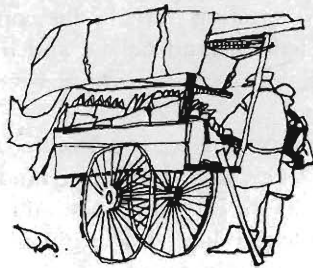


In an age dominated by the memory of sectional rebellion and a war to preserve democracy and the Union, Congress could hardly be expected to sympathize with another extreme form of states' rights and another peculiar, domestic institution. Unfortunately for the Mormons, the Republicans in Congress never forgot the parallel between an independent Mormon Utah, which condoned the practice of polygamy, and the confederacy which defended slavery. They even used methods learned in the Civil War and Reconstruction to force conformity on Utah. General Connor's presence in Utah was military occupation, thinly disguised. The scores of anti-polygamy and anti-Mormon bills depended heavily on Reconstruction measures as precedents. Disfranchisement, loyalty oaths, confiscation of property, and threat of imprisonment were as familiar to Mormons as they were to high-ranking Confederates. The passions and concerns of the hour which shaped policy in Washington affected events in Utah.

Lamar believes that in the evolving, continually expanding nation, one part always seemed to be out of step with the others, a condition that has helped to give American politics a permanent geographic or regional orientation. In his estimation, Brigham Young in his western setting was one of the most successful rebels against accepted American religious social and political traditions in the nineteenth century. With Archbishop Lamy of New Mexico, he stands as one of the few great and complex men to play a cultural role in the American occupation of the Southwest. Partly because of these men, two religiously-oriented Southwestern subcultures exist today within the borders of a standardized and secularized America.

Utah was not to remain wholly isolated. With considerable apprehension, the state after 1896 threw off its traditional Democratic inclinations to vote for big business and Republicanism. After fifty years the Mormons had entered the mainstream of American life once more. But the sense of painful alienation and persecution which accompanied reentry remains a group experience unique in American history.



PHILOSOPHICAL CLARIFICATION

George Boyd

Eternal Man. By Truman G. Madsen. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1966. x, 80 pp. \$2.00. George Boyd is director of the L.D.S. Institute of Religion at the University of California at Los Angeles.

This volume by Dr. Madsen, Professor of Philosophy at the Brigham Young University, consists of seven essays. The first, "Whence Cometh Man?" raises

philosophical problems which become the subjects of the six essays which follow. These problems—the problems of identity, the paradoxes of creation, the mind-body problem, the problem of freedom, the problems of evil and suffering, and the problem of self-awareness—are interpreted in terms of Joseph Smith's teachings, the main source of which the author finds in the *Teachings of The Prophet Joseph Smith*, edited by Joseph Fielding Smith. The Mormon view on these problems is compared and contrasted with other philosophical interpretations.

The essays were first published in the *Instructor*, where they received such enthusiastic reception that the author was encouraged to publish them in book form. This favorable response was in part due, perhaps, to the fact that there is a dearth of philosophical literature in the Church. Their approval does suggest, however, that Mormon readers are interested in and want the kind of intellectual stimulation that comes from a philosophical approach to religion.

The book exhibits the author's deep insight into and feeling for Mormonism as well as his wide acquaintance with traditional and contemporary philosophy and theology. Its strength lies in its interpretation and exposition of the former rather than in its treatment of the latter.

Like most books this one has its strong points and its weak ones. This review will be centered on what are regarded as the shortcomings of the book rather than its strength, because the typical Mormon reader will recognize and appreciate the strength of the book, whereas he is not so likely to be conscious of its shortcomings.

The chief problem of Madsen's essays arises out of his purpose and method. Hints of this difficulty are encountered early in both the introduction and the preface. Lorin Wheelwright, Associate Editor of the *Instructor*, in the introduction says: "President Truman G. Madsen writes both in the language of the churchman and the philosopher. Some readers may prefer that the two viewpoints be kept separate; others may feel that the questions are beyond our adequate consideration" (p. vi). Madsen, in the preface, complains that readers of the original essays who wrote in praise of their objectivity "miss my feeling that such merit as they have is in their subjectivity" (p. viii). It seems probable that the readers' confusion as to the author's purpose comes from the fact that he writes "both in the language of the churchman and the philosopher." The mixing of these idioms is often fraught with difficulties and leads in the present case to a depreciation of the book's subjective appeal and to a careless handling of objective materials.

Professor Madsen describes the book "as a kind of 'Midrash'" (p. viii). This brings to mind a story from rabbinical lore which points up the problem of mixed idioms and reminds us that it is not a new one:

Two students sat at the feet of an old Rabbi. One said, "Expound the law." [applied to our case, "teach us in the language of the philosopher."] The other said, "Narrate a parable." [i.e., "teach us in the language of the churchman."] He began expounding the law but was stopped by the one who wanted to hear a parable [or *Midrash*]. He began narrating a parable but was stopped by the one who wanted an exposition of the law. Finally the old Rabbi said, "To what shall I liken this? To a man with two wives, one young, the other old. The young

wife plucks the grey hair from his head, the other the black. Between them he is left bald.”

The functions of these two kinds of language are different; one speaks to the mind, the other to the heart. Professor Madsen’s description of the book as a *Midrash* fits his stated purpose, but his use of language does not serve the function of the book as a *Midrash*. He says, “The goal has been to clarify rather than verify, with little room for argument, except an implicit appeal to introspection” (p. viii). But many readers will find that the descriptions, comparisons, arguments, and numerous references to highly technical and sophisticated works are hardly appeals to introspection. The method is too highly discursive and at times pretentiously erudite to fit the author’s portrayal of the essays as gestures “toward inner echoes, toward as it were the nerve-endings of the spirit” (p. viii).

No objection is being made here to a subjective approach to religion, nor is there a complaint against one who would make gestures toward “the nerve-endings of the spirit” to determine what spiritual harmonies may be achieved. But when an author presumes to go further than this, the lyrics must fit the music. It is at this point, in my opinion, that the book fails. The style and language often obscure rather than clarify, and the use of discursive exposition to serve the purpose of religious testimony hinders the achievement of the book’s purpose, i.e., lessens its subjective appeal. In other words, the “language of the philosopher” is not an appropriate vehicle for conveying the message of the “churchman.”¹ The book’s scholarly tone may also lure some readers into a kind of pseudo-edification not unlike the vain elation sometimes felt when a movie star or a sports hero joins the Church. Whenever one is moved to bear his testimony, he should be sensitive to the fact that any addendum is superfluous and the only appropriate ending is a simple “amen.” One does not argue with or for a testimony.

When we turn to the matter of the violation of philosophy when it is pressed into the service of a subjective interest, we find a number of distortions arising from the author’s comparative analyses—where Mormon views are compared with and contrasted to other positions. Whenever an objective approach is made subservient to an appeal to subjectivity, this very subordination dulls the sensitivity to matters of fact.

It should be said that part of the author’s problem is his penchant for dropping names and referring to philosophical ideas without sufficient explanation or context to make them understandable to the typical Mormon reader. At times one also senses what seems an almost cavalier disdain for the views he discusses. This difficulty is due in part to the brevity of the book and the author’s primary interest in presenting the Mormon position. Nevertheless, this technique is annoying to the reader who has some acquaintance with the names and titles, to say nothing of the confusion and misunderstanding that must result for the reader who has no such acquaintance. Only a few examples can be given here where oversimplification and the loose treatment of materials lead to errors:

¹Wheelwright’s term “churchman” does not accurately convey the meaning here. A more appropriate term is “mystic.”

In stating the Mormon position relative to the responsibility of God for the limitations and evils of this life (p. 18), the author says this position "parallels Brightman's notion of 'the Given' with which God is struggling" (p. 19). Now regardless of what is meant by "parallels," this statement (as well as footnote eleven on page fifty-seven) is entirely misleading, as Brightman's idealistic logic denies the non-mental or extra-mental content of matter and therefore would reject the pluralism suggested by the author's use of the terms element and spirit. Nor can "the Given," posited by Brightman, be imposed on the Mormon God, for in Brightman's metaphysics, "the Given," as the source of all evils not ascribed to man, is internal to and part of God's own nature. This follows logically from Brightman's monism and needless to say is incompatible and nonparallel to the pluralism which is the basis of the author's Mormon solution to the problem of evil.

If the uninitiated reader of this review is confused relative to "the Given," then he has a taste of what to expect in much of the book. My purpose is not to discuss nor to clarify the difference between the Mormon treatment of the problem of evil and that of Brightman but merely to indicate that in this instance, as elsewhere, the facile, off-hand way in which the author treats names and ideas without sufficient explanation can scarcely lead to clarification, when clarification is the stated purpose of the book.

On page nineteen, for another example, the statement is made that the Mormon position "refutes the view of a Bradley or a Buddha that evil is illusory." There is confusion here as to the meaning of illusion and appearance in the idealistic philosophy of Bradley and the meaning of *Maya* in Indian thought. For Bradley evil was not illusory. "Evil and good are not illusions, but they are most certainly appearances" (p. 401, *Appearance and Reality*. See Chapter XXVIII for Bradley's meaning of these terms). Note twenty-six, page nineteen, suggests the same confusion and in addition generalizes on Oriental thought, leaving the impression that all Orientals think alike on this subject.

On page twenty, in a brief reference to Rudolph Otto's *Idea of the Holy*, there seems to be an identification of the author's notion of a spiritual "prior awareness," in a temporal sense, with Otto's "A priori numinousness." If by "prior awareness" Madsen means a memory of a temporal spiritual past (as chapter seven implies), then Otto would not accept this identification or comparison, regardless of the psychology involved. Madsen seems entirely unaware of Otto's use of *a priori*. On the same page in note 32 there is the statement, "The word 'numinous' is a derivative of 'luminous.'" If this is not a printer's error, then it is a rather strange factual error, as Otto carefully describes how he coined the word "numinous" from the Latin *numen*, which is a general Latin term for divine power. (Otto, *Idea of the Holy*, pp. 5-7, 20.) Otto uses the term to stand for the extra-ethical quality of the divine nature and stresses foremost among other things the "overpoweringness" of the divine in religious experience as contrasted to creaturely dependence and abasement. If the author had some theological, philosophical, or psychological subtlety in mind in his use of "numinous" and "luminous," the reader is entitled to an explanation. Linking these terms together in relation to Otto is misleading.

Humanists would and should object to the statement on page 30, that

“humanists try to account for man as an ‘epiphenomenon,’” on the grounds that in their common view man is too closely related to the world genetically, organically, and functionally to be a mere epiphenomenon. Most humanists would also reject the position attributed to them that “freedom is the name for our ignorance of the causes that determine us” (p. 30).

The third paragraph on page 30 completely misrepresents William P. Montague. He is represented as holding “the things that matter most will ultimately be at the mercy of the things that matter least.” The fact is that Montague held that the opposite is true. This paraphrase is taken from a statement where Montague is arguing that if the truths of religion can be accepted and acted upon, then “no longer would the things that matter most be at the mercy of the things that matter least.” (See Montague’s *Belief Unbound*, p. 7.) Montague is also represented as a humanist when in fact he was a theist.

The reader who is familiar with Bertrand Russell will be more than surprised with Madsen’s implication that he accepts the position that “a pig satisfied at the trough is better than a Socrates unsatisfied at the Trial” (p. 47).

Professor Madsen’s book, as indicated earlier, represents insight and understanding of Mormon doctrine and philosophy, but his style, which at times borders on the melodramatic, gets him into some difficulties. For example, in introducing the problem of freedom he says, “any approach to the nature of man leads to the question of freedom. In what sense, if at all, is man free? Paradoxically, this is a question we are not free to ignore. *We agonize over it daily*” (p. 63, italics mine). That the person who does not believe in free will, as well as the person who does, behaves as if he were free means that the question is one that can be ignored, and, in actual experience, is ignored. As a matter of fact, Mormons are prone to state rather dogmatically that man is free and leave it at that. The author would be hard pressed to find a single Mormon specimen, outside certain institutions, agonizing daily over the question of freedom.

In the chapter “Evil and Suffering,” the problem of evil is limited to human suffering and is discussed in the form of a dialogue in which the Prophet Joseph Smith is represented as answering the questions of a distraught mother on the problem of suffering. While the Prophet may have held the views attributed to him, one finds explicitly or implicitly in his answers most of the classical solutions to the problem of suffering. The reader, probably, would have anticipated this had he not been told “the merest kernels of his prophetic grasp of man’s origins, radically alter typical reflections on suffering” (p. 55).

Of course, reference here is to Mormon non-absolutism and the doctrine of the uncreated nature of man, which obviously ease the problem of God’s involvement in and responsibility for evil. However, the claim of original inequality (p. 57) has little to do with the problem of suffering and certainly is no answer to the question relative to the vast difference in degrees of suffering experienced by men in this life.

To be consistent with Madsen’s handling of the problem, Mormon theism must regard suffering as serving some positive purpose. The author regards suffering as a necessary means to perfection (p. 57). This may well be true, yet such an interpretation compromises the claim, not that suffering is real, but that suffering is evil. And while it may be said that some suffering serves such