It is my pleasure to write this piece celebrating the work and retirement of Professor Bruce Lincoln. Compared to some of the others contributing to this digital Festschrift, my direct work with Bruce Lincoln has been somewhat limited. He is not my primary advisor. I have been to his office hours only a few times. I have taken only a few courses with him. Limited interaction notwithstanding, his impact on my intellectual development is tough to overestimate.

While at the University of Missouri, where I completed my MA in Religious Studies, I became aware of his work gradually—starting with chapters from *Gods and Demons, Priests and Scholars*, moving on to *Discourse and the Construction of Society*. It was in large measure thanks to these books that I was able to find my disciplinary niche and produce a thesis that attempted to contribute both to Buddhist Studies and the History of Religions.

Come to find out, his method of instruction significantly rivals, perhaps even exceeds, his written work.

In his lectures, Professor Lincoln invites eminent figures (sometimes dead, sometimes living) from various disciplines into the room and puts them into conversation with one another and the students. Positions are faithfully and fairly represented, arguments old and ongoing are brought to life thickly in their contexts. Strengths and weaknesses, insights and blind spots—all are discussed. By the end of the quarter, students are intimately acquainted with not only whatever topic or theme gave the course its name, but also the lay of the disciplinary land and the social, political, and historical forces at play behind shifts in the discipline itself.

In the seminar room, things are much the same—only the floor is opened even further for students to share and develop their ideas. Indeed, in the seminar room, students become interlocutors. Professor Lincoln has a knack for formulating questions that are both open-ended and focused. Once conversation is sparked and some views have been articulated, he offers thoughtful challenges, all with the aim of getting his students to clarify their own thinking and manner of expression. Professor Lincoln relishes in vigorous debate and invites his students to do the same. My classmates and I never leave a session merely edified. We have always sharpened our critical and analytical tools.

Were it not for Professor Lincoln’s books, I might not have resolved to pursue a doctoral degree in the History of Religions. Were it not for Professor Lincoln’s instruction, my time at the University of Chicago would have been less fruitful, the quality of my work half what it has come to be. I know my peers would agree.

For these reasons, and many more, I thank him and wish him the best in his retirement.

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