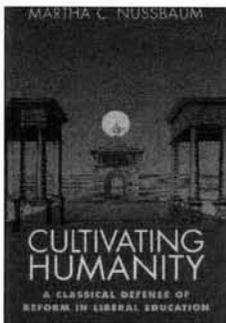


## R E V I E W S

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
IN A LIBERAL WORLDCULTIVATING HUMANITY: A CLASSICAL DEFENSE OF  
REFORM IN LIBERAL EDUCATIONby Martha C. Nussbaum  
1997, Harvard Press  
328 pages, \$26.00

Reviewed by R. Dennis Potter



*Mormons will find this book engaging since it explores the philosophical roots of the "culture wars" that have been particularly interesting at BYU in the last decade.*

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO Ernst Freund Professor of Law Martha Nussbaum has written an engaging discussion of the cluster of issues surrounding the "culture wars" in U.S. liberal education. She offers a fresh perspective, and where her new book lacks specific analytical argumentation, it compensates with a powerfully persuasive picture of how education should be carried on.

Nussbaum's book is of special interest to Mormons because it includes a chapter on religious education that discusses Brigham Young University and Notre Dame as alternative models of a religious university. Mormons may also find the book engaging

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since it explores the philosophical roots of the "culture war" controversies that have taken a particularly interesting guise at BYU in the past decade. From considering Nussbaum's views of ideal education, we Mormons can better articulate our own visions of the goals of higher education.

This review focuses on Nussbaum's discussion of religious education, but it is necessary to begin with an overview of the rest of the book.

## OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

*Producing "ideal citizens" is higher education's goal—but how?*

IN two respects, Nussbaum's book stands out from other recent literature about cultural issues in education. First, she uses concrete cases from real universities to reach her conclusions. Second, she argues for reform in liberal education on the basis of

Classical philosophy, not by way of postmodernist or relativist assumptions. That first unique aspect of this work makes it engaging. And while anecdotal evidence is notoriously problematic—individual experience may mislead about general experience—the conclusions Nussbaum draws from her anecdotal evidence about BYU and Notre Dame square fairly well with my own first-hand experience of them.

The central argument of *Cultivating Humanity* follows the Greeks'—that the fundamental purpose of our institutions of higher education is to produce ideal citizens whose primary loyalty is to humanity as a whole. In order to achieve education's lofty purpose, citizens must exhibit three capacities: (1) a critical examination of oneself and of one's community, (2) an ability to see oneself as tied to the rest of humanity, and (3) a narrative imagination that allows one to put oneself in another's place.

Nussbaum's claim about the purpose of higher education contrasts starkly with the common view of many Americans, who treat higher education as fundamentally vocational: at the university, students learn skills necessary to succeed in careers. Nussbaum rejects this view. The argument is, then, that liberal education as currently practiced requires certain reforms to satisfy these goals.

Her introduction, "The Old Education and the Think Academy," begins with contrasts in Aristophanes' *The Clouds* between the traditional Greek education, which is a disciplined and controlled indoctrination ("the old education"), and the "new" Greek education, which encourages youth to think for themselves and to question the dominant values. Aristophanes' picture of Socrates is wildly distorted, she points out, and then she draws a parallel to the picture that many American conservatives paint of modern secular academia, i.e., one in which left-wing, elitist professors force political correctness on their students, trying to subvert their traditional values and religious beliefs. The distortion, she claims, is similar to Aristophanes' of Socrates.

In the first chapter, "Socratic Self-Examination," Nussbaum continues by discussing the first capacity of an ideal citizen—a critical focus. Again the dichotomy is between the old education, which holds up tradition, and the think-academy, which questions it (16). And those resisting a reform of traditional liberal education are resisting Socratic reform. Nussbaum argues that despite Socrates' personal objection to democratic government, his way of doing philosophy is uniquely (for his time) democratic: he practices it in the streets and

anyone can engage in it. Not only is Socratic inquiry democratic, but democracy actually depends for survival on good Socratic inquiry. She says, "The successful and stable self-realization of a democracy such as ours depends on our working as hard as possible to produce citizens who do examine tradition in a Socratic way. The successful integration of previously excluded groups as citizens with equal respect depends on realizing their capacities for rational autonomy and Socratic self-examination." (27)

Although Socrates does not explicitly discuss education, the Stoics applied his thinking to education. And, according to Nussbaum, the Stoics make four claims about Socratic education: (1) Socratic education is for everyone; (2) it should be suited to the circumstances of the pupil; (3) it should be concerned with a variety of different traditions; (4) it should ensure that books do not become authorities.

Nussbaum's claim that there are both left-wing and right-wing opponents of Socratic education certainly seems correct (37). (The conservative opposition defends traditional values and religion and worries that Socratic inquiry will undermine them.) Her discussion of postmodernist attacks on Socratic inquiry is good (37-41). Her arguments for reform do not come from the knee-jerk postmodernism so popular these days nor from the relativism that most often accompanies it. She says, "The search for truth is a human activity, carried on with human faculties in a world in which human beings struggle, often greedily, for power. But we should not agree that these facts undermine the very project of pursuing truth and objectivity." (40)

Interestingly, conservatives can unknowingly buy into a kind of cultural relativism by insisting that the received cultural tradition is not questionable, thus implying that there is no objective fact that would ground and justify it. (This situation is especially interesting for those of us familiar with recent trends at BYU, where the postmodernist emphasis on subjectivity and historicity is used more often to defend the tradition than to criticize it.<sup>1</sup>) Indeed, if one thinks that truth is relative to one's cultural framework, then one has no space from which to criticize.

Nussbaum's second chapter takes from Diogenes' idea that we should consider ourselves "citizens of the world." Here, she argues for our fundamental priority to all humanity and compares culture to language (61-62). While Nussbaum argues that our fundamental priority is to humanity and not our particular culture, she wants to avoid the position often associated with multicultur-

alism, i.e., that each culture is of equal worth (82). Instead, she advocates "interculturalism," the doctrine that there should be a comparative study of all cultures, recognizing common human needs and discussing dissonance and criticism within cultures (82). Unfortunately, she stops short of admitting that we can make moral pronouncements about other cultures.

In the third chapter, "The Narrative Imagination," Nussbaum makes a case for the importance of a variety of intercultural literature. She asserts that through the imaginative abilities of fiction, we begin to understand others. Literature teaches us to feel sympathy, to open up to other possibilities. In this way, literature teaches us morality. A mere study of history cannot do this. She admits this role of literature involves a political agenda, but the alternative is a sterile formalism in literary criticism (89). SUNSTONE readers will be interested in her discussion of Wayne Booth's *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (100ff).

The introduction and these first chapters, then, provide the bulk of her argument. Chapters 4 to 7 discuss possible reforms and illustrate her arguments with particular cases. In the process, she discusses the study of non-Western cultures, African-American studies, women's studies, and the study of human sexuality, including gay and lesbian studies. Of note is her discussion of Cristina

Hoff Sommers's criticism of contemporary feminism, such as that by Catherine MacKinnon (215 ff). Nussbaum persuasively rebuts Sommers's claims that the goals of contemporary feminism are illiberal.

In chapter 7, on human sexuality, Nussbaum engagingly discusses the theory that sexual mores are being eroded by the study of human sexuality because of the presumed moral relativism in contemporary academic discussions. Nussbaum points out that although the study of human sexuality does involve the doctrine of social constructivism—i.e., the claim that how we think about sexuality is a social construct—this approach still allows for normative ethics, since we can criticize better and worse constructs, depending on their utility (226 ff). Of course, conservative and religious readers must ask whether that approach is sufficient. Social constructivism is itself a controversial philosophical doctrine that should be subjected to scrutiny.

Nussbaum's comment that it is virtually impossible for faculty members at BYU to discuss homosexuality in an unconstrained manner seems right, but might need some qualification. In my experience at BYU,<sup>2</sup> only in Samuel Rushforth's classes did the issue arise. Nevertheless, an open philosophical debate about the Church's position on homosexuality would probably not be administratively approved at BYU.<sup>3</sup>



"Joyce still opens every set with 'Who Are These Children Coming Down?'"

KENT CHRISTENSEN

***“Education is a sacred obligation. It is only natural that we require high standards of those to whom we accord this responsibility.”***

SOCRATES IN THE  
RELIGIOUS UNIVERSITY

*Unity of purpose and spirit—not of opinion.*

NUSSBAUM opens the chapter on religious education with an anecdote about the 1996 directive that BYU faculty be annually certified by a bishop as temple worthy, and she quotes an anonymous BYU alumnus who calls the order “sickening.” She follows this with a brief account of the Notre Dame administration’s denial of official status to a gay and lesbian organization and the faculty senate’s vote condemning this action. The two accounts set the stage for her contrast of BYU and Notre Dame as examples of religious universities. According to Nussbaum, Notre Dame has done a good job of balancing the educational goals of the academy with the demands of its church to reinforce its religious tradition, and BYU has not. Two questions arise at once. First, are these accounts really indicative of the atmospheres of BYU and Notre Dame? Second, is BYU’s requirement of ecclesiastical endorsement so wrong?

Before answering these questions, here is her argument:

Notre Dame and Brigham Young lie in many ways at opposite ends of a spectrum on issues relating to academic freedom, Socratic inquiry, and diversity in religious higher education. . . . Drawing on a long Roman Catholic tradition of inquiry and higher education, Notre Dame has constructed a genuinely religious education with a first-rate research university with strong guarantees of academic freedom and a commitment both to Socratic searching and to international study. Issues concerning women and sexuality continue to be deeply divisive, both in curricular matters and in campus life; but faculty feel free to state their views even where those conflict with official church doctrine. (261–262)

Evidence for this claim is based on Nussbaum’s interaction with the faculty and students on campus. For example, she cites Phillip Quinn and Paul Weithman, Notre Dame philosophy professors who have both criticized the administration and the church on certain fundamental issues (268). She

notes the presence of religious concerns among the faculty and in the community in general. Anyone who has attended Notre Dame would also be keenly aware of these concerns. Indeed, conferences discussing creationism and evolution and theology and world peace made headlines just last year. She also discusses the long-standing Catholic tradition of commitment to higher education. She does note some episodes that are problematic for her—for example, the extremely divisive issue of the gay and lesbian group that was refused official recognition (277).

Regarding BYU, she is not impressed:

The case of BYU shows a university far more disposed to restrict scholarship and inquiry in the name of a religious belief. An attitude of anti-intellectualism increasingly shapes the course of the institution. This state of affairs, rather than promoting a strong, distinctively religious institution, threatens to stifle its academic spirit and thus jeopardizes its status as a religious institution of higher education. (262)

As evidence, she cites the well-known cases of Scott Abbott, Gail Houston, Cecilia Farr, and David Knowlton and also the university’s decision not to invite Pulitzer Prize-winning Laurel Thatcher Ulrich to speak on campus. Nussbaum also discusses the authoritarian nature of LDS church governance (which is not all that different from Catholic hierarchy), the strict moral standards of Mormon culture, and the status of women with respect to the priesthood. She also argues that despite the missionary program, BYU students learn very little about other cultures compared to those at other institutions.

Having been an undergraduate at BYU from 1987 to 1993 and a philosophy Ph.D. student at Notre Dame since 1995 to the present, I have little criticism of her claims about affairs at BYU and Notre Dame. She is generally right about the respective atmospheres at both institutions. While her description is about on target, there are underlying philosophical issues she leaves untouched that might have affected the way she evaluated these two schools. The larger issue here is how religious persons should relate to the broader, non-religious culture. One extreme would claim that religion should entirely

accommodate to the general culture. Another extreme would insist that religion should entirely reject the general culture. Early Mormonism clearly opted largely for rejection. But more and more, Mormonism has moved toward an accommodationist stance. Regarding BYU and its peculiar role as a religious university, this question is particularly thorny: What sort of higher education should Mormons—or Catholics—pursue and endorse? Since such institutions are part of the larger culture, how does a church as a religious community and a governing institution interact with its university, particularly when religious life, learning, and tenets are in tension with the surrounding culture?

Because Nussbaum holds a moral and intellectual allegiance to classical philosophy and the liberal political tradition, she advocates greater accommodation by religions to the larger intellectual culture. But for the religious traditions, I would argue, such accommodationism might not be best. Indeed, an overly ardent accommodationism might well kill the religious culture. So from within a religious tradition, it seems that the central goal should be the flourishing of that tradition. This goal need not clash with the ideal citizen goal that guides Nussbaum’s book, i.e., an overarching commitment to humanity. But the goal of preserving the religious tradition gives a certain perspective on how best to achieve the goal of being an ideal citizen.

Both Mormonism and Catholicism give similar answers to just how much accommodation of the outside culture should be accepted. Mormons and Catholics are convinced that much truth is to be found in worldly research and that criticisms of the faith from outside can serve to strengthen understanding of faith. Lowell Bennion’s remarks in *The Religion of the Latter-day Saints* are typical of the Mormon attitude toward education and intellectual pursuits:

No person can comprehend the whole of life in its beauty, depth and breadth through a single one of these humans interests [i.e., art, science, philosophy, religion] to the exclusion of the others. (17)

From the point of view of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as interpreted by Latter-day Saints, there is

no justification for dogmatism, in the sense of unwarranted positiveness, even in religion. (23)

But even though Mormons or Catholics should learn as much from the world as they can, they should do so as Mormons or Catholics. Indeed, both traditions have a commitment to the ideas that God has revealed his will to his people and that understanding his revelation is paramount to salvation. The ideal citizen's concern for humanity is then transformed by these religions into a concern for the salvation of humankind.

Such worldly accommodation within a religious tradition allows for academic freedom not because we are committed to an individual's right to think as she or he pleases but because a frank and open discussion of our religion is the best way to ensure that it flourishes intellectually. Such accommodation also calls for academics who are not only deeply committed to the religious tradition but whom others of the community can trust to do their best to contribute to its flourishing. All may not have the same idea about what contributes to such flourishing, but allowing a broad amount of freedom in trying to define this goal is clearly the best way to ensure that it will happen. Trust among the individuals involved in a religious intellectual community allows for the best discussion.

From this perspective, in contrast to Nussbaum's, a different evaluation of Notre Dame and BYU emerges. Clearly, Notre Dame allowed an open, frank discussion of the gay and lesbian issue. All viewpoints were heard; faculty and student groups openly opposed the administration's decision, and no action was taken against them. This situation has allowed Catholics the opportunity to develop more sophisticated apologetics for their own religious position. It also allows them to clarify their own positions and reinforce their commitments. Nevertheless, the Notre Dame community, as a Catholic community, had to take a stance consistent with its Catholicism. And not allowing on campus a gay and lesbian group that advocates the moral neu-

trality of homosexual behavior is an appropriate reinforcement of the Catholic ethic.

On the other hand, the issue caused great contention; neither side now seems to trust the other. Instead of having people united as a Christian community should be, Notre Dame is deeply divided on this issue. And this is a symptom of a deeper division between those who are committed to the Catholic nature of the school and those who want a secular school with a Catholic name. In this way, Notre Dame is two universities, religious and secular. Ironically, the existence of the secular university enables the religious one to achieve its goals in certain ways not available at BYU.

Similarly, a different evaluation of BYU emerges once we see the purpose of education in terms of religious flourishing. From Nussbaum's view, BYU is wrong in not allowing enough academic elbow room. But academic elbow room should not be the primary issue. The real issue is whether BYU helps the Mormon intellectual tradition to flourish. Here, the judgment against BYU may be even harsher than Nussbaum indicates. For Nussbaum, BYU is flawed because it is just a bit too Mormon. But if we have in mind the goal of encouraging a flourishing of Mormon tradition, then the real problem is that BYU is not Mormon enough. BYU stifles the flourishing of the Mormon tradition by stifling any substantive discussion about Mormonism. This is a strong claim, so I'll make an argument for it.

Notre Dame enables the flourishing of the Catholic tradition by allowing the open discussion of homosexuality and theology.

Through the open discussion, a Catholic apologetic is articulated and developed. Indeed, the Catholic intellectual tradition itself is carried to new generations by inculcating the methods and tools of the traditional apologetic.

BYU has some of this. Hugh Nibley, Eugene England, and researchers at FARMS come to mind. Instead of accommodating secular scholarship by reinterpreting the faith in the academy's terms, such scholars re-evaluate the foundations of their respective disciplines and try to rebuild their disciplines in light of their Mormon beliefs. Although this type of intellectual enterprise occurs at BYU, it is the exception rather than the rule.

Consider the case of Scott Abbott. His controversial SUNSTONE article challenging the traditional dichotomy between faith and reason had a lot to do with his being denied a promotion to full professor (despite being unanimously recommended by a committee of his peers).<sup>4</sup> This dichotomy between faith and reason is traditionally accepted in academia. But we Mormons believe, of course, that another religious perspective, apostate Christianity, led to this dichotomy. Accepting this dichotomy, instead of re-evaluating it in light of the restored gospel, is thus accepting a peculiar form of accommodationism. Here, the effect of the BYU administration's stifling of Abbott's views is not the strengthening of Mormon orthodoxy, as it seems at first, but the defense and re-entrenchment of the orthodoxy of an apostate tradition. Now, clearly Abbott's views might be wrong. Catholics and Protestants may have a good reason to distinguish between reason and



"Well, I still think Saving Private Ryan is a better picture than Shakespeare in Love."

***“We can afford to make mistakes in our academic conclusions,  
but we cannot afford to avoid mistakes if that means that we avoid thinking.”***

revelation. But the point is not the correctness of Abbott's view, but the intent behind his project to rethink this traditional distinction in terms of his Mormon beliefs. This ongoing rethinking of the tradition in terms of Mormonism is essential for a Mormon academic tradition to flourish. In punishing those who try to do so, we kill our own tradition. We can afford to make mistakes in our academic conclusions, but we cannot afford to avoid mistakes if that means that we avoid thinking.

This situation in Mormonism is sad. Indeed, in my own discipline, philosophers often ask me from what Mormon writings can they read about the philosophy of religion. Sadly, little work has been done by Mormon philosophers on theological issues and even less in the philosophy of religion.<sup>5</sup> Even Sterling McMurrin's famous theological and philosophical *Foundations* are merely historical works and quite outdated.

Why the dearth of Mormon work in this field? Is it because we are afraid of developing our own tradition? Or is it because we are satisfied with the philosophical tradition we have established? This lack of Mormon philosophy is certainly not due to a lack of Mormon philosophers. But for some reason, few of them have done serious work in their field that would relate to their religious beliefs. When there is a lack of Mormon philosophy, Mormon philosophy students read only non-Mormon philosophy; instead of flourishing, the tradition dies.<sup>6</sup>

So, instead of criticizing BYU for not living up to a standard of the worldly academy, as Nussbaum does, one ought to criticize BYU for discouraging the development of uniquely Mormon thought. We cannot expect Nussbaum to do this. We can only expect her to critique BYU from her point of view. But we can also criticize “liberals” who take her position. If the goal of a religious (academic) institution is the flourishing of the religious (intellectual) tradition, then Nussbaum's notions about what a religious university should do are untenable.

Moreover, the very idea of academic freedom takes on a new meaning. A religious education is a particular kind of education—and that necessitates that it be conducted in a certain way, according to certain constraints. This does not mean that professors should not have elbow room. Indeed, I am arguing

that more elbow room for BYU professors is needed for the flourishing of the tradition. But it does mean is that professors use their elbow room in a certain way.

One important criticism of Notre Dame is that it is deeply divided. In some ways this division helps to avoid the dogmatism that would stifle religious flourishing. But it doesn't create a desirable community for a religious institution. Instead, there should be a sense of unity. Such a sense is clearly present at BYU. Unfortunately, BYU has achieved this unity by encouraging a unity of opinion, not of purpose and spirit. This is a false unity. What is needed is a sense of trust between faculty members and the administration, trust that all are committed to building the kingdom of God. If such trust truly existed, then the incidents with Abbott, Houston, Farr, et al., may not have happened.

The clear boundaries for Mormon academic freedom should not be defined by the highly politicized, faddish academic views that are current controversies in Mormon thought. Instead, the boundaries should be ones of intent and purpose. If we can trust each other's intent and purpose, we can achieve the sort of unity required for a religious community.

This point leads to my response to Nussbaum's assumption that BYU's requirement of ecclesiastical endorsement is wrong. For Mormons, part of being involved in building the kingdom of God is being temple worthy. So, this requirement is an acceptable way (although not the only way) of ensuring that intellectual trust exists among members of our religious institution. To Nussbaum and other non-Mormons, it may seem odd to require a temple recommend to teach at BYU. But from within Mormonism, it seems only natural.

Some from within the tradition might object that ecclesiastical endorsement “cheapens” the sacred nature of the temple recommend interview. I welcome such criticism from within and think it is healthy that we openly discuss the issue as Mormons. However, I can respond that the Mormon insistence that even the mundane is sacred blunts the force of this challenge. Education is a sacred obligation. It is only natural that we require high standards of those to whom we accord this responsibility.

(On the other hand, absurdly, ironically,

when I was hired as a research assistant last summer, BYU's employment office did not accept my temple recommend as evidence that I was temple worthy. This stance undermined the very sort of trust that exists between me and temple officials, who do take my recommend as evidence of worthiness.)

Of course, this radically different evaluation of BYU and Notre Dame emerges from a perspective not available to Nussbaum since she admits that her religious commitments are of a moral and not a theological nature (262). I have, however, other minor criticisms of her conclusions that do not arise merely from our different theoretical approaches. Nussbaum claims that the missionary program and the apparently cosmopolitan atmosphere that results at BYU is only superficial and does not contribute to a true multicultural understanding (286). Since the missionary program is set up for evangelization, and since this is the central reason for BYU's strong commitment to foreign instruction, the motivation for foreign instruction is not at all cosmopolitan (286).

Nussbaum apparently mistakenly conflates language training at the MTC with language training at BYU. And she is right about the MTC, but not about BYU. Most students in my 400-level Portuguese class were returned missionaries. They were not preparing to leave on a mission, so proselytizing could hardly have been their primary reason for continuing to study the language and culture. Instead, these good missionaries apparently fell in love with the foreign culture in which they preached the gospel. And love happened despite when leaving for their missions, they may have had delusions about the supremacy of American culture.

Perhaps Nussbaum is right to say that BYU could do a better job of teaching about other cultures and of instilling narrative imagination in its students. I am not qualified to say. Nevertheless, the missionary program, even if unintentionally, helps to broaden cultural horizons within Mormonism—perhaps better than any academic program could.

Another minor point is, though not her fault, Nussbaum seems to get the Mormon position on homosexuality wrong. She seems to assert that Catholic theology has a rationale for its position on homosexuality and

Mormon theology does not. But she is wrong. If "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" is taken as doctrine<sup>7</sup> then gender is eternal. Part of what constitutes Mormon exaltation is being able to spiritually procreate. This does not mean that each sex act must be procreative, but it does mean that the procreative capacity must be there. So it follows that in order to attain the highest degree of glory in God's kingdom, Saints must be in a marital relationship with the possibility of procreation. A same-sex relationship will not allow people to attain their full potential. Of course, this argument presupposes much that would be controversial. But it is still a solid, internal justification for the Mormon position that same-sex sexual relationships are sinful.<sup>8</sup>

Nussbaum's ignorance of Mormon theology again points back to my contention that we need to discuss and articulate our beliefs, and we should allow BYU professors to do so. In order to have that articulation, we must broach the topic of homosexuality. And although we must ultimately defend our theological position as it is stated in revelation, along the way we must be willing to explore different defenses, criticisms, and interpretations of the fundamental position.

This attitude requires the frank and engaging discussions that occur at Notre Dame but not at BYU. If we refuse to articulate our position as academics—and not merely as preachers of the gospel—then we cannot expect others outside our faith, like Nussbaum, to understand our rationale for our view. In this way, we have much to learn from Catholicism.

Unfortunately, this kind of intellectual interchange is discouraged in our intellectual community, which—like it or not—is defined and maintained by BYU. We should all find ourselves chastised by First Presidency Counselor James E. Faust's recent comment:

As a means to coming to truth, people in the Church are encouraged by their leaders to think and find out for themselves. They are encouraged to ponder, to search, to evaluate, and thereby come to such knowledge of the truth as their own consciences, assisted by the Spirit of God, lead them to discover.<sup>9</sup>

This is not the comment of one who believes it is good to deny tenure to those who do their level best to articulate their Mormon beliefs. This comment is by one who believes that a flourishing of the Mormon tradition requires thought and elbow room within which to carry on this thought.

## NOTES

1. David Bohn's essay, "The Larger Issue," *SUNSTONE* 16:8 (Feb. 1994) 45–63, is an extreme example of this tendency.
2. My experience counts as anecdotal evidence as well. So the reader should beware!
3. I would be delighted if someone were to show me that this is not the case.
4. Scott Abbott, "One Lord, One Faith: Two Universities: Tensions between 'Religion' and 'Faith' at byu," *SUNSTONE* 16:3 (Sept. 1992), 12–23.
5. Some work done by David Paulsen and also Blake Ostler is an obvious exception. James Faulconer, Rex Sears, Benjamin Huff, Keith Lane, James McLachlan, and I (perhaps among others) are all presently doing work in this area. I hope this is a sign that this trend is changing.
6. One might cite an anti-theological strain in Mormon

though that could account for the lack of work done in theology and philosophy of religion. Indeed, with continuing revelation, it is difficult for there to be an *official* theology. But even if we grant that there can be no official Mormon theology, that does not mean that there should be no theological discussion. Doing theology and making it official are two different projects.

7. Whether or not it should be is a thorny issue that I can't treat here.

8. Of course, the question arises here as to whether or not same-sex sexual relationships can be analogous to heterosexual civil marriages (which also keep one out of the highest degree of glory), or whether something is more intrinsically immoral about same-sex relations. One might argue that although we often treat those who live in such relationships as if the latter were true, there is only theological justification for the former.

9. James E. Faust, "The Truth Shall Make You Free," *Ensign*, Sept. 1998.



## NIGHTLINES—5

Night:

death seems not too far  
after all.

Do I hear  
its thumping boots  
ascending the staircase?  
Its soft, gentle knock on the doors  
of my loneliness?

Or, will it come down  
just like the shining saws  
of the guillotine?

Life is a lonely bird  
trapped in body's cage.

Moon's vigilant eyes  
trail me wherever I go.

And the arrogant trees at my courtyard  
stand defiant  
like masked terrorists  
tilting their stengun branches  
towards me.

—DURGA PRASAD PANDA