Whether the strangeness and unlikelihood of these settings get in the way of enjoying the stories will depend largely on the individual taste of the reader. Case in point: while I found "Release" both powerful and heartwarming, three other members of my family (all science-fiction readers) found it too far-fetched. One, for example, thought that by acting subconsciously on its members, the Church in this story denies agency in much the same way as the hostile state—or Satan.

This illustrates why Mormon science fiction is such a fraught endeavor. Even among those of us who like science fiction and have no problem thinking about alternate futures and realities, the Church itself is to some extent a set value—one that can't change in fundamental ways before it stops being the organization to which we owe our allegiance. (Which in itself raises interesting questions in light of our belief in ongoing revelation.)

And so I have to say, in the end, that while I think this is a very good, finely crafted collection, and one well worth reading, the science fiction stories in particular will appeal only to a subset of readers. Still, at $2.99 (at the time of this writing), it's certainly worth a try. And if a particular story doesn't appeal to you, skip to the next one.

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A Cluttering of Symbol and Metaphor

David G. Pace. *Dream House on Golan Drive.* Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2015. 300 pp. Paperback: $24.95. ISBN: 9781560852414.

Reviewed by Eric W. Jepson

How to represent lived religious experience without either underplaying its reality or slipping into the magical-fantastical is an ongoing difficulty in Mormon literature. David G. Pace, in his novel *Dream House on Golan*

Drive, has decided to lean hard into that latter option. The story is narrated by Zedekiah, one of the Three Nephites assigned to watch over young Riley Hartley. What makes Riley special enough to deserve this honor is never clear. Also unclear is just how much of an "honor" it is to have Zedekiah acting as, essentially, his guardian angel. Although loyal to Riley, Zedekiah is not as pious as one might expect of an immortal servant of Jesus Christ. In fact, far from pious, Zedekiah has become almost agnostic on questions of right and wrong, sin and righteousness. He mostly just observes, and when he does engage, it's largely to provide Riley (or someone close to Riley) with a sense of the sublime, of the eternal, of being loved. But while these experiences may strengthen Riley for moments or years, faith itself remains fragile. Even Zedekiah, who sat at the feet of Jesus, cannot keep his relationship with deity as defined as it once was. Current knowledge is a weak predictor of future faith.

Perhaps Latter-day Saint thought itself is to blame. Throughout the novel, the characters who embrace personal revelation as their right are the characters most likely to run into difficulty with the Church. Riley's father is a professional preacher who has built up a cult of personality around himself as he serves in student stakes and earns a living speaking at Know Your Religion. He emphasizes LDS reliance on personal communication with God, yet when he publishes a book to this effect, he is confronted by the Church hierarchy. He is able to accept this chastisement and eventually becomes a General Authority himself.

Other characters are not so successful at harmonizing God's will as revealed to them and God's will as revealed to the Church. Lucy, for instance. Lucy comes into Riley's life when she receives a revelation that she should live with the Hartley family. As Riley's father's teachings are part of the reason she follows this prompting, the family can hardly tell her no even though their home is already packed with kids surnamed Hartley. While Lucy lives with the family, she persists in asking difficult questions and forcing them to either confront or bury disparities between correlated truths and individually-received truths. Later, after marrying

and moving to California, Lucy receives revelation to engage in sexual relations with another man—a spiritual husband. Additionally, Riley's own wife, Dina, receives a revelation to leave him. For a religious people defined largely (within the confines of the novel) by their successful families, these aberrations carry weight.

Whether personal revelation or hierarchical adherence is ultimately more important, the nature of characters' faith is represented by their misaligned sexualities: Riley's adolescent dabblings in homosexuality, Riley's never-recognized love for Lucy, Lucy's polyandry, Riley's sister Candace's sexual attraction to her father—a man whose sexual charisma draws in every woman in the novel, least obviously his wife, the former Miss Utah. Indeed, were it not for their ten kids, there's barely evidence of attraction between them.

Everyone is faking it, sexually speaking, and hoping no one will notice (most of all themselves). But everyone is also faking it religiously in hopes that playing their allotted role will lead to a greater certainty within that role. This is perhaps most obvious in the novel's conflation of temple ordinances and sexual experience. The connection is made explicit a few times, such as when Riley's non-Mormon father-in-law recites rumors of Mormons having sex upon the altars of the temple, or in this description of Riley's visit to a massage parlor/brothel:

> "And there was someone behind a curtain who reached for you," I say.
>
> "Yes."
>
> "Like in the temple back home . . ." (293–94)

The massage-parlor-as-religious-rite performs on multiple levels. For one, Riley's patronage leads to his contracting a venereal disease that he shares with his new wife; he plays Eve in their relationship, bringing her a fruit that means they will surely die. He also, eventually, requests a male masseur—in one respect a signal of his growing spiritual failure, but equally a sign that he is returning to the Edenic glory of his first experiences with friends in the home he grew up in.

Finally, this discussion of being brought through the brothel curtain allows Zedekiah to reintroduce Riley to temple ordinances on the New York City subway. This final scene is a massing of symbols as Pace removes Riley from realism and plunges him into the supernatural. As Riley and Zedekiah interview on the subway car, Riley sheds layers of armor. Some of the armor seems real ("the backpack Riley is wearing as a breastplate" [291]) and some is more clearly figurative ("chain mail gloves" [292]). What does Riley's shedding of this armor mean? Is it the armor of righteousness? Is it the barriers he's set up between himself and his faith?

Riley believes he is dying—why else would a supernatural figure be testing his knowledge of sacred handshakes?—and he is still Mormon enough to see that it is right and proper to leave his life in this way. But he's unable to follow the ritual exactly as he learned it, and Zedekiah does not correct him or steer him away from confronting fear and anger. Which is not surprising, as we have seen Zedekiah observe both temple ordinances and sexual encounters without particular emotion—have too many years as an immortal robbed him of his passion? He watches the barely-pubescent Riley swap handjobs with the same (dis)interest as he does Riley and Dina's first sexual encounter after their marriage. That latter scene is sanctified, however, by Zedekiah's being convinced to turn away by a fellow immortal. The encounter begins with the sweetness expected of Mormon innocents but is also the final stage of months of contained animal lust. Only by ceasing to observe them can it become something beautiful rather than just another crude, terrestrial, human act. Beauty, it seems, can only exist in mystery.

Zedekiah does not turn away in Riley's final scene—in fact, he is a participant—but his description of these moments is layered with so much symbolism and uncertainty and confusion that even the most painful honesty is obscured and we can't know exactly what we are seeing or what it means. Whether this explosion of symbol and metaphor is intended to reveal meaning or to sidestep it, what's certain is that

Zedekiah, at least, is feeling something. Whether Riley is lost or saved is only a question of the moment, for this moment too will move inexorably into the distant past and we will again have to find comfort in the simplicity of Church or seek more complex answers in the uncertainty of speaking directly with God.

Ultimately, *Dream House on Golan Drive* suggests that life may have meaning, but it hesitates to take a stand as to what that meaning might be. This hesitation comes off not as a pleasing ambiguity or a compelling question but as a kind of wariness against taking a stance. The cluttering of the final pages with weighty symbols and obscured emotions, then, is the literary version of having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.

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More than a Different Color

W. Paul Reeve. *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 352 pp. Hardcover: $34.95. ISBN: 9780199754076.

Reviewed by Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp

Three decades after the LDS Church lifted the priesthood ban on African Americans, scholars are offering readers a host of new studies that address the legacy of racial thought and practice in the LDS Church. One of the latest and finest is Paul Reeve's *Religion of a Different Color*, a work that traces Mormon understandings of race as they developed in the nineteenth century. What sets this book apart is that Reeve is not simply concerned with how Mormons thought about other races, although that plays a role here. Nor is he focused simply on how