

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2015

Check-in and Light Brunch

9:00–9:30 a.m. (Education in Zion Auditorium and adjacent food area, B-192 JFSB)

9:45–10:45 a.m.

Session 1.1

(B-192 JFSB)

THEORY I: THE READER, PHILOSOPHY, AND ART

(Education in Zion Auditorium, B-192 JFSB)

Moderator: Billy Hall, Brigham Young University

“On the Varieties of Readerly Experience, or, Theory After Suspicion”

Matt Wickman, Brigham Young University

Recent theoretical interests in modes of reading—e.g., surface and distant reading—that eschew the assumptions of psychoanalysis, Marxism, and deconstruction effectively reduce texts to repositories of distortional symptoms the truths of which can only be discerned by critics whose penetrating gaze is evocatively divine. Other modes of reading, by contrast, appeal to affect, to networks of signification, and, by association, to something like spiritual experience or textual connectedness. What does it mean to think of these categories—depth and surface, God and spiritual experience—apart from each other? What is God in this new critical landscape?

“Percy’s implicit philosophy of Art in *Lost in the Cosmos*”

Paul Fortunato, University of Houston—Downtown

Through his works, most particularly *Lost in the Cosmos* (1983), Walker Percy indirectly proposes some sketches of a philosophy of art, a conception of how modern art and literature function, by discussing how clueless people tend to be about the self, and how those who are most successful in negotiating the modern world are often those most clueless about their own self and identity. Percy also suggests that artists (and others) can often find the source of meaning in the Christian story. Such a conception comes close to the analysis of critics like Charles Taylor. Writers like Percy offer a way to re-enchant a modern world that has lost its capacity to wonder, to be open to mystery and transcendence and ultimately to meaning—be it religious or aesthetic.

“Literature, Religion, and Deep Reading”

John Schwiebert, Weber State University

The discipline of deep reading—of studying passages of verse or prose, of memorizing and repeating them to direct will and action—includes practitioners among all major religions. While the object of reading widely is to acquire *information*, the object of reading deeply is to obtain *wisdom*. Wisdom, where literature and religion intersect, is knowledge that must be learned, forgotten, and repeatedly relearned in the context of daily experience. By reading deeply, internalizing poetry and prose, one can appreciate one of the great lessons of both religious and nominally secular literature: that attention is everything, and that one molds one’s self to the objects of one’s thoughts.

THE NATURE OF BELIEF IN THE NOVELS OF MARILYNNE ROBINSON
(Museum of Art Lecture Room, 386 MOA)

Moderator: Dan Muhlestein, Brigham Young University

“Marilynne Robinson and the New Earnestness”

Trent Hickman, Brigham Young University

When Marilynne Robinson’s *Gilead* (2004) won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction, it signaled a trend among critics to celebrate novels that conspicuously question cynicism and disbelief as desirable personal and cultural traits. Perhaps in part a reaction against the irony of post modernism, this New Earnestness sees hope and belief as fundamental ways of knowing the world and of perceiving it accurately. Robinson’s *Gilead*, *Home* (2008), and *Lila* (2014) thus join a constellation of other recent Pulitzer Prize-winning novels like Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* (2006), Paul Harding’s *Tinkers* (2009), and Anthony Doerr’s *All the Light We Cannot See* (2014), all of which anchor their writing in an ontology that refuses to subordinate itself, as Robinson puts it in her essay “Wondrous Love,” to “tribalism, resentment, or fear.”

“From Kristeva to Robinson: The Nature of Belief in *Lila*”

Makayla Steiner, University of Iowa

Unlike *Gilead* (2004) and *Home* (2008), both of which approach issues of belief through a rather conventional Christian worldview, Marilynne Robinson’s most recent novel *Lila* (2014) is the story of a woman who comes to belief—and to believe—under completely nontraditional circumstances. Whereas the two earlier novels in the Gilead trilogy plainly address specific doctrinal concepts related to grace, prodigality, predestination, etc., the nature of belief in *Lila* exists somewhere in the liminal space between concrete human experience in the material world and the pull toward the intangible realities of love, devotion, and sacrifice. *Lila* is driven by what Julia Kristeva calls an “incredible need to believe,” which not only facilitates the possibility of conversion to an organized religion but also her physical survival to that point.

(Education in Zion Auditorium, B-192 JFSB)

“Postsecular Approaches to Literature and the Humanities”

Lori Branch, University of Iowa

THEORY II: ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON ART AND FAITH
(Museum of Art Lecture Room, 386 MOA)

Moderator: Trent Hickman, Brigham Young University

“Dialogues of Borup”

Byron Borup, Weber State University

“Dialogues” attempts to show, using variants of quantum physics, that we can know what a writer of scripture whom we accept actually meant even though what that writer produced has undergone several variant translations and thousands of years of time before coming to us.

“Representation, Desdemona, Transcendence”

Rick Duerden, Brigham Young University

Readers have long sought explanations for Desdemona’s inexplicable goodness. Fortunately, Levinas helps, suggesting a reliance on representation to evoke what is beyond concept, all in light of his ambivalence toward artistic representation. The defense of the play *Othello* (1623), of art in general, and of criticism must in this instance rely on the phenomenon of reading or seeing the play. Readerly objections to Desdemona’s subjectivity rely on a response that is best understood in light of Levinas’s concept of justice: her death is incumbent on readers, and they may deal with a sense of guilt or responsibility with avoidance, blame, or sorrow and awe.

“Toward a Natural History of the Image”

Ed Cutler, Brigham Young University

“History,” Walter Benjamin writes, “decays into images, not stories.” An examination of this claim in relation to natural history, drawing upon insights common to metaphysics, psychoanalysis, and the cognitive and biological sciences, suggests that whether images be catalytic, transmissible, indexical, or informative, their ontological status is always to hover between subject and object, remaining themselves ungrounded and unconditioned. Human notions of spirit, mind, and form not only derive from prehistoric images but also from an atemporality attuned less to time than to rhythms of planetary life.

12:15–1:15 p.m.

Session 3.2

(260 MOA)

QUESTIONS OF FAITH IN OLD ENGLISH AND MEDIEVAL TEXTS

(Museum of Art Auditorium, 260 MOA)

Moderator: Bruce Young, Brigham Young University

“The Breastplate of Righteousness: Preparation, the Position, and Protection of God in *Judith*, *Juliana*, and *Elene*”

Karyn L. Hixson, University of Nebraska-Kearney

Faith and obedience are used as a protective shield against adversaries in the Anglo-Saxon poems *Judith*, *Juliana*, and *Elene*, which in turn reflects Paul’s admonition to the Ephesians to “stand therefore . . . having . . . the breastplate of righteousness” wrapped around them.

“‘I am Christian’: Social Dynamics of Belief in the Anglo-Saxon Life of St. Rumwold”

Miranda Wilcox, Brigham Young University

“Christianus sum” cries the newborn Rumwold as the saint commences his miraculous three-day life. The eleventh-century hagiographer imagines Rumwold’s miracles—his precocious professions of faith—in terms of Anglo-Saxon desires and anxieties about salvation. To be saved, a person must be baptized, but infants were unable to make the public profession of faith required for baptism. Such was the desire for infants to be sealed to Christ that adults from the community spoke vicariously for them at their baptism. Some scholars have argued that infant baptism transformed Christian rites of initiation into an exorcism of original sin, but Rumwold’s professions manifest baptism as the intersection of the ethical and sacramental in the public cooperation between individuals and communities in renewing and transmitting their belief.

QUESTIONS OF FAITH IN OLD ENGLISH AND MEDIEVAL TEXTS

(Museum of Art Auditorium, 260 MOA)

“The Lack of Heavenly Aesthetics in *Piers Plowman*”**William M. Storm, Eastern University**

In contrast to the glittering scenes of Pearl or the transcendent empyrean of *Paradiso*, the world of *Piers Plowman* presents readers with a landscape populated by allegorical figures that range from the peasantry to the kingly. *Piers Plowman*, much like *Pearl* and *Paradiso*, seems designed to instruct and to guide the reader to a fuller understanding of how an every day and ordinary aesthetic accomplishes a formation of the Christian faith and afterlife.

THEORY III: MOTIFS AND NARRATIVES OF FAITH

(Museum of Art Lecture Room, 386 MOA)

Moderator: Matt Wickman, Brigham Young University

“Sacred Motifs in Secular Literature”**Mahalingam Subbiah, Weber State University**

Literature is perceived as secular in its temperament, yet religious motifs continue to provide important narrative framework for many works. Such works are not restricted to Christian motifs nor to the American and English canons. Indeed, an examination of the works of J. M. G. Le Clezio and Mo Yan, Nobel Laureates in literature, reveals that religious motifs from Hinduism and Buddhism pervade world literature.

“‘The Beauty in the Beast’: Finding Origin in Fairy Tale Retellings”**Rebecca Hay, Brigham Young University**

From a “villain receiv[ing] information about his victim” to “the hero [who] is married and ascends the throne,” Vladimir Propp contends that “[a]ll fairytales are constructed on the basis of one single string of actions or events called ‘functions’” in his model for the study of fairy tales. But such recent works as Angela Carter’s “The Tiger’s Bride” and Sarah J. Maas’s *A Court of Thorns and Roses* (2015) call into question Propp’s contention that all fairy tales can be broken down into thirty-one functions. Through an examination of these two hallmarks of the Grimms’s tale “Beauty and the Beast” answers emerge. While fairy tales may openly acknowledge their lack of origin, Maas and Carter’s use of specific hallmarks indicate that this tale, and in more general terms the genre of fairy tale itself, is more hallmarked than structured, leading one to study how hallmarks, demarcating a tale or idea and interwoven with different textured works, can lead to similar beliefs or tales.

“Making Old Stories New: Reading and the Cosmological Imagination”**Kellianne Matthews, Brigham Young University**

What readers need today are new ways to read and engage with stories, new reading methods to metaphorize narratives themselves, making them metafictional even when they are not. Through more deliberately imaginative reading and interpretation, we can begin to read stories as cosmologies that pertain to our contemporary situation, thereby reimagining the possibilities of belief and meaning.

THEORY AND FAITH IN RENAISSANCE TEXTS

(Museum of Art Auditorium, 260 MOA)

Moderator: Gideon Burton, Brigham Young University

“The Matter of Spirit: Margaret Cavendish’s Poems and Fancies as Theory and Midrash”**Brandie Siegfried, Brigham Young University**

Margaret Cavendish was accused of being an atheist in her own day, and her reputation as someone who wore her Christianity as a requirement of social fashion—rather than embracing it with heartfelt conviction—continues to be stated with casual certainty in expositions on her poems. The original accusation was based on three characteristics of Cavendish’s faith that are, in fact, true: she did not believe in an immaterial soul; she embraced a Latitudinarian approach to doctrine generally; and more particularly, she asserted that knowledge could only ever be probable, never certain. These characteristics—emerging in part out of her friendship with the Jewish Duarte family during her exile in Antwerp—are recognizable attributes of the seventeenth-century practice of Midrash, wherein reading for beauty provides a “middle way” for approaching the Divine.

“Shakespeare and the Atonement”**Bruce Young, Brigham Young University**

Along with its frequent emphasis on the individual’s reconciliation with God, the centuries-long discussion of the atonement has also considered its social and cosmic implications. Atonement at all three levels is at work in a number of Shakespeare’s plays, including *As You Like It* (1623) and *The Winter’s Tale* (1623), both of which invite audiences to see ethical and spiritual conflict working its way toward resolution not only within characters considered in isolation but also at a social level—and even beyond that, at a cosmic level in which heavenly powers take part in an earthly story.

“The Breath of Worldly Men: Belief Versus Divine Right in Shakespeare’s *Richard II*”**Brittany Rebarchik, Brigham Young University**

In Shakespeare’s *Richard II* (1597), Richard, Henry Bolingbroke, and the people of England are in crisis because they believe they can act on behalf of a higher power. However, only the common people of England possess the ability to act on their belief directly by rejecting the divinely appointed Richard and then appointing Bolingbroke as their king. Their belief not only deposes the king but also destroys the convention of divine right, which placed him in power in the first place. Right to the throne, in *Richard II*, thereby becomes a matter of justified common belief rather than the will of a deity.

THE BIBLE AND LITERATURE

(Museum of Art Lecture Room, 386 MOA)

Moderator: Brandie Siegfried, Brigham Young University

“True as Far as Translated Correctly”**Steve Walker, Brigham Young University**

To those who may have wondered how God could have ordered Joshua to kill all the Canaanites, children and cows included, consider the possibility that he did not. The most determinative biblical translation is the one readers make from the end product of all earlier translations of the text: readers are thus responsible for their own ultimate translations.

“Marlowe’s Psalm Adaptation in *Doctor Faustus* and the Rhetoric of Devilish Truth”**Gary Fuller, Brigham Young University**

Christopher Marlowe’s adaptation of the eighth psalm in *Doctor Faustus* (1604) undermines his alleged atheism while creatively participating in the popular Renaissance emphasis on metrical translations of the Psalms. Marlowe’s devils actually serve as effective teachers of orthodox Christianity and are rhetorically powerful because they are “hostile witnesses,” who join in an English literary tradition of devilish truth-teaching that extends both backward to Old English biblical verse and forward to *Paradise Lost* (1667).

FROM SCOTT TO WILDE: CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON SPIRITUALITY

(Museum of Art Auditorium, 260 MOA)

Moderator: Frank Christianson, Brigham Young University

“Sir Walter Scott as Anthropologist and Historian: Religion’s Influence on Scottish Culture and Ideology”**Kaleigh Spooner, Brigham Young University**

Sir Walter Scott attempted to catalog both the history and culture of the Scottish people and their influence on his own generation. His work, while critical of the religious radicalism of Highlanders and Jacobites in favor of a more moderate and temperate attitude towards politics, marks the part that religion played in the formation of Scotland’s unique culture—its ideologies, superstitions, traditions, folklore, etc. His appreciation of the significance of religion in Scottish culture marks Scott as an anthropologist-historian and a preserver of a culture that might otherwise have been lost.

Holy Dying: The Victorian Deathbed Scene”**Lynn M. Alexander, University of Tennessee—Martin**

When one looks at the variety of texts depicting a major character’s final moments, one realizes both the universality and the importance of deathbed scenes in Victorian literature. Works as varied as Dickens’s popular serial *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841), George Reynolds’s sensational serial polemic *The Seamstress* (1856), and Dinah Mulock Craik’s moral self-help tale *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1851), all present similar deathbed scenes. Michael Wheeler observes “that a cluster of

key ideas and symbols associated with death and the future life provided writers with a shared vocabulary which can be described as characteristically Victorian.” A comparison of the deaths of major characters from three diverse works both illustrates the characteristics of the deathbed scene in Victorian literature and suggests a common theme for them in Jeremy Taylor’s *Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* (1651).

“Oscar Wilde’s Liturgical Aesthetics in a Secular Age”

Joseph McQueen, Ohio State University

Recent advances in post-secular theory—particularly the work of Charles Taylor and John Milbank—have made it possible to explore with greater clarity the largely ignored connections between Oscar Wilde’s Catholicism and his aesthetics. An analysis of some of Wilde’s writings on aesthetic theory as well as *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) suggests that Wilde treats the Eucharist and Roman Catholic liturgy as privileged sites where language and performance transform and even recreate reality.

4:00–5:00 p.m. *Session 6 Plenary Address* (B-192 JFSB)
(Education in Zion Auditorium, B-192 JFSB)

“The Unspoken and the Unspeakable in Missionary Literature”

Jeanne Moskal, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2015

9:00–9:50 a.m. *Session 7.1* (386 MOA)

ART AND RHETORIC IN THE BIBLE

(Museum of Art Lecture Room, 386 MOA)

Moderator: Jon Balzotti, Brigham Young University

“Polemic & Apology: The Rhetorical Aesthetics of Evangelism”

Morgan Mayreis-Voorhis, Los Angeles Mission College

The rhetorical modes of the apology and the polemic have been utilized for centuries in literature, especially religious literature, to defend and advance belief. While each of these genres possess specific technical aspects, they also exhibit an aesthetic dynamic that requires craftsmanship and style to create an inherent beauty present in them. Though these forms exist in antiquity, they have been preserved and enhanced in the works by C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien that specifically deal with issues of faith, working hand-in-hand, both technically and aesthetically.

“The Rhetoric of Biblical Rhetoric”

Nancy Christiansen, Brigham Young University

Through their scholarly focus on rhetorical theory and practice, Renaissance Christian Humanists assume the compatibility of their philosophy with Biblical doctrines. A study of scripture reveals in part rhetorical theory, curricular methodology, and practice either explicitly taught or implicitly applied in the Divine Word that not only corroborate Humanists’ claims but also discover that the Bible serves, along with Ciceronian classical precedents, as a key source for their rhetorical philosophy and practice that in turn correct deficiencies of alternative versions preceding them, that is, Sophistic, Platonic, Aristotelian, Isocratean (Ciceronian) and Augustinian.

9:00–9:50 a.m.

Session 7.1

(386 MOA) (continued)

ART AND RHETORIC IN THE BIBLE

(Museum of Art Lecture Room, 386 MOA)

“A Shift from Utility to Aesthetics: The Creation Story in Genesis”

Andrea Brunken, Brigham Young University

A close look at the two creation stories that begin the Bible—the one readers encounter in the text’s opening chapter, as well as the one that follows in chapter two when the story begins again—reveals an odd moment of narrative backpedalling that points readers to a shift in thematic emphasis—that is, a shift from utility to aesthetics. The trajectory encountered in Genesis causes readers to question the purpose of the biblical creation story and consider possible implications for the role of aesthetic apprehension in the lives of the faithful.

9:00–9:50 a.m.

Session 7.2

(260 MOA)

SPIRITUALITY AND ADOLESCENT LITERATURE

(Museum of Art Auditorium, 260 MOA)

Moderator: Jon Ostenson, Brigham Young University

“The Last Taboo: Spirituality in Young Adult Literature”

Patty Campbell, Editor, Rowman & Littlefield’s Studies in Young Adult Literature Series

In a time when almost any gritty topic can be featured in a young adult novel, one subject avoided by writers and publishers continues to be faith and belief in God. The lack of such ideas in mainstream adolescent literature can be interpreted by teens to mean that these matters are not important, yet a significant part of growing up involves struggling with various issues of spirituality. An examination of the reasons behind this avoidance and a description of some recent books by authors who have braved the taboo are illuminating.

“Writing a Novel: A Leap of Faith”

Chris Crowe, Brigham Young University

As with most artistic endeavors, novel writing is a complicated and vexing pursuit, an enterprise guaranteed to induce self-doubt, frustration, and avoidance. Some authors claim—and maybe they are telling the truth—that they have discovered the secrets of novel writing, but I am more inclined to endorse Somerset Maugham’s observation that “There are three rules for writing a novel. Unfortunately, no one knows what they are.” For me, the writing process is so fraught with uncertainty that I have to approach it as an act of faith, forcing myself to move forward with hope that if I do, something will emerge. The surprising evolution of my latest novel, *Death Coming Up the Hill* (2015), illustrates this process of faith in action.

10:00–11:00 a.m.

Session 8 Plenary Address

(B-192 JFSB)

(Education in Zion Auditorium, B-192 JFSB)

“Finding Milton and Angels in the Downtown Eastside”

Martine Leavitt, Vermont College of Fine Arts

BIBLICAL CUSTOMS, CONFLICTS, AND CONSEQUENCES

(Museum of Art Lecture Room, 386 MOA)

Moderator: Nancy Christiansen, Brigham Young University

“If It Be So, Why Am I Thus?: Barrenness in a Time of Multiplying”**Jennifer Thorup, Brigham Young University**

In the first chapter in Genesis, God establishes the commandment to “multiply and replenish the earth,” yet the Bible weaves a pattern of focus on six righteous women who do not have the ability to bear children, which in turn raises an interesting question: Is barrenness a curse from God?

“Stoning as Religious Expression in ‘The Lottery’ and the New Testament”**Elizabeth Gillis, Weber State University**

Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery” and the story of Stephen in the New Testament are similar in several ways, particularly in that they both end with a person being stoned to death. An important difference between the stories involves how the two victims react to their imminent deaths. Tessie Hutchinson exclaims, “It isn’t fair, it isn’t right,” holding out her hands to keep the armed villagers away, but Stephen defends himself with scripture, forgiving those who stone him. These reactions show the strength of the victims’ faith. Tessie Hutchinson had lost faith in the traditions of her community, while Stephen maintained strong faith in God.

“Paul the Literary Theorist”**Jason Kerr, Brigham Young University**

In his Epistle to the Romans Paul uses the concept of religious law to grapple with the issue of signification that is at the heart of inquiry into literary modes of meaning, aiming to show both that law undergirds the very possibility of meaning but also cannot capture all possible meaning. Probing the social implications arising from the reality of divergent relationships to systems of meaning, he attempts to imagine something like the possibility for a unified discourse community in the face of postmodern fragmentation and to think about conditions that might enable such a community to exist.

MORMON INFLUENCES IN LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

(Museum of Art Auditorium, 260 MOA)

Moderator: Keith Lawrence, Brigham Young University

“A Utah Lynching: When Violence is Commodified as Art, Faith, and a Community Celebration”**Dan Muhlestein, Brigham Young University**

In June, 1925, in Price, Utah, Robert Marshall, an African American, was lynched by a mob of over 1000 people. The lynching took place at approximately 10:20 a.m. on the front steps of the Carbon County courthouse. Newspaper accounts of the lynching—which was discussed at length in *The Sun* (Price), *The Salt Lake Tribune*, and *The Deseret News* (Salt Lake City)—can be best understood as examples of gallows literature, in which violence is commodified as art, faith, and a community celebration.

MORMON INFLUENCES IN LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND CULTURE
(Museum of Art Auditorium, 260 MOA)

“Mark Twain’s ‘In Memoriam’: The Lost Temple of Beauty and Belief”

Alan Manning and Nicole Amare, Brigham Young University

Mark Twain penned the poem “In Memoriam” in 1897 on the first anniversary of his daughter Suzy’s death. An examination of the poem suggests that it might have been based on the rise and fall of the Nauvoo temple, just eighty miles upriver from Twain’s boyhood Hannibal, historic events later reconstructed by Twain as an allegory of his daughter’s life and passing. At the gates of an end-of-life disaffection from God, Twain perhaps yet built from the iconography of Mormonism a final point of emotional refuge.

“The Laureate and the ‘Mormonites’: Wordsworth’s Niece and Early Perceptions of Mormons in England”

Nick Mason, Brigham Young University

On February 3, 1846, Britain’s most revered living poet, William Wordsworth, dashed off a letter to his American publisher, Henry Reed, inquiring about what he knew of “a wretched set of Religionists in your Country, *Superstitionists* I ought to say, called Mormonites or Latter-day-saints.” He went on to explain that his niece, Margaret Hutchinson, had “just embarked, *we believe* at Liverpool, with a set of deluded Followers of [Joseph Smith], in an attempt to join their society.” While scholars have long known about Wordsworth’s letter, no one to date has adequately tracked what happened to Margaret after her departure or explored what her conversion says about the appeal of the Mormon gospel beyond the slums of Preston and Manchester. A close study of Margaret’s diaries and poems helps to begin filling in the gaps concerning what is known about Margaret herself and the family she left behind in England.

SPIRITUAL MOTIFS AND ISSUES IN CLASSIC VICTORIAN TEXTS
(Museum of Art Lecture Room, 386 MOA)

Moderator: Nick Mason, Brigham Young University

“Islamic Motifs in Robert Browning’s ‘My Last Duchess’ and ‘Count Gismond’”

Jena Al-Fuhaid, Kuwait University

A recent surge of criticism in the field of Romantic Orientalism has led to a reexamination of Arabic-Islamic influences on canonical male Romantic poets. Extending this critical approach to Victorian poetry discloses Arabic-Islamic motifs in Robert Browning’s poetry, especially “My Last Duchess” and “Count Gismond,” which demonstrate his appropriation of the Arabic-Islamic motif of veiling as well as the story of the Aisha and installing them in Western settings.

“Beauty and Ugliness around Jo’s Death in *Bleak House*”

John H. Mazaheri, Auburn University

Charles Dickens describes Jo’s death in *Bleak House* (1853) from a clearly Christian perspective, showing how a poor despised boy dies *beautifully* in a miserable and *ugly* place.

“‘I Wondered at her Silence’: Jane Eyre’s Wrestle with the Bystander’s Dilemma”

Rose E. Hadden, Concordia College

For the last forty years criticism of Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847) has understandably concentrated on Bertha Mason Rochester as a marginalized, abused, and silenced mixed-race woman. Although Jane’s childhood friend Helen Burns is a very different and much less controversial character, she and Bertha suffer similar deaths from the culpable neglect of their guardians and the silence of those who should be their allies. Both women serve as the impetus of a bystander’s dilemma: the perennial question of whether one is obligated to protect another’s life or dignity at the risk of one’s own. Commentary by Victorian legal theorist John Austin is useful in creating a standard against which to judge the ethical merit of choices made by Maria Temple and Jane in choosing not to protect Helen and Bertha.

12:30–1:30 p.m.

Session 10.2

(260 MOA)

BYU WRITERS AND SCHOLARS DISCUSS THEIR WORK AND EXPERIENCES I

(Museum of Art Auditorium, 260 MOA)

Moderator: Lance Larsen, Brigham Young University

“Answering Johann Wondra’s 1980 Call for Beauty”

Cynthia Hallen, Brigham Young University

For a symposium at Brigham Young University in November 1980 titled “Mormonism and the Arts,” Johann Wondra spoke about art as a possibility for love, calling upon Latter-day Saints to produce creative works that please God and ennoble others in five areas: agency, integrity, perfection, beauty, and charity. An examination of selected poems in the context of Wondra’s remarks suggests that they indeed address the quest for true beauty and real love.

“The Essay as Resurrection”

Joey Franklin, Brigham Young University

Every personal essay is a calling forth, not a joint-and-marrow restoration to be sure, but a restoration nonetheless. When one sits down to write an essay, one is, in effect, lifting a hand over one’s past and calling it forth from the darkness, willing it back into existence. If one calls memories forth well, then a potentially sloppy resurrection can become a first step in confronting and communing with the divine. The personal essay can thus be a tool for personal discovery and spiritual exploration, a textual bridge from body to spirit, an intercessor between one’s deepest sense of self and the larger world around one.

12:30–1:30 p.m. Session 10.2 (260 MOA) (continued)
BYU WRITERS AND SCHOLARS DISCUSS THEIR WORK AND EXPERIENCES I

(Museum of Art Auditorium, 260 MOA)

“Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Writing Literary Mormon Fiction”

John Bennion, Brigham Young University

If beauty in terms of the aesthetic tradition of the Mormon novel can coexist with belief in this current historical moment, and, further if novelic beauty includes the sublime, possibly exploring spiritual danger and doubt that can undermine the faithfulness of the novel for many readers, then perhaps young writers who are trying to meld aesthetic quality and faithfulness can benefit from a Mormon culture that is more open to doubt and questions about belief.

1:45–2:45 p.m. Session 11.1 (386 MOA)

EXPRESSIONS OF FAITH FROM GASKELL TO GALE

(Museum of Art Lecture Room, 386 MOA)

Moderator: Brett McInelly, Brigham Young University

“The Curse and the ‘Clare’: Religion in Elizabeth Gaskell’s ‘The Poor Clare’”

Toni Pilcher, Brigham Young University

The interpretation by characters in Elizabeth Gaskell’s “The Poor Clare” of Bridget Fitzgerald’s feminine Christian “wildness” as witchcraft resulted in definite consequences within the story.

“Beauty after Death: Heaven as Consolation in Beebe Eyre’s *Miscellaneous Poems*”

Carlie Wetzel, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Does a belief in heaven benefit the dead or those still living? In many nineteenth-century elegies the assertion that a lost loved one is in a beautiful, more peaceful place often precedes another assertion that the mourning reader should cease grieving and celebrate the lucky lot of the deceased. A close analysis of several of Beebe Eyre’s elegies for young people from his *Miscellaneous Poems* (1866) asks how and why Eyre describes the afterlife, ultimately determining that the method of consolation Eyre calls for does not directly satisfy the grief of the living, but, rather, the overall assertion in the elegies of the existence of heaven provides comfort to those who are still living but must face eventual death.

“Sensitively Sensuous: The Mormon Aesthetic of Embodiment”

Gideon Burton, Brigham Young University

Mormon aesthetics begins with the concept of an embodied God and a view of existence being exalted through physical-spiritual union. From such theology, the LDS contemplation, creation, and appreciation of artistic works must be founded on respect for form: artistic form is the “embodiment” of ideas. Like human bodies, form is a mode of mortal proof, paradoxically sacred and mundane.

BYU WRITERS AND SCHOLARS DISCUSS THEIR WORK AND EXPERIENCES II

(Museum of Art Auditorium, 260 MOA)

Moderator: John Bennion, Brigham Young University

“Against Happiness: Delay and Trouble in Narrative Fiction”

Stephen Tuttle, Brigham Young University

An examination of function and delay in fiction discloses how fiction thrives as happy or satisfying conclusions are deferred and how readers are drawn to unstable or unsettled narrative moments.

“Odd Angles of Heaven: Writing Poems of Belief”

Lance Larsen, Brigham Young University

Sometimes a dogleg through the body and the world is the quickest route to the divine. Larsen suggests that without meaning to he has made this his *modus operandi*, or as a recent reviewer of his work puts it: “There’s a slantwise echo of the garden in all of Larsen’s poetry. In its fascination with the natural world, both domestic and wild, there’s a longing to connect with the creation, with the other, and with God.”

“Beauty in Diversity: A Personal Essay on My Experiences as an LDS Student in Secular Universities”

Heather Thomson, Brigham Young University

How can one successfully pursue academia and be true to one’s own religious identity? How can one be a witness as a Mormon/Christian/person of faith while working within a mainly secular structure? Thomson explores these and other questions in a personal essay informed by her experience as an LDS student who spent six years at predominantly secular universities before coming to BYU to study creative writing.

SONGS AND IMAGES OF TRANSCENDENCE

(Museum of Art Lecture Room, 386 MOA)

Moderator: Brian Roberts, Brigham Young University

“Purple and Divinity: Emily Dickinson’s Eucharistic Poetry”

Alyssa Devey, Brigham Young University

That Dickinson’s poetry is the embodiment of language just as the Eucharist is the embodiment of Christ is apparent from two considerations of her poetry: 1) her use of Catholic imagery and the Eucharist suggests a joining of religious ideas that promote the potential divinity of Christ within the individual; 2) the Eucharistic markers in Dickinson’s poetry indicate how her work is both material and spiritual, just as the Eucharist is both referential and symbolic at the same time.

“The Transcendent Christian Family in the Hymns of Emily H. Woodmansee, Mary Judd Page, and Eliza R. Snow”

Keith Lawrence, Brigham Young University

In the context of American psalmody of the early and mid-nineteenth century, where American hymn writing was democratized and women were effectually enabled to preach to mixed audiences through their hymns, often reaching far more ears and hearts than the preaching of male ministers, the hymns and poems of three Mormon women are especially striking. Eliza R. Snow, Emily Hill Woodmansee, and Mary Judd Page not only spoke powerfully and memorably to mixed audiences, but they also made difficult doctrinal principles accessible, critiqued gender inequity, instructed priesthood bearers, and established benchmarks of faith and religious devotion still embraced by Church members more than 170 years later.

3:00–3:50 p.m.

Session 12.1

(386 MOA) (continued)

SONGS AND IMAGES OF TRANSCENDENCE

(Museum of Art Lecture Room, 386 MOA)

“Images of Beauty and Transcendence in Galway Kinnell’s *Body Rags*”

Duke Trott, Emerson College

While *Body Rags* (1968) is most notable for containing some of Galway Kinnell’s most celebrated poems, an exploration of how the poems work together to tell a story of the search for beauty in the modern world and the growth that can come from confronting the pain that often comes along with this search is instructive.

3:00–3:50 p.m.

Session 12.2

(260 MOA)

RELIGIOUS ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN TEXTS

(Museum of Art Auditorium, 260 MOA)

Moderator: Emron Esplin, Brigham Young University

“The Influence of Religious Values on the Writings of Brainard Cheney”

James Young, Weber State University

An investigation of the works of Brainard Cheney, a writer from Georgia, who participated in the Southern Renaissance of Literature (1930 to 1955) sheds light on how his personal crises of faith influenced his fiction.

“Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* and the Matter of Belief”

Charles Pastoor, John Brown University

In the years since its publication in 2006, Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* has become a source of debate among scholars interested in the representations of religious faith in fiction, namely, the role such faith plays in the lives of the two main characters of the novel—a father and son who must navigate its post-apocalyptic landscape. Contrary to the opinion of one critic who claims that the novel demonstrates that religious faith is not necessary to live a moral life, a study of the novel itself suggests that morality does in fact, at least in part, depend upon belief in God for its existence and justification.

“Significant Connections between Beauty and Belief in the Classroom”

Elizabeth Christianson, Brigham Young University

If aesthetics are meant to be experienced, how can one create an aesthetic experience while teaching the subject of aesthetics? What is an aesthetic experience-based approach to learning? How does it differ from a more traditional inquiry-based approach? Maxine Greene argues that learning is found at the intersection of inquiry and imagination—the aesthetic experience. Teaching the literary arts should easily allow for these experiences, but too often critical inquiry and academic reflection leave very little room for the exercise of imagination, thus limiting the aesthetic experience. One way teachers can enhance an appreciation of beauty is through assigning a Beauty Project, which allows students to explore the connection between beauty and their religious beliefs.

4:00–5:00 p.m.

Session 13 Plenary Address

(B-192 JFSB)

(Education in Zion Auditorium, B-192 JFSB)

“Beauty . . . Belief . . . and Sadness: An Awareness in Japanese Literature”

Van Gessel, Brigham Young University