

Hard Day for Professor Midgley: An Essay for Fawn McKay Brodie

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THE YEAR 1998 FOUND THE NATION in the grip of a sex scandal in the White House, a sex scandal in which a president (named for Thomas Jefferson) flatly denied "improper sexual relations," believing, evidently, that no physical evidence could link him to the alleged deeds. Into the middle of this storm broke a piece of news. The DNA of Thomas Jefferson's paternal uncle had been compared to the DNA of the descendants of Sally Hemings, one of Thomas Jefferson's slaves. The results would dramatically shift the ground in a long debate over Jefferson's relationship to Hemings and to her children.¹ With one notable exception, historians and biographers had dismissed, even denounced claims and rumors that Jefferson had been sexually involved with a "mulatto" slave. The exception was Fawn McKay Brodie. She had already published *No Man Knows My History*, a biography of Joseph Smith, which, while well received generally by critics and scholars, had provoked outrage in the Mormon community. Her Jefferson biography, by contrast, came almost universally under attack for its scholarship and methodology, but most especially for its central assertion that Thomas Jefferson had, in fact, had a long sexual relationship with Sally Hemings and, moreover, had fathered one or

1. Eugene Foster, et al., "Jefferson Fathered Slave's Last Child," *Nature*, 5 November 1998, 27-28. Evidence from the recent DNA tests is not conclusive in the sense of logically excluding any chance that Jefferson was not the father of any of Hemings' children. As has been pointed out by the authors of the original *Nature* study and their critics, the possible logical universe of fathers for Hemings's child Eston Hemings is now limited to Thomas Jefferson, his brother Randolph Jefferson, Randolph Jefferson's five sons, and a slave child in the Jefferson line (Gary Davis, "The Thomas Jefferson Paternity Case," *Nature*, 7 January 1999, 32; David M. Abbey, "The Thomas Jefferson Paternity Case," *Nature*, 7 January 1999, 32; Foster, et al., "Reply: The Thomas Jefferson Paternity Case," *Nature*, 7 January 1999, 32).

more of her children. The swift establishment response pronounced Brodie's book both reckless and wrong.²

Now, however, twenty years later, DNA testing has re-opened the debate with a vengeance. No longer can Brodie be dismissed merely as sex-obsessed and incompetent. Jefferson scholars must now reconsider her work, not in terms of whether she dishonored a national icon, but in light of the evidence: documentary, circumstantial, and DNA. Interestingly, the reopening of the Jefferson debate also has important implications for Brodie's work on Joseph Smith and for the community of LDS scholars.

The feelings of Professor Louis C. Midgley on the subject of Fawn Brodie are well documented.³ Brodie, in his view, was an atheist, and a biased one at that, who had been given a pass by the larger American academic community because her target was Joseph Smith. The narrow parochialism of establishment scholars blinded them to the truth, according to Midgley, that Brodie was a bad historian who concealed her hidden agendas behind clever rhetoric and assumptions that did violence to the real Joseph Smith.

Thus, Midgley was delighted when some years later the American historical establishment aimed its intellectual cannons at Brodie's *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate Biography*.⁴ To be sure, Midgley had had his own clash with the establishment. By his account, as a young doctoral candidate at a prestigious Ivy League school, he was set to storm the citadel of east-coast religious thought with a powerful doctoral dissertation on Paul Tillich. In taking on Tillich, Midgley viewed himself as a lonely warrior about to do battle with one of the key icons of the establishment. Furthermore, Tillich was the central character in the work of the young Midgley's graduate advisor. Motivated by the desire to stop this would-be Quixote in his tracks, the advisor met with Midgley (in the professor's "plush office") to discuss Midgley's dissertation proposal. When the young student entered the office, he found himself confronted with a naked desk, except for one item, a copy of Brodie's *No Man Knows My His-*

2. See, for example the interviews of Joseph Ellis of Mount Holyoke College, Annette Gordon-Lee of New York Law School, and Daniel Jordan of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, each of whom offers a perspective on professional historians' change of heart after the DNA evidence came in (PBS, "News Hour with Jim Lehrer," 2 November 1998, "Thomas Jefferson's Legacy," interview by Margaret Warner).

3. This essay deals with two articles by Midgley on Brodie: Louis C. Midgley, "The Brodie Connection: Thomas Jefferson and Joseph Smith," *BYU Studies* 20, no. 1 (1979): 59-67 and Louis C. Midgley, "F. M. Brodie—'The Fasting Hermit and the Very Saint of Ignorance': A Biographer and Her Legend," reprinted from *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 8, no. 2 (1996): 147-230 available at http://www.farmsresearch.com/frob/frobv8_2/midgley.htm (citations are to this version).

4. Fawn Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate Biography* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975).

tory. Clearly this was intended as an ambush, a maneuver to intimidate the Mormon, but rising to the challenge, Midgley tells the professor that the Brodie work is "bad," sparing not the chance to highlight the fallen nature of the author, "Fawn McKay Brodie." A discussion ensues in which Midgley invokes the name and arguments of Hugh Nibley against Brodie, and just when one expects the professor to reveal himself as Charles Anthon and declare, "I cannot read a sealed book," the conversation ends unresolved. Midgley comforts the reader, however, by concluding the story with the same professor signing off on Midgley's doctoral dissertation, acknowledgment evidently that Midgley has refuted both Tillich and the professor's attempt on Mormonism.⁵

This trumping of the academic establishment would not be his last. In 1979, after Fawn Brodie had published her now somewhat famous and controversial Jefferson biography, another chance to throw sand into the face of the American intellectual establishment presented itself to now Professor Midgley. In an article in *BYU Studies*, Midgley seized the chance to show that the historical profession had caught Brodie cheating on her Jefferson biography in just the same manner in which she had cheated in her book about Joseph Smith where, however, historians had neglected to condemn it. She had committed the same offenses against Jefferson that Hugh Nibley had accused her of committing against the Prophet Joseph Smith. Nibley and Midgley had been right all along! Brodie was a bad historian! The establishment's failure to see this in the first instance was just another example of the closed-minded failure of the intellectual elite to give a fair hearing to the embattled Mormons. In 1996 Midgley returned to the same topic, presenting an expanded version of this argument in an all-out attack on Brodie's work.⁶

I.

Both of Midgley's essays on Brodie make the same essential points about her work on Jefferson: she handles evidence badly, distorts facts, engages in unwarranted speculation, and focuses obsessively on sex. She also pursues a personal agenda of painting Jefferson in a long-term emotional and sexual affair with a slave. Midgley's technique in both essays is to string together quotations from the pantheon of Jefferson historians, using their words, usually remarkable for their sarcasm or overwrought rhetoric, to make his case. Midgley summarily dismisses any favorable

5. Midgley, "The Brodie Connection," 59.

6. Midgley dubs Brodie the "Very Saint of Ignorance" in typical Midgley fashion, repeating the insult in bold letters then carefully directing the reader to the real source of the slander. See Midgley, "The Fasting Hermit," note to the title.

review of Brodie's work as motivated by crass commercial concerns or as the work of anonymous and, therefore, unreliable critics.⁷

In his 1979 piece, Professor Midgley quotes review after review to build the indictment against Brodie, the biographer of Thomas Jefferson:

- She is mistaken in portraying Jefferson as a "lusty 'ladies-man.'"⁸
- She "is at her best when there is no evidence whatsoever to cloud her vision. Then she is free to speculate."⁹
- She fails by attempting to prove Jefferson's involvement with Hemings "less by any single unqualified historical fact than by a fine web of subtle references."¹⁰
- She relies on "inaccuracies" and "shaky evidence."¹¹
- She has a hidden personal agenda: "It is because of Mrs. Brodie's own clear commitment to ideals of racial equality that she wishes to depict Jefferson as setting the taboo [against miscegenation] aside."¹²
- Brodie has an "obsession with all the things she can find or invent about Jefferson's sex life" and "ought to have given her book a better title. Why not 'By Sex Obsessed?'"¹³
- Brodie uses "bad psychology."¹⁴

Throughout his attack on Brodie, Midgley goes to some pains to exhibit the lofty academic credentials of his surrogates—the august names of Columbia, Berkeley, MIT, and Harvard are all invoked against Brodie. He focuses intensely on the Hemings affair as the prime indicator of Brodie's sloppy work and cavalier method—he mentions or refers to Hemings' affair with Jefferson at least ten times in the short essay. He sums up with a sneering quote from Garry Wills, who condemns Brodie's *Jefferson* as "involv[ing] heroic feats of misunderstanding and a constant labor of insignificance. This seems too high a price to pay when the same appetites can be more readily gratified by those Hollywood fan magazines,

7. Midgley, "The Brodie Connection," 60.

8. *Ibid.*, 61, quoting Edwin M. Yoder, Jr., "An Unshaken Hero," *National Review*, 10 May 1974, 542.

9. *Ibid.*, 64, quoting David Herbert Donald, "By Sex Obsessed," *Commentary* 58, no. 1 (July 1974): 98.

10. *Ibid.*, 60, quoting Alan Green, "The Inner Man of Monticello," *Saturday Review/World* 1 (6 April 1974): 23.

11. *Ibid.*, 62.

12. *Ibid.*, 63, quoting Max Beloff, "The Sally Hemings Affair," *Encounter* (September 1974): 53.

13. *Ibid.*, 64, quoting Donald, "Sex Obsessed," 68.

14. *Ibid.*, 63, quoting Winthrop D. Jordan, book review in *William and Mary Quarterly* (July 1975): 511.

with their wealth of unfounded conjecture on the sex lives of others, from which Mrs. Brodie has borrowed her scholarly methods."¹⁵

In his 1996 essay, Midgley again makes the Hemings affair the centerpiece of his attack on Brodie, beginning his essay with a broadside against Brodie's treatment of Jefferson, titling this section of the essay "The Jefferson Debacle."¹⁶ He admits that his earlier essay was a work written to establish his "vindication" and chides "cultural Mormons" for their vain efforts to brush aside Nibley's criticisms of Brodie.¹⁷ Further, he criticizes Brodie for not heeding the criticisms of her *Jefferson* from the cadre of professional historians, with language that is painful to read in light of subsequent developments:

[These] criticisms were rejected [by Brodie] as merely an effort by what Brodie derisively labeled "the Jeffersonian establishment" to protect [Jefferson's] image, just as she had discounted the criticisms of Latter-day Saints for somewhat similar reasons.¹⁸

Midgley then resumes quoting others, excerpting the most vitriolic criticisms of the Jefferson illuminati to set the stage for his own attack on Brodie as a biographer of Joseph Smith:

- Brodie is the "mistress of the iffy sentence."¹⁹
- "Brodie's treatment of the miscegenation issue will only confirm the skeptic's complaint that psychohistory is nothing but a form of suppositional history."²⁰
- Brodie, using "tedious and ridiculous" methods, "discovers sexual references in nearly everything Jefferson wrote."²¹
- "[T]wo things, each wondrous in itself, combine to make this book [*Jefferson*] a prodigy—the author's industry and her ignorance."²²
- Brodie employs "a wide range of the most amateurish psychological clichés."²³

15. *Ibid.*, 65-66, quoting Garry Wills, "Uncle Thomas's Cabin," *New York Review of Books* (18 April 1978): 26.

16. Midgley, "The Fasting Hermit," text in note 37.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, text after note 40.

19. *Ibid.*, text in note 46, quoting Cushing Stout, *Pacific Historical Review* 44, no. 2 (May 1995): 266.

20. *Ibid.*, text in note 48.

21. *Ibid.*, text in note 51, quoting T. Harry Williams, "On the Couch at Monticello," *Reviews in American History* 2 (December 1974): 524.

22. *Ibid.*, text in note 56, quoting Wills, "Uncle Thomas," 26.

23. *Ibid.*, text in note 44, quoting Larry R. Gerlach, *Utah Bicentennial Post* 1, no. 4 (May/June 1974): 5. Midgley inexplicably goes to some length to note that Mr. Gerlach was trained at Rutgers.

Finally, as though the whole episode were not loaded with enough irony, Professor Midgley decides to have a seat in Dr. Freud's chair, placing Brodie on the couch to examine her reaction to critics of *Jefferson*. In a surprising resort, he invents a new psychological category, the "hater," to denounce Brodie's motives. "[She] appears to have been a good hater," he says, and then asks rhetorically, "what happened to the honest and open pursuit of truth?"²⁴

To be sure, Midgley also attacks Brodie in less personal terms, but here too relies on the Jeffersonian historians. At length, he compiles their complaints that Brodie has made factual errors in *Jefferson*:

- He quotes Richard B. Morris, who, he carefully notes, held "the Gouverneur Morris Chair of American History at Columbia University" and who comments that "at times [Brodie's] slips are embarrassing, confusing the vote on and the signing of the Declaration of Independence" and incorrectly concluding that Jefferson refused an appointive office as peace commissioner.²⁵
- Midgley quotes Mary-Jo Kline, dismissing the importance of Brodie's discovery of a newspaper interview with one of Jefferson's children by Hemings for reasons that are painfully ironic in retrospect—the supposed bias of an African American family in trying to lay claim to the Jefferson heritage.²⁶
- Midgley quotes a historian who notes that the illegitimate son made "at least four" errors in the "ten lines in that part of his reminiscences reproduced" in Brodie's *Jefferson*.²⁷

Midgley adds these errors to those he had cited in his earlier article—such as the complaint of one historian who solemnly intoned that, "Mrs. Brodie confuses 'Light Horse Harry' Lee with Richard Henry Lee . . . and with 'Black Horse Harry' Lee . . ."—²⁸—to portray Brodie as a shoddy practitioner of the historian's craft. Errors of fact are, of course, damaging to any historian, but Brodie's ultimate failure is demonstrated with finality for Midgley in her treatment of Jefferson's affair with Sally Hemings:

Those supposed secrets [revealed by Brodie] involved, among other things, fathering illegitimate children with a young quadroon slave girl who accom-

24. *Ibid.*, note 57.

25. Midgley, "The Brodie Connection," 61, quoting Richard B. Morris, "The Very Private Jefferson," *New Leader* 57, no. 11 (27 May 1974): 25.

26. Midgley, "The Brodie Connection," 62, quoting Mary-Jo Kline, book review in *New England Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (December 1974): 624.

27. Midgley, "The Brodie Connection," quoting Holman Hamilton, book review in *Journal of Southern History* 41, no. 1 (February 1975): 108.

28. *Ibid.*, 62, quoting Hamilton, 108.

panied him and his daughter to Paris. Thus, she devotes five chapters and an appendix to the *old tale* about Jefferson's supposed "affair" with Sally Hemings.²⁹

Midgley has thus marshaled his arguments, in many cases twice, each time hammering Brodie with all the weight of academic consensus. Professor Midgley even goes to the trouble of cataloging by name 36 "distinguished experts and other professional historians and other academics who published unfavorable reviews of [Brodie's] *Thomas Jefferson*."³⁰ Secure that the Jefferson establishment concurs with his estimation of Fawn McKay Brodie's method, her agenda, and her style, he turns to demonstrating that historians have failed to notice the very same shortcomings in her work on Joseph Smith. His resentment is tempered, but unmistakable:

In 1946, when Hugh Nibley first attempted to challenge Ms. Brodie's scholarship, he was denounced as flippant and his arguments were discounted; but there were some rather remarkable similarities between his objections to *No Man Knows My History* and the current scholarly criticisms of *Thomas Jefferson*, which complain as Dr. Nibley did of Ms. Brodie's *manipulation and tangling of evidence, of her obsession with sex, of her ignorance of the larger background of the subject she is treating, and of her special "intuition" into the minds of people*. Perhaps it is time for non-Mormon historians to examine once again Fawn M. Brodie's still-respected earlier work, *No Man Knows My History*; for that book may suffer from the same faults now so *painfully* evident to the reviewers of *Thomas Jefferson*.³¹

II.

Midgley and the reviewers he quotes had leveled their criticisms at Fawn Brodie's *Thomas Jefferson* without, of course, ever thinking that physical evidence might some day render comic their absolute confidence that Brodie had erred. For Jefferson's biographers the DNA test revelations were embarrassing; many have virtually made careers out of denying even the possibility of an affair between Jefferson and his slave. For Professor Midgley, in many ways, the case is worse. He walked into this argument, not for the purpose of discovering the truth about Jefferson, but to reveal to the world the methodological and character defects

29. Midgley, "The Fasting Hermit," text after note 42 (emphasis added).

30. *Ibid.*, in note 75.

31. Midgley, "The Brodie Connection," 66-67 (emphasis added). I have italicized the loaded language because Midgley accused Brodie of being motivated by hate. Surely Midgley did not entertain the conceit that his own writing on Brodie represented dispassionate scholarship.

of Fawn Brodie and, thereby, conclude that a writer of such "bad" history would not be reliable when she wrote about anyone, including the prophet of Midgley's deeply held faith.

When the DNA evidence came in, it forced the historical community to reassess the many heated condemnations of Brodie. Defenders of the Jeffersonian image are, of course, already at work, but, for the moment, are themselves the ones sounding "speculative." And where does the new evidence leave Midgley's project? In trouble. Fawn McKay Brodie, who was so obviously, overwhelmingly wrong, appears now to have been right. At least, the greater probability in light of scientific evidence is that Jefferson did indeed have a sexual relationship with his slave mistress.³² Brodie's methods, criticized as "intuition" and "amateur conjecture," had led her to conclusions that seem now in serious danger of holding up. Had her *Jefferson* contained factual errors as her critics insisted? Certainly. Yet, Brodie's gift was seeing through facts and past establishment proscriptions to a central truth about Jefferson the man that others could not or would not see. In light of this, their punctilious criticisms of her factual errors seem richly ironic. One is reminded of Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees, "blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."³³

Brodie had not gotten it all right—the DNA tests establish that Jefferson did not father the child Hemings conceived in Paris as Brodie thought.³⁴ Yet, this is scant consolation to Professor Midgley's case. He himself points out, this time without a trace of irony, that Brodie seems not in the least bothered by the fact that "no other Jefferson biographer," all of whom had access to her sources, took "these tales of his sexual prowess" seriously.³⁵ This criticism, meant to be damning, turns out to be high praise.

Consider the daunting challenge that Brodie faced. Thomas Jefferson is among the most revered of all Americans. Countless biographies had dismissed the Hemings affair as idle gossip, the supposedly unreliable myth of African-Americans, or as malicious political slander. The authors of these biographies occupied the upper seats in the ivory towers of America. According to Midgley himself, this powerful group, with a vast stake in their versions of Jefferson's life, rose up almost uniformly to condemn Brodie. Midgley—who began his 1979 essay with the story of his own battle with the Tillich establishment dragon—might have sensed

32. Above, note 2.

33. Matthew 23:24.

34. Eugene Foster *et al.*, "Jefferson Fathered Slave's Last Child," *Nature*, 5 November 1998, 28. Brodie thought that Jefferson had fathered the first of Hemings's children in Paris. (Brodie, *Jefferson*, 293).

35. Midgley, "The Brodie Connection," 64, quoting Donald, "Sex Obsessed," 97-98.

more than anyone that such adamant and vitriolic criticism by establishment historians was itself suspicious. For, if Brodie were right about the "quadroon," the "mulatto" (the terms used in Midgley's essays), then hundreds of pages and countless hours of investment in denying the Hemings affair would be lost. Historians who had devoted careers to Jefferson would have to admit that their strident denials were vast overstatements. And their creation Jefferson, the icon of rationality, would have to make room for Jefferson, the carnal and not altogether admirable man.

By taking sides with the Jefferson establishment, Midgley made Brodie's method in *Jefferson* a test case for her treatment of Joseph Smith. In the same essay in which he congratulates himself for confronting academic arrogance, he abruptly switches sides to align himself with the arrogant. He even treats Brodie as deluded when she blames closed-mindedness for the rejection of her Jefferson biography.³⁶

Such opportunistic side switching is not uncommon in the world and not surprising. Professor Midgley, along with other LDS scholars, has made his own career with a stout defense of traditional orthodox teaching about Joseph Smith. Midgley, Nibley, and other Brodie detractors have been pillars of the Mormon establishment, revered as defenders of the faith in Priesthood Quorums and Sunday Schools, at Church Education Weeks, and Know Your Religion Series.³⁷

Brodie knew what she was up against in writing about Joseph Smith; it is Midgley who reminds us that she was Fawn McKay Brodie. She knew that she was subjecting to examination the foundation stories of a people that had pulled handcarts across the barren plains. She knew that she was confronting powerful men with vested interests. Yet, she wrote a history of Joseph Smith that, for better or for worse, followed her sense of truth.

The Jefferson establishment's lambasting of Brodie's *Jefferson* presented Midgley with a seductive call. He would let the secular historians

36. Midgley, "The Fasting Hermit," 40. Indeed, as Annette Gordon-Reed has made painfully clear, Brodie was exactly right about the biased history written by the Jefferson elite about the Hemings affair. See Ms. Gordon-Reed's powerful *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy* (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 1997), in which she builds a compelling case that Jefferson historians often couched arguments against the thesis that Hemings and Jefferson had a relationship in terms that reflect clear race and class bias.

37. See David B. Honey and Daniel C. Peterson, "Advocacy and Inquiry in the Writing of Latter-day Saint History," *BYU Studies* 31 (Spring 1991): 271n1 who opine that "Louis Midgley has been the most vociferous defender of the faith from the inroads of 'revisionist' historiography, as he terms it." See also Kent P. Jackson, book review in *BYU Studies* 28 (Fall 1988), who, while stating reservations about Professor Nibley's methods maintains that "[i]n his role as a defender of the faith, Nibley has served extremely well and deserves our highest admiration and praise."

show up her shoddy methods and dubious conclusions. But Midgely is no secular historian, and he often decries their “naturalist” assumptions. In his historiography God appears to an adolescent New York farm boy, angels deliver ancient records, and ancient emissaries arrive to give the boy supernatural powers. What appears absurd to the naturalist is perfectly normal to the believer. This is a comfortable position from which to argue because the historian employing “naturalistic” assumptions must deal with verifiable events and use arguments that stand or fall on verifiable evidence. With a supernatural worldview, Midgely need not fear rational argument because his most important claims are, at their root, not subject to rational proof or disproof. Arguing from this perspective allows him to take the “naturalist” historian sternly to task for the inevitable holes in argument that result from an incomplete, incoherent, and imperfect historical record or from the unavoidable constraints of time, place, and historical perspective. When confronted with incoherence in his own chain of evidence, he can call on supernatural explanations that cannot be refuted because they cannot be verified.

However, in confronting Brodie in league with conventional historians, Midgely loses his supernatural recourse. Either Jefferson had sex with Sally Hemings, or he did not. Either the Hemings family descendants carried the Jefferson family DNA, or they did not. These, as it turns out, are largely verifiable facts and not forever beyond the reach of rationality as are, for Midgely, the central claims of Joseph Smith. Here he has picked a fight that it is possible for him to lose. And so, long after celebrating what seemed an early and devastating rout, he must learn that although he had rhetorically mauled Fawn Brodie, she had withstood his assault.

CONCLUSION

At the moment Fawn McKay Brodie, imperfect historian, has emerged from her battle with Louis Midgely and the Jefferson elite ahead on points in an ugly struggle. She has been badly bruised, but emerges in the lead because she dared tenaciously to follow her own stubborn insight. The altercation has been brutal and is not over. Her conflict with those who have vested interests in preserving one view of Joseph Smith will be tougher still, perhaps hopeless, because like Midgely, they have taken up positions immune, finally, to rational challenge. Even so, it may be that Professor Midgely owes the late Ms. Brodie an apology. I do not make it my place to insist on this, and, in fact, I hardly think apology is enough. Is it enough to apologize after decades of venomous personal invective? There is, however, an important lesson for all of us who care about historical events and personalities, about methodology and pre-

mises and "the open and honest pursuit of truth." We must, I think, reconsider the way in which we conduct our discussions and disagreements and retaliations. A bludgeoning is a bludgeoning, even if the rage that drives it is outrage, even if the outrage is justified or motivated by deeply held beliefs. Apologies do not follow bloodbaths, nor would they help much. How could he admit? And how could she forgive? Where does the pursuit of truth go from here? Ms. Brodie's own passions did not much spare the deep convictions nor, for that matter, insecurities of faithful Latter-day Saints. But the kinds of truths at stake are surely not dependent on her destruction. If we learn anything from this turn in events, it should be humility. The truth "listeth where it will." Historical truth, for instance, now includes the fact that much of the documentation in *No Man Knows My History*, once so angrily denounced, has been vindicated and must now be acknowledged or even incorporated by faithful LDS historians. That is, of course, another essay, but as Midgley once demanded that scholars reappraise Fawn Brodie's work on Joseph Smith in light of her *Jefferson* critics, perhaps fairness and loyalty to truth now ask that we assess *No Man Knows My History* again in light of her vindication.