"her eyes still greet me," "with the children raised and gone," "fighting the wind," "she tunes in on crickets," "nana used to say," "two canes — out of step," "an empty cup," "autumn nightfall," "nursing-home hall," and "the sound of foghorns." And the language in these poems is convincing and accessible, often colloquial: few would find the poems obscure. Most memorable, though are the images delineated so forcefully, and on nearly every page: "Mist curls at / her swollen ankles / like a lap dog / she ignores," writes William Pitt Root of the cursing, clever, classically marginal bus passenger in "Passing Go" (p. 90); "I am hanging / my body on a line with clothespins, // it is an old bag, a broken- down / dreamskin, a dilapidated girdle / pickled grey with washing," chants Rachel Loden's liberating narrator in "The Stripper" (p. 132); while "The old woman plays in a shapeless black coat, / button missing, she skips through the orchard," in her delight delighting us all in Virginia Barrett's "Autumn Poet" (p. 76). Such images multiply over and over, and though they evoke responses varying from pleasure to disgust, depending to a large degree upon the viewer's own comfort with the life processes portrayed, they are always arresting.

But it is the women themselves who stay with us long after the book is on its shelf. American mostly, they are also Ukrainian, Irish, French, Jewish, Eskimo, Vietnamese, Armenian; individualized portraits in the main, they are also representative crones, earth mothers; mainly seen through a variety of others' eyes — a daughter's, a son's, a grandchild's, a great-grandchild's, a neighbor's, a friend's, an observer's — we also see her through her own eyes, the lens my personal favorite perhaps. At least I continue to be overcome by one particular dramatic monologue, Geraldine C. Little's "Mary Ludwig in Old Age (Whom history knows as Molly Pitcher" (p. 115-17). Molly is as real to me here as the old women in my own family, women with particular frailties, particular memories, yet it is the quality of resonant imagination in the poem to which I respond most strongly. What indeed happened to Molly after the revolution? An encyclopedia quickly provides the facts; Geraldine Little provides the life. And this Molly does live. Yes, she remembers the war — "Maggots in boyish flesh move through my dreams" — and "makes no apology" that she "aimed to kill." But what she prefers to remember are her years as a new bride: "I / am as young as you are, just married. I see / the beautiful arc of his body over me, hear // lovewords no lady should know, that I *loved*." Indeed, rather than recollect the sweating, "blackened limbs" of the boys to whom she ferried water, she "would like to think only of how it was when he came / to [her] first in the high hard bed, how his hand / round a cup of tea in the kitchen was tawny, and kind." In this poem, Molly is real, she is earthy, she is wise — all the more the heroine for having shed some of her myth.

Only Morning in Her Shoes is a myth-shedding, stereotype-shattering book. Though it holds no *special* appeal for Mormon readers (aside from its publication by a Utah press and three poems by Dixie Partridge), it should nonetheless *appeal* to them very much: all of us, after all, come from a family of old women.

Penetrating the Heart of Mormonism

The Memory of Earth: Homecoming by Orson Scott Card (New York: Tor Books, scheduled for 1991 release).

Reviewed by Michael R. Collings, professor of English, Humanities Division, Pepperdine University.

THE MEMORY OF EARTH begins the five-volume story of the Oversoul, the master computer of the planet Harmony. For forty million years, the Oversoul has preserved peace among humans exiled into space by a nuclear holocaust on Earth.

Aware that its powers are failing, the Oversoul sends premonitory dreams and visions to Wetchik, one of Harmony's leading citizens. Wetchik's four sons respond differently to their father's experiences. The two eldest rebel; the third, crippled and dependent upon technology for his mobility and independence, remains passively loyal. But the fourth and youngest, Nafai, attempts to understand his father's dreams. His actions set him against his older brothers and against the prevailing mores of the city that is their home, Basilica.

If all of this sounds vaguely familiar, it should. In *The Homecoming* Card sets himself an ambitious goal: to reproduce as science fiction the overt narrative structure and underlying ethical, moral, and theological conflicts of the Book of Mormon. As he has done superbly in the *Tales of Alvin Maker* series, his reimagining of the Joseph Smith story in a world of science and religion and magic, Card attempts here to penetrate the surface of religious narrative and analyze the underlying human motivations.

Card insists that his readers recognize both surface and substance when he structures his story in *The Memory of Earth* on the opening chapters of 1 Nephi. All of the essential elements are here, altered to meet the needs of Card's imagined worlds yet retaining the force of their narrative and theological meanings. The relationship of Nafai to Nephi is immediately obvious, but Card is careful to distance himself from other specifics of the Book of Mormon narrative. Nafai's father is not Lehi but Wetchik, a prosperous trader. His older brothers Elemak and Mebbekew parallel Laman and Lemuel in their attitudes but not necessarily in their actions. And—perhaps most intriguing of all—Card's Sam-analogue, Issib, emerges as a fully rounded character, as capable as Nafai but physically handicapped and totally dependent upon technology or other people.

As *The Memory of Earth* unfolds, Card systematically lays the foundation for his narrative. Wetchik is warned in a vision to leave the city of Basilica, situated—as was Jerusalem in Lehi's time—between two rival and warlike nations. His older sons join the opposition party, whose leaders plot to kill Wetchit, while his younger sons struggle to make sense of what is happening. Forced by the unraveling political situation to flee Basilica, the family camps in the desert, where the father speaks a poem modeled on one in 1 Nephi (identified as a "quellenlied" by Hugh Nibley in *Lehi in the Desert*), naming the river for his oldest son and the valley for his second son. While in the desert, Wetchik is told that his sons must return to Basilica for the Palwashantu Index—the computer index of the Oversoul that holds all memories of Earth—currently in the possession of his archrival. The four sons return and attempt to buy the Index; ultimately, Nafai slays a drunken Gaballufix and deceives the servant Zdorab into turning over the brass ball.

At this point *The Memory of Earth* breaks off, having prepared the ground for four subsequent volumes: *The Promise of Earth*, *The Ships of Earth*, *The Voyage to Earth*, and *The People of Earth*. Card has made clear that he is clothing Book of Mormon narratives and themes in the guise of contemporary science fiction. *The Memory of Earth* does not strive for the truthfulness of theological assertion, since that level is never in doubt in Card's fictions; rather it struggles for the truthfulness of human motivation—love, faith, loyalty, greed, ambition, fear, revenge.

In *The Memory of Earth*, Card creates an alien world with complex ecological, historical, and political backgrounds; with a self-destructive social system based on female ownership of property; and with religious and cultural beliefs central to Nafai's development and at the same time frequently illustrative of LDS belief. The elements that define the planet Harmony are essential to Card's narrative, yet they also define our own world, with its often distorted social, sexual, moral, and ethical values.