

HONRS 292R-002, Fall 2008  
Samuel Bradshaw

Lecture Responses (250-500 words)

Having attended the enriching Honors 292R seminar by Professor Sowell, I have a new appreciation for the comprehensive planning and organization of renaissance-period art. I did not realize before how many symbols artists of that time period incorporated into their paintings. For example, Saint Jerome, the main focus of the seminar: he is always or most often depicted as an old man, living in the desert, with a rock, skull, crucifix, and other objects nearby. He is pictured as writing or studying, for he was an example of disciple-scholar; he studied the works of Roman scholarship, then he devoted the rest of his life to study of scriptural texts. He is pictured in the desert because that is where he lived, as a hermit of sorts, studying alone. The crucifix he holds or looks at symbolizes his devotion to and focus on the Savior and Christianity. A rock he holds or has nearby stands for a rock he used to bang his head against in case of inappropriate thoughts: a symbol of penitence. The skull? This symbolizes the reality of mortality, but also the place called Golgotha (the "place of the skull" where Jesus was crucified) and possibly the skull of Adam, found traditionally under the cross of Jesus Christ in art and story. There are other symbols as well, common in art depicting Saint Jerome: a lion, an hourglass, a red robe, even a Cardinal's hat. All these things and more represent the fascinating symbolism of renaissance-period artistic works.

Samuel Bradshaw, 9/5/08

The lecture by Jim Faulconer was about how French philosophy has a correlation with religion. Typical perceptions of stereotypical French philosophy include atheism and lack of, denial of, or ignorance pertaining to religion (especially Christian faiths). But Faulconer disputed these unbalanced yet common claims of atheism in French philosophy by asserting that, though some philosophers are indeed atheistic, there are very many who in fact are not. Faulconer set forth his assertion by stating that Jean Paul Sautre is not equal to French philosophy. A major philosophical idea that he expounded upon was the idea of "transcendence" and how nobody can have access to things that are outside of themselves. The idea of transcendence is common, among philosophical circles: basically it says we can't know that anything exists. But, philosophers with a religious background and belief have said that neither can we know of a thing's existence, nor can we know that they do not exist. Thus the philosophy of transcendence cannot disprove religion. But, of course, as Latter-day Saints, we see that the influence Holy Ghost proves that we can in very deed know of things that transcend us, thus discrediting the philosophical transcendence-theory ideas. Where philosophy makes ideas and things uncertain (such as our real existence), religion fills in and makes those things certain again. Overall, I felt that the lecture was well-prepared and Faulconer was passionate about his subject, but personally I was not very interested in the subject. Perhaps I was just tired. Les croissants avec du fromage étaient très bons.

Samuel Bradshaw, 9/12/08

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel gave a lecture on the Book of Matthew in the New Testament. Having studied the Bible academically as well as studying the scriptures spiritually, he is a “disciple-scholar.” Unfortunately, there weren’t enough seats and I was sitting halfway into the hall; therefore, I did not hear all that was said and only caught a few of his main points. Holzapfel focused on the call to discipleship. Jesus followed the Jewish traditions and went to the Jewish feasts “as was his custom.” He went to the temple and the synagogues. But He was not a typical Jewish teacher. No other Jewish teachers called specific individuals as disciples. No other Jewish teacher taught that we were to be as children – as the children of God – and to rely on the Father and trust in him unconditionally. Holzapfel also mentioned some interesting things about the texts of the four Gospels; that, though they may have discrepancies between the accounts, such as the number of messengers announcing Jesus’ resurrection at the tomb, the core of the story, that which is important, remains the same: that messengers announced it; and, that much information from the Gospel of Matthew is based on Peter’s contribution to the Gospel of Mark. These things are interesting from a historical point of view. Holzapfel also talked about the progression towards discipleship: first hearing, then understanding, then believing, then repenting, then obeying and following. I lost much else of what was said due to the capacity of the room.

Samuel Bradshaw, 9/19/08

The lecture given by Paul Anderson about Japanese woodblock prints was interesting. I did not know that so much western art was influenced so exceedingly by Japanese art. The woodblock prints were made by creating a kind of stamp for each color, and stamping one color at a time onto the artistic surface. In Europe, they did not know how to create prints of many colors until seventy years after the opening of Japan to international trade and commerce. Japan was isolated for hundreds of years, which caused a preservation of their unique culture as well as a period of peace, in which Japanese woodblock printing flourished. This ended after an ambassador from the United States met with Japanese leaders and asked that Japan be opened to the rest of the world. Anyway, in time, the Japanese art found its way into Europe and the Americas, lending itself to the techniques of new western artists – and one who looks at certain pieces of western art, or certain artists, can see definite similarities between the two types of art, originating with the Japanese style. Anderson, after explaining the history a little bit, explained what kind of questions an inquisitive student of art might ask, grouping them into five categories: what is the story being told? how was this work created? who made it, where, and when? how does it compare to other works? and, what does it say about “larger issues” – i.e. society and culture. We analyzed several woodblock prints using these questions.

Samuel Bradshaw, 9/26/08

This, the fifth lecture, by Russell Osguthorpe, was about the connection between learning and teaching. Elder Osguthorpe (he is an area general authority) quoted William Butler Yeats, who said, “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” If the analogy is extended, this means that in giving education to another, your own is not lost; education must be constantly maintained within oneself; and education grows with time. The Latin proverb, “quod docet discit,” means, “One who teaches, learns.” Elder Ballard said, “When missionaries know that they know how to teach, that’s all they want to do.” By teaching something, you learn more about it; and by

listening to the response of those you teach, you learn yet more. This was illustrated by a class exercise in which, in groups of two, one person reads one article, and another the other, and teaches the teaching to the other person. Different insights are expressed by different people, even on the same topic. Also, by teaching, you must find a way to clearly express your subject, and by so reviewing the subject in your head, the knowledge is reinforced more strongly in the teacher. I think it is for this reason (among others) that “a testimony is found in the bearing of it.” The scripture is also brought to mind, that when you teach with the Spirit, “he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together” (D&C 50:22). Overall, Elder Osguthorpe had some interesting insights to teaching and learning.

Samuel Bradshaw, 10/3/08

Jim Kearn, a professor of economics, spoke today about how and why education is important. Apparently studies have shown that, on average, high school dropouts make less money in their jobs than high school graduates, who make less money than college graduates, who make less money than graduate school graduates. Therefore, the level of education a person receives is closely tied to his or her salary. There are two mainstream explanations for this: that education only provides literacy, called the “signaling theory,” and that in college we acquire skills that increase our productivity in a specific sector (human capital notion). Kearn’s theory is “discipline habits kapital.” He believes that most job-related skills are learned on the job, but education is learning how to learn. Through education we acquire rewarding habits such as punctuality, reliability, hard work, toleration for boring assignments, balancing use of time, etc. A college such as Brigham Young University is helpful because there are high expectations for discipline. Jim Kearn thinks that independent study classes are not beneficial, but rather they are harmful: “education at your convenience” violates one of the huge benefits and purposes of education: to learn how to do things, not when you feel like it, but when it is assigned. People who learn through independent study or home schooling do not perform as well on the job because they are not as disciplined to do hard things at inconvenient times. All in all, the lecture today was interesting, with a lot of statistics, and the chili was good.

Samuel Bradshaw, 10/10/08

The Dean of Undergraduate Education at our university, Dr. John Bell, talked about the role of general education in life. He first showed a video of “Father Guido,” who talked about a concept for a five-minute university (as a joke). It was actually quite entertaining. Dr. Bell said that we need to use our educational experience to learn how to teach. He referenced Elder Osguthorpe’s lecture from two weeks ago, which was focused on learning by teaching. He focused on four categories of reasons to learn how to teach: practical, economic, social, and spiritual. Practically, when you teach something, you learn it better yourself. Economically, the world is becoming more competitive and previously localized jobs are becoming available in other places. Workplaces need managers and leaders who can synthesize and teach things they learn, understandably and comprehensively, to new employees. Socially, we are told to love our neighbor as ourselves, so we should be concerned about the education of those around us. The world needs, especially in under-developed countries, more educated people who can become good educators. Also, parenthood requires teaching children all kinds of things. Dr. Bell said that the things that stood out in his best education experiences were great timing, one-on-one

learning, experience and application of subjects, questions and class participation, et cetera. Dr. Bell talked about the power of language and the importance of inviting the Holy Ghost. In conclusion, he said that the role of undergraduate education is to provide an opportunity to give. Overall, I think Dr. Bell used a lot of good stories and examples and made the lecture interesting. So did the cookies outside at the end.

Samuel Bradshaw, 10/16/08

John Lamb, a professor of chemistry, spoke about what people know and what they think they know in science, and how that has changed throughout history: the rise and fall of scientific certainty. The Latin root of “scientist” is “to know,” so a scientist is “one who knows.” Professor Lamb prefers to call them “natural philosophers,” a term meaning, from its linguistic roots, “lovers of wisdom about nature.” Greek science flourished around the fifth century BC. The first idea of an atom was that if you kept cutting something in half, eventually you would have non-divisible bits – “atom” means “not divisible.” There are two types of scientific certainty, according to Professor Lamb: Type I Certainty is that everything can be described in physical terms. The idea was that if someone could completely observe the intricacies of mechanics within the atom and the universe, they could know what has happened and what will happen in the future. The problem with this is that there is no room for free will: that everything is cause and effect, and choices are simply brought about sequentially by a huge machine we call the universe. Then there is Type II Certainty: that is, we have things all figured out. Even famous scientists have subscribed to this proven-wrong theory and said things to the effect that we already know everything: for example, the famous scientist Max Planck’s old physics professor had said, “don’t bother going into physics – all important discoveries have been made.” These two types of certainty have come and gone through the years. Professor Lamb then explained scientific models, how science relates to faith, and he popped a balloon.

Samuel Bradshaw, 10/23/08

Gary L. Hatch, an associate dean of BYU, talked a lot about rhetorical strategies and how they were applied to the United States Presidential competition. First he described a made-up term called “rhetrickery,” which is using rhetorical strategies to make the worst cause seem the better cause. Aristotle defined “rhetoric” as “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.” Plato said it is “the art of leading the soul by means of speech” (quotes originally in Greek). Some more terms he defined are “exigence,” which is an imperfection marked by urgency, something that must be done; “audience,” which is the group of people capable of being influenced by an argument who can act on it; and a “set of constraints,” such as the date of an election. Chronos and kairos, two views of time in Greek, speak of the flow of time and the opportune time. The next thing that Professor Hatch talked about was the flow of time and when to argue: First is the origin, where the discussion is being shaped. Then is maturity, the time when one must speak up, saying the right thing at the right time and place. Next is deterioration, when a matter is decided and speaking out becomes less utile and effective, followed by disintegration, where the argued event is passed and nothing can be done to change it. In conclusion, after talking about the Presidential competition in terms of rhetoric, Hatch described rhetoric as that which develops practical wisdom, helping us decide the best course of

action based on the available knowledge. In all, the lecture was somewhat long. I had already learned a lot of the same things about rhetoric in English class, so it was repetitive, as well.

Samuel Bradshaw, 10/30/08

Barta Heiner, of the theatre and media arts department, talked about counterfeits and choosing the right in general. She said that actors try to find an “if” situation – to pretend that they are actually experiencing whatever they are to act. Richard Boleslavsky said, “Acting is the life of the human soul receiving its birth through art.” Sister Heiner is an actor and therefore used acting as the recurring analogy in her lecture. She talked about how acting is a counterfeit for life situations. She repeated that counterfeit values always resemble the truth. The Greek word for “actor” is hypocrites, meaning to act or pretend. Sister Heiner said that her father said, “If there’s a rule, God put it there for a reason.” She urged us not to break rules, or “sell our birthright,” for counterfeit happiness. She told the story about the stagecoach owner looking for a driver; two of the applicants would drive close to the edge without falling, but the third was prudent and stayed away from the edge. The one who didn’t go along the edge was chosen. Basically she was saying that we need to stick with what we know is safe; we have no reason to break any rules or take unnecessary risks. James E. Faust said, “There will always be enough risks that will come to you naturally without your having to seek them out.” Another good quote she used, from an ancient Greek, was, “Whatever frees our spirit without giving us control over ourselves is ruinous.” In all, the lecture had some good points, and good quotes.

Samuel Bradshaw, 11/6/08

Robyn Openshaw-Pay gave a somewhat fascinating presentation about how to color-code people. She referenced the book “The People Code” by a Doctor Hartman (previously titled “The Color Code”). According to the theory presented, each person can be categorized into a dominant “color,” which corresponds to a specific set of character traits. “Red people” are focused, organized, determined, and logical; “blue people” are loyal, thoughtful, and emotional; “yellow people” are outgoing, loud, optimistic, and carefree; and “white people” are patient, accepting, shy, and creative. According to the “Hartman Personality Profile” color quiz assessment, my personality was 53% white, 24% blue, 16% yellow, and 7% red. As we sat in different sections depending on our dominant color, Openshaw-Pay talked about the personalities to be expected from the different groups. She cautioned us to use this “knowledge” for good, that is, to know how to relate to them, and not for bad, that is, to stereotype, dismiss, or direct ill will towards them. Then she and three others were guessed about, through the asking of questions, in discerning their dominant colors. If I remember correctly, Landon was yellow, Jordan was blue, Matthew was blue, and Openshaw-Pay was red. Those who guessed accurately received a book or a t-shirt. The lecture activity was interesting overall, as some people I knew did seem to fit into their respective color-coded categories, though I still have no idea why colors should represent personality types. In addition, the cake provided at the end of the lecture was quite good.

Samuel Bradshaw, 11/13/08

The Honors thesis panel and preceding thesis explanation were very informative, especially for those who plan to graduate with University Honors. Professor Sowell gave good introduction and PowerPoint presentation that explained all about the thesis. The thesis would improve a writer's research skills and rhetorical skills. They would have a chance to make an original contribution to the academic world. If the thesis is significant, it might be published. Good theses provide academic and professional credentials and an advantage in applying to post-college graduate school. Professor Sowell also talked about the long, laborious process for creating a thesis. An orientation meeting is required first. Then you figure out what area you want to study, meet with Honors people, find a "thesis advisor" or endorsing professor, decrease the range of topic span to a smaller segment of study, etc. Once all that is completed, a writer would submit a thesis proposal. Then they would spend a long time researching, and write a draft, which would continuously be revised. Finally, when the final draft is finalized, it is submitted and defended before the Honors people. If it is approved, it is formatted and bound, and a few copies are produced. Several people help with a thesis along the way; it is not really completely an individual effort. After having completed the PowerPoint and explanation, Professor Sowell invited four students to introduce themselves, all of whom are writing or have written their theses. Questions were asked of these four people. Again, the class would be informative and useful for anyone planning to do an Honors thesis. And the refreshments were good!

Samuel Bradshaw, 11/20/08

Having attended the enriching Honors 292R seminar by Professor Sowell, I have a new appreciation for the amazing benefits that BYU offers. I really liked the quote by James E. Faust that said, "For the amount of money we spend subsidizing one of you for four years at BYU, we could build a schoolhouse ...". Some of the benefits of BYU are as follows: the student body is predominately LDS, the college is provided at a relatively low cost, there is an Honor Code, and people meet good people and form lasting relationships. Marriage and family is emphasized at BYU; about 53.4% of those in the most recent graduating class are married. As to the Honor Code, we recognize how it benefits us; it protects principles, keeps us from more serious problems and crimes, allows us to keep the Spirit with us, and frees us from evil influences. BYU's rankings and statistics are also impressive; we hold first place in many of the moral categories of college rankings by the Princeton Review, such as not using drugs, praying regularly, et cetera. We also are ranked first for our study-abroad programs, our dental-bound graduates, and our undergraduate accounting program. BYU is also the sixteenth-ranked college for National Merit Scholars. But the main point that sets BYU apart, and makes it the best place in the world to get an academic education, is the fact that the spiritual and temporal, the religious and secular subjects are taught hand-in-hand. And the fact that they have good refreshments after Honors 292R classes.

Samuel Bradshaw, 12/11/08