HONRS 292R-002, Winter 2009
Samuel Bradshaw

Lecture Responses (250-500 words)

Because I added the class late, I wasn't able to attend the first lecture, so this response is to a lecture I attended in its place. The lecture was titled "U.S. Foreign Assistance: Why We Do It; Why It Matters; New Approaches" and was presented by Aaron Sherinian. Sherinian works for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, formed by Congress in 2004. According to the data he had, in 2007 the United States gave about $21.8 billion of development assistance to other countries (which is still less than one fourth of 1% of the gross national income). That amount is twice as much as in 2000. I didn't realize how much the government contributed (and in addition to all the private organizations). Fifty separate "units" of our government help to develop and deliver aid. But, Sherinian says that the American attitude is changing: A lot of people don't want to give money oversees because often they don't see it being used wisely. That's why the MCC was formed. The government needed a better strategy, better organization, clear legislation, and more resources. More than half of the people in the world live on less than $2 each day. Unfortunately, in places of extreme poverty, the more viable and productive way to live seems to be through violence and corruption. But the MCC collects a wide range of data from different countries to determine which ones are eligible for aid: the categories of eligibility assessed are whether they are ruled justly, whether the government invests in the people, and the amount of economic freedom provided to the people. I liked a quote he used, "Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere."

Samuel Bradshaw, 1/8/09 (make-up)

I went over the PowerPoint for this lecture with the TA because I wasn't able to attend the lecture itself. It's very interesting to see how many symbols there are in old works of art. Iconography is the study of these symbols. The symbols in Annunciation paintings from the Renaissance are repeated consistently in the different paintings. The Annunciation is the announcement to Mary (by Gabriel) of Christ's birth, found in Luke 1:26-29. Some of the interesting symbols are as follows: Often the angel is depicted holding an olive branch. This symbolizes peace. Mary's clothes are usually red and blue. Red stands for charity, and blue for the "vault of heaven." She has blond hair, which (during the time of the Renaissance) symbolized surpassing beauty. Lilies are commonly depicted: they are white, and symbolize purity. A group of three items often stands for the trinity, and four items for the four corners of the earth. Together they can mean the coming of God (Christ, trinity) to the earth. The Holy Ghost is often represented by a beam of light or a dove. Mary has a book, which is opened to Isaiah's prophecy of Christ's birth. Some Annunciation paintings show the Fall, because Eve's (according to Catholic tradition) wickedness was balanced by Mary's purity. Often Mary is separated visually from others in the paintings. Also, the paintings often show windows or glass bottles. Both of these things (separation and glass) describe the virgin birth. The glass is a metaphor for this: just as light can pass through a glass bottle warming the contents without touching them, so Mary conceived while remaining pure. These are just a few of the many symbols that are prevalent in Annunciation paintings.

Samuel Bradshaw, 1/15/09 (late)

Terry Ball, the dean of religious education, gave an interesting lecture about how faith and the scientific method interact and are connected. George Albert Smith said, "Thus the university has a dual function ... secular learning, the lesser value, and spiritual development, the greater. These two values must be always together." There have been many scientists who were LDS or believers in God who have contributed great things to science and technology. Some people think that science and religion are opposing ways of thinking. Professor Ball divided scientists into two categories: scientific atheists, and scientific theists. The atheists think that the scientific method is foolproof and religion isn't needed if one is an expert at applying it. They think that if God exists, He can be proven just as scientifically and temporally as any other phenomenon. Scientific theists don't see a need to abandon faith. They feel that the scientific method is not an absolutely certain method, and that science can't fully answer every question. They rely a lot on intuition in addition to scientific reasoning. There are several scriptures that Professor Ball quoted to the effect that eternal truths must be discovered through faith, not pure reasoning. To the spiritually discerned, however, the scientific method is similar to the instruction found in Alma 32. There is a hypothesis, an experiment, and a conclusion. Another good point made was that even some scientific "proven" things are not really observed, but are discerned only by results of side effects in experimentation: for example, nobody has seen an electron itself. In all, the lecture was insightful and several good arguments were made for scientific theism. And the pizza provided at the end was good.

Samuel Bradshaw, 1/22/09

John Welch's presentation on Mormonism and academia was actually really insightful and interesting. I've been interested for a while in proofs and evidences of the Book of Mormon. Brother Welch provided a lot of them. Of course, the way to share or obtain a pure testimony is not simply through academic studies: it must be conveyed through the Spirit by faith. Nevertheless, evidences can help build our testimonies. One evidence he gave for Joseph Smith's character was that he was a witness in a trial in Palmyra, New York, in 1818. He was not even 14 at the time. Legally, because of his young age, they would have had to assess and examine him to make sure he was mature, and of good character, before he could stand as a witness. He was found good enough to be a witness (this Palmyra trial also counters claims that the Smiths didn't live in Palmyra until after 1820). Another "evidence" John Welch brought up was the so-called Alma Scroll, wherein it's proven that Alma is indeed a man's name, despite previous claims that it was a female name. What's great about this kind of discovery is that Joseph Smith could not have known these things, and either he was the luckiest guesser ever, or he was the Prophet of the Restoration (the latter, of course, being the case). Brother Welch talked about how these times are great times for the Church. In 2005 there was a Joseph Smith symposium at the U.S. Library of Congress. Studies are published often in the BYU Studies series. The Joseph Smith papers are being published for all the world to see. His conclusion was that scholarship and academia are and should be inseparable from faith and the Gospel.

Samuel Bradshaw, 1/29/09

Marie Cornwall's lecture on what caused more women to become employed outside the home in recent centuries provided a lot of interesting points. People associate this trend with several factors. One theory is that more women value the family less. Sister Cornwall suggested this was not the case because women still spend a lot of time with their children. Another theory is that people began to buy more stuff that they didn't really need (consumerism) so women worked so they'd have more money to buy stuff. Sister Cornwall said that this couldn't be because most women didn't get hard (high-paying) jobs. A third theory is that women just want to be like men. But when women go into employment, they are very often in different specializations than men. The fourth common theory is that women sought identities outside their home and families (feminism). Sister Cornwall said that because feminism as a movement wasn't huge until after the employed women trend had already started. I didn't agree with most of what Sister Cornwall said in discounting those theories. But her own theory wasn't bad, either. She thinks it was simply due to the changing economy. People bought products for cheaper than they could make them, saving time. Also, technology saved a lot of time, and old homemaking tasks became obsolete (such as preparing a fire to cook on). Having more time, they went to work because their husbands didn't make enough money, and more job opportunities became available for women. I think her theory is valid, but I think that all of the other theories are also valid factors in the trend of employed women.

Samuel Bradshaw, 2/5/09

For extra credit, I attended the lecture by Dr. Riley Nelson on "Knowing: The Times and Seasons of Joseph Smith, Abraham Lincoln, and Charles Darwin." Dr. Nelson began by talking about five ways of knowing: by faith, force, consensus, art, and science. Everyone learns to some extent by all of these ways, but according to Dr. Nelson, Joseph Smith relied predominately on faith, Abraham Lincoln relied on consensus (the opinions and objectives of the people around him), and Charles Darwin relied mostly on scientific reasoning. All three of these men lived around the same time. Each of them lost children. All of them changed the world through their diligent efforts. Dr. Nelson then proceeded to give a short biography about each of them. Joseph Smith, of course, brought forth the Book of Mormon and reestablished the Church. Abraham Lincoln came from rural life to become a famous United States president. He studied hard and had a lot of help from his wife, who had a political family. As the president, Lincoln was credited with uniting the northern and southern states after the Civil War and abolishing the institution of slavery. Lincoln was a pragmatist: the ends justified the means in his eyes. The issue wasn't so much the morality of slavery, he said, as it was the unity of the nation. Unlike the others, Charles Darwin was born in a more wealthy family and had a professional education. He explored and developed the theory of natural selection and "transmutation theory" or evolution. Dr. Nelson was somewhat interesting of a lecturer.

Samuel Bradshaw, 2/11/09 (extra credit)

George Handley gave a pretty good lecture on the earth, and nature as a source of spiritual renewal. He talked about how the places we live influence our lives. Joseph Smith lived near the Sacred Grove, for example, around the time of the First Vision. Brother Handley talked about how animals and trees are living souls, and were created spiritually before they were created physically. Brother Handley said that nature is a good place to reflect and gain understanding:

Joseph Smith went to the Sacred Grove to pray, for example. Brother Handley had his own "Sacred Grove": a jetty, out in nature, where he gained a stronger testimony at age seventeen. A lot of people say that because nature is for the benefit and use of man, we can do whatever we want with it. This, in Brother Handley's view, is irresponsible. Ecosystems are connected, and that which affects other ecosystems will affect us. He then got into statistics about rainforests, species, and such. He encouraged us to learn about the places we live, and get to know the environment and natural surroundings. I agree that people should protect nature more than we do, but I think some of his statistics were irrelevant. If people are using nature's resources for a good purpose, because nature was made for the benefit of man, obviously we should respect it, but we shouldn't feel guilty when it is harvested. If the plants and animals are living souls, won't they have some sort of happier afterlife? Death isn't something inherently bad. That's just an idea, I don't know if I would defend that viewpoint, but nature is put there for our benefit and use. The refreshments were pretty good.

Samuel Bradshaw, 2/12/09

I went to the Great Works Symposium. From 7:00-8:00 I attended Dr. Luke Howard's lecture about classical music's influence on popular music of today. From 8:00-9:00 I attended Dr. David Kooyman's lecture. At 9:00 I went to the introduction of the film "Il Postino." I watched the first half hour or so of the film, but then had to leave because I had other homework. Dr. Howard's lecture was interesting, he let us listen to a lot of cool music inspired by famous songs. He explored several characteristics that make modern orchestral pieces become part of pop culture (classical orchestral pieces have the advantage of time to be absorbed). By becoming pop culture, these great pieces are recognized by almost anyone and the tunes are used in derivative works and arrangements. The five common characteristics of pop culture tunes he chose that have modern origins are the following: they are composed for a full orchestra, they have vocal parts in unintelligible or foreign languages, they have a relaxed or stately tempo, they avoid double meter (2/2 time), and they are flexible to modifications in rhythm, meter, etc. without loosing their ability to be recognized. Dr. Kooyman's lecture was supposed to be about keeping a Gospel perspective in vocations, but because it was Darwin week, he instead talked about science, creation, evolution, and his work in the field of xenotransplantation. It was really an excellent lecture, which I enjoyed a lot. The introduction to the film introduced that it was based on a Chilean story, and also introduced some of Naruda's poetry. In the first part of the film, Naruda moves onto the island and the fisherman's son becomes Naruda's personal postman. The postman asks Naruda a lot of questions and admire's Naruda's poetry. I wasn't able to see the entire film. The refreshments were excellent.

Samuel Bradshaw, 2/12/09 (extra credit)

Kristen DeTienne gave an interesting lecture about how to give and receive feedback. Feedback is defined as information returned stating whether or not a message was received. When giving feedback, it is important to be sensitive – don't reprimand in front of others, because the person won't be thinking about what you say. Also, be prompt – address the problem before it is forgotten. Third, be specific, giving facts and examples to help the person understand what the problem was and how it can be fixed. Finally, focus on specific behaviors, not on the person in general. Don't use "hasty generalizations" such as phrases beginning with "always," or "never,"

or any other such words. Additionally, the giver of feedback should avoid using sarcasm, criticism, and blaming; these may keep the hearer from heeding and they may feel isolated and defensive. How you begin the conversation is important: it must not begin with a hard or harsh comment. Rather, it must be clear, polite, and appreciative – don't make it seem as if you are against them. The relationship should be appropriate to the level of feedback – don't directly reprimand a person you're not responsible for. As to the receipt of feedback, it's important to treat it as a gift. It's likely that the giver of feedback is sincerely trying to help you. Acknowledge the feedback, ask for details and clarification; thank the giver of feedback, and follow through, perhaps returning to the giver of feedback news about your progress. In all, the lecture was insightful and useful.

Samuel Bradshaw, 2/19/09

Dr. Roger Macfarlane gave an interesting lecture about ancient and historical documents. He explained a process developed at BYU that allows researchers to see the text on a blackened page by taking photos in certain frequencies of light. This means that documents can be read without attempting to scrape off a surface layer, thereby protecting the document from potentially harmful handling. The first document he used as an example is the Herculaneum Papyrus, from the city of Pompeii. It had been preserved by the soot buildup associated with the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, but was blackened and unreadable to the eye. But the special camera could take a photo in a frequency such that the document could be read perfectly well (for those who know ancient languages, anyway). This is called multispectral imaging. A lot of Egyptian papyri were found as stuffing for mummified crocodiles, and provide much historical documentation of their lifestyle and culture. Another great discovery was the Dictys of Crete text in the original Greek – known copies have only been found in Latin, so many believed it was fiction written by a Roman author. But the Greek text proves that the author was Greek, as the text itself claims. It's supposed to be a witness account of the war at Troy. One interesting text or document in BYU's possession is that of Didymos the Blind – a commentary on the Psalms. In conclusion, a lot of these documents that were previously unreadable are readable thanks to this new technology – which is good for those who like to study history.

Samuel Bradshaw, 2/26/09

I went to parts of the BYU Inquiry Conference on Friday – I went to the last part of the first session, all of the second session, and all of the third and final session. In the second session, the topic was "Tolerance, Diversity, and Community." One of the panelists (Sandra E. Elman) sent a recorded video of her comments; the other panelists who were there were James D. Gordon III, Renata Forste, Natalie Quinn (a student), and David A. Whetten (the moderator). Sandra Elman works on the Northwest Regional Accrediting Commission for educational institutions. Natalie Quinn talked about gaining from a diversity of thought, such as the thoughts of some of her favorite authors (she's an English major): Walt Whitman, Emmanuel Levinas, Emily Barrett Browning, etc. She made an interesting point about BYU being a diverse place, and the Church around the world being diverse, but nevertheless being united. Renata Forste talked a little bit about how all the returned missionaries at BYU contribute diverse languages and viewpoints from having traveled throughout the world. She also talked about how an institution such as BYU shouldn't divide the world into "we" and "they," but rather should just contribute to the

world. We need to have the ability to learn things from those who are different or who hold different opinions. The third session was the most interesting, in my view. BYU President Samuelson spoke, then President Henry B. Eyring. I liked President Samuelson's quote about how there will always be prayer in schools, as long as we continue to teach math. Henry B. Eyring had a good quote, "God knows thermodynamics."

Samuel Bradshaw, 2/27/09

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 three students to introduce themselves, all of whom have written their theses. Questions were asked of these three people. Again, the class would be informative and useful for anyone planning to do an Honors thesis. And the refreshments were good! We had a thesis panel last semester, too, and it was pretty much the same thing.

Samuel Bradshaw, 3/5/09

Brent W. Webb, an associate academic vice president at BYU, gave a pretty good lecture. He began with a lot of cool statistics about BYU and the students at BYU. In the Fall Semester of 2005, there were about 6830 arriving freshmen. Today's BYU student GPA is a higher average than it has been before. 78% of BYU students speak 107 different languages. BYU is ranked high in many areas. It is the 9th on the list of United States baccalaureate origin institutions. BYU has the largest pre-dental school in the country. It has the 6th highest number of law school applications. Webb then proceeded to list several items of advice for successful scholarship. First, we should read the texts for our classes. Second, we should "learn to love to learn" because we will need to learn our whole lives. Creativity is key. Also, we should forge friendships. He counseled us to invest in our education now – to get all the education we can. Brent Webb said that all we have to work with is time, because it is constantly diminishing. We shouldn't doubt our abilities, nor should we doubt the quality of a BYU training. Writing well is critical and criticism should be sought after. Additionally, speaking well is critical. An attitude Webb said we should have is, "I don't have to, I get to." We should "revel" in university life – the actual meaning of the word might not exactly fit, but he meant that we should enjoy it and make the best of it while it is around us. Over all, the lecture was pretty insightful.

Samuel Bradshaw, 3/12/09

Dean John Rosenburg, of the Spanish department, gave a lecture about museums, and specifically the art in Spanish museums. Originally a "museum" was a temple for the muses (Greek tradition). The art in Spanish museums symbolize what it means to be a Spaniard. Museums take artifacts and art from their original locations and out of their original contexts and group them together in one place. Most old art was painted to adorn churches or palaces. One palace full of art that John Rosenburg focused on was the Palacio del Buen Retiro, in Madrid, Spain. In the middle of the Thirty Years' War in Europe, Spain was losing power and influence, and, to quote John Rosenburg, it was "losing the public relations war." In order to enforce the legitimacy and nobleness of Spain, King Felipe the Fourth commissioned 800 paintings to line the walls of his palace. There were three "chapters," or themes, for the art. The first theme was the labors of Hercules, as in Greek mythology. It is Spanish tradition that Hercules was the founder of Spain, and ruled there for 19 years. The mountains on either side of the Strait of Gibraltar, called the pillars of Hercules, once were a symbol of the motto, "non plus ultra," meaning "nothing more beyond." However, when Columbus stumbled upon the Americas, the motto became "plus ultra," as the gateway to the western world. This is the motto that appears on Spain's coat of arms. The lecture was okay, but I'm not that interested in history and art.

Samuel Bradshaw, 3/19/09

At the Honors Symposium, I went to the Dan Steinhilber art exhibit and the question and answer meeting for pre-professionals. Following the breakout sessions, everyone ate dinner and listened to a General Authority speak. The Dan Steinhilber art exhibit was amazing; I thought it was really cool how he could take ordinary objects and use them to compose various works. For example, one of the exhibits was a mosaic of duck sauce packets. Another was a pile of air-filled garbage bags with a trash can atop. At the pre-professionals meeting, the speaker gave five suggestions: don't consider yourself a vital asset to the company, live happily with what you have, take risks, be nice, and picture yourself successful. The General Authority speaker was pretty good as well. He talked about the importance of the mind and spirit working together. He quoted cool scriptures like Mosiah 4:9.

Samuel Bradshaw, 3/25/09 (extra credit)

Scott Duvall gave an interesting presentation about the ten books he considered to be the most influential printed books affecting American culture. The list was ordered chronologically, so he didn't show much of a preference for which were more important than others. The first on the list is Johann Gutenberg's printed Bible (Old and New Testaments). It was the first book printed with movable type, and it is the Latin Vulgate translation. Theologically, it is obvious why this is among the ten most influential books. The second book is Nicolaus Copernicus' *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres.* He proved with science that the earth and other planets travel around the sun, discounting terracentric theories of the universe rotating around the earth. Third was Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote.* This book is well-known in the world of fiction and has been used as a pattern for other works of fiction. Johannes Kepler's *Astronomia Nova* helped correct some of Copernicus' theory, adding that planets don't travel in perfect circles, but

rather in elliptical orbits. Fifth on the list was *The First Folio,* a collection of Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare's plays are universally known in the Anglophonic world. Next is Sir Isaac Newton's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy.* Newton's theories and laws are universally accepted (pardon the pun) as fact in how the physical universe runs: gravity, inertia, etc. Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* is the authority on economic theories and thought. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* helped turn people against the problem of antebellum American slavery. Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* set forth widely- accepted and taught theories of evolution and survival of the fittest. Albert Einstein's *Die Grundlage der Allgemeinen Relativatstheorie* introduced the famous General Theory of Relativity. All of these books have greatly influenced American society and culture, and also the whole world.

Samuel Bradshaw, 3/26/09

Dean John D. Bell of undergraduate education gave an excellent lecture about how faith opposes fear, and especially how it helps psychologically. He talked about two types of fear: acute fear and chronic fear. He mentioned several scriptural accounts of how righteous people reacted to frightful circumstances with faith rather than fear. Dean Bell then proceeded to describe the various parts of the brain: the frontal lobe, for decisions and higher thinking; the parietal lobe, for processing sensory data; the temporal lobe, for speech and sounds; the occipital lobe, for sight; and the cerebellum, for balance. He talked about the hormone cortisol, which causes the strong emotions of fear or anger. From this hormone, two responses can come: the active response, to run away or change the situation; or the passive response, to give up. He told the story of a fish he was chasing while scuba diving that swam away for a time, but then gave up. Cortisol is necessary for our health: coping with stress, blood sugar level maintenance, ability to more easily awaken, etc. But too much of it is bad and has detrimental effects on the body: high blood pressure, muscle weakness, mood swings, depression, increased likelihood of illness, etc. Some ways to keep cortisol at a low and healthy level are through exercise, keeping a nutritious diet, having meaningful social interactions, having good sleep patterns, and hearing relaxing music. Caffeine raises the cortisol level. But we can control our fear; that's where faith comes in. There are three elements of acting in faith that remove our fear: make a choice to act by faith, trust in God, and believe that God has the power to alleviate the problem.

Samuel Bradshaw, 4/2/09

I think it was a cool idea to have the students vote on which presentations were the best. People have a wide variety of preferences. I hadn't really noticed throughout the semester, but one student mentioned that there were very few scientific lectures. It's interesting to see what lectures others liked and why. I liked several of the presentations this semester. Among my favorites were "Faith and the Scientific Method," by Dean Terry Ball; "What Does Mormonism Have to Do with Academia, and Vice Versa," by John Welch; Effective Feedback, by Kristen DeTienne; and Dean John D. Bell's presentation about faith and fear. The effective feedback lecture was the only one I felt I could actually use – most of the others were just interesting depending on your field of interest. The last lecture, by Professor Sowell, was also a good one. I liked his parable about the Countess von Hohenlohe. It is cool how many different applications a story can have to real life situations – it seems that there were 15 or 20 mentioned. For example,

that the education we get is one of the few things we can keep no matter what happens to us. Also, appearances can be deceiving – what looks like a cheap decoration could really be an expensive and rare antique item. In all, I was relatively satisfied with this semester of Honors 292R. A lot of my BYU professors have been excellent; we were asked to recommend anyone who might make a good speaker for future Honors 292R lectures. Two of my favorite professors so far that I would recommend are Alan K. Parrish (religion) and Scott Woodfield (computer science). Thanks!

Samuel Bradshaw, 4/9/09