the first chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee, says, "Diversity is a way of recognizing the beauty of difference, of unique experiences and qualities across the human race. Inclusion and belonging, then, are where we make an effort to not let our differences divide us."

To promote a spirit of unity, BYU chooses to use the word *belonging*, which is meant to organize diversity, inclusion, and equity within the context of our shared identity as children of loving heavenly parents. Leman says, "We are told that the Lord looks on the heart[1] and that all are alike unto God.[2] To me, this is the standard for how we should see other people—not through the distorting lenses of stereotype and prejudice but the clarifying light of God's love and wisdom."

To that end, the committee's efforts the past year have addressed these objectives:

1. Promote belonging, diversity, and inclusion as expansive topics, ones that move beyond surface-level attention and reach true engagement.
2. Address students' concerns regarding campus climate.
3. Create additional opportunities for dialogue and experiential learning while modeling faithful inquiry.

Bruce Haraguchi, a diversity and inclusion officer for Liberal Arts Advisement & Careers, says, "The real power here is to build community, and that involves everyone."

Last year, the committee sponsored many efforts on campus to build a Christlike community that promotes belonging, kindness, curiosity, and understanding. In fall 2022 semester, five students with autism, ADHD, or social anxiety shared their campus experiences and the kinds of social and academic support they found helpful. Educating neurotypical students about neurodivergent experiences—including executive dysfunction, oversharing, or stress induced by seemingly small events—can help neurodivergent students feel more comfortable connecting with others or sharing when they have challenges. This panel allowed students to discuss their individual challenges, which may not always be visible from the outside.

In winter 2023, two sets of Muslim siblings addressed a packed auditorium, explaining connections that brought them to campus and how they practice their faith at BYU. Haraguchi says, "They made it really clear that they don't speak for all Muslims. That balance of hearing an individual perspective without it being representative of the whole group was a valuable reminder to us."

The Intersection, a club run by student fellows of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee—Madelaine Gonzales (Interdisciplinary Humanities ’23) and Natércia Ribeiro (French Teaching ’25)—also participates in the effort to foster belonging. The club’s weekly meetings bring students together from across the College and provide a lighthearted environment for students to explore one another’s cultures. The Intersection has organized a backpack drive, a poetry slam, presentations by Native American students in association with the Tribe of Many Feathers, a workshop on self-care and stress management, and discussions about the cultural significance of Black hair in conjunction with the Black Student Union. Their efforts to connect individuals and serve others reflect the personal nature of gospel ministering, meeting people where they are, and helping everyone feel welcome.

In response to student focus groups, faculty members have made significant efforts to diversify curriculum to include artists, authors, and ideas that have been overlooked in the past. One project reexamined assumptions about Shakespeare’s work and the narrow interpretations that have been made of certain characters or relationships. Diverse curriculum builds well-rounded individuals who can understand complex concepts and parse difficult, real-life situations with empathy. Haraguchi explains that the College of Humanities provides funding to professors and research assistants to review and revise portions of curriculum “to see how they might be approached with a more inclusive lens.”

Respectful relationships among individuals of diverse beliefs, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and other experiences are the foundation of belonging in the College of Humanities. Building that foundation requires patience and humility as we learn to live together in love. “Only when we show humility toward one another and recognize each other’s unique identities and experiences can we create an environment of true belonging,” Leman says.

The mission of belonging in the College of Humanities includes listening to and learning from the individual experiences of those who surround us at work, school, and elsewhere, as well as strengthening our common bond as children of heavenly parents. Haraguchi says, “We have all this enriching difference among us, and we share powerful commitments to God and to each other. They’re not always understood or expressed the same way from person to person, but that’s what drives us. That’s what binds us,” he concludes. “Unity and diversity are not opposites.” H

ENDNOTES

1. 1 Samuel 16:7
2. 2 Nephi 26:11

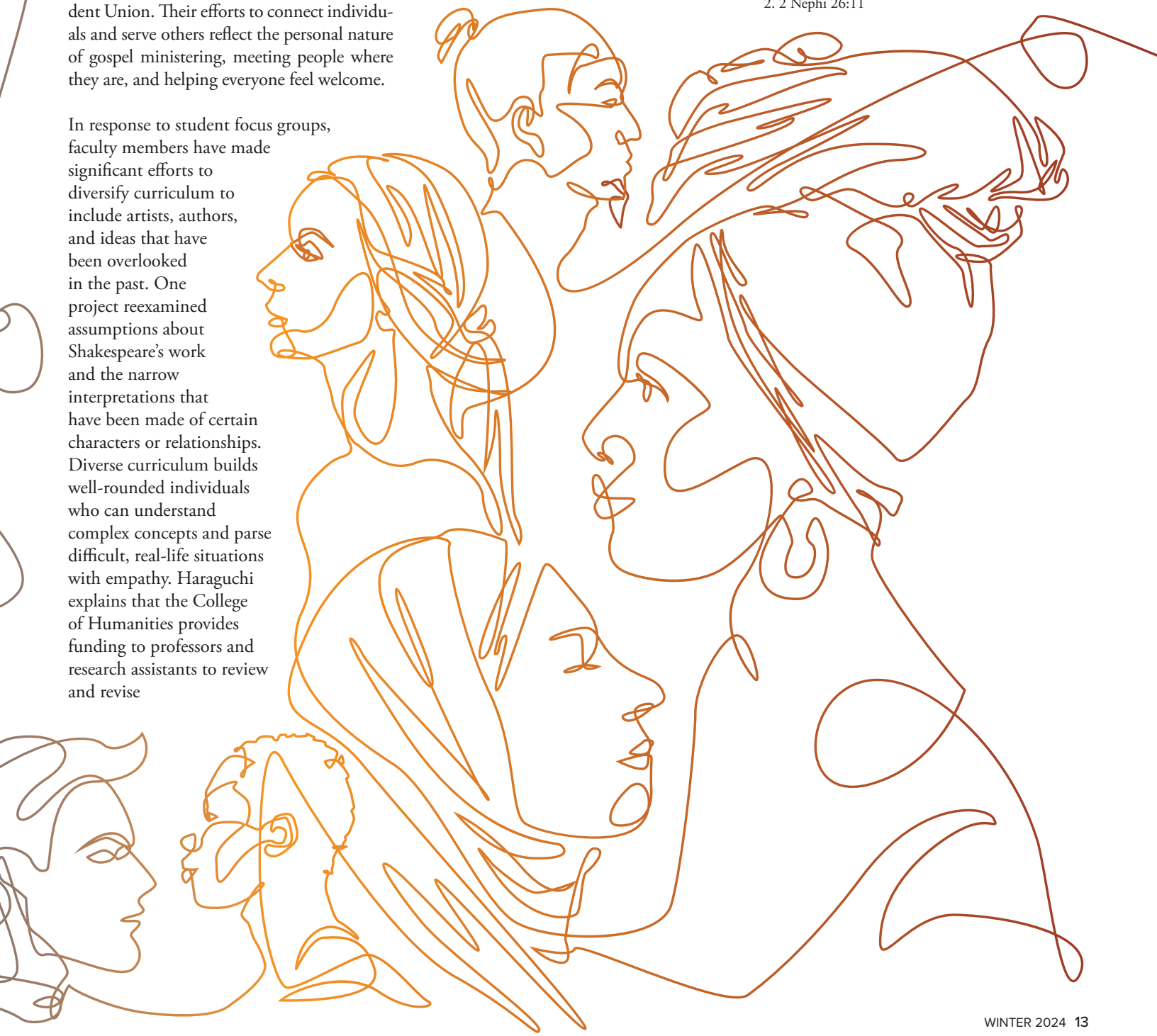


Illustration by Kathryn Hawkins

PRESERVING IDENTITY

by Julie Irvine (Editing and Publishing ’23)

Over 7,000 languages are spoken in our world today, but each year, nine of those languages become extinct, meaning they are no longer spoken.[1] When this happens, the world loses a wealth of history, knowledge, and culture. To help with preservation efforts, BYU linguists work with Indigenous communities to document their languages and provide sustainable language learning and teaching resources for future generations.

“Language is essential to a community’s sense of self,” says Associate Professor Dirk Elzinga (Native Languages of Utah). Because many Indigenous groups have oral cultures (meaning knowledge, history, and language are passed from generation to generation orally instead of graphically), language is an essential factor in preserving their culture and shared identity.

Elzinga studies the phonology of the Ute language and recently started language documentation projects with the Ute Mountain Utes in southwestern Colorado. His research has concluded that fewer than one out of five tribal members are speakers of their heritage language. For these communities, “language has become an endangered part of their identity,” Elzinga explains.

To aid in preserving that identity, Elzinga documents languages by conducting recorded interviews and distributing questionnaires. This process enables him to develop a picture of the language’s sound and grammar systems. He analyzes how speakers of the language “make words, how words come together to form sentences, the parts of a traditional story, and how the speakers organize a conversation.” The Native communities then use the resulting materials in ways that best serve their needs—whether those needs include teaching materials, language acquisition research, dictionaries, or online resources.

Photo by Pete Walls / Unsplash

Another linguist, Associate Professor Chris Rogers (Language Documentation for Historical and Typological Research), says, “People realize they’re part of a global community—they have to use a global language like Spanish, English, or Mandarin—but they also have this unique identity. And it connects them to their past in ways that other things can’t.”

Rogers serves Indigenous communities in Central and South America where there are as few as four living speakers of the language. He works alongside Iñapari speakers in Peru, Wichí speakers in Ar-

1 languageconservancy.org/language-loss/#

UTE
[ˈjuːt]

Iyanam nüm
uruhnikas Nuuchiu.
[ijænɑm nɨm
urʊnikʲæs nuːtʃiu]
↳ ***"We, the Ute People, are still here."***

Nuuch, Nuuchiu
[nuːtʃ, nuːtʃiu]
↳ ***"Ute person, Ute people"***

Nuu'apagap
[nuːʔɑpɑʁɑp]
↳ ***"Ute language"***

maykw tügüvün
[mɑjkʷ tɨɣɨvʷɨn]
↳ ***"Hello, friend"***

XINKA
[ˈʃiŋka]

ayaalha [aˈjaːɬa]
↳ ***"woman"***

huurak [huːˈrak]
↳ ***"man"***

mento [ˈmento]
↳ ***"hello"***

mapˈu [ˈmap'u]
↳ ***"tortilla"***

üylhüwˈa [ɨjˈɬɨw'a]
↳ ***"honey"***

Chumu: [ˈtʃumu]
↳ ***"indigeneous person"***

tz'uulhi: [ˈts'uːɬi]
↳ ***"non-indigeneous person"***

IÑAPARI
[iɲaˈpari]

hirimatiri [hirimaˈtiri]
↳ ***"tiger"***

anawá [anaˈʋa]
↳ ***"canoe"***

anáwa [aˈnaʋa]
↳ ***"they/them"***

anawã́ [anaˈʋã]
↳ ***"catahua tree"***

ahi: [aˈhɨ]
↳ ***"person"*** as a general term, but this is always bound by specific suffixes: *ahɨchi, ahɨtu, ahɨna*

"Language is essential to a community's sense of self."

Photo by Jaren Wilkey / BYU Photo

gentina, Xinka speakers in Guatemala, and others. To document their languages, Rogers first records interviews with native speakers, then he determines the system their language follows and notes the interesting qualities. Rogers applies his research based on the goals of the community. For example, the Iñapari had already created a written system to preserve their language, so Rogers assisted their documentation efforts by creating a dictionary to supplement the existing materials.

The College of Humanities is the home of all languages taught at BYU, where over 70 are offered regularly. However, while students often fill Spanish or Mandarin courses to capacity—often because of their relevance in business—lesser-known language courses may only have a handful of students per semester. "BYU is a linguistically diverse community," Rogers says, "but we need to recognize that these smaller languages are valuable and worth our time."

We learn languages to connect with and respect cultures and people outside of our limited experiences. In doing so, we can both support efforts to preserve lesser-known languages and cultures and also see others as fellow brothers and sisters whose perspectives expand our understanding. ■

LIFELONG LANGUAGE LEARNING

Learning a foreign language requires lifelong effort to continually improve—but that effort yields great benefits.

by Laura Catharine Smith (Theoretical Phonology)

When talking to graduating students, many of my colleagues like to pose one simple question: **What will you do to keep up your language skills after you leave BYU?** As a university dedicated to fostering a commitment to lifelong learning, this question should not be surprising. Chances are, if you are reading this, you have (1) taken at least a couple of semesters of a foreign language, (2) served a foreign-speaking mission, or (3) majored or minored in a foreign language.

While speaking at least one other language is very beneficial in Europe where a short trip can land you in a different country, learning and maintaining additional languages in the US requires more effort, especially if your second language is not Spanish. Moreover, since English tends to be a lingua franca, allowing Americans to function abroad in many countries, many English speakers simply have not seen the need to learn additional languages. But the effort is worth it. It can even be life changing.

THE BENEFITS OF LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Learning languages provides numerous benefits, including opening doors for employment, enlarging our social circles, increasing our ability to connect with past generations—including the living (relatives in the home) or dead (family history research)—and helping us be better informed about the world. The latter point is particularly relevant to us today. Recent updates to the Church's *General Handbook* address the pernicious nature of misinformation in our world today.[1] Learning additional languages, however, can serve as "careful study," thereby providing us with a bulwark against such misinformation. Expanding our options for news and information sources allows us to break free from our echo chambers and hear different perspectives on issues. Indeed, learning new languages can help us realize that issues that are politically divisive at home are not so in many other countries.

But there are even more, perhaps less obvious, benefits. Here are just a couple.

Improving Cognitive Functions

Recent research has demonstrated that those who speak more than one language can often stave off the effects of cognitive decline associated with conditions such as dementia or Alzheimer's for an additional four and a half to five years compared to monolinguals (those who speak just one language).[2] Indeed, bilingualism boosts the brain's reserves by creating denser gray matter than found in monolinguals, while also corresponding to increased nerve fibers and neuronal connections in the brain (white matter).[3] These benefits are found regardless of differences between speakers (for example, socioeconomic or education levels). Not surprisingly, language learning is also associated with other cognitive benefits such as increased memory, better attention and focus, creativity, and even problem-solving, all of which are required to learn new vocabulary items, grammar rules, etc.[4]

Developing Empathy through Other Cultures

It goes without saying that learning new languages opens the door to learning about new cultures. Not only can we read the literature

Photos by Savanna Richardson / BYU Photo (TOP), Unsplash (BOTTOM)

of a culture in the original language as we increase our proficiency, but we can also understand how a culture ticks. Admittedly, however, attaining that level of proficiency is often humbling to the core as we quickly learn that we cannot express ourselves as well in the new language as we can in our first.

This can ideally help us develop greater empathy toward others who have had to learn our mother tongue as a second language and sometimes struggle to get the right words out. Instead of just speaking more loudly, as happens all too frequently, we seek ways to understand and help these foreign language learners in our midst because we recognize the mercy that such understanding and patience provided us. Moreover, by learning about new cultures and coming to love the speakers of those cultures, we better understand that ultimately, even despite cultural and linguistic differences, people really share more in common than we often admit: we all want to be loved, understood, and connected. This exercise can help us learn empathy, compassion, and even tolerance of individual and cultural differences that can otherwise create barriers that keep us divided.

DEVELOPING OUR PROFICIENCY

It is never too late to either learn a new language or increase proficiency in ones we have already learned. New technologies have made it easier than ever. Apps can help us unlock new vocabulary and basic grammar, while watching movies with subtitles (especially in the target language), listening to local radio, watching news programs on the internet, practicing with native speakers via Zoom or Skype, or taking classes locally or via Zoom with reputable language programs can all open new opportunities for learning and practicing.

To make the best use of these opportunities to develop language skills, we need to do more than just practice more. Developing proficiency must be a purposeful endeavor that forces us outside of our comfort zone. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, or ACTFL, has developed proficiency guidelines that elaborate what developing proficiency means in practical terms. In overly simplified terms, Novice-level learners can use memorized phrases and provide lists of words. Intermediate speakers are "survivors," able to "create with language," discussing typical activities and performing simple transactions. Being able to provide more detailed descriptions of the world around them and elaborate on their narrations make Advanced-level learners "storytellers," able to communicate with increased accuracy in the three major time frames (past, present, and future) and navigate transactions with a little difficulty. To achieve Superior proficiency, speakers must be able to hypothesize, think abstractly, discuss world issues in detail, and even argue multiple sides.[5] This requires learners to be informed about the world and break free from echo chambers and partisan thinking.

As each of these proficiency levels highlight, not only do the functions increase in complexity but so does the text type, moving from words to simple sentences to multiple paragraphs with more complex connectors (such as *because*, *consequently*, and *in light of*). Likewise, topics expand from things with which we are familiar to topics of more global importance, moving beyond just ourselves. (*You can learn more about language proficiency and development in the article "Varieties of Proficiency" on page 6 of this issue*).

Viewing proficiency as a framework has some advantages. First, it changes the conversation from "I am fluent in German" to being able to state what the speaker can actually do with the language. It is worth noting that many missionaries return home Intermediate High speakers, not Advanced or Superior.

Second and perhaps more importantly, it helps us understand how we can be more intentional to improve our language skills rather than just "speaking more." For instance, can we talk about a typical day at school or work? Or what about a typical family dinner? If not, start there.

Developing Advanced language skills in most languages is often difficult because it involves mastery of the past tense. Likewise, we are often not good at providing details in our descriptions of things and events. You can start by doing this in your first language: If you were asked to describe the room you are sitting in or what you did on the weekend, how much detail could you give without using the filler *um*? As this exercise implies, learning a second language can also help us improve our first language skills. Learning to add more details to our descriptions ("the pensive child eating an ice cream cone with chocolate sprinkles") and narrations ("As soon as the horse eyed the plastic bag, he galloped off, afraid it would eat him" instead of "The horse saw the plastic bag and galloped off") will help us increase our proficiency as we also expand the topics we can discuss.

While many BYU learners may default to Church materials to practice their language skills, building proficiency requires moving beyond religious topics. One way to start is to engage in topics of importance to us such as family, work, school, or hobbies. We can find articles or stories related to those topics to grow our vocabulary and see how native speakers discuss those topics. If native speakers are not readily available to practice with, start by journaling or recording yourself talking about these topics. The possibilities for practice are endless, and part of the journey is tracking our progress.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The amazing part of learning other languages is our ability to see the world through new eyes. Indeed, there is a whole world waiting for us to discover as we learn about new cultures and languages. When I visited the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in Northern France several years ago, I had the chance to meet a number of French men and women who did not speak English. Through French, we shared our sentiments for what had happened on that hallowed ground a century earlier. Had that been the only opportunity for me to ever use my French, that experience alone would have been worth the years of study. In short, my life is richer because of the friendships and connections made in languages other than English. The blessings that come from learning foreign languages are absolutely worth the effort. H

ENDNOTES

1 *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* 38.8.41, ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

2 "Can Learning a Language Help Prevent Dementia?," Glasgow Memory Clinic, accessed June 30, 2023, https://bit.ly/47VxFle; Victor Costumero et al., "A Cross-sectional and Longitudinal Study on the Protective Effect of Bilingualism against Dementia Using Brain Atrophy and Cognitive Measures," *Alzheimer's Research & Therapy* 12, no. 11 (2020): 1–10, https://doi.org/10.1186/s13195-020-0581-1.

3 Carley Spence, "How Learning a New Language Changes Your Brain," *World of Better Learning* (blog), April 29, 2022, https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2022/04/29/learning-language-changes-your-brain/.

4 "Benefits of Learning a Second Language," University of the Potomac, accessed June 30, 2023, https://potomac.edu/benefits-of-learning-a-second-language/.

5 American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012,* https://www.actfl.org/uploads/files/general/ACTFLProficiencyGuidelines2012.pdf.

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LIGHT! CAMÉRA! ACCIÓN!

A SEMESTER IN INTERNATIONAL CINEMA

BY GARRETT GUNNELL (ENGLISH '25)

Since the 1960s, International Cinema (IC) has shown thousands of films, ranging from drama to action and documentary to comedy. These screenings have helped students learn new languages, become more aware of other cultures, and examine various genres of film. As Marie-Laure Oscarson, assistant director of International Cinema, puts it, "What better way to learn a language than when you can see people speak it in real cultural contexts?" Today we shine the spotlight on a few of the past semester's standout events from IC.

REAL LIFE ON FILM

Every semester, IC presents a variety of films and film genres. Recently, IC highlighted documentary film and filmmakers of both past and present. Emmy-nominated film professor Brad Barber presented on Dziga Vertov's Bolshevik-era documentary *Man with A Movie Camera*. Filmed in 1929, it highlighted everyday life for the people of Soviet Russia. Barber explained that being a successful documentarian does not require a certain background or education level—it only requires the ability to find beauty in the ordinary.

"MAYBE YOU HAVE SEEN ME ON TV . . . NACHOOOOOOOOOOO!"

The film *Nacho Libre* may not seem like an obvious candidate for IC, particularly because it was written by American filmmakers. However, the film is loosely based on a true story and was filmed entirely in Mexico—giving it cultural context. The movie also acts as a parody of El Santo, a Mexican *luchador* folk hero who starred in many films during the twentieth century. In winter 2023, IC screened *Nacho Libre* with the goal of anchoring the film in its El Santo-style tradition, which is naturally campy. Before the screening of the film, IC invited the audience to enjoy Mexican candies and a performance by BYU's mariachi band. These activities helped the viewers embrace Mexican culture and gain an appreciation for movie parodies.

OUR NEXT GUEST ON THE SHOW

In addition to its weekly movies and lecture series, IC directors host a biweekly podcast. A more recent addition to the program, the podcast provides a venue for hosts to discuss one of the films shown over the past two weeks. The podcasts focus on the complex elements of each film. The hosts also interview film specialists who offer more insights about the weekly films. On one episode, Professor Rob McFarland (European Reception of America) spoke to IC codirector Marc Olivier (Film and Media, French) about the German film *The Lives of Others*, which told the story of citizens in East Berlin finding self-expression while their government constantly spied on them. During the episode, McFarland said, "An artist is a free radical. An artist will follow art, not necessarily the art that people want them to make."

FIN

IC has done a lot this year to help students contextualize foreign cultures and learn about documentary filmmaking. IC has given students the chance to not simply learn about films from different countries but also to embrace foreign films and learn about different cultures through their art. H

STATE OF THE DISCIPLINE:
Spanish & Portuguese

Weaving Words & CULTURES

by Garrett Gunnell (English '25) and Joshua J. Perkey (Manager of Digital Media and Communications)

Roughly 5,000 miles southeast of BYU and 200 years ago, Maria Firmina dos Reis was born to a White father and a Black, formerly enslaved mother in São Luís, Brazil. Sadly, this young girl would witness discrimination throughout her life and lived alongside Brazilian slavery until it was abolished in 1888. Despite the challenges Reis faced, she became a writer promoting civil liberties and worked as a schoolteacher in the small town of Guimarães, located up the coast from São Luís. She had contact with a number of other abolitionist writers and had a profound impact on her community.

Fast forward to 2020: a monument was erected in Luís Domingues Square, in the center of Guimarães, to memorialize her life as a symbol for racial liberty as well as her work starting the first mixed-gender school in the region. Reis' legacy reaches beyond her nation, inspiring Assistant Professor Jordan Jones (Luso-Brazilian Literature and Culture) to visit the village where she lived and to study her life's work.

Jones was drawn to Reis' life during his graduate research on 19th-century antislavery writings when his professor gave him some of Reis' writings to study. "I really thought it was a powerful text," he says, "and I just started researching her more and more. She was in my dissertation and she continues to be one of my research focuses to this day."

The passion Jones feels for his research is emblematic of the faculty throughout the Department of Spanish & Portuguese who come from a diverse collection of emphases and interests. Jeff Turley (former department chair, Hispanic Linguistics) says, "Foreign language departments are interesting because you have three to four very different disciplines that are held together by the glue of the foreign language. We have linguists, literature professors, pedagogy people, translation people, and we are all very different from each other. So, it is a challenge when we have to decide what our core requirements are when everyone who does it, does it differently."

Within that diversity, the faculty foster understanding of different approaches, and that enriches both the individual and the department. Assistant Professor Will Carr (Translation Studies) says, "As we navigate these different cultures, there is one way to look at it and say 'that's different and that's OK.' But there is another way, saying 'I can learn something. These people have different experiences than me, and they are just as much children of Heavenly Father with a divine nature and destiny. There is truth that they have that I don't have.' We should be curious, teachable, and humble so we can be exposed to a little bit more of the omniscience of God."

We continue our series on the State of the Discipline by covering the Department of Spanish & Portuguese with a similar sense of curiosity. The department has become a hub of intellectual exploration, weaving together distinct academic threads. It has grown from its humble roots in the late 1800s into a vibrant language study community.

THE HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT

The first Spanish classes were taught at BYU in 1883 when the university was still an academy. Ferdinand (Fernando) A. Lara, a Mexican convert to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, served as the first teacher. Over the next few decades, Spanish flourished on campus and more classes were added, including new curriculum. In 1942 Portuguese classes were added, the first being taught by Gerrit de Jong, Jr. As popularity in the languages and strength of faculty grew, College leadership separated the two languages from the large Department of Languages in 1967 to form the new Department of Spanish & Portuguese. Today it is one of the largest departments in the College—both

in terms of faculty and number of students taught, including those majors, minors, and other interested students, such as returned missionaries.

SHIFTS IN THE PEDAGOGY

In recent years, faculty in the department have been reevaluating their approach to pedagogy. Turley says, "Part of this is reflected in our focus in our introductory classes, such as Spanish 321, which for many years was just grammar. Now we're realizing that as our students come in from their missions or other experiences that bring them here, we want to educate them on everything that we have to offer. We're not just a grammar machine, we also do literature and we talk about culture." This wide-eyed approach is critically important because nearly 75% of students taking classes in the department major in a different field—creating an even wider diversity of student experience and expectation.

This shift arose from a careful observation of the vast differences in proficiency and fluency of students taking their classes, which consists of majors, minors, generally interested students, native speakers, and returned missionaries from Spanish- or Portuguese-speaking missions.

COMPETENCIES AND CURRICULUM

Assistant Teaching Professor Lauren Truman (Curriculum Development and Pedagogy) explains that the department has revamped the Spanish 321 class by updating the textbooks to include experiential learning, an approach that involves practical, hands-on learning where students complete assignments that will "increase student engagement better for their upper-level classes, and also life outside of college."

The department provides a variety of experiential learning opportunities. For example, in the future, one unit in the 321 class will focus on identity by taking

Photo by Izuddin Helmi Adnan / Unsplash

students through a variety of different "texts," including literature, film, or art, that explore the idea of identity. They then will take what they learn and create Spanish LinkedIn pages that portray elements of their identity. Assistant Professor Patrícia Baialuna de Andrade (Luso-Brazilian Literature) says that in the 493 capstone class, students "present a portfolio as a capstone class requirement illustrating what their experience was like in the program, and exemplifying how the assignments proposed by several professors helped them achieve better cultural competence, critical thinking, language proficiency, etc. This digital portfolio is presented to faculty and other students and can also be something the student wants to show to a potential employer as evidence of the many skills their college education helped them develop."

Another change involves updating assignments that have real-life application to utilize more current skills. Ten years ago, students would progress from learning grammar and vocabulary, to writing essays and research papers, to creating a business proposal in Portuguese where students would have to decide what kind of business they would create in Brazil, where they would start it, and why. While the assignments provided excellent preparation for life after college, they ended when the student submitted the proposal to the professor for a grade. Now assignments like these have more of an online emphasis and focus on engaging a wider audience that includes potential employers, opening up actual business opportunities.

Like all departments in the College, the Department of Spanish & Portuguese also integrates core competencies that teach students how to navigate other cultures. These include the ability to write and communicate clearly, evaluate information effectively, and understand, appreciate, and engage positively with other cultures. Andrade says, "It's important to look at things critically instead of just accepting what is in front of you." In other words, the faculty place a premium on teaching critical thinking skills far beyond learning a foreign language so that students better appreciate perspectives that differ from their own.

One class about Brazilian culture does this by asking the students how Brazilians differ from Americans. Students engage in questions such as "how does this other culture view time, music, film, and family?" The answers lead to understanding, respect, and a more effective level of engagement.

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

The department also offers a certificate program to students who complete three language classes and pass tests that evaluate proficiency levels by national standards. The certificates, recognized nationally, validate student achievement. Most students who

strive to acquire the certificates pursue majors in other fields (arts, education, sciences, etc.).

Professor Rex Nielson (Luso-Brazilian Literary & Cultural Studies), director of the Humanities Center, says that the real value in the certificate comes from helping "students develop an awareness of their own skill level and learn how to communicate their skills in speaking and understanding cultural differences to a future employer or someone outside the university."

LEARNING WITH INITIATIVE

The Department of Spanish & Portuguese has been exemplary in creating programs that let students take initiative and apply practical skills. Truman says, "In an upcoming semester we will pilot some service learning as students' final projects in Spanish 321. Instead of giving a final presentation they'll be going out into the community and volunteering 15 hours with the Spanish-speaking population in some capacity and reflecting on that. We are hoping to give them a chance to apply their skills." Students will volunteer in a number of capacities. For example, medical interpretation students will interpret in health clinics across Utah County. The service learning projects will give both practical application of language skills to students and provide community service across Spanish-speaking communities in Utah.

The Spanish translation program holds the distinction of being one of the department's oldest undergraduate programs. This major equips students with cultural competencies that enhance their understanding and collaboration with people from all over the world. Students have the chance to translate BYU speeches and run the translation project themselves. Undergrads can earn a Spanish translation degree providing them with technology and networking advantages with industry professionals. They can also complement that degree with a minor in translation and localization from the Center for Language Studies. Graduates from these programs often outcompete graduate degree-holding applicants for project management jobs. With the rise of Google Translate and other AI, some may wonder if such translation needs will become obsolete. Not according to faculty in the department. Even AI needs a human eye that understands nuance, idioms, culture, and current linguistic trends. Carr says, "The more globalized things become the more valuable those students become and prove that they will never be replaced by AI."

The 40-year-old program continues to impact the department's landscape today. Several current faculty members graduated from BYU in this major, including Carr, who says, "We have students doing amazing things while they are here as students, and when they go out with that degree . . . it gives them all of those advantages using technology and networking with industry professionals."

One of those students is recent Honored Alumnus Barry Olsen ('95), who has taken his skills into the world of diplomacy, interpreting languages on Air Force One. Other majors have worked in translation in public broadcasting and for the Church.

STUDY ABROAD AND INTERNSHIP INITIATIVES

The department's study abroad programs provide concrete learning experiences, extending students' education beyond traditional classrooms. Nielson explains, "We have a long running program in Madrid that continues to be a jewel of the department. We have an additional study abroad program in Santiago. We have our program in Mérida, Mexico. We also have rich internship programs in Spain, Spanish America, Portugal, and Brazil, which definitely did not exist 10 years ago. We have now had hundreds of students go on those programs." These internships approach a variety of fields such as governmental sectors, STEM fields, business, accounting, investment banking, nonprofit sectors, and archival research.

A critical reason the College and the department invest so many resources in these programs is to equip students with the skills to work effectively in international settings. Some of these programs include the Spain, Spain OléSAY, Portugal SiPN, and Brazil IEB Internship Program. Offered throughout the year, these programs present students with opportunities to expand their learning and understanding of the world. As with other study abroad programs sponsored by the College, Spanish and Portuguese programs expose students to foreign cultures through practical activities, encouraging them to understand and appreciate diverse values and traditions. Students engage with local communities to foster relationships and broaden their global perspectives.

Any student on campus with language skills can participate in the programs, regardless of major. Most students in the department participate in these programs for their minors, the certificate program, or second-majors.

The study abroad offerings have always provided quality experiences, but there have been changes. One exceptional program gave students the chance to live in Mexican villages, spending their days finding adults to teach literacy. Turley says, "Students would live in Mexico, sometimes one student per village, and spend their days finding people to teach how to read. They were living in primitive conditions—dirt floors and no running water—and absolutely loving it! It was a completely integrating experience in rural Mexico that was truly life changing." Unfortunately, the world's social and political changes that affect the

Photos by Soroush Zargar / Unsplash (LEFT), Raquel Pedrosa / Adobe Stock (RIGHT)

programs are not always for the better. The Mexican village program had to be discontinued recently due to security concerns.

BYU student Jenny Charters (Spanish and Economics '25) represents the many whose education has benefitted from her study abroad experience—which for her was much more than a lovely travel opportunity. She says, "Studying abroad in Spain for eight weeks was exactly what I needed. I loved learning all the history while traveling the country; it made the stories come to life and stick with me. But, most of all I'm grateful for what studying abroad taught me about myself. It helped me discover a passion for traveling and taught me how to love others from different corners of the world."

CURRENT RESEARCH

In addition to their efforts in enhancing pedagogy, faculty in the department have also made new developments in their fields of study. Professors often take a multidisciplinary approach, but all have areas of specialty, and some study very narrow or specific areas. As an example of the latter, Andrade has been studying how violence and oppression in contemporary society are depicted in Brazilian literature over the past several years.

Nielson's field of study covers environmental humanities, which examines how culture and attitudes on natural environment are intertwined with the environmental crisis. "I think the issues related to the climate crisis are ever more acute," says Nielson, "so I think that is why we are seeing an explosion of academic inquiry in environmental issues on interdisciplinary perspectives." Professor Nielson feels that taking an academic inquiry in modern problems is critically important to the College. Some of his research projects include publishing an anthology of nature writing in Brazilian culture and studying how droughts in Brazil are represented in the arts.

Likewise, Professor (and new department chair) Scott Alvord (Linguistics), studies the linguistic structure of Spanish in the United States, a country growing increasingly bilingual. In fact, the United States is the now the fifth largest Spanish speaking country in the world, even though English is the most widely spoken language and language of government. Alvord's research reveals that many US Spanish speakers, even those raised speaking Spanish in the US, have been told by other native speakers that their language has been "contaminated" by English and is therefore invalid. Alvord "explores what it means to speak a language. We talk about Spanish in the United States as a variety of Spanish that is just as valid as any other variety of Spanish." He hopes this focus on inclusion will help tear down barriers.

Women writers have been a particular interest in the department, with many professors leading unique research programs. Professor Valerie Hegstrom (Early Modern Spanish Literature) and Associate Professor Anna-Lisa Halling (Iberian Women Writers) have been collaborating with students to identify unknown or less well-known female writers from the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries in Spain and Portugal and document them on their website, "More than Muses." These writers were mostly nuns who wrote plays on religious topics.

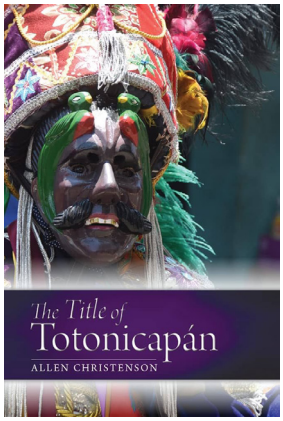
Faculty in the department utilize a number of tools to strengthen the department's international reputation. One quite successful method they have used is the minicourses. This initiative started 25 years ago. Minicourses provide a forum where the faculty members invite the best literary professors, pedagogy scholars, linguists, and translators from all over the world to spend a week teaching graduate and undergraduate students at BYU. During these minicourses, guest instructors work with BYU professors on their research and strengthen professional and social connections. The minicourse program has become nationally recognized as a mark of prestige for participants, with many prestigious scholars asking to contribute their time to the program every year.

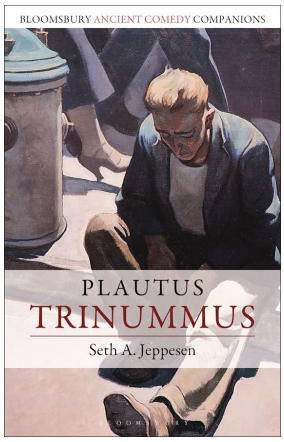
CONCLUSION

Even as the faculty continue to engage in world-class research on their own, one thing continues to be abundantly clear: a focus on improving linguistic proficiency among students is enhanced as they improve their critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. Jones says this focus has caused "more engagement with a wider audience while students are in school." This is a familiar refrain around the College, where personal goals to improve, learn, and discover go hand-in-hand with evaluating and elevating the quality of the student experience. ■

Faculty Publications

A selection of books recently published





Korean Conversations and Debating: A Language Guide for Self-Study or Classroom Use. **Juno Baik, Eunjin Gye, and Julie Damron.**

Hebrew Bible with Analytical Keys. **Donald W. Parry.**

Developing Advanced Proficiency in Chinese through Debate. **ShuPei Wang, Yina Ma Patterson, and Lin Guo.**

Marianne Meets the Mormons: Representations of Mormonism in Nineteenth-Century France. **Heather Belnap, Corry Cropper, and Daryl Lee.**

The Title of Totonicapan. **Allen J. Christenson.**

Lucretius and the End of Masculinity. **Michael Pope.**

Plautus: Trinummus. **Seth A. Jeppesen.**

Kore-eda Hirokazu: Shared Spaces of Filmmaking. **Marc Yamada.**

Technical Communication: A Design-Centric Approach. **Jon Balzotti.**

Open Canon: Scripture of the Latter Day Saint Tradition. **Christoper J. Blythe.**

Using Young Adult Literature to Work through Wobble Moments in Teacher Education: Literary Response Groups to Enhance Reflection and Understanding. **Dawan Coombs and Jon Ostenson.**

American Kairos: Washington National Cathedral and the New Civil Religion. **Richard Benjamin Crosby.**

What Works in Grammar Instruction. **Deborah Dean.**

The Writer's Hustle: A Professional Guide to the Creativity, Discipline, Humility, and Grit Every Writer Needs to Flourish. **Joey Franklin.**

Methodism and the Rise of Popular Literary Criticism: Reviewing the Revival. **Brett McInelly.**

The Alcaic Metre in the English Imagination. **John Talbot.**

Bazaar Literature: Charity, Advocacy, and Parody in Victorian Social Reform Fiction. **Leslee Thorne-Murphy.**

Here. **Darlene Young.**

Velocipedomania: A Cultural History of the Velocipede in France. **Corry Cropper.**

Italian Jewish Women in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. **Marie Orton,** translator.

Curriculum Development for Intensive English Programs: A Contextualized Framework for Language Program Design and Implementation. **Grant Eckstein, Norman W. Evans, K. James Hartshorn, and Benjamin L. McMurry.**

Utahisms: Unique Expressions, Inventions, Place Names & More. **David Eddington.**

Perspectives on Latter-day Saint Names and Naming: Names, Identity, and Belief. **Dallin D. Oaks,** editor.

Mastering Spanish through Global Debate. **Nieves Pérez Knapp.**

The Spanish Lexicon of Baseball: Semantics, Style, and Terminology. **Robert N. Smead.**

Manual de fonética e fonologia da língua portuguesa. **Willis C. Fails and J. Halvor Clegg.**

Maynard Dixon, Searching for a Home: Painted and Poetic Imagination in the American West. **Kenneth Hartvigsen,** editor.

Dictionary of Proper Names & Foreign Words in the Book of Mormon. **John Gee and Stephen Ricks.**

2023 P. A. CHRISTENSEN LECTURE:

MARC OLIVIER

by Lydia Hall (Interdisciplinary Humanities ’23) and Ellie Smith (English ’23)

The P. A. Christensen Lectureship, established in 1977, honors College of Humanities faculty in literary and cultural studies.

Remember *Goodnight Moon*, the children’s book that carefully catalogs every object in a room before saying goodnight to each of them? What happens if “instead of drifting off into a blissful slumber, we watch those things take on unfamiliar shapes?” asked Professor Marc Olivier (Film and Media, French), in his 2023 P. A. Christensen Lecture on March 8. Olivier’s restless nights inspired his recent book *Household Horror: Cinematic Fear and the Secret Life of Everyday Objects*, which he describes as *Goodnight Moon* for insomniacs. It also informs his research in 18th-century French literature, European cinema, and photography. During Olivier’s lecture, “Unrest in All Things: An Insomniac’s Guide to the Humanities,” he explored how a playful, childlike approach to learning allows the intellectually curious to create unexpected connections and ultimately revives the inherent wonder people feel as they engage in the humanities.

Quoting Parley A. Christensen (whom the lecture honors), Olivier said, “I like to feel an unrest in all things, a ferment at work everywhere by which all things are trying to transcend themselves.” As an insomniac, Olivier is no stranger to unrest. He sees beyond what currently exists and imagines what *could* exist, which revitalizes his approach to his discipline, research, and teaching. However, testing the boundaries of study does not eliminate the need for rules. Olivier said, “Constraints enable growth. . . . Being playful is all about making up rules in order to see structures emerge.”

Olivier shared three examples of his playful approach. In the first, students reimagined chapters of the French novel *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (*Dangerous Liaisons*) as tweets. This unique constraint allowed students to examine a classic book in a memorable, modern way.

The second project reversed standard essay writing processes. Rather than starting with a topic, students began with one of several bibliographies with randomly selected sources; for example, one bibliography only included sources that referenced Olivier’s work. The exercise challenged the students to find cohesion in randomness as they wrote their essays.

In the third project, Olivier’s students produced millions of sonnets by first composing poems in the style of French poet Louise Labé and then funneling them into a generative program that reorganized individual lines into new poems.

Olivier concluded, “Once we let the mind wander freely and allow ourselves to play unafraid, we can watch familiar objects take on new shapes, we can generate unexpected links between objects, and we can reclaim childhood wonder.” H

Scan the QR code to watch the full lecture.

Photo courtesy of Marc Olivier

Faculty Favorites

FILMS

Jordan B. Jones (Brazilian Literature)
—Doutor Gama
A biographical drama that chronicles the life of one of the most notable abolitionists in Brazilian history.

Brazilian film *Doutor Gama* (*Doctor Gama*) dramatizes the life and work of Luiz Gama (1830–1882), an amazing 19th-century abolitionist who was born free but illegally sold into slavery by his father at age 10. During his eight-year enslavement, Gama learned to read and studied the Brazilian legal system, and he eventually obtained proof of his free birth and the illegality of his enslavement. After escaping from slavery, he continued to study the law and represent enslaved people in court. During his lifetime, Gama helped over 500 illegally enslaved people secure their freedom in the courts.

This film is a powerful portrayal of the violent legacy of slavery, and it also addresses the anti-Black racism that persists in Brazil to this day. It highlights the contributions of one of Brazil's great abolitionists and points to the diligent efforts of countless other Afro-Brazilians and allies in resisting slavery and working toward abolition over the course of centuries. Finally, it shows how Luiz Gama used his mastery of languages—Portuguese, Latin, French, and the language of law—to bring about positive change for himself and those around him.

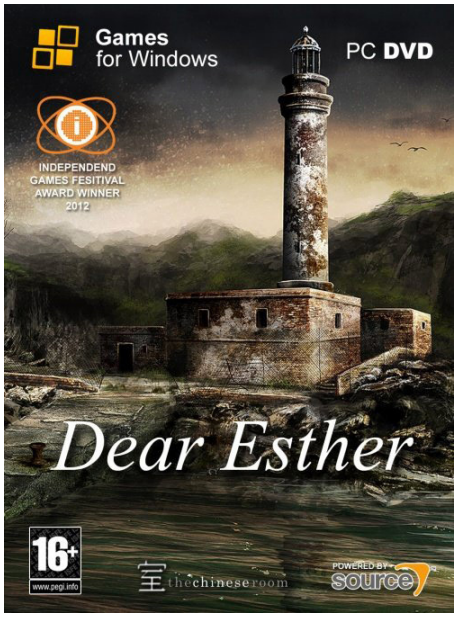
Carl Sederholm (Horror, Popular Culture, Literature, and Film)—*Now, Voyager*
A classic Hollywood romance film set in 1942 in which a young woman finds her independence from the pressures of society.

Now, Voyager (1942), starring Bette Davis, still resonates with audiences today. The film tells the story of a shy and repressed woman who discovers herself during a cruise. She also falls in love, but her story does not necessarily turn out the way audiences might expect. I have sometimes shown this film in American studies or interdisciplinary humanities classes, and my students love discussing its themes while also connecting them to their favorite contemporary romantic dramas.

VIDEOGAMES

Michael Call (17th-Century French Art and Literature)—*Dear Esther*
An untraditional, first-person exploration virtual experience.

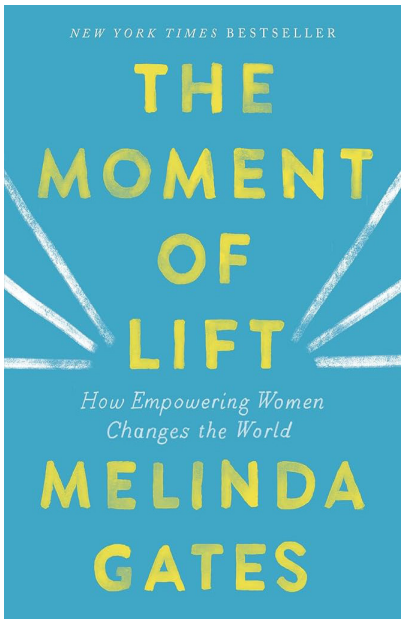
A pioneering and award-winning example of the walking simulator subgenre, *Dear Esther* places you on a gorgeously rendered Hebridean island and then presents you with fragments of dialogue. As you wend your way through the mysterious island, these narrative fragments weave together threads from the island's history and the narrator's recent personal tragedy. The twist that you do not realize until subsequent playthroughs is that the bits of narrative that you receive are randomly selected from a much larger bank of possibilities, meaning that the particular version of the story you encounter in your journey is based upon chance, which raises the specter that it might just be meaningless. And there is the rub: *Dear Esther*'s narrative conceit makes human meaning-making the game's real focus as both you and the narrator struggle to decide if the story components of human life and death can make sense in a world where things happen by accident.



BOOKS

Bobbe May (Humanities Center Program Administrator)—*The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World* by Melinda Gates
A memoir on Melinda Gates' experiences in her efforts to empower women.

As a devoted Christian and global health advocate, Melinda Gates writes about the issues women are facing through a lens that really resonates with me. She is driven by her faith in Christ to understand and address many of the most difficult issues that women and children (and by extension, all humanity) face worldwide. Her energy for this cause and



optimism for what we can accomplish in the future are contagious.

Corry Cropper (French)—*Carmen* by Prosper Mérimée
A 19th-century novella depicting the flirtatious, gypsy woman Carmen bewitching a Spanish soldier, Don José.

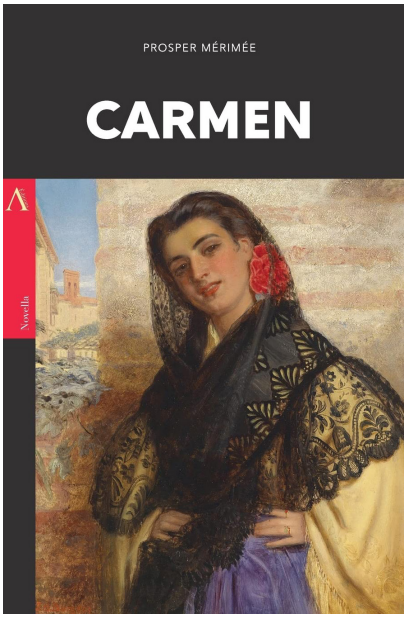
Mérimée's 1845 novella *Carmen* inspired Bizet's famous 1875 opera. But where the opera's characters are largely types, Mérimée's characters are more complicated: José is not simply an innocent soldier corrupted by passion; he has joined the army to flee preexisting legal problems in his home region. Carmen is not simply a dangerous femme fatale; she is a countercultural embodiment of freedom who resists José's attempts to control her. Mérimée's *Carmen* plays on the archaeological fervor of 19th-century Europe—the narrator has traveled to Spain to locate the site of Julius Caesar's Battle of Munda. But instead of solving this historical mystery, he is pulled into the story of José and Carmen and attempts—but seemingly fails—to understand their personal drama. Reading the original novella provides new insights into the opera but also offers a glimpse into the issues of history, nationalism, gender, and social class in 19th-century France.

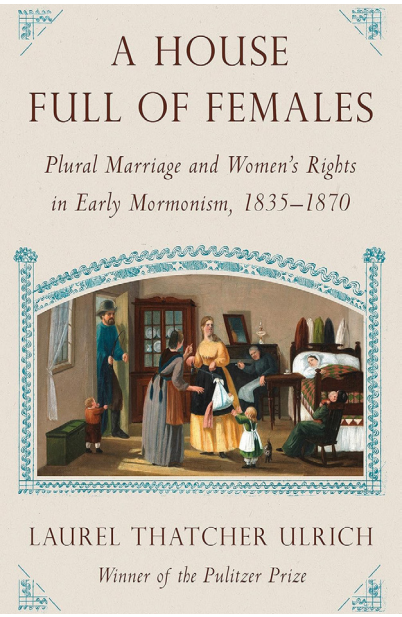
Julie Damron (Korean Linguistics and Pedagogy)—*A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women's Rights in Early Mormonism, 1835–1870* by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich
An account of the earliest Latter-day Saint women based on the memorabilia they left behind.

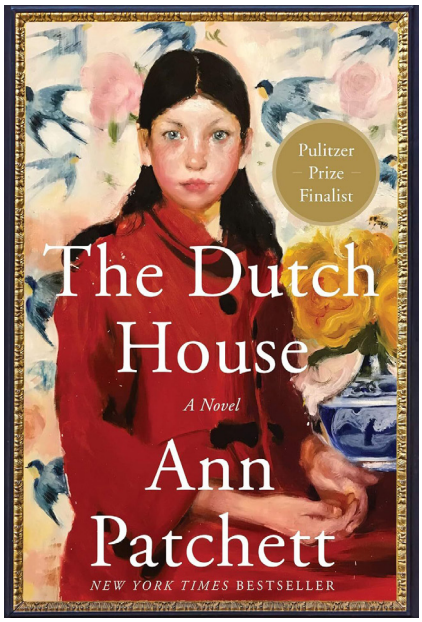
A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women's Rights in Early Mormonism, 1835–1870, written by Harvard history professor Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, provides an insightful and much-needed look at Church history from women's perspectives. Ulrich interlaces excerpts from diaries, poems, and meeting minutes to illustrate the challenging lives of 19th-century Latter-day Saint women. It focuses on the utter chaos and the loss of status for women caused by early plural marriage. Overall, it is a powerful account of the strength, conviction, and unending devotion of early Latter-day Saint women.

Cheri Earl (Fiction Theory, The Latter-day Saint Novel)—*The Dutch House* by Ann Patchett
A historical fiction novel that combines Paradise Lost *and* Cinderella.

I have read *The Dutch House* four times in two years, and I will most likely read it again. And again. I even assign it to my Beginning Novel students and read along with them because the pain of this novel, for me, is so compelling I cannot leave it alone. The story orbits the Conroys—Cyril, Elna, and their two children, Maeve and Danny. The Conroys' fate is attached to an early 1920s mansion in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, that they call the Dutch House. In *The Dutch House*, Patchett attends to the peculiar wounds shared between mothers and their children, asking, "What sins are too grievous to forgive?" Frankly, I am still trying to answer that question for myself, which may be the reason I keep coming back to the novel. But if you need a better reason to pick up the book, Tom Hanks narrates the audio version. ■







College Updates

1 GOOGLE'S GLOBAL DIRECTOR (AND COLLEGE ALUMNUS) SPEAKS ON CAMPUS

Brent Dance, Google's Global Director for Apps and Games, gave the Honored Alumni Lecture for the Department of German & Russian on January 19, 2023. He highlighted how studying Russian shaped his journey toward optimism, increased critical thinking, and authentic love. Through his lecture, "How Learning Russian Changed My Life," Dance detailed experiences he had learning the language on his mission and at BYU. Additionally, he spoke about how his Russian major helped him serve others at Google through creating phone air raid alerts for those suffering in the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

2 BRETT HASHIMOTO RECEIVES INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ORIGINATION AWARD

Assistant Professor Brett Hashimoto (Corpus Linguistics) recently received an Interdisciplinary Research Origination Award from BYU's Research Development Office to participate in a corpus linguistics study investigating how the term *sustainability* is used in various spheres, from academia to popular media. The team working on this project includes linguists, engineers, and experts on public service and ethics. The culminating project will produce papers on sustainability, course curricula, real-life experiments, and community-facing initiatives such as policy publications and workshops.

3 BYU SPEECHES TRANSLATION INITIATIVE

The College of Humanities is helping translate BYU devotionals and forums into Japanese and Spanish—with more languages to come. Computer science professors and language students undertaking this project utilize machine translation, with student translators providing an initial review. This helps student translators develop a repertoire of useful skills to prepare them for translation opportunities after college. Faculty and native speakers conduct reviews of the student translations to ensure the translation is as accurate as possible. After final edits, students upload the text and text-to-audio recordings to the BYU Speeches website (speeches.byu.edu), making these uplifting speeches more accessible to people around the world.

4 STUDENT PIONEERS S'GAW KAREN LANGUAGE COURSE

When undergraduate student Laesgaw K'Chawtee (International Relations '25) came to BYU, the university did not offer any courses teaching his native language of S'gaw Karen. K'Chawtee approached the Center for Language Studies and, after some discussion, was invited to become the official teacher of S'gaw Karen, a language spoken in Myanmar and Thailand. Since Myanmar's independence in 1948, the Burmese military has propagated genocidal campaigns against the Karen people, leaving a dwindling number of speakers. K'Chawtee says, "Everything I'm teaching is . . . based on what I observed from my own language and my understanding of the English language and training. There's not a guidebook like other languages." For now, S'gaw Karen is only open to returned missionaries who learned the language on their missions, but K'Chawtee hopes to offer the class to all students in the future.

Laesgaw K'Chawtee (right) stands with an elephant. Photo courtesy of Laesgaw K'Chawtee

Matt Baker
Photo by Colby St. Gelais

5 MATT BAKER WINS OUTSTANDING MANUSCRIPT AWARD

Associate Professor Matt Baker (Editing, Business Communication) won the 2023 Outstanding State Manuscript Award from the Central States Communication Association for his paper "The Working World is a Minefield: Counterstories of Job Loss." He worked with professors Rachel Collier Murdock (Des Moines Area Community College) and Stacy Tye-Williams (Iowa State University) to interview people experiencing job loss. The team discovered that people who lost their jobs spun "counternarratives" where they framed themselves in different ways. Sometimes they described themselves as liberated from undesirable jobs and sometimes as victims of unfortunate circumstances. Baker also found that people repudiated the employers that terminated them.

Taowen Le at BYU China Conference.
Photo by BYU Photo

6 STUDIES PROGRAMS FIND NEW HOME IN KENNEDY CENTER

In fall 2023, two studies programs transitioned from the College of Humanities to the Kennedy Center: Scandinavian Studies and American Studies. As faculty coordinator of American Studies, Associate Professor Jamin Rowan (English, American Studies) explains, "The College of Humanities has been an incredibly generous and supportive host to the American Studies program for the past 20 years, but the Kennedy Center has increasingly become the center of gravity on campus for interdisciplinary programs like ours." This is because the Kennedy Center can help these programs expand their focus to include areas such as social science, political science, and anthropology. Associate Professor Nate Kramer (Danish and Norwegian 19th- and 20th-Century Literature), director of the Scandinavian Studies program, explains that student experience prompted the decision to move. He says, "They come from all over the university, and we want to provide an academic experience for our students that is more in line with their own backgrounds and academic interests."

7 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE–WINNING JOURNALIST VISITS BYU

Russian journalist and winner of the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize, Dmitry Muratov, visited BYU campus on February 24, 2023, to share his insights as a journalist amid the Ukraine-Russia conflict. Muratov made a career as editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, winning the Nobel Prize "for his efforts to safeguard freedom of expression," according to the prize judges. Muratov's lecture, "The Role of Free Media in Building a Civil Society: The Case of Russia," which was given in Russian and interpreted live for non-Russian speakers, discussed the devastating effects of the war and offered insights for identifying and overcoming state propaganda. He ended his speech with an additional call to action. "We need to bring back free election and free media," he said. "Otherwise, we will pay with death."

The Nobel peace prize winners, Dmitry Muratov, (right), and Maria Ressa, (left).
Photo by AP Photo / Alexander Zemlianichenko

8 BYU CHINA CONFERENCE

The Chinese Flagship Center and Center for Language Studies sponsored the annual BYU China Conference on March 11, 2023, which seeks to foster understanding and make connections between the US and China through discussions with students. The conference gathered academic and diplomatic speakers from across the university and China to participate in a question-and-answer session, and the conference also included a networking luncheon. In addition to strengthening international relations, the program seeks to improve education in both countries, particularly on creating a more well-rounded and accessible approach to education for students in China. H

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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1. hind, 5. sushi, 10. TAs, 13. irae, 14. sneak, 15. bit, 16. double entendre, 19. Insta, 20. Bay, 21. née, 22. Draco, 26. Thor, 30. Grand Prix, 32. sum, 33. beget, 34. mints, 36. vicar, 39. trail, 41. Ira, 42. coup d'état, 46. meld, 48. hosta, 49. ale, 50. USA, 52. Inuit, 54. pardon my French, 60. ivy, 61. femur, 62. a tie, 63. gee, 64. Alamo, 65. Tsar

Down
1. *Hiding*, 2. ironer, 3. nausea, 4. debt, 5. SSE, 6. *une*, 7. Sen., 8. hatbox, 9. IKEA, 10. TBD, 11. Air, 12. Ste, 17. ladder, 18. NYT, 23. RPG, 24. Are too, 25. citrus, 27. HSN, 28. out, 29. RMs, 31. NBA, 34. midair, 35. Ile, 36. vim, 37. ire, 38. Cal, 40. apt, 42. Chanel, 43. taunts, 44. Alicia, 45. tether, 47. dud, 51. sofa, 53. neat, 54. pig, 55. Ave, 56. Rye, 57. MMA, 58. yum, 59. fro

FACULTY INTRODUCTIONS

Holly Baker (Linguistics) received her PhD from the University of South Dakota, MA from Ohio University, and BA from BYU, where she studied both English language and linguistics, as well as completed an editing minor. She did a post-doctorate in Bucharest, Romania, where she learned more about publishing practices in Eastern Europe.

Sam Dunn (English) graduated with his BA and MA degrees in English from BYU and received his PhD in rhetoric and composition from Purdue University. For the past five years he has been an assistant professor of English at Sacramento State. His particular areas of scholarly interest are disability rhetorics and writing as it is taught and executed across disciplines and professions.

Angela Wentz Faulconer (Philosophy) earned her PhD in philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. She first taught for the Philosophy Department at BYU during the summer of 1995. She has worked at BYU on and off for many years, teaching just one class a semester much of that time. She has taught many courses at BYU from intro to philosophy to more specialized courses.

Shannon Stimpson (English) earned her BA and MA in English from Brigham Young University and her PhD in English with an emphasis in rhetoric and composition from Pennsylvania State University. As a teaching professor, her research interests include writing studies, writing pedagogy, and historiography.

Carter Charles (French) obtained his PhD from the Université Bordeaux Montaigne, where he taught courses on religion, culture, and politics, and worked in the French national education system. His research on a variety of topics is informed by the sociology of religion, and he collaborates with the Center for Language Studies on Haitian Creole curriculum.

Ann Dee Ellis (English) is the author of the novels *This is What I Did: Everything is Fine*, *The End or Something Like That*, *You May Already Be a Winner*, and *The War with Grandma* (coauthor). Her books have received starred reviews, been named Junior Library Guild picks, and been featured on multiple lists.

Kathie Gossett (Office of Digital Humanities) led digital humanities initiatives at University of California, Old Dominion University, and Iowa State University. Her specialties in user experience design and digital writing will expand the current offerings of the ODH and Digital Humanities and Technology program.

Miriam Whiting (Linguistics) received her MA in Russian linguistics and PhD in Slavic linguistics from The Ohio State University and her BA in Russian and English from BYU. She began teaching as an adjunct at BYU in fall 2020 after 11 years in the public sector. She specializes in discourse analysis, language planning and policy, and editing and publishing.

FACULTY FAREWELLS

Gideon Burton (English) spent 29 years at BYU as an assistant professor. He created the world's best-known online database of rhetorical concepts called "The Forest of Rhetoric." He was an early adopter of teaching practices that acknowledged the new digital literacy.

Dave Eddington (Linguistics) retired after 20 years working as a professor of linguistics at BYU. Dave stood out as an expert in experimental methodology and as a scholar at the forefront of describing Utah English. Dave delivered the College of Humanities' Barker Lecture in 2009 on "Linguistics and the Scientific Method" and served on a plethora of MA thesis committees, both as chair and reader.

Nancy Christiansen (English) taught as an associate professor for 29 years. She specialized in rhetoric's history and theory, pedagogy in rhetorical criticism, reading theory and pedagogy, style theory, and Renaissance British literature. She is currently writing a book entitled *Shakespeare's Paideia: Five Tragedies as Rhetorical Handbooks*.

Francesca Lawson (Comparative Arts & Letters) retired at the end of July after 16 years at BYU. She served effectively as the section head of the Interdisciplinary Humanities program for eight years, helping to increase the number of majors and improving the way the program advises and serves students.

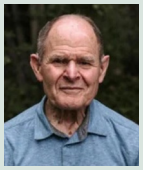
Photos courtesy of BYU Photo and family members

Deryle Lonsdale (Linguistics) retired after 25 ½ years at BYU. During his time in the Department of Linguistics, Deryle has chaired 43 MA graduate committees, served as a member on 38 other committees in Linguistics, and 20 more in other departments. He also was on 11 doctoral committees. In total, he served on a committee for 112 graduate students.

Monte Shelley (Office of Digital Humanities), director of the Research Technology Group and manager of the WordCruncher team, retired in February of 2023 after 46 years serving the campus community.

IN MEMORIAM

Charles Tate (English) peacefully passed away in March 2022. Charles taught English, Dutch literature, and religion at BYU for 34 years, including a year at BYU-Hawaii. He edited many publications through the Religious Studies Center at BYU and even taught for four winters in Nauvoo for BYU.



Peter Ashworth (Spanish & Portuguese) peacefully passed away at age 90 in November 2022. Peter fell in love with the Spanish language on his mission, which led to a lifetime of studying and teaching Spanish literature. He thrived on discussing ideas and was an educator until the very end.

Penny Bird (English) passed away in November 2022 from Alzheimer's disease. She spent her career as the longtime director of the BYU Research and Writing Center. She hosted writing conferences, taught Doctrine and Covenants courses, and enlightened others with her vast Jane Austen knowledge while teaching in London for a semester abroad.

VerDon Ballantyne (English) passed away in January 2023 at the age of 86. VerDon served as an Honors English professor at BYU for 41 years teaching technical writing and American literature. He was awarded the Karl G. Maeser Distinguished Professor Award for excellence in his field.

John Franklin Hall III (CAL) died in March 2023 after a brief illness. He was a professor of classics and ancient history at BYU, where he was an Eliza R. Snow University Fellow. He specialized in Rome from the time of the Etruscans to the reign of Augustus. He was best known among scholars for his work on the secular games, a Roman religious celebration involving sacrifices and theatrical performances.

Tom Plummer (German & Russian) died at age 83 in March 2023. He earned his PhD from Harvard, beginning his career as a German professor at the University of Minnesota. Tom chaired the humanities department a year after arriving in Provo. He also taught a memoir class through the Honors department.

Stephen Lowell Tanner (English) died at age 85 in May 2023. He received his PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He was recruited to BYU where he taught English for 28 years. He received many awards while teaching, including the P. A. Christensen Lectureship, Phi Kappa Phi Scholar Award, Karl G. Maeser Distinguished Faculty Lectureship, Ralph A. Britsch Humanities Professorship, and the national Lionel Trilling award.

Jack Brown (Spanish & Portuguese) died in September 2022 at age 91. Jack earned his doctoral degree at the University of Syracuse, New York. In 1965, he accepted a position at BYU as an associate professor. He loved teaching Spanish and the cultures of Latin America for 30 years.

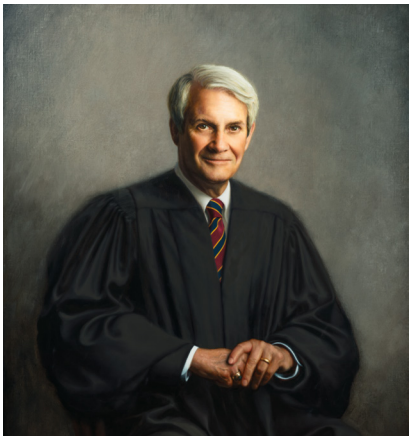
Peter Sorensen (English) passed away on July 12, 2023, at age 72. Peter taught English at BYU for 27 years, focusing on the works of William Blake and other Romantic literature. Even in the classroom, his teaching was shaped by his desire to make the process of learning entertaining.

Joseph Orestes Baker (German & Russian) passed away in November 2023. Joseph directed BYU Study Abroad for 11 years before returning to his first love, teaching in the classroom. Joseph instituted the International Film Festival in 1968, which eventually became International Cinema. In 1988, he was awarded a prestigious Fulbright Grant by the US State Department.

Moderate, Unify

by Thomas B. Griffith (Humanities '78)

President Dallin H. Oaks' talk, "Defending Our Divinely Inspired Constitution," provides a template for achieving unity while protecting our freedoms.



Portrait by Jonathan Linton

There are a set of cultural expectations about a general conference address given on Easter Sunday afternoon. It is likely that the speaker, especially if he is an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, will bear witness to the reality and transformative power of the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

That President Dallin H. Oaks took a different tack in his April 2021 address, "Defending Our Divinely Inspired Constitution," signals, I believe, the importance and urgency of his message. To an American nation deeply divided by toxic political polarization, President Oaks offered the most elegant explanation I have seen of what is required for citizens in general—and Latter-day Saints in particular—to heal this divide. "On contested issues," he taught, "we should seek to moderate and to unify."[1]

In that straightforward and simple directive, President Oaks captured the animating spirit that created the United States Constitution in 1787 and is necessary for its survival. In early July of 1787, the delegates who had gathered in Philadelphia to create a written constitution for the new nation faced the real prospect of failure. Yet by mid-September, they had produced the charter that would be the basis for our enduring success as a nation. In his letter transmitting the Constitution to Congress, Washington attributed this surprising turn of events—what one popular account of the convention called the "Miracle at Philadelphia"[2]—to the "spirit of amity, and of that mutual deference and concession which the peculiarity of our political situation rendered indispensable."[3] Our current political situation renders indispensable those same qualities.

Constitutional law scholar Derek Webb explored what Washington meant in a brilliant article that points out that the delegates to the Convention exhibited not only civility in their debates—a good first step—but more important still was they were willing to set aside parochial interests, come to a compromise, and in some instances even give up cherished liberties for the sake of unity.[4] The "miracle of Philadelphia" was not a *deus ex machina.* It came about only because people made an effort to understand one another and were willing to give up some things they valued dearly for the sake of unity.

Without that spirit, captured in President Oaks' charge, the Constitution will not survive.[5] As Michael Gerson noted, "Our political system is designed for vigorous disagreement. It is not designed for irreconcilable contempt. Such contempt loosens the ties of citizenship and undermines the idea of patriotism."[6] That is why it is so troubling that in our current political moment, contempt has replaced disagreement. And this contempt, Arthur Brooks observes, is "ripping our country apart. . . . Political scientists have found that our nation is more polarized than it has been at any time since the Civil War."[7] NYU's social psychologist Jonathan Haidt warns, "There is a very good chance American democracy will fail, that . . . we will have a catastrophic failure of our democracy. . . . We just don't know what a democracy looks like when you drain all trust out of the system."[8]

What does it mean to "support and defend" the Constitution in this environment? At the very least, it means that we will support and defend the rights protected by the Constitution. But it means much more than that. It means that we will "support and defend" the values that gave life to the process by which the Constitution was created. Compromise *for the sake of unity* is the animating spirit of the Constitution, and it is every bit as vital to its preservation in this moment of toxic political polarization as it was in the summer of 1787.

Latter-day Saints have a sense that we have a stewardship with regard to defending and supporting the Constitution. President Oaks has now given us a template for how to do that. His template may surprise some. We are not to be culture warriors. Rather, we are to be people who are building bridges of understanding across partisan divides. That is our standard. It brings to mind the scene from the television series *The Chosen*, in which the disciple Peter, troubled by Jesus' teaching as He calls Matthew to follow Him, remarks, "This is different!" To which the Lord responds, "Get used to different!"[9]

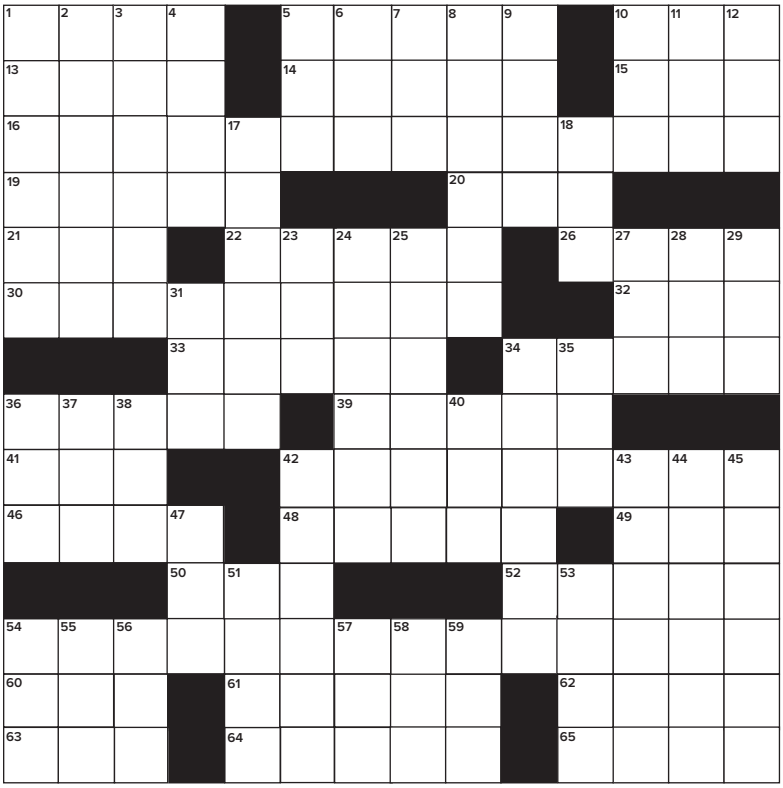
Latter-day Saints are called to work for at-one-ment in all our relationships—not just between an individual and God or within families but between people divided by contempt. That is hard work, to be sure, but as former Young Women General President Susan W. Tanner taught us so well, "[We] can do hard things."[10] H

Thomas B. Griffith is a BYU College of Humanities graduate and former judge on the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit. He served as BYU general counsel and as the nonpartisan legal counsel to the US Senate. A version of this article was published by *Deseret News* on August 31, 2023.

1. Dallin H. Oaks, "Defending Our Divinely Inspired Constitution," *Liahona*, May 2021, 105, 107.
2. Catherine Drinker Bowen, *The Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention, May to September 1787* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966).
3. James Madison, *Note of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), 627.
4. Derek A. Webb, "The Original Meaning of Civility: Democratic Deliberation at the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention," *South Carolina Law Review* 64, no. 1 (Fall 2012): 183–219.
5. Yuval Levin, "The Constitution and National Unity," *National Review*, September 16, 2022, https://bit.ly/3uW7rAy.
6. Michael Gerson, "A Primer on Political Reality" *Washington Post*, February 19, 2010, https://wapo.st/3uTe6LU.
7. Arthur Brooks, "Our Culture of Contempt," *New York Times*, March 2, 2019, https://nyti.ms/47TfSewl.
8. Paul Kelly, "'Very Good Chance' Democracy Is Doomed in America, Says Haidt," *The Australian*, July 20, 2019.
9. See, e.g., John 7:46, Luke 4:32, Matthew 7:28–29, Matthew 9:33.
10. Susan W. Tanner, "For the Strength of You: A Conversation with the Young Women General Presidency," *Ensign*, October 2007, 12.

Lingua Franca

by Corry Cropper (Associate Dean, French)



ACROSS

1 ___quarter (horse's caboose)
5 Dish served on a conveyor belt
10 Student helpers in large sections: Abbr.
13 "Dies ___" (part of a Latin requiem mass)
14 Word before peek or after quarterback
15 Comedic sketch
16 "I've now realized for the first time in my life the vital Importance of Being Earnest," e.g.
19 Popular photo-sharing app, for short
20 Bengal or Biscay
21 Maiden name word
22 Harry's nemesis, Malfoy
26 Mythological hammer-wielder
30 Formula 1 race
32 Multiplication : product :: addition : ___
33 Have children, biblically
34 Creates, as a coin
36 Latter-day Saint : Bishop :: Episcopal : ___
39 Hiker's path
41 Glass of "This American Life"
42 Government overthrow
46 Vulcan mind-___
48 Shade-loving plant
49 Pub order
50 2002 Winter Olympics host country: Abbr.
52 Native Alaskan
54 "Sorry—not sorry—for the spicy language" . . . and a hint to 16-Across, 30-Across, and 42-Across
60 Wall-climbing plant
61 Q: What did the ___ say to the pelvis? A: This is a real hip joint!
62 End in ___ (requires overtime)
63 "___ whiz!"
64 Crockett's last stand locale
65 Q: What do you call 19th-century Russian sci-fi? A: ___ Wars!

DOWN

1 Corrie Ten Boom's autobiography, *The ___ Place*
2 Press agent?
3 Queasy feeling
4 What causes one to sing "I owe, I owe, it's off to work I go!"?
5 SLC to Provo direction
6 French (indefinite, singular, feminine) article
7 One of 100 in DC
8 Bonnet holder
9 Store where you can buy a POÄNG and a PÅDRAG
10 "We still need to figure it out," for short
11 2023 flick about a shoe
12 Rue ___.-Catherine, Montréal
17 I'm going to shout from the rooftop: "Who took my ___?!"
18 Big Apple paper: Abbr.
23 Dungeons & Dragons, e.g.: Abbr.
24 Reply to "Am not!"
25 Q: Why does the yogi always meditate under the ___ tree? A: It's a sublime spot.
27 QVC alternative
28 Ump's call
29 Many YSA ward members
31 UT Jazz league
34 Trapeze artist's workplace
35 ___ de la Cité, home of Notre-Dame de Paris
36 Vigor's partner
37 Anger
38 Baseball great Ripken
40 Appropriate
42 Coco, designer of the "little black dress"
43 Mocks from the stands
44 Singer Keys or Actress Silverstone
45 ___ ball (Napoleon Dynamite game)
47 Flop
51 Couch
53 Swell
54 Orm-fay of atin-lay
55 Caesar's greeting
56 Grass in a Salinger title
57 UFC fighting style
58 "Delish!"
59 To and ___

Check your answers on page 29.

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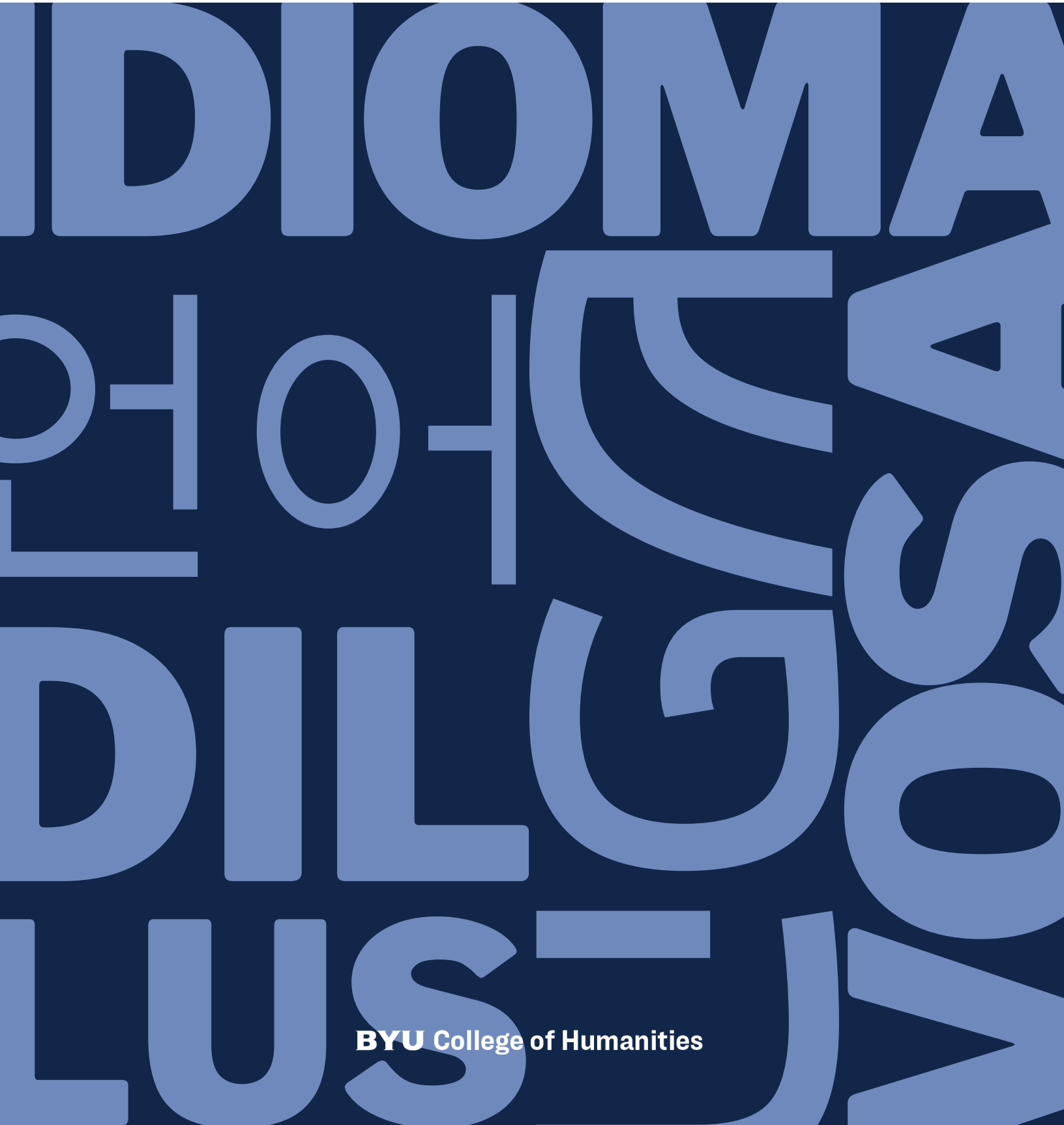
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