

from a Mormon perspective as we come to understand the necessity of making Heavenly Mother not just another component but an *essential* component of our doctrine and worship.

Good Girls Stay Quiet, Before the Broken Star, and Lovely War are three excellent examples of Mormon women creating innovative narratives about women and power. Being willing to move beyond a focus on adult literary fiction and exploring popular genre literature written specifically for young women and girls allows us to appreciate the empowering work being done for a rising generation of women.

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Tipping the Scales: LDS Women and Power in Recent Scholarship

Charlotte Hansen Terry

How history is framed and whose stories are told by an institution reveals much about its paradigms and priorities. From a survey of the past few years of history and Mormon studies materials published about (and even by) the Church, it seems the scales of gender representation are gradually tipping toward a better balance. This recent scholarship relies on important foundations laid by contributors like

Lavina Fielding Anderson, Valeen Tippetts Avery, Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Jill Mulvay Derr, Martha Sonntag Bradley-Evans, Maxine Hanks, Carol Cornwall Madsen, and Linda King Newell. The selection that follows shows a gratifyingly rapid expansion of research on Mormon women and their diverse relationships to power. You may want to add some of these to your shelves.

The First Fifty Years of Relief Society (Jill Mulvay Derr, Carol Cornwall Madsen, Kate Holbrook, and Matthew J. Grow, editors, Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2016) provides essential documents for understanding women and their organizations in the nineteenth century. The full Nauvoo Relief Society minutes can be found here, along with minutes and discourses from the beginnings of the Young Women and Primary programs. This work took decades to come to fruition and is especially helpful to scholars working on the nineteenth-century Church. The nature of the material may be cumbersome for the lay reader, but the section introductions are great summaries of key historical moments. *At the Pulpit: 185 Years of Discourses by Latter-day Saint Women* (Jennifer Reeder and Kate Holbrook, eds., Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2017) contains discourses and contextual information on selected sermons by women both familiar and obscure, from Lucy Mack Smith in 1831 to Kenyan member Gladys N. Sitati in 2016. This book is more devotional in its intent than scholarly but offers an unprecedented collection of faithful LDS women's voices while giving them historical context. Both volumes are available free online (churchhistorianspress.org), and some material has also been translated into other languages. Hopefully these works will find their way into Church instructional manuals to further broaden their reach.

Outside the publishing arms of the Church, recent biographers have explored how individual women have wielded what power they had within the institution. In *A Faded Legacy: Amy Brown Lyman and Mormon Women's Activism, 1872-1959* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2015), David Hall uses his access to institutional sources

from the Relief Society to offer important insights on Lyman's many years of leadership in that auxiliary and the inner workings of the organization. We read about significant institutional changes instigated by women in the early-twentieth-century Church, such as launching the welfare programs of the Church, along with the important power dynamics Lyman encountered after her husband's excommunication and the loss of control by the Relief Society of the welfare programs they birthed. In *Emmeline B. Wells: An Intimate History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2017), Carol Cornwall Madsen uses Relief Society general president Emmeline B. Wells's journals to reveal the complexities of her relationships with other women and male Church leaders in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Like the Lyman biography, this book also provides important details about the gendered power dynamics of a specific historical period, showing the misgivings and struggles that Wells encountered as she worked to expand the power of the Relief Society and women's rights in general.

In addition to these biographies of women with formal titles, other scholars have excavated the lives of women who challenged the institution of the Church from outside the leadership structure. *Helen Andelin and the Fascinating Womanhood Movement* (Julie Debra Neuffer, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2014) explores the Mormon underpinnings of Andelin's life work. She self-published *Fascinating Womanhood* and encouraged church communities to implement its ideas on relationships between men and women. As an insider who seemed to be elaborating on well-established Mormon cultural norms, she hoped the Church would support her program, but to no avail. Neuffer explores this tension and Andelin's frustrations. Broader historical context would have strengthened this book, but it is a shorter read and shows the continued influence of Andelin's ideas on cultural norms. *Your Sister in the Gospel: The Life of Jane Manning James, A Nineteenth-Century Black Mormon* (Quincy D. Newell, New York: Oxford University Press, 2019) provides a portrait of this early African American member and her struggles for recognition and inclusion

within the Church. Newell constructed this biography from limited sources, and her careful work is a worthy example of producing the history of challenging subjects.

Other historians have used a social history approach to show how women have negotiated their roles in the institution but also how they have created their own spaces to find meaning for themselves. *A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women's Rights in Early Mormonism, 1835–1870* (Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017) delves into the private, seemingly ordinary lives of Mormon women in the nineteenth century leading up to the surprisingly determined push for the right to vote in 1870. Ulrich's power with words and her gift for mining gold from countless fragmented records of women's lives make this a pleasurable read, and her footnotes are a great resource that point to many other scholars and their work for further study. *Sister Saints: Mormon Women Since the End of Polygamy* (Colleen McDannell, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018) focuses mainly on the twentieth century, placing Mormon women within the larger context of American history, and considers the diverse experiences of these women within the faith. McDannell summarizes many other works but includes new insights and sources that others have not yet used to consider the daily religious practices of Mormon women. For a different angle, *The Power of Godliness* (Jonathan A. Stapley, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018) explores some of the gender dynamics in Mormon liturgy and cosmology. Stapley includes materials on the history of female ritual healing and giving of blessings. Women are not the main focus of the work but form an important part of the narrative on liturgy.¹

1. Important additional reads on female ritual healing are two co-written articles: Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, "The Forms and the Power: The Development of Mormon Ritual Healing to 1847," *Journal of Mormon History* 35, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 42–87; and Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, "Female Ritual Healing in Mormonism," *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 1–85.

Contemporary Mormon women, of course, face a different set of tensions than their historical sisters, and recent scholarship grapples with these, moving the field in a direction that showcases feminism and the perspectives of women and others at the margins. *Women and Mormonism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Kate Holbrook and Matthew Bowman, eds., Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016) brings together works by historians and social scientists along with contemporary personal perspectives. This volume is a helpful state-of-the-field collection, considering women, power, and agency. *Mormon Feminism: Essential Writings* (Joanna Brooks, Rachel Hunt Steenblik, and Hannah Wheelwright, eds., New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), a much-anticipated volume on the contemporary Mormon feminist movement, makes important sources available to generations to come, showing the continued work of women for institutional recognition, including the work of those who openly challenge the power structure itself. Looking more at the margins of institutional and narrative power, *Decolonizing Mormonism: Approaching a Post-colonial Zion* (Gina Colvin and Joanna Brooks, eds., Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2018) is a critical contribution. The editors of this volume argue that scholars and the Church itself need to look at the so-called periphery of institutionalized communities and how people have claimed power in these spaces and addressed issues of colonialism in the Church. Their volume also argues that the answers for how to build a Zion community are found in the global Church. Chapters include pieces by Indigenous authors, some looking at contemporary issues and others rooting these issues in their history of imperialism and colonialism. This volume is an essential read for anyone working in Mormon studies today.

Women's formal scope and authority has often been limited within Mormon institutions, but all of these scholarly works from the past few years reveal women, both historical and contemporary, creatively navigating the mazes of power structures to exercise their agency and build their visions for their lives and for the Church. While the paradigm

hasn't fully shifted, scholars who prioritize women's history as part of the main thread of history rather than a specialized subfield, and who apply an intersectional lens to the overlapping power structures of race, gender, class, and geography, offer new and critical modes of understanding our Mormon past, present, and future.

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Fourteen Respite

Ashley Mae Hoiland. *One Hundred Birds Taught Me to Fly: The Art of Seeking God*. Provo: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University, 2017. 212 pp. Paperback: \$12.95. ISBN: 978-0842529921.

Reviewed by Meg Conley

One Hundred Birds Taught Me to Fly is the kind of work that becomes more radical with time. When I first read it years ago, I appreciated it. I liked its looseness and its light. I felt a kinship with the woman who wrote and the children she mothered and the world they tramped through with wet shoes and too few snacks. I felt like I was that woman and the children were my children and the cold feet and hungry stomachs were mine to warm and mine to feed.

When I returned to *One Hundred Birds*, I expected to gather up enough sustaining sisterhood to get through another wondrous, hard year of long walks trailed by little feet. Instead, by the time I was done reading (in one sitting while the littlest feet napped), my hands were stuffed full of the filaments of faith.