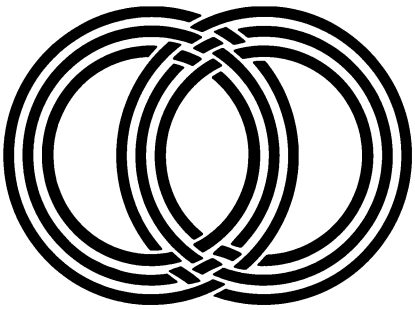
DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT



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A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT

is an independent quarterly established to express Mormon culture and to examine the relevance of religion to secular life. It is edited by Latter-day Saints who wish to bring their faith into dialogue with the larger stream of Judeo-Christian thought and with human experience as a whole and to foster artistic and scholarly achievement based on their cultural heritage. The journal encourages a variety of viewpoints; although every effort is made to ensure accurate scholarship and responsible judgment, the views expressed are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or of the editors.

DIALOGUE: A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT, Vol. 22, No. 4, Winter 1989

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

REVIEWS

All folk artists were photographed by Carol Edison except Henriette Mananui, who was photographed by Hal Cannon.

All folk art was photographed by Jess Allen except the Willow Chair, which was photographed by Kent Miles © 1983 (from *Chase Home: Contemporary Utah Crafts in Design* [Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Arts Council, 1984]).

The art editor gratefully acknowledges the help of Carol Edison, director of the Folk Arts Program, Utah Arts Council.

Front cover: Hmong cross-stitch flower cloth, Mao Lee Vang (Midvale, Utah), 30½"×35", cotton, aida cloth, silk thread, 1981; (Utah) State Art Collection.

Back cover: Saddle, beehive design, Glen Thompson (Huntsville, Utah), 28"×40"; leather, rawhide, metal trim, 1980; (Utah) State Art Collection.

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DIALOGUE welcomes articles, essays, poetry, fiction, selections for Notes and Comments, letters to the editor, and art. Manuscripts must be sent in triplicate, accompanied by return postage, and should be prepared according to the *Chicago Manual of Style* including double-spacing all block quotations and notes. Use the author-date citation style as described in the thirteenth edition. An IBM-PC compatible floppy diskette may also be submitted with the manuscript, using WordPerfect or other ASCII format software. Send submissions to DIALOGUE, University Station — UMC 7805, Logan, Utah 84322-7805. Artists wishing consideration of their artwork should send inquiries to the Art Editor at the same address.

IN THIS ISSUE

For over a century and a half, Joseph Smith has been the object of praise, adulation, ridicule, and condemnation. Both his defenders and his critics have filled pages with analyses of his life and work. Karl Sandberg's "Knowing Brother Joseph Again" is a refreshing approach to understanding the life and impact of the Mormon prophet. It is fitting that an interview with Leonard J. Arrington be paired with Sandberg. Arrington has written and published Mormon history for over three decades and directed the LDS Church Historian's Office during the 1970s. A man without guile, Arrington became the leader, spokesperson, and sponsor for Mormon historians. His contribution is fittingly summarized by his former academic colleague Stanford Cazier, president of Utah State University.

Two articles follow, illuminating significant aspects of contemporary Mormon thought. Max Nolan examines how materialism became part of the Mormon creed, and Michelle Stott traces the threads that connect Mormon and existential philosophy.

As a reminder of the Christmas season, the "Personal Voices" section features three brief essays that relate to sharing and giving. Each is a poignant reminder of what is good and sacred and memorable. Lisa Madsen de Rubilar's short story, "Pure Thin Bones," is an intense look at a man's preoccupation with God's love and hate and at the difficulty we have accepting what is unfamiliar. The poetry selected emphasizes the power of carefully chosen words to move and teach.

We are privileged to publish William A. Wilson's essay, "The Study of Mormon Folklore," originally presented as the Parley Christensen lecture at Brigham Young University and an excellent analysis of a significant and growing field of Mormon studies. Our "Notes and Comments" section includes an exchange between Charles L. Boyd and David H. Bailey regarding Bailey's article that appeared in the Spring 1988 issue of DIALOGUE, as well as a brief summation of Joseph Smith's references to Jews while he was editing the *Times and Seasons*.

Our art in this issue features an interesting variety of Mormon folk art, reinforced with an essay by Carol Edison that draws attention to the significance of our cultural artifacts.

We announce the annual writing awards in this issue. Considering Donlu Thayer's essay on competitiveness, we had a difficult time determining "clear-cut" winners and opted instead to share many of the 1989 awards. We appreciate those who contribute to the annual writing awards.

LETTERS

It's a Matter of Opinion

Thanks to Ed Kimball (Summer 1989) for pointing out three errors in our recent *An Abundant Life: The Memoirs of Hugh B. Brown*, edited by Ed Firmage. These have been corrected in the third printing.

Regarding Kimball's objection to "the publisher's advertising methods" — which occupied fully one-third of his book review — let me first point out that the headline of an ad in *Sunstone* magazine (July 1988, p. 4), "For Those Who Want All the Facts," came from a review of *Salamander: The Story of the Mormon Forgery Murders*, not *An Abundant Life*, as the asterisk next to the headline made clear. The ad featured three new Signature titles, and the headline recommended breadth in reading, not "tell-all" genre books.

Second, Kimball objects to Signature's two-page press release announcing publication of *An Abundant Life*, which promised readers information on President Brown's "troubled youth and physically abusive father, his courtship and career as a successful lawyer, the devastating death of his oldest son during World War II, and his trying years as a Mormon leader," as well as "his liberal views on birth control, marital sexual relations, divorce, political extremism, science, intellectualism, and race relations." Most reviewers of *An Abundant Life* have recognized that the memoirs in fact treat at length each of these aspects of President Brown's life (see, for example, *L.A. Times*, 3 Dec. 1988; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 18 Dec. 1988; *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 7 Jan. 1989; *St. George Daily Spectrum*, 26 Nov. 1988; *This People*, Spring 1989). Each subject, at least as President Brown remembered it, *was* a "major theme," not an "item mentioned in passing," as Kimball states. President Brown's youth *was* "troubled" in many ways. Kimball's intimation that this implies moral turpitude is his own interpretation, not ours. Brown's father *was* physically abusive. According to President Brown: "The first thing I remember from my youth is my father's harsh discipline. Sometimes my older brother Homer James . . . would be slapped to the ground while working on the garden. This also happened to me a few times. My mother's heart would break a little each time it happened. . . . Even up to the time of his death, his awful temper and quick tongue alienated practically all of the members of his family from him" (pp. 1–2).

As to Kimball's comment that President Brown's social views "may have been liberal, but hardly extreme," our press release did not label them "extreme." President Brown's views, however moderate compared to contemporary Church teachings, were heterodox for his time. A few excerpts may help to illustrate this point. On marital sexual relations: "It is a dangerous thing to try to regulate the private lives of husbands and wives or for church leaders to go into the bedroom of a couple who are married and try to dictate what they should or should not do" (p. 119). On the occasional lack of unanimity among Church leaders: "As a General Authority I have been reversed on a number of things and have seen others appointed without the usual procedure" (p. 129). On freedom of thought: "I believe we should doubt some of the things we hear . . . . There are altogether too many people in the world who are willing to accept as true whatever is printed in a book or delivered from a pulpit. . . . We

should be dauntless in our pursuit of truth and resist all demands of unthinking conformity" (pp. 135, 138).

Kimball's last comment, that *An Abundant Life* sheds "little light on the workings of the hierarchy during his [President Brown's] tenure," does not seem to be true for most readers. Again, other reviewers, such as John Dart of the *L.A. Times*, John DeVilbiss of the *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, and David Bigler of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, have written that *An Abundant Life* contains some of the most helpful discussions of the Mormon hierarchy from an insider's point of view to have ever appeared in print.

Obviously I do not agree with Kimball that our promotional material sensationalized the contents of *An Abundant Life* or the life of President Brown. But in the end, the best judges on this point will be readers of the book themselves.

Gary J. Bergera
Salt Lake City, Utah

A Kinder, Gentler Church

On a recent Sunday, I read Lavina Fielding Anderson's excellent essay on President Ezra Taft Benson's instructions to parents ("A Voice from the Past: The Benson Instructions to Parents," [Winter 1988]). That same day, I watched a televised interview with former President Ronald Reagan, taped just before he left office. I could not help comparing the attitudes and perspectives of these two leaders. It struck me that each, although sincere and well-intentioned, seems to be living in the past — not even the actual, historical past, but some incurably romantic idealization of the past — and therefore can appear to be shockingly insensitive to the present reality of many of those whom he leads.

For example, as Anderson mentioned, President Benson chastised women who are employed in the marketplace rather than the home. What President Benson failed to acknowledge or appreciate is that his own "angel mother" was as much "in the marketplace" as any modern working woman; it just so happens that in the agrarian society of his boyhood home in southern Idaho, "the marketplace" was the family farm. I am certain his mother did her share of work in that marketplace while his father was fulfilling various Church callings, leaving her and the children to support themselves.

A friend of mine in San Diego is resourceful and fortunate enough to have created for her young son the modern analog of President Benson's boyhood home — an in-house neighborhood preschool where she is able to use and develop her teaching skills while staying at home — but that is rare in the modern marketplace, which is vastly more complex and diverse than the idealized version President Benson remembers. What Anderson's article shows is that many of President Benson's instructions seem at best unhelpful and in some cases harmful to those who sincerely and prayerfully struggle to maintain the ideals of family life in today's reality but reach a different personal resolution than President Benson commends.

President Reagan often showed similar insensitivity and detachment from reality. He was fond of platitudes about freedom, liberty, and human rights, but he seemed ignorant of the emptiness of such platitudes to a growing number of Americans — especially those victimized by a brutal redistribution of scarce resources from domestic social programs to an unprecedented military buildup. He once suggested that the problems of the homeless are of their own choosing. He offered superficial, seductively simple solutions to the crises of drug abuse and AIDS. And he consistently opposed efforts to strengthen civil rights laws to eradicate the lingering stench of racism. Indeed, during the interview I referred to above, President Reagan opined that civil rights leaders intentionally propagate bias and hatred to line their own pockets. He seemed genuinely oblivious to growing economic and social discrimination, recently confirmed in figures compiled by the National Urban League regarding the incidence of unem-

ployment, homelessness, drug abuse, and other social problems among blacks compared to whites, that stand in stark contrast to the bright picture he painted.

President Reagan is gone now, leaving others to deal with the realities he managed to ignore for eight years. Those of us who disagreed with him can dismiss him as sincere and affable but fundamentally misguided and look forward to the "kinder, gentler America" President George Bush has promised. President Benson is not so easily dismissed. The authority of his position compels each of us to seriously consider his counsel. If, as individuals or as families, we reach conclusions that differ from his instructions, then we must live with the consequences.

What about the direction of the Church as an institution? I believe the answer depends to a large extent on whether wide-ranging dialogue about the Church's direction — the type of dialogue that produces insight and understanding and that sometimes even contributes to change—will continue. I am concerned because I sense a sort of acquiescence, or worse, resignation among many thoughtful, progressive Church leaders. And I fear that, as a result, many of the positive results of past efforts will be undone. Anderson is to be praised for refusing to acquiesce in or become resigned to what she perceives as a backward trend in the Church's attitude toward women by pointing out some of the differences in substance and in tone between President Spencer W. Kimball's counsel and President Benson's instructions. Perhaps Anderson's example will encourage others to speak out with their own ideas about where we are and where we should be going as a Church.

I suggest that as we look forward to a "kinder, gentler America" under President Bush, we should also hope and work for a kinder, gentler Church, a Church more sensitive to the real struggles its members face. Although recent changes in Church policy on excommunication offer some hope, I am less optimistic than Anderson. But God works in mysterious ways. Within the last few years, he has touched the heart of a "Godless" nation and raised up a remarkable leader, one who has the rare ability to see beyond both the past and the present toward a future unhindered by the limited and limiting perceptions of the human condition. Ironically, this leader outperformed even Ronald Reagan on the world stage. If Mikhail Gorbachev can emerge from within the stultifying bureaucracy of the Soviet Union to lead it (and perhaps a large part of the world) out of ideological captivity into the next century, then surely the Church can go forward with at least as much reality and vision.

Stephen C. Clark
New York, New York

No Act of Penitence

I received a copy of Levi Peterson's recent book, *Juanita Brooks — Mormon Woman Historian* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988) for Christmas and became quite a hermit over the holidays because I was so caught up in it. Though I grew up as a Utah Mormon, I haven't considered myself a Latter-day Saint for years. This book was cathartic for me. It made me appreciate the best of my roots: Juanita's integrity, the community made up of caring people, and the commitment to purpose that are fruits of searching forebears. I applaud Peterson's work.

I was also caught up in Peterson's essay "Juanita Brooks, My Subject, My Sister" (DIALOGUE, Spring 1989), until it referred to Juanita's setting the record straight on the Mountain Meadow Massacre as an act of "penitence" (p. 25). This is extremely misleading. According to my dearest aunt, who shared this article with me and was a friend and contemporary of Juanita Brooks, Juanita never was penitent. I don't intend to split hairs over the meaning of "penitent," regret for one's wrong-doing; however, penitence is individual. Juanita's impetus was a desire to tell the real story — not just feelings of remorse for her ancestors. Calling Juanita's book an act of penitence muddies one of her greatest achieve-

ments—never compromising, against strong authoritarian threats, the full picture of the Mountain Meadow incident.

I agree with Peterson that penitence is an inherent characteristic of Latter-day Saints. This is no different from Catholics or Jews raised with strong urgings to do what is right while being aware of sins of omission as well as commission. Juanita was probably penitent over little things but not at all penitent about her work to clear the secretive, black cloud that hung over some Mormon history.

Carolyn Platt
Sisters, Oregon

What's a Rameumpton, Daddy? (With Apologies to Gregory Bateson)

"What's a Rameumpton, Daddy?"

"Well, the Book of Mormon says it was a place where the Zoramites stood to worship and pray."

"But my Primary teacher said it was a tower that evil people used."

"I can see how someone could think that. The Book of Mormon says it was 'a place for standing which was high above the head' and only one person at a time colud go up there."

"Was it like a speaker's stand in the church?"

"A speaker's stand? You mean a pulpit? Yes, I suppose it was. In fact the word 'Rameumpton' means 'the holy stand.' "

"What's so evil about a holy stand, Daddy?"

"Well, it wasn't the stand that was evil. It was how it was used. The people gathered there in their synagogue . . ."

"What's a synagogue?"

"Just a different word for chapel or church, honey."

"Oh."

"They'd gather in their synagogue one day a week."

"Which day, Daddy?"

"I don't know, honey. It just says 'one day' and that they called the day 'the day of the Lord.' "

"It must have been Sunday."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because Sunday is the Lord's day."

"Well, maybe it was. . . . Anyway they'd gather there and whoever wanted to worship would go and stand on the top of the Rameumpton."

"Could anyone go up there?"

"Well, no, that was part of the problem. Apparently they had to wear the right clothes . . ."

"You mean like us when we wear our Sunday clothes, Daddy?"

"Well, not exactly but in a way yes, I suppose. Some of us might have a hard time accepting certain kinds of clothes or people in sacrament meeting. But we wear our Sunday clothes to help us be reverent, don't we?"

"Yes, Daddy."

"So anyway, where was I?"

"They went to the top of the Rameumpton . . ."

"Yes, they'd go up and worship God by thanking him for making them so special."

"Were they bearing their testimonies?"

"Well, uh, I guess maybe they were in a way, but they weren't true testimonies."

"How come?"

"Because they were too proud."

"What do you mean 'proud,' Daddy?"

"Well, they would talk about how they were 'a chosen and holy people.' "

"My Primary teacher said Mormons are the chosen people and we're a special generation."

"Yes, honey, but that's different."

"How?"

"Because we are."

"Oh."

"Besides, they were very, very proud about how much better they were than everyone else because they didn't believe the 'foolish traditions' of their neighbors."

"What does that mean, Daddy?"

"It means that they believed everyone else was wrong and they alone were right."

"Isn't that what we believe?"

"Yes, but it's different."

"How?"

"Because we *are* right, honey."

"Oh."

"Everyone would stand and say the same thing . . ."

"That sounds like testimony meeting to me."

"Don't be irreverent."

"Sorry."

"Then after it was all over they would go home and never speak about God until the next day of the Lord when they'd gather at the holy stand again."

"Isn't that like us, Daddy?"

"No honey, we have Family Home Evening."

"Oh."

Robert Nelson, Jr.
Fort Dix, New Jersey

An LDS Version of the Bible?

I thoroughly enjoyed Philip L. Barlow's article, "Why the King James Version?: From the Common to the Official Bible" (Spring 1989). Ever since reading J. Reuben Clark, Jr.'s *Why the King James Version*, I have been hoping that someone would shake us and remind us that we are not, after all, Protestants. We Latter-day Saints like to look down our noses at what we feel is the Protestants' unhealthy "bibliolatry," so it is ironic that we have clung to a version of the Bible most of us no longer even understand.

As a Sunday School teacher I used to enjoy teaching my students the true meaning of "help meet," the difference between "charity" and "agape," and how to conjugate Jacobean verbs ("I have, thou hast, he/she/it hath . . ."), and so on. However, I must admit that of late I have grown weary of playing the elocutionist ("No, don't pronounce 'shew' like Ed Sullivan!"). The illicit thrill of uncovering the earthiness of the Hebrews has worn off, and I have become jaded. Someday soon I hope my self-styled amateur specialty of interpreter of the ancient liturgical language of the United Kingdom will be as nostalgic as the trade of the farrier and the alchemy of the tincturer of laudanum.

By the way, amongst all the alternative versions to the Authorized Version which Barlow lists, I failed to see my own personal favorite: the Anchor Bible. While I realize that it is not all that accessible to the average peruser of religious bookstore shelves — perhaps in part because it's not yet completed — I wonder if someday a version of the Bible based on this scholarly yet straightforward translation might not form the basis of a new LDS version of the Bible?

Marc A. Schindler
Gloucester, Ontario, Canada

Drop on in

On reading Karen Moloney's "Beached on the Wasatch Front" (Summer 1989), I was not only surprised but appalled to learn that she has been considered a second-class Saint because she is a convert. Just what kind of sanctimonious snobbery is this? Converts are the lifeblood of the Church and always have been. To begin with, the entire adult generation of Mormons, including Joseph Smith, were converts. Converts keep us old-line Saints on our toes when we tend to let things slide.

Converts may not have my feeling of heritage, but I have always admired their faith and their zeal; they have been born again, and I've been born but once. I've never had the spiritual ecstasy of conversion; I've never been on the road to Damascus; I am humble in the presence of the chosen who have made the choice.

And I would like to inform Karen that if she's ever out here in the California boondocks, she should drop in at Redwood City First Ward, where she'll be treated with the respect she merits.

Samuel Taylor
Redwood City, California

Are We Chosen?

Karen Moloney's incisive essay (Summer 1989) imploring us toward a greater

sense of universal kinship brought to mind two sermons delivered at the University of Utah Institute of Religion during the late 1950s.

The first was given by President David O. McKay as the "spiritual thought" during a prayer meeting held in preparation for an Institute graduation service. It lasted about two minutes and is probably the most deeply moving sermon I've ever heard. President McKay stated that no Latter-day Saint generation seemed more blessed with opportunities than ours; indeed we were a *chosen generation.* He asked a rhetorical question, "Does being chosen mean that we are better than or morally superior to others?" His response: "I believe not."

Next he cited John the Baptist's exhortation to repentance found in JST Matthew 3:36: "Think not to say within yourselves, We are the children of Abraham, and we only have power to bring seed unto our father Abraham; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." President McKay then reread the scripture substituting "members of the Lord's restored church" and "those having pioneer ancestry" for "children of Abraham" and "father Abraham," respectively. The moral challenge penetrated my soul.

He concluded by rephrasing the original question, "Are we chosen?" then answered: "Yes. We are chosen *to serve.*"

The second sermon I recall was a fireside address delivered by Elder Richard L. Evans, at the time an apostle, who tackled the problem of self-righteousness in an explosively humorous way. Stressing that we are prone to draw unwarranted conclusions about our moral worth based on our favorable life circumstances, Elder Evans spoke of two maggots who found themselves on a farmer's shovel coming in from the fields. As the farmer banged his shovel against the porch step, one maggot fell into a crack in the sidewalk while the other landed in a pile of barnyard fertilizer. As the days went on and the first maggot withered away, he asked his rich, fat, sassy friend the secret of success. The second maggot's response: "Brains and personality."

Touche!

Kent Olson
Louisville, Colorado

Help from the Still, Small Voice

Mark Looy's letter on creationism (Spring 1989) set me thinking. Before I went to BYU and learned about evolution I used to wonder, if the good Lord could create the world and all its creatures, including us, in six days, put the penguin in the ice floes of the Antarctic and the exquisite little bluebird under the eaves of our mountain cabin as the first sign of spring — if he did all that, why would he then create mosquitoes and woodticks or the spider who eats her mate after one enchanted evening?

Mark Looy's letter stimulated me to review a bit on Darwin, and I was pleased to find he had similar thoughts. In a 22 May 1860 letter to Asa Gray he wrote:

> There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the Ichneumonidae with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice. Not believing this, I see no necessity in the belief that the eye was expressly designed. On the other hand, I cannot anyhow be contented to view this wonderful universe, and especially the nature of man, and to conclude that everything is the result of brute force. I am inclined to look at everything as resulting from designed laws, with the details, whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance. Not that this notion *at all* satisfies me. I feel most deeply that the whole subject is too profound for the human intellect. A dog might as well speculate on the mind of Newton. Let each man hope and believe what he can.

So that is what each of us does. Some, like Joseph Smith, think the earth has consciousness, is a part of divinity. In his oration at the funeral of King Follett, 7 April 1844, the Prophet said "create" meant "or-

ganize," that "God had materials to organize the world out of chaos — chaotic matter, which is element, and in which *dwells all the glory.* Element had an existence from the time He had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed, they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beginning and can have no end" (HC 6:308–9).

He was right about no end to the planet earth, which will abide, but what about the creatures thereon? Surely the question right now is not whether it took God billions of years or only six days to create us, but rather how much longer are we going to be here? We have created devices that could end it all in six minutes. While waiting for that, what else can we worry about?

Our oceans, which cover 70 percent of the globe, sustain plankton that accounts for a big share of the oxygen we need (which we commonly ascribe to land plants). But pollution in our oceans is threatening the plankton. We have all heard about the alarming destruction of the rain forests of Brazil, but less publicized are the rain forests of our own Pacific Northwest which — on private and government-owned lands — are being clear cut at an unprecedented rate, one out of four logs going to Asia.

The rain forest of Madagascar shelters a greater variety of unique species of flora and fauna than any other part of the world, and it is fast disappearing, now reduced to about 10 percent of its original size. The peasants slash and burn to clear the land to plant their crops; the tiny layer of soil disappears in two or three years, when they move on. Eighty percent of that country's 8000 flowering plants are endemic — that is they exist nowhere else. So are half of the more than 200 bird species, 95 percent of the reptiles (including two-thirds of the chameleons), almost all of the 250 different kinds of frogs, 97 percent of the 3000 varieties of butterflies and moths, and almost all of the native mammals. Obviously, once gone from here these species are gone forever from the face of the earth.

The Samoan rain forests, as reported by Nancy Perkins in *BYU Today* (May 1989), are going fast, and with the forests go the abundant medicinal plants, many not even classified.

The elephants are being exterminated for their ivory to make baubles for affluent women, and with the elephants go the habitat which they create for smaller ungulates who in turn feed the big cats, and we don't know what this does to us.

Indian sacred religious sites are being co-opted by the forest service for roads, taken over by developers, and mined for uranium.

As Geoffrey Sea reported in the 30 April 1989 *San Jose Mercury News*, "Everything seems to be warming up, melting down, breaking apart, or leaking out." Mathew Fox, the out-of-favor Catholic theologian, warned in the March 1987 *New Age Journal:* "The killing of Mother Earth in our time is the *number one* ethical, spiritual, and human issue of our planet. The direction we are heading is not only suicide for our species but ecocide for the rest of the planet. All the decisions that are going to be made in this generation are *going to be irrevocable*" (p. 107).

Many enlightened groups believe they can do something about it, that the mind is far more potent than we imagine. Perhaps a rise in consciousness, spirituality, a belief in the mystical or whatever you want to call it may be able to stop wars, heal bodies and souls, find insights into clean sources of energy, deal with garbage, animal rights, overpopulation, rights of women, and so on.

Mystical experience is no stranger to Latter-day Saints. We are fortunate. The world may be fortunate to have us. It would be hard to find anyone among us who has not had prophetic dreams, been involved in a miracle healing, heard a saving voice, or been tickled with the story of Mary Fielding Smith (widow of Hiram) blessing her exhausted, fallen oxen, which then arose and plodded right along on the road to Zion.

We are in a first-class position to listen to the still, small voice that will alert us to the plight of Mother Earth. We are already programmed to prayer, to faith and hope, and we know the strength of the interconnectedness of people. So we must listen, wait for the light, and then, Saints that we are, we will surely take the right steps to be a saving force.

My husband, Sam, starting off on his mile walk to the shopping center, asked what he should bring back. "Get a melon," I said, having in mind a small cantaloupe. In a while he arrived with a cardboard box containing a large, fat watermelon. "I didn't think I was going to make it," he said cheerfully, "but just as I was about to give up, there was this box that the Three Nephites put there for me."

A mind set like that cannot help but keep us around for a while.

Gay Taylor
Redwood City, California

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More Than Just Ebb and Flow

I have heard young people say, "I want to be different, just like all my friends." That same mixture of motives in the Church as an institution is well described by Armand Mauss's article on assimilation and ambivalence (Spring 1989).

Mauss says, "At any given time, then, a movement is grappling with either of two predicaments [seeking to minimize conflict with others while maintaining distinctiveness]" (p. 32). Conceding that at any moment one or another of the two concerns is dominant, I think it worth emphasizing that a movement is, at *all* times, grappling with *both* predicaments. As a Church and as individual members we are reminded to be in the world but not of the world.

Fitting evidence together to support a thesis sometimes leads to unintentional distortion. For example, Mauss identifies modernization of the garment earlier in the century as assimilation (reducing distance from the world) (p. 36) but cites further modernization in more recent years (p. 46) as part of a "retrenchment" effort emphasizing the importance of temple work distinctive to Mormonism. He characterizes abandonment of elaborate and publicized missionary farewells as routinizing and universalizing the expectation of a mission call (p. 46), when in reality the change occurred initially to avoid stirring up resentment among non-members whose sons were subject to the draft while missionaries had ministerial draft deferrals. In time the change may have come to exemplify routinization of mission service, but I believe it had other meaning at the outset. In one period, standardizing doctrine signals assimilation (p. 35), and in more recent times it becomes reactionary (pp. 48–49).

Mauss suggests that the Welfare Program in the 1930s and the later focus on Lamanites (p. 43) were assertions of uniqueness, but he does not note the substantial dilution of both programs in recent years. This mixture of effects seems to be true for many changes. For example, the 1978 revelation on priesthood reduced the stress between Mormonism and other faiths, but at the same time it made the differentiating claim of continuing revelation to prophets.

Mauss rightly identifies the ebb and flow of the tide; I mean only to call attention to significant eddies.

Edward L. Kimball
Provo, Utah

The Context Makes the Difference

Sociologists often fear (with good reason!) that their work is so heavy and opaque that no one will read it. It is there-

fore most gratifying to see that my article was read (and carefully) by a colleague so distinguished as Ed Kimball. I appreciated too his having recognized that large-scale theories, like the one I tried to apply, can deal only with the general ebbs and flows of history. He is of course correct that we encounter many eddies along the way, important exceptions to general trends, and that to some extent both the assimilation and the reactionary motifs can be seen at any given point in time. That is why, at the outset, I introduced a general "continuum" between the two poles, rather than a categorical conceptualization.

Ed is correct too that in trying to fit varied data to an *a priori* theory one runs the risk of biased selectivity and distortion. What we observe rarely fits a theory perfectly, even in the physical world; the most we can hope for is the best fit available, which I still claim to have offered. Yet the apparent inconsistencies that Ed finds in my evidence are not necessarily contradictions or distortions in the case I am making. The *meaning* of a single act or development may differ from one social or historical context to another. For example, a polygamous marriage in Utah would represent social conformity in 1860 but social deviance in 1960. Thus, modernizing the temple garment might well have meant something different in the 1920s (when emphasis on temple work was at an all-time low) from its meaning in the more recent context of a strong new program of temple-building and temple work.

The same reasoning would apply to some of the other points Ed raises. Even policy changes (like eliminating elaborate missionary farewells), which may originate for reasons unrelated to the dominant organizational motif and could presumably easily be reversed when the "original" reasons no longer apply, may instead be retained if they fit well with an *emerging* motif. Other policies (such as those dealing with welfare, Lamanites, and blacks), which may eventually be diluted or abandoned for various organizational reasons, may still make important symbolic "statements" at the time of their initiation or reaffirmation. Again, the specific context is what gives meaning to an act or policy.

Finally, in response to questions from friends, and in retrospective fairness to Ed, I must take this opportunity to emphasize that the "close relative of President Kimball" cited as my informant in Footnote 13 was NOT Ed Kimball. I have since learned, furthermore, that my informant's source was not President Kimball himself but another General Authority.

Armand L. Mauss
Pullman, Washington

A Burning Bosom Isn't Enough

I read with considerable interest Jeffrey C. Jacob's essay in your Summer 1989 issue. It prompts these observations:

His socio-economic analysis of the contemporary [North American] Mormon community is perceptive, and his typology — Scribes and Watchmen — is provocative. I have no objection to being grouped with the former, and I acknowledge that Liahona Saints do not always resist the temtation to be observers rather than fully engaged participants in the efforts to build the Kingdom of God.

His critique of the Liahona-Iron Rod dichotomy is also thoughtful. I take strong exception only to one point. In his effort to sharpen the distinction between the Charismatics — his new category — and Liahonas, he credits "people like me" with little or no faith in the efficacy of prayer and the witness of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, we believe in them, and we derive inspiration and motivation from them. Our questions relate to the dependability of spiritual impressions, without external support, in validating propositional truth.

Jacob seems to say that Charismatics can receive "unmediated spiritual direction" and that they may safely rely on it, without testing it against either reason and experience (the Liahona standard) or tradi-

tion and authority (the Iron Rod standard). As a proposition this is debatable, and as a policy it is potentially disastrous. The amount of damage that has been done — and continues to be done—by people whose burning bosoms tell them that God is directing them is incalculable.

Richard D. Poll
Provo, Utah

Material on Nibley

I am currently compiling materials for a family history on my father-in-law, Hugh Nibley. I am collecting correspondence, memorabilia, stories, anecdotes, and other materials relating to his life. I would also be interested in hearing from those who have been influenced by him in any way. Anyone with information that they would be willing to share with me may reach me at:

Boyd Petersen
157 Westway Road #201
Greenbelt, Maryland 20770

Moved by Huebener

Margaret Blair Young ends her moving and well-written personal voice, "Doing Huebener" (Winter 1988), with rather wishful thinking when she states, "How I wish Huebener could be honored here as he is in his homeland. Honored, even, by the Church he loved" (p. 132). Maybe that dream will come true one of these days. I share her husband's feelings about Helmut's death chamber in Berlin. Having lived in Germany for the last twenty-nine years, eleven of those in West Berlin, I believe that the majority of German Latter-day Saints are not aware of Helmut's tragic story; only a few have even heard his name. Except for a brief notice in the *Stern* (German edition of the *Ensign*) a few years ago, he is never mentioned in Church circles, classes, or speeches.

Since LDS publications about Huebener have all been in English, German members have never had sources to go to. Gathering information about Huebener and resistance towards the Nazis usually turns out to be difficult, academic work.

I would like to note, however, that after years of preparation, the Berlin government opened a new exhibit last July at the "Gedenkstatte Deutscher Widerstand" (Memorial of German Resistance). A small section is dedicated to "Youth Resistance" and includes a complete board showing Huebener, his friends, two handbills, and background information, including a remark about his Church membership. This exhibit is only half a mile away from the Berlin stake center. I wonder how many Church members will see it.

Tom Roger's play about Huebener was significant and controversial, just as Helmut's life was significant and, for some people in the Church now, even controversial. I commend those courageous writers and actors who dared to be a part of the production. I wonder if I will have the courage to translate the play into German and seek a group of willing members to produce the play. Am I prepared to live with the Damocles sword of censorship over my head?

For now I will continue to tell my four children about those real heroes and examples, take them along to exhibitions, to visit the death chamber in Berlin and other prisons where innocent and brave people perished, to the camps of Bergen-Belsen where Anne Frank spent her last days, and to join a Jewish friend in our Kaddisch-prayer at the graves of those murdered in the Holocaust.

James Field
Hannover, West Germany

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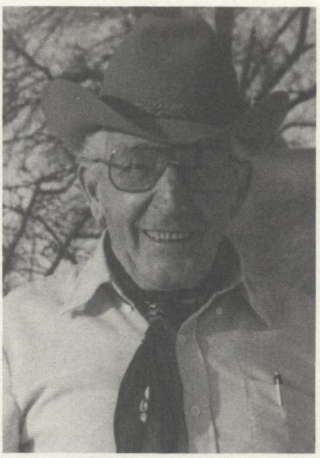

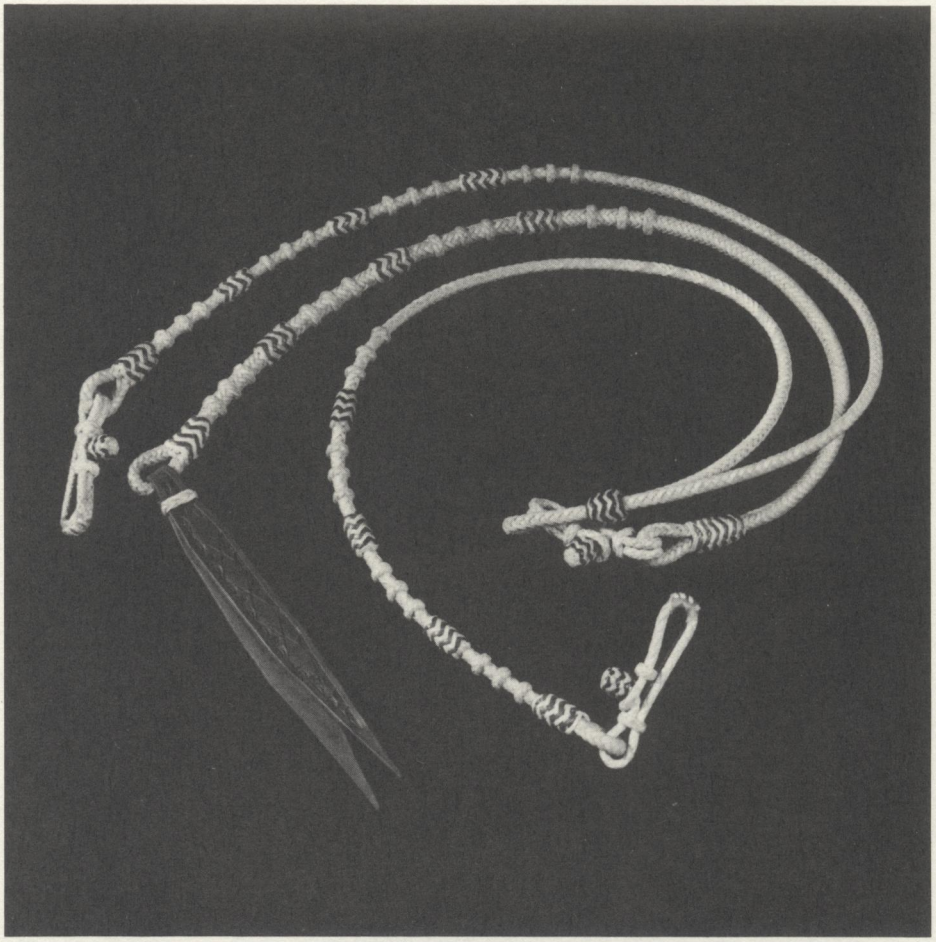

Rommel-style reins, DeWitt Palmer (Millville, Utah), 48″ long (bridle), 49″ long (quirt), rawhide, leather, 1986; (Utah) State Art Collection.

Knowing Brother Joseph Again: The Book of Abraham and Joseph Smith as Translator

Karl C. Sandberg

> No man knows my history.
> Joseph Smith
>
> Millions shall know Brother Joseph again.
> Mormon hymn

THE ORIGINAL PROBLEM PROMPTING THIS ESSAY occurred improbably more than twenty years ago as I was sifting through the four *in folio* volumes of Pierre Bayle's 1697 *Dictionnaire historique et critique* in search of something else and came upon his articles on biblical personages. Bayle, a Huguenot refugee and Calvinist controversialist writing in Holland from 1680 to 1704, was one of the most erudite men of his time and had apparently encountered the Hebrew Cabala and the rabbinical tradition during his exile in Rotterdam. Here in his article on Abraham was information with a familiar ring: Sarah was Abraham's niece; Abraham was exceptionally well educated, was an astronomer, and opposed the idolatrous religions among which he was raised; he was therefore persecuted, and his life was threatened by idolaters; and a book about Abraham existed anciently that gave an account of the creation.

All of this information was familiar because it was also found in the Book of Abraham (Joseph Smith's rendition of ancient papyri, begun in 1835 and published in 1842), but it was not found in Genesis. What could account for Pierre Bayle's dictionary in the Book of Abraham, or vice versa?

The problem took another turn when Joseph Smith's papyri, which had been missing and presumed lost for eighty to ninety years, resurfaced in 1967 and were examined and translated by Egyptologists. One fragment of papyrus was identified as the ostensible source of the Book of Abraham, but it bore no relationship to the Book of Abraham either in content or subject matter (Heward and Tanner 1968, 93–98; Parker 1968, 98–99). This discovery

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raised more questions: What *is* the Book of Abraham, and what is to become of the concept of Joseph as translator?

The issue was complicated further by a more careful reading of the text of the Book of Abraham itself. It contains some information about Abraham found in Genesis and some information contained in extra-biblical sources but not in Genesis. The most significant parts of the book, however, the concepts that make it one of the prime source documents of Mormon theology, are original, with no apparent source in any previous document or tradition. Yet the text exists, and Joseph produced it. All this might lead us to ask: What went on in Joseph's mind when he produced the Book of Abraham? What kind of person was he? What kind of religion did he launch? And what *did* Joseph mean when he said, "No man knows my history"? The problem became that of "knowing Brother Joseph again."

Ezra Pound's verse might appropriately be applied:

> Oh, they'll not get him in a book,
> Though they write it cunningly,
> No mouse of the scrolls was the goodly fere
> But a man o' men was he.
> *The Ballad of the Goodly Fere*

Before we can have any hope of getting Joseph Smith into a book or, more specifically, understanding the religion he channeled and informed, many more pieces must be put into place. One key piece is the concept of "translation" as he understood and practiced it. Understanding this process and, in particular, the role of stones, symbols, and documents in it, will enable us to see the turn of his mind, which cast the character of Mormonism with its paradoxes of the rational and the revelatory, of the intelligible and the numinous, and ultimately of the institutional and the individual.

This argument has several strands, which will have to be developed separately.

I

A new look at Joseph might begin by trying to see him as he saw himself, from the inside out.

On 6 April 1830, at the inception of the Church, a revelation given through Joseph Smith instructed him that in the record to be kept in the new church, he, Joseph, should be called "a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (D&C 21:1). In 1835, in the description and definition of the offices of the two priesthoods, the presiding high priest of the Church is characterized as being "a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet" (D&C 107:92). On 19 January 1841, three years before Joseph's death, his brother Hyrum was designated as "a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator unto my church, as well as my servant Joseph" (D&C 124:94), but to Joseph it was given "to be a presiding elder over all my church, to be a translator, a revelator, a seer, and a prophet" (D&C 124:125). It seems clear that Joseph consistently thought of himself as a translator and did not think of himself as a seer or a prophet separate and apart from his role as a translator. It is perhaps significant that

neither of the two major biographers of Joseph Smith (Fawn Brodie and Donna Hill) assign great importance to this unusual self-perception.

What is translation?

Translation as ordinarily practiced in our time and culture starts with a document in language A and ends with the creation of a document in language B. The language in document A will work on the levels of denotation, connotation, register, and discourse as determined by the culture in which it was produced. Translation, then, is a process of understanding the document in language A and finding the words and the structures in language B that express the document's denotations, connotations, register, and discourse in culture B. For a translation to be completely accurate, the reading of the document in language A must be so exact that it excludes all possible meanings but one, and the rendition into document B must be correspondingly exact. The ideal translation is the slave of the original, adding nothing and taking nothing away.[1]

The check on the accuracy and adequacy of the translation is always rational and consists of rereading document A to see how appropriately and adequately the entire content and range of expression of A is re-expressed in B. Translation does not require a special gift; it can be performed by anyone with a knowledge of two languages and can always be checked by anyone who knows both languages.

Joseph Smith did not think of translation in these terms. We can save ourselves much rumination if we accept at the outset that Joseph Smith never did document-to-document translation based on a knowledge of two languages, except as an exercise in his Hebrew class in the winter of 1835–36. Five major articles have appeared in the past nine years detailing the historical circumstances of Joseph Smith translations, and all solidly establish that many times during the translation of the Book of Mormon he was not even looking at the plates. Doctrine and Covenants 7 comes from a parchment hidden up by John the Revelator and "translated" by Joseph and Oliver through the Urim and Thummim without the parchment being physically present. When Joseph translated the Old and New Testaments, he made no claim to be consulting Greek or Hebrew manuscripts—he simply revised the substance (Van Wagoner and Walker 1982; Ostler 1987; Lancaster 1983; Ashment 1980; Ricks 1984). Only the Book of Abraham has an original document to compare with the translation, and the original and the translation show no relationship to each other.

The fact is that Joseph Smith and those of his time and milieu used the term "translation" in a way far different from any in use today. (The contrast between Joseph Smith's culture of the 1830s and our own can be seen in some measure by the immense disparity in the use of the term.) Michael

[1] A translation in this sense is seldom more than approximate. Matthew Arnold maintained that no one had ever adequately translated Homer — one translator may have captured his swiftness but not his nobility; another may have captured his nobility but not his plainness. On the other hand, Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayam into English is accounted by many who know both languages to exceed the quality of the poetry in the original, and Fitzgerald, not Omar Khayam, is credited as the poet of the *Rubyiat*.

Quinn points out, for example, that even in encyclopedias of the 1830s Egyptian "characters" and hieroglyphics (cf. the "reformed Egyptian" of the Book of Mormon) were thought to be occult symbols to be deciphered or interpreted by an arcane art now entirely lost (1987, 151–52). The word "translation" itself needs to be translated from one culture into another.

How then did Joseph Smith himself understand the term "translation"?

Here we are not in doubt, for the Book of Mormon speaks very directly about translation, and the process is not one familiar to the Translation Department in the Church Office Building today. When the brother of Jared is commanded to write the things that he has seen and heard and to seal up the record in a language that others, coming later, will not be able to "interpret," he is also commanded to hide up two stones he has received, stones which "shall magnify to the eyes of men these things which ye shall write" (Ether 3:21–28, 4:5).

A more detailed account appears in Mosiah 8:5–19, where King Limhi asks Ammon if he can "interpret languages." An exploring party has come across records kept on metallic plates by a people that has since disappeared, and the king wants to know the cause of their destruction. Ammon says that he cannot interpret but that he knows someone who can, a man who "can look, and translate all records that are of ancient date; and it is a gift from God." The aids this man uses are "called interpreters, and no man can look in them except he be commanded, lest he should look for that which he ought not and he should perish. And whosoever is commanded to look in them, the same is called a seer" (v. 13).

When the king exclaims that a seer is greater than a prophet, Ammon explains that a seer is indeed a prophet and also a revelator, because "a seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them, and also things shall be made known which otherwise could not be made known" (v. 17). The interpreters were, in fact, prepared for the specific purpose of "unfolding all such mysteries to the children of men" (v. 19). These interpreters are elsewhere identified as stones (Mosiah 28:13).

In a subsequent passage, Alma instructs his son Helaman to preserve the twenty-four plates because they contain the record of the secret works and abominations and wickedness of the people that had been destroyed and to preserve the interpreters along with them. The record will be read in effect by a stone, which "shall shine forth in darkness unto light" (Alma 37:23) and by which the Lord will "bring to light all their secrets and abominations, unto every nation that shall hereafter possess the land" (37:25). The one who has this high gift of God is called a "seer," and by virtue of this gift, the greatest of all possible gifts of God, is also a "revelator" and a "prophet" (Mosiah 8:16).

Translation, as understood in the Book of Mormon, is the gift of seeing hidden things, both good and evil, and making unknown things known. It is

carried out or made possible through the use of physical objects — stones which enable the user to see what is hidden and thus to describe it and bring it to light. Translator is synonymous with seer. The capacity of revelator and the status of prophet derive from seership.

When the seer translates, he does not go from document to document, because part or all of the original document has been lost or is in an unknown language. He must go back to the original source of the document, to God, and get the reading from him. Translation thus derives from a keenly perceived connection with the numinous, and through this connection come statements that we call revelation.

Here the term "numinous" calls for some clarification.

The concepts of the empirical, the rational, and the intelligible, to which the numinous stands in contrast, are easily understood. We know a thing when we can measure it, or when our uncertainty about it is reduced to zero, or when we can see it in relation to other known things. When we speak of the numinous, however, we are talking about the stuff of religious or creative experiences, about forces that are experienced as real but that remain unseen. They engage, entice, attract, illuminate, or move us to act but cannot be measured or analyzed. We may be gripped by them, moved by them, lifted up or cast down by them, but however much we try to encompass them by thought, something always escapes. They are experienced as indefinitely large and ultimately mysterious. They cannot be delimited except to say that they are as large as the stove, the table, the cupboard, and quite a bit more besides. In the realm of religion they manifest themselves in the experiences of conversion or of mysticism, as William James, for example, so clearly and abundantly describes in his classic *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). In modern psychiatry, these experiences are tapped by deep analysis. They might be referred to, as in Jungian psychology, in terms such as the "anima" or the "shadow" or the "unconscious" (Jung 1964, 72–73, 88). Nonetheless, no description of the forces of the numinous or unconscious is ever more than partial. Experience with them is real but subjective.

If, then, the experience of the numinous is subjective and cannot be observed directly, how much can we say about the translation process Joseph went through? How did he do it?

We can start by just looking. Had we been present in the room at the time as practicing empiricists, we would have said Joseph was translating with stones. William Smith, Joseph's brother, in 1891 told of having seen the "interpreters" — two stones set in a bow — and having looked into them. For William they did not work, because translation was a gift, one he did not have (Ostler 1987, 103). It was these two stones that Joseph used to produce at least part of the first 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon, the pages Martin Harris lost. When Joseph started to translate again, he did not use the interpreters, but a stone he had found while digging a well in 1822. When Joseph translated, he put the stone in his hat, put his face far enough into the hat to exclude light, and then dictated. This same stone was the medium through which he received a number of revelations through 1829,

some of which were published in the Book of Commandments in 1833. On a number of occasions, the plates were not physically present or, if they were, Joseph did not look at them as he translated. (Detailed descriptions of the translation process appear in Van Wagoner and Walker 1982, 50–55; Ostler 1987, 103–5; Lancaster 1983, 52–56; Ashment 1980, 11–13; Ricks 1984, 1–6.)

But we can recognize the shortfall in empirical observation when we want to add, "Yes, but how did he really do it?" For we have to say either that something else was going on inside Joseph that we do not get at by observation, that the stones possessed some causal quality (they were "magic spectacles"), or that the book (in the case of the Book of Mormon) does not exist.

We can take a step closer to understanding Joseph Smith's mind and spirit by looking at his translation process from two different but complementary perspectives.

The first is that of Jungian psychology. It is fair to say that no figure of the twentieth century has done more than Jung (1875–1962) to describe the breadth and sound the depths of the human unconscious. How does that which is latent and formless within an individual emerge and take on a form? The way that the analyst or the individual makes contact with the deep well of the unconscious is often through the medium of a concrete object. Jung gives the example of one of his analysands who had taken a long train ride in Russia. "Though he did not know the language and could not even decipher Cyrillic script, he found himself musing over the strange letters in which the railway notices were written, and he fell into a reverie in which he imagined all sorts of meanings for them."

The incident was revealing for Jung in that it showed him that one could reach the center of the psyche "from any point on the compass. One could begin with Cyrillic letters, from meditations upon a crystal ball, a prayer wheel, a modern painting, or even a casual conversation about some trivial event" (1964, 11). Or, we might add, a stone. And it is informative to learn that in Joseph's milieu stones were often used as means of locating lost objects,[2] but it is even more informative to note that Jung and his associates, in describing psychic phenomena empirically in Africa, in North and South America, and

[2] When the report went around the countryside that Joseph was on the trail of hidden plates of gold, many of the local citizenry believed in the plates' existence as much as Joseph did and, according to the account of Lucy Mack Smith, sent some sixty miles for a conjuror to come and help them locate the plates. Joseph was nonetheless able to forestall them because he carried the Urim and Thummim around with him, and they warned him when the plates were in danger (L. M. Smith 1853, 102–4).

In another example, after Joseph had obtained the plates and had hidden them temporarily in a box in the cooper's shed, "a young woman by the name of Chase, sister to Willard Chase, found a green glass, through which she could see many wonderful things, and among her great discoveries she said she saw the precise place where 'Joe Smith kept his gold bible hid.'" Evidently the glass worked just fine, for the mob went to the exact place she indicated, tore up the floor, and found the box in which she had seen the plates. Fortunately, Joseph had had an intimation of danger and had removed the plates from the box, hidden them in another place, and had replaced the box as before (L. M. Smith 1853, 108–9).

For David Whitmer the stone even became the test of the authenticity of revelations — it was after Joseph stopped using the stone and started to give revelations by his own mouth that he began to trust in the arm of flesh and to drift into error (Whitmer 1887, 12).

in Asia, conclude that stones have been and are a universally recurrent means of contact with the divine power (von Franz 1964, 227). Joseph's translation process by a stone was strange but, from a more universal vantage point, not altogether unusual.

The second perspective comes from comparing the self-description that poets, musicians, mathematicians, inventors, and painters have given of the creative process they have experienced with the self-description that Joseph gives of his translation process. The two kinds of experiences turn out to be remarkably similar.

In an introductory essay to an anthology of accounts of artistic and scientific creation, Brewster Ghiselen describes the recurring patterns that can be observed in the creative process. It begins with an awareness that something has gone wrong which needs to be set right. The artist first experiences an extreme dissatisfaction with the existing order of his or her inner world. Some problem or experience has troubled the waters, perhaps bringing with it a sense of unrealized potential (1952, 12) or an initial "commerce with disorder" (p. 13). Time is out of joint. The creative power, an extension of the life force, overreaches and finishes breaking down the established order and then reorganizes it out of the "surging chaos of the unexpressed" (p. 14). The finished product often includes items not found originally.

The process also appears to be spontaneous and automatic, as a seemingly independent force guides the work. Mozart often found appearing in his mind whole musical ideas, which he then worked into their orchestrated form. When he wrote them down, he appeared to be taking dictation from the muse (Ghiselen 1952, 44–45). Picasso, walking through the forest of Fontainebleau, might have had an "indigestion of greenness" (p. 59), which he would have to resolve into a form and later translate into a painting that appeared to take shape spontaneously on the canvas. "At the beginning of each painting," says Picasso, "there is someone who works with me. Toward the end I have the impression of having worked without a collaborator" (p. 57). The mathematician Poincaré had the experience during a sleepless night of seeing all of his ideas about the solution of a particular problem "colliding" and working themselves out to a solution, which he had only to write down the next morning, he himself serving, as it were, as scribe to his ideas (p. 16). And Max Ernst describes his own creative experiences as resembling the poet who is "writing at the dictation of something that makes itself articulate within him." Just so, "the artist's role is to gather together and then give out that which makes itself visible within him" (p. 65). The artist no less than the prophet is a seer.

This same process was at work with Joseph Smith. After a long period of indeterminancy during his adolescence caused by the status of his family and the tensions and divisions in the family over religion, the contentions and uncertainties with regard to religion among the churches, and the anxiety over his personal follies and shortcomings (JS-H 2:5–10; Groesbeck 1988, 22–29), the elements of his experience came together in something greater than the sum of its parts. Certainly he experienced a gestation period of deep and earnest thought that he later associated with revelation: "The things of God

are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man! if thou wilt lead a soul to salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity — thou must commune with God" (in J. F. Smith 1976, 137). For Joseph also, the experience of revelation, a gift that could be cultivated by anybody, was sudden and illuminating. It was the feeling of "pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas . . . you may grow into the principle of revelation" (1976, 151).

What was the role of the stone in this process? We may surmise that for Joseph the stone was a catalyst — because of his belief in the stone and his attunement to the world of the numinous, or the unconscious, where unseen powers moved, collided, contended, danced, and held their revels, the stone became the means of concentrating his psychic energies and giving them form. When the translation of the Book of Mormon began, it appeared to be automatic, even given by dictation, as Oliver Cowdery describes it: "These were days never to be forgotten — to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of his bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted to write from his mouth, as he translated with the Urim and Thummim, or, as the Nephites would have said, 'Interpreters,' the history or record called the 'Book of Mormon' " (*Times and Seasons* 2 [1 Nov. 1840]: 201).

But let us recognize that having said this much we still have not said the essential. We cannot say precisely how we got the theory of relativity, or the Ninth Symphony, or the Koran, or such recent claimants of divine revelation as the Urantia Book or the Course in Miracles.[3] The stone, and indeed all experiences with the numinous and the creative, remain a scandal to the analytical mind. Even Oliver, who shared in the intensity and exultation of the translation process, said on another occasion, "I have sometimes had seasons of skepticism in which I did seriously wonder whether the prophet and I were men in our sober senses, when he would be translating from the plates, though the 'Urim and Thummim' and the plates not be in sight at all" (Van Wagoner and Walker 1982, 51).

But as important as the stones are for understanding Joseph as seer, they are even more important for understanding Mormonism because of two unexpected results which derived from them, for we inevitably ask whether any check exists on this kind of subjective translation, which seemingly plucks the new book out of the air. What will keep the translator from simply making up what he wants? What will keep the reader or believer, in Jonathon Swift's phrase in his *Tale of a Tub*, from "the possession of being well deceived, the calm and serene state of being a fool among knaves"? It was in natural response to this question that one of the paradoxes of Mormonism appeared. We

[3] The Urantia Book, published by the Urantia Foundation (Chicago, 1955) is a history of the past and future of this planet (Urantia), with a life of Jesus, the whole being given by a corps of revelators appointed to this purpose. A Course in Miracles, published by The Foundation for Inner Peace in 1975, was dictated by an inner voice to its author, or recipient.

would be making a gross error in interpreting Joseph and Mormonism if we did not recognize that the stones, those seeming instruments of the magical world, brought with them the dichotomous elements of institutional authority and of rationalism.

The institutional test came early as egalitarian revelations threatened the cohesion of the community of saints in late 1830 and early 1831. Hiram Page, a brother-in-law to David Whitmer and one of the eight witnesses of the Book of Mormon, also had a seer stone and received revelations with it concerning the building up of Zion. Joseph had a revelation in September 1830 saying that "No one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church, except my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., . . . For all things must be done in order, and by common consent in the church, and by the prayer of faith" (D&C 28:2, 13). In other words, revelation was to be subjected to an institutional test. The ideas of common consent and the prayer of faith provided for the participation of individual members in ratifying revelations, but the burden of the message was that any individual revelation was subject to established institutional authority.

The test by individual reason, however, had come even earlier. While on the one hand the process of translation appeared to be entirely subjective and automatic to some of those surrounding Joseph (all their lives David Whitmer and Martin Harris believed Joseph saw English words under the unknown characters when he looked into the stone), Oliver Cowdery had the opposite experience. Assisting Joseph as a scribe, Oliver believed so much in the marvelous process of translation that he wanted to translate, too, apparently assuming the process to be automatic. When he tried and failed, it was explained to him that translation is also a process of studying the subject out in one's own mind, getting an idea, and having an inward confirmation (D&C 9:7–9). Significantly, Lucy Mack Smith remembered Joseph as being the least bookish of her children but the one most inclined to "meditation and deep study" (1853, 84). The process of translation involves the intellect, and the end result is propositional and rational.

In May 1831, another revelation came to Joseph giving him the key for discerning which revelations came from God and which did not: "He that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together. And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness. That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day" (D&C 50:22–24). The same test is also implied within the Book of Mormon in Alma 32. The test of the goodness of the seed, the word, is whether it sprouts, grows, and brings forth increase.

The test of revelation and of translation is understanding and intelligibility, the congruence of "hidden things made known" with a growing body of understanding, coupled with a pragmatic confirmation of their goodness or futility in one's life. Revelation and translation depend upon the understanding and experience, and thus upon the reason, of the recipient for their verification.

This invitation to reason and learning quickly broadened. Whereas the Book of Mormon had been offered to the world almost as an act of defiance — the sealed book that the learned could not read (Whitmer 1887, 11–12) — in another eighteen months revelation would enjoin the Saints to seek out and read the best books that the learned could read (D&C 88:77–80, 118–19). Both divine and human enlightenment tasted good and were seen as being served from the same abundant table.

The spirit of this commandment was fulfilled in the *Messenger and Advocate* (published in Kirtland from 1834 to 1837), which included not only doctrinal discussions but articles on such topics as Roman history, and in the School of the Prophets, where some forty participants gathered to "teach each other diligently" and even engaged a learned Jew, a professor Joshua Seixas, to teach them Hebrew. This growing stream of Mormonism culminated in the Thirteenth Article of Faith, which states that all truth from whatever source is a part of the religion, to be sought out and possessed.

What can we conclude, then, about translation as Joseph knew it? The word "translation" comes to embody and express the central tension in Mormonism. In the Joseph Smith experience with translation, the primary contact was not with the contents of a document but with the mind of the seer, which determines what the document should say. The seer is the one who makes contact with the deep, mysterious, and powerfully moving parts of the soul or historical milieu and sees into them in such a way as to transform them, to give them form, and to bring them to light, so that they may be examined, analyzed, and tested experientially. The "seer" brings the numinous into the realm of the intelligible, where its content becomes authoritative but at the same time subject to analysis and examination, and may be — must be — tested by reason and experience (without the process of its production necessarily being understood). The tension between the rationalism of the Enlightenment and the supernaturalism of the frontier milieu, which Bushman describes (1984, 7–8, 71–72), appears to be only one aspect of the deeper paradox and tension within Joseph Smith himself, a condition that remained constant in him throughout his life and in the church he founded through the present time. Mormonism is a two-winged bird whose wings do not always flap in unison.

II

We can move still closer to understanding Joseph by seeing another paradox of his personality, expressed by the respective roles of stones and symbols in his mental processes. As we come to see the role of symbols, we can begin to see the structure of Joseph's individual works and the progressions in his work as a whole. In seeing the structure of his works, we can see the progressions of his mind, and we thus obtain an indispensable key for understanding him and his work.

To reiterate, the stone[4] represented and was a means of Joseph's direct contact with the numinous. As a child of his times, he held to the efficacy of the

[4] The term "Urim and Thummim" apparently did not appear in any publication before 1833, when W. W. Phelps associated the stones or interpreters with the Old Testament prac-

stone in the process of translation: it made known what was hidden. In the early 1830s, while translating (revising) the New Testament, he came upon John 1:42, which in the King James version reads, "And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone." Joseph rendered the verse: "And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jona, thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a seer, a stone" (Edwards 1970, 23).

In the Book of Abraham, produced between 1835 and 1842, we learn that it was through the Urim and Thummim that Abraham gained his ideas of the heavens, the planets, and the eternity of intelligences (Abr. 3:1, 4). In 1843 Joseph declared,

> The place where God resides is a great Urim and Thummim. This earth, in its sanctified and immortal state, will be made like unto crystal and will be a Urim and Thummim to the inhabitants who dwell thereon, whereby all things pertaining to an inferior kingdom, and all kingdoms of a lower order, will be manifest to those who dwell on it; and the earth will be Christ's. Then the white stone mentioned in Revelation 2:17, will become a Urim and Thummim to each individual who receives one, whereby things pertaining to a higher order of kingdoms will be made known. (D&C 130:8–10)

Although Joseph stopped using the seer stone sometime early in 1830 and gave it to Oliver Cowdery, he apparently possessed several similar stones throughout his life (Van Wagoner and Walker 1982, 59–61; Quinn 1987, 195–204).[5]

Nonetheless, as Joseph came into contact with book learning, symbols (going from the visible to the intelligible) came to play an increasingly important role in his revelations and appear to have had an even more pervasive influence on the form, content, and production of his revelations than stones had.

Jung's notion of symbols is especially appropriate: "Man, as we realize if we reflect a moment, never perceives anything fully or comprehends anything completely . . . [therefore] we constantly use symbolic terms to represent concepts that we cannot define or fully comprehend." A word or anything immediate or visible is symbolic "when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning. It has a wider 'unconscious' aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained. Nor can one hope to define or explain it. As the mind explores the symbol, it is led to ideas that lie beyond

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tice of inquiring of the Lord through Urim and Thummim (Van Wagoner and Walker 1982, 61). The reference to translation by the Urim and Thummim in D&C 10:1 differs from the same revelation in the 1833 Book of Commandments. D&C 17, where the term is used, was not published until 1835.

[5] I must mention in passing that the notion of the seer and the use of physical objects as prompts to or media of inspiration were not restricted to the "magical world view" or the burned-over district of the American frontier. In the age of Romantic inspiration, when William Blake was having his mystical visions and Swedenborg in the manner of a seer was laying bare the correspondence of the natural and spiritual orders, characters in Balzac novels expatiated freely on phrenology, Goethe composed poetry while holding the skull of Schiller, and Victor Hugo, the poet-seer, consulted the spiritualistic mediums on the island of Jersey. The rationalism of the Enlightenment was momentarily awash.

the grasp of reason" (1964).[6] People are generators of symbols, and symbols are generators of ideas.

In a 1988 DIALOGUE article, Anthony Hutchinson associated the LDS creation narratives of the Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham with the literary form of midrash, interpreting an original text by translating, embellishing, or adding to it. The relationship of symbols to the creative process shows how a midrash might be produced.

If we examine the texts produced by Joseph Smith, a common pattern emerges. First, there is a symbol: a fact, an image, or an experience that expresses a sense of a mystery, or something that has been lost or hidden. At the same time, the symbol becomes a catalyst, pointing to something beyond itself with a hint, idea, or suggestion from which Joseph leaps to ideas and whole systems that emerge entire and new, bypassing a pedestrian plodding from premises to conclusions. The symbol thus sets loose a flood of information, ideas, and connections that go far beyond the initial question and end by establishing a new cosmic context. Joseph's translations are thus never slave to an original document; they always start with a symbol and add something that was not there before. The new revelation becomes another metaphor, the starting point for yet another revelation. In this process, we see another dimension of the idea of "continuing revelation" and another fundamental characteristic of Joseph's mind to be taken into account by any future biographer.

Michael Quinn describes in great detail the symbols of the magical or arcane in Joseph's milieu and with which Joseph was familiar (1987, 97–111). I find no evidence that they moved Joseph to produce much text. Symbols of a different order, on the other hand, did move his mind powerfully and resulted in the primary revelations shaping later Mormon theology. Two of several such symbols[7] can be cited from Joseph Smith's translation of Genesis, undertaken sometime in 1830 and finished by 1833 (Edwards 1970, 15).

The first was the figure of Enoch. Prior to December 1830, as Joseph said later, "much conjecture and conversation frequently occurred among the saints concerning the books mentioned, and referred to in various places of the Old and New Testament, which were nowhere to be found. The common remark was, they were *lost books*; but it seems the apostolic churches had some of these writings, as Jude mentions or quotes the prophecy of Enoch, the seventh from Adam. To the joy of the flock . . . did the Lord reveal the following doings of olden times from the prophecy of Enoch" (in Edwards 1970, 8).

It is not impossible that Joseph had heard of a translation of the lost Book of Enoch — one had been available since 1821 (Quinn 1987, 172) — but what is significant is the way in which he responded to the symbol. The one

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[6] The Jungian paradigm with its concepts of the unconscious, the animus and anima, the shadow, and individuation offers rich possibilities for understanding Joseph which are beyond the scope of this present essay.

[7] A more complete study of Joseph before 1830 would have to include the symbols of Israel, including the lost ten tribes, of Zion, and of the curse (which figures so prominently in the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses). A study of Joseph in Nauvoo would have to include the symbols of Masonry.

verse in Jude becomes sixty-nine verses in Genesis 7 of the Inspired Revision or Moses 7 in *The Pearl of Great Price*, expressing new and large ideas about the nature of Zion and the character of God, as Enoch walks and talks with God and sees in panoramic vision the end of the world and God's judgments.

Enoch, having grown prominent as a symbol in Joseph's mind, in turn appears to have led to another symbol, Melchizedek, who in turn becomes the generator of new ideas about the priesthood. When Joseph began his revision of Genesis and came to the account of Abraham offering tithes to Melchizedek, Melchizedek and the priesthood he held were associated with Enoch and described in terms that do not occur in any of Joseph's previous revelations. We learn that Melchizedek was a man of faith who as a child feared God, stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire. "And thus, having been approved of God he was ordained an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch. . . . For God having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed with an oath by himself, that everyone being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course; to put at defiance the armies of the nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God" (JST, Gen. 14:26, 27, 30, 31).

We are already here far beyond any concept of priesthood elaborated in the Book of Mormon, where the role of priesthood is seen simply as the performance of rituals and ordinances. We are well on our way toward D&C 84 and D&C 132, where the priesthood is seen as the key to knowledge and the channel of power and increase. (Joseph Smith said several times that he had restored the fullness of the Church, the priesthood, or the gospel, but the character of revelation was such that the fulness never got full — there was always something else to be added [Beurger 1983, 22, 24]. Joseph's translation of Genesis was really part of the gathering theological flood that was sweeping through and changing everything, including the political and social order, in its course.)

To these two examples we can add D&C 76, dated 16 February 1832. Joseph and Sidney were working on translating the Gospel of John — again without recourse to Greek texts — and again Joseph sensed that "many important points touching the salvation of man had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled" (HC 1:245). Again, he appealed directly to God, the original source — "this caused us to marvel, for it was given to us of the Spirit" (D&C 76:18) — and the result, again, was a new cosmic context in which the recipients of celestial glory "are priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son" (v. 58). Those who come into the celestial kingdom are those who "have come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of Enoch, and of the Firstborn" (v. 67). The symbols of Enoch and Melchizedek have become part of a larger cosmic order, much more elaborate than in the Book of Mormon but still considerably less elaborate and comprehensive than in D&C 132.

The next great symbol in Joseph's development was Abraham.

III

The Book of Abraham, begun in 1835 and published in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842, stands at midpoint among the source documents for the elaboration of Mormon theology. There is, in fact, a clear progression in the expansion of the concepts of the nature of God, humans, priesthood, and salvation from the Book of Mormon (1829) through Joseph Smith's translation-revision of the Bible (1830–33), D&C 84 and 88 (1832), the Book of Abraham (mostly 1835–36), and D&C 121 (1839) to D&C 132, the temple ceremony, and the King Follet discourse (1842–44). Among Joseph Smith's revelations, the Book of Abraham serves as a prime source for the doctrines of the premortal existence of human spirits and the plurality of Gods, stands as a halfway house in the movement toward plural marriage, and marks a stage in the development of statements about priesthood as the key to knowledge of God.

In 1835 a Michael Chandler exhibited in Kirtland some Egyptian mummies and papyri, which members of the Church bought from him. Joseph Smith said, "I began the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics [of these papyri], and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt — a more full account of which will appear in its place, as I proceed to examine or unfold them" (HC II: 235–36). In the current LDS edition of the Book of Abraham, the book is presented as "a Translation of some ancient Records, that have fallen into our hands from the catacombs of Egypt. — The writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand, upon papyrus."

Since resurfacing in 1967, having been missing and presumed lost for some eighty to ninety years, the papyri have been examined and translated by Egyptologists. As previously indicated, the fragment of papyrus identified by some as the ostensible source of the Book of Abraham bears no relationship to the Book of Abraham either in content or subject matter (Heward and Tanner 1968, 93–98; Parker 1968, 98–99). On the other hand, LDS Egyptologist Edward Ashment has suggested that it is not certain that Joseph Smith considered he had gotten the Book of Abraham from the papyri — he may have "received a revelation comprising the Book of Abraham [and] tried to match his revealed text with the *snsn* text in an effort to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphics" (1979, 44). In either case, there is a problem. Either Joseph's translation is in error, or there is no translation as we currently use the term.

Let us explore the latter possibility. The Book of Abraham does not fit with modern ideas about translation. It is not a document-to-document translation; Joseph got it wrong about the papyri having been written by the hand of Abraham. The English text nonetheless fits precisely with the pattern of translation as the restoring of things lost or the unfolding of things not known. The production of the book involves symbols that moved Joseph's mind to a vastly greater cosmic context.

The first stimulus seems to be the expanding ideas of Abraham and the priesthood, which derive from Joseph's previous revelations. The second stimu-

lus is his contact with Hebrew, which by powerful coincidence Joseph began studying during the winter of 1835–36, shortly after he became deeply engrossed in the Egyptian papyri. The third stimulus is extra-biblical lore about Abraham, which Joseph encountered at about this same time.

Joseph's encounter with Hebrew has been carefully studied by Louis Zucker (1968), who describes the circumstances of the class, the qualifications of Professor Seixas, and the effect that Hebrew had on Joseph's thinking and revelations, especially on his revelation of the Book of Abraham. The presence of Hebrew words in the text (for example, the names of the sun, moon, stars, and firmament) can easily be accounted for by referring to Professor Seixas's grammar book. (These Hebrew terms are not important for adding ideas to the book, but they are important for showing that Joseph's mind was occupied with Hebrew.)

Not so easily explained is something quite different and more significant: other Hebrew words are used and carried far beyond their bare meaning into the elaboration of a new concept. The word *gnolaum* for example, is a noun form that may also be used as an adverb; but it is used by Joseph as an adjective in elaborating a doctrine of the premortal existence of spirits: "Yet these two spirits . . . shall have no beginning . . . no end, for they are *gnolaum*, or eternal" (Abr. 3:18). The word *Elohim*, which is a plural form consistently interpreted as a singular by Jewish commentators, becomes the springboard for a polytheistic theology in chapters 4, 5, and 6, departing from the strict monotheism of the Book of Moses and of Abraham 1, 2, and 3. Zucker then gives a very insightful comment: "It has not been my intention to imply that Joseph Smith's free-handling of Hebrew grammar and the language of the Hebrew Bible shows ineptitude. . . . I simply do not think he wanted to appear before the world as a meticulous Hebraist. He used the Hebrew as he chose, as an artist, inside his frame of reference, in accordance with his taste, according to the effect he wanted to produce, as a foundation for theological innovations" (1968, 51–53). In a more recent essay, Michael Walton makes the same points and emphasizes the influence of Joseph's Hebrew studies on the syntax and key words of the Book of Abraham (1981, 41–43). Joseph worked as an artist, taking familiar material and transmuting it into something new and larger. Translation, then, is transmutation.

The third stimulus working in Joseph's mind was the extra-biblical information on Abraham. The problem initially prompting this essay, that of establishing a link between Joseph Smith and this material, was solved bit by bit but turned out to have only secondary significance. Joseph had access to information about Abraham through three identifiable sources: two learned Jews (Joshua Seixas and Alexander Neibaur) and Josephus, with whose writings, especially the *Antiquities of the Jews*, he was almost certainly familiar.

Joshua Seixas, the teacher engaged to teach a ten-week course of Hebrew at the School of the Prophets in Kirtland, was a learned and devout Jew, as evidenced by his authorship of a manual of Hebrew grammar to "promote the best of all studies, the study of the Bible" (Zucker 1968, 6). It has sometimes come as a surprise to Bible-bound Christians that all the extant information

about Abraham was not included in Genesis but has always been available to anyone learned in the rabbinical schools and traditions (as Joshua Seixas certainly was), since these traditions form an intrinsic part of the Jewish study of the scriptures.

We know from Professor Zucker's article that on at least one occasion (6 March 1836), Joseph went alone for instruction in Hebrew (1968, 46) and that on two other occasions (7 and 8 March), the "first class" translated chapters 17 and 22 of Genesis, both of which deal with Abraham (1968, 47). It is not unlikely that the Jewish professor had occasion before, during, or after these sessions to mention or describe other information about Abraham.

Another possible source of information about Hebrew traditions was Alexander Neibaur, the first Jewish convert to Mormonism. He had studied in a Jewish rabbinical seminary and was familiar with Jewish philosophers and commentators. He settled in Nauvoo in 1841, became friends with Joseph, and was close enough to him to become a sometime German tutor to him. The Book of Abraham appeared in *Times and Seasons* in the spring of 1842, after Neibaur's arrival.

A more immediate and demonstrable source is Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37–ca. 100) in whose writings the same lore appears. His *Antiquities* was translated into English in 1737, and a copy of the 1794 edition was in Joseph Smith's hometown library (Quinn 1987, 263); but we need not speculate about a direct link. As we skim over the pages of the *Messenger and Advocate* for December 1835, whom do we find quoted at length by Oliver Cowdery but . . . Josephus! (p. 234) And the reference is to the part of the *Antiquities* corresponding to Genesis. We cannot escape the conclusion that Josephus was read and talked about in Kirtland in 1835. And since Josephus lays out this extra-biblical lore in such matter-of-fact detail and abundance, it seems reasonable to assume that Joseph Smith's already keen sense that much in the scriptures had been lost and needed to be restored may have been quickened, even to restoring more than was in Josephus.

Having said that much and having established the strong likelihood that Joseph did encounter the learning of the rabbinical tradition, we still have not explained the Book of Abraham, for its most striking characteristics are not in what is familiar, but in what transforms and transcends the familiar to the point of becoming original. The Book of Abraham is, in fact, an elaboration of the idea of priesthood as the key to knowledge, passing through Joseph's new learning, and ending with a new picture of the cosmos.

Abraham 1:26–27 has most often been read as a statement of the relative status of the white and black races, but in the context of the whole chapter these verses seem to be more a statement about the superiority of Abraham's priesthood, with its knowledge and keys to knowledge, compared to the learning of the Egyptians. Abraham is first portrayed as a seeker after knowledge, and his attainment of great learning is connected in a novel way with his "appointment unto the Priesthood" (Abr. 1:2–4). The learning of the Egyptians, as recounted in the rabbinical tradition, is reflected in the Book of Abraham in Pharaoh's having received "the blessings of the earth, with the blessings

of wisdom." But the superiority of Abraham and of the priesthood emerges as Pharaoh is cursed as to the priesthood (Abr. 1:26), which also accounts for the idolatrous imitation of the priesthood among the Egyptians (1:6–27). That this cursing was not merely a manifestation of nineteenth-century racism is shown by the fact that Pharaoh, who was cursed as to the priesthood, is depicted in facsimile 3 as being white.

Again, in Josephus, the study of astronomy causes Abraham to become the first monotheist. In the Book of Abraham, Abraham's study of astronomy leads to the vision of the heavens (given through the Urim and Thummim!), and from there Joseph takes us to a discussion of the eternity and therefore the premortal existence of spirits or intelligences, the purpose of earthly existence, the appointment of a redeemer and the revolt in heaven, and the creation of the earth and its life forms by a multiplicity of gods under the direction of one supreme God.

The Book of Abraham, in sum, reflects Joseph's first contact with substantive learning outside of the strictly biblical tradition in the study of Hebrew and the rabbinical tradition that attends it. This learning seems to have acted on his mind, along with his fascination with the papyri and mummies, in the same way that symbols and seer stones previously had. It served as a catalyst to "the gift of seeing" in the quantum leaps of revelation. The Book of Abraham is not the product of a document-to-document translation, but it fits exactly with the pattern of the seer-as-translator, unfolding what was hidden and expanding the symbol to the larger concept. For its authenticity the book depends not on a previous document but rather on its own internal merits.

We can feel the tug of the tide carrying us forward to 1842 and Joseph's encounter with the symbols of Masonry, likewise transformed and carried to new meanings, and the further symbol of Abraham as the polygamous patriarch, ending with the transformation of humans into eternally increasing and creating gods. However, we must leave these latter themes undeveloped and must recognize as well that the themes we have examined are susceptible to deeper probing and analysis (for example, the process of Joseph's translations, which might be clarified still more by Jungian views on the relationship between symbols and creativity). We must conclude with a statement of the premises and conclusions of this essay and their implications for Mormon belief and for new biographical light on Joseph Smith.

The first implication concerns the nature of revelation.

The tidying up of Mormonism over the past century or so has resulted in two views of revelation. One sees revelation as divine dictation to which a passive recipient makes no contribution, perhaps pausing even in mid-revelation to ask, "Would you mind spelling that word?" The recipient may be changed by the revelation, but the revelation is not limited by the culture nor changed by the life experiences of the recipient — it arrives pure and unsullied, as with a letter brought by a postman. David Whitmer had such an idea of the translation process of the Book of Mormon, believing Joseph saw letters and whole words through the seer stone and then simply dictated them to the scribe (1887, 12). According to this view, as revelations are collected, their parts

are interchangeable and their authority is equal: a verse from I Samuel 11 is just as valuable and binding as a verse from the Doctrine and Covenants or the Sermon on the Mount.

Such finalized revelation is a precondition to the construction of a dogmatic theology, one that can give definitive answers and cast the last stone. A dogmatic theology is a closed system. The first item on its agenda is authority, and the practical focus it yields for the religious life is obedience to this authority.

In the other view, the revelator is a prism shaped by his or her culture and life experiences. The light of the revelation is changed by the recipient, whose effort, study, and contribution are indispensable. The revelation reflects and in important ways is limited by the cultural context of the recipient, even while transcending it in others. The parts of the revelation are all valuable but not interchangeable. A later revelation may even contradict an earlier one, while each retains its parcel of truth. The revelation is always continuing and progressive, never fixed and final, and always partial.

In 1835, for example, had we asked for an absolute and final answer to the question of the number of personages in the godhead, the Lectures on Faith would have told us, "Two" (1963, 55). In 1843, we would have been told, "Three" (D&C 130: 22–23). In 1832, had we wanted to know what God was like, we would have been told that he was omnipotent and omniscient, and that he had always been that way ("Lectures" 1963, 37–38). In 1844, had we been present at the King Follet funeral discourse, we would have heard that God was once a man (J. F. Smith 1976, 345). We should therefore expect that a continuing revelation may well modify previous revelations and that one day we will see in a wider context everything that we now believe.

This kind of continuing and partial revelation, which includes all of Joseph's translations, does not allow the construction of a dogmatic theology. This kind of revelation can vitalize, but not finalize. The theology derived from it serves as point of reference, as something to think with, but the system remains open, and the first item on the religious agenda is the responsibility of the individual to choose what is important in the living of his or her life. The focus of the religious life is on individual initiative.

The second implication of the views in this essay derives from the first and relates directly to authority-based belief. The earliest anti-Mormon writers assumed that if they could link the Book of Mormon to a previous document (such as the Spalding manuscript) they could demolish the book's credibility. Pro-Mormon writers have assumed that if they could link the book with a previous document (such as the golden plates), the authority of the book would be established. Similarly, anti-Mormon writers have assumed that by severing the Book of Abraham from the papyri, they have settled the authority question, and some pro-Mormon writers have twisted every possible way to avoid those implications. In either case, the mind comes to rest on a document, yielding a binary mode of thought: either Joseph Smith was an infallible spokesman for God, or he was a fraud.

The mischief with this binary mode is twofold. First, it leaves unsettled the question of how the document, even if authentic, becomes an authority.

If the original manuscript of the Gospel of Mark, written in Mark's own handwriting, were discovered in a cave in upper Egypt, we would still have to resolve the question, for example, of whether Mark mistook epilepsy for demonic possession; we would still have to say why we believe that Mark got it right.

Second, the binary mode insulates us from, and in many cases causes us to miss, the contact with primary religious questions. To the extent that I base my life on an authority *out there*, the authority becomes responsible for me. As that authority diminishes, I must perforce take more responsibility myself.

With the more detailed descriptions we now have of the production of the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham, the immediate and primary link of the resulting texts is with the mind of the seer and not with a document, and the question changes complexion. Maintaining an authority-based faith becomes more and more difficult. Ultimately, I believe, both books must stand or fall on their own intrinsic worth, on the religious value of their content, as do the Koran, the Bagavahd-Gita, the Urantia Book, and the Course in Miracles. In William James's phrase, they must be judged by their fruits, not their roots (1902), and individual responsibility in judging them then becomes total. No book becomes an authority by its origins, and all books become authorities to the extent, and only to the extent, of their yeast.

Could it be different? The Book of Mormon itself claims that it will be authenticated experientially and pragmatically, or at least that is how I understand Alma 32 and Moroni 10:4–5. The same test must also be applied to the Book of Abraham, as should the test enjoined since the beginning of Mormonism with regard to any supposed revelation: that which is light continues to increase in light, in congruence with a growing body of understanding. In the very terms of Mormon revelation, then, the translation or revelation cannot become an authority until it is completed and ratified in the mind and experience of the recipient.

As for "knowing Brother Joseph again," any new biography of Joseph Smith ought to include an account of his mind, at least to the extent that it can be known through the texts he produced. Much of the current intellectual energy of Mormonism is being spent on establishing context, and, while context is indispensable and will require us to think in new ways, it will nonetheless miss the essential quality in Joseph until it is joined with text, which shows what he did with his context.

In addition, if we wish to understand Joseph Smith better, we should think of him as a complex man embodying a number of paradoxes. Richard Cummings has described the many facets of "literal mindedness" as the quintessential Mormon way, rooting life in a very narrow and particular spot (1982, 93–102); but the genius of Mormonism, as expressed in the belief in a continuing revelation and in the Thirteenth Article of Faith, has nonetheless been to go beyond the literal and to accept no limit as permanent. In this paradox, Mormonism continues to mirror its first prophet, for Joseph Smith manifested a curious literal mindedness throughout his life, all the while reacting powerfully to symbols, which always carried him beyond the immediate and the

literal. A reductionist view, that he was "nothing but . . . ," will miss this essential quality.

When we think of him as a translator, we should think of him as a seer, one who sees into the powerfully moving, unseen forces of the soul and the rest of the cosmos to give these forces form. The resulting translation becomes authoritative only as reason completes this retrieval from the unknown by finding light and coherence in it and by confirming it in practice. Thus, since its inception, Mormonism has embodied a dialectic and has been shaped by this tension between the revelatory and the rational and pragmatic. To be a Latter-day Saint aware of beginnings is to be left with the individual task of making sure that all of the foregoing gets translated correctly.

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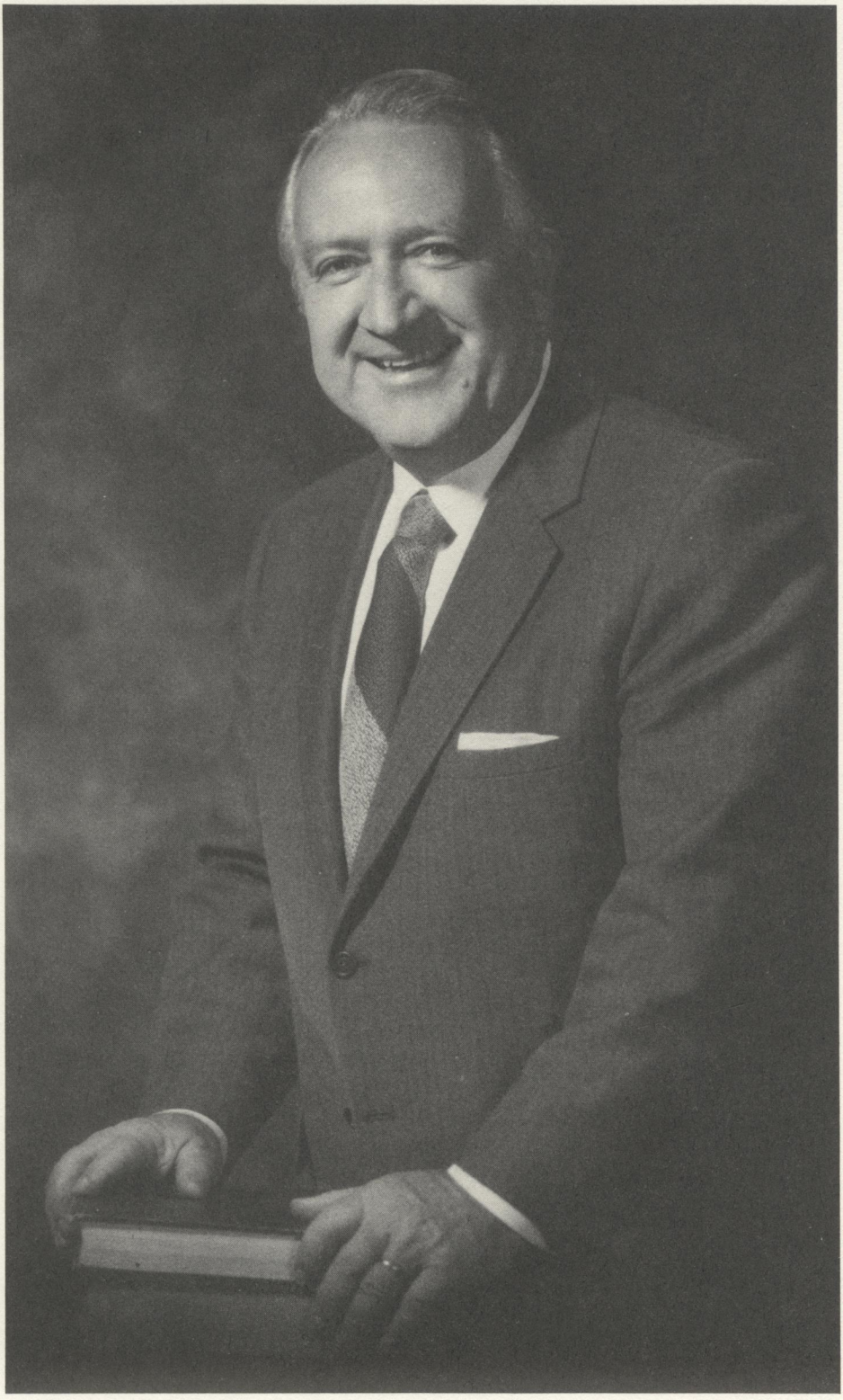
Gauntleted gloves, rose design, Hazel and Wallace Zundel (Clearfield, Utah), 5½″×14″, buckskin, glass beads, 1988; (Utah) State Art Collection.



Coming to Terms with Mormon History: An Interview with Leonard Arrington

DIALOGUE: Leonard, would you tell us something of your family background and childhood, please?

Arrington: I grew up on a farm in Twin Falls County, Idaho. My father served on the high council of Twin Falls stake when I was a child and youth. In 1924, when I was seven, he was called on a two-year, full-time mission to the Southern States. He left behind my mother and four children (I was the second son). We rented our twenty-acre farm to a neighbor and moved to a small frame house near my grandparents and two uncles on the south side of Twin Falls. Five months after my father left, my mother gave birth to a fifth child. When Dad returned he resumed farming, and I was happy to work closely with him because I was interested in animals and poultry just as he was. With his encouragement I became a teamster on the farm and also initiated a poultry enterprise that I continued until I went to college.

DIALOGUE: What sparked your interest in Mormon history?

Arrington: I was first introduced to Mormon history in 1929 when I was twelve years old. Our Twin Falls ward started a junior genealogical society in lieu of our regular Sunday School class, and I became fascinated with family history and genealogy. For this class I wrote an eleven-page autobiography and histories of both my father's and my mother's families. I completed pedigree charts and family group sheets, corresponded with my mother's oldest sister to get the history of their family, recorded a number of faith-promoting incidents, and gave several talks about our family history projects in Sunday School. Unfortunately, the program in our ward was dropped after one year because instructions from Salt Lake City discouraged wards from adopting

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any programs that had not been cleared with Church headquarters. All of the local leaders wept but dutifully discontinued the program. However, my interest in family and Church history had been ignited.

When I was fifteen, a neighbor gave me a book that had just come out — *Joseph Smith, An American Prophet* by John Henry Evans. I read it, enjoyed it very much, and got a new appreciation for the Prophet and for Church history.

DIALOGUE: How was your interest in Mormon history heightened as a college student?

Arrington: When I went to the University of Idaho (1935), we were fortunate to have George Tanner, in my judgment the finest institute teacher in the Church. A graduate of the University of Chicago, he was very interested in LDS history as well as Christian history and, under his direction, our Sunday School class studied the *Comprehensive History of the Church* by B. H. Roberts. During the four years I was at the University of Idaho, we went through all six volumes. Brother Tanner also taught classes in Church history, Old and New Testaments, Book of Mormon, and comparative religions, so I had splendid university-level training in LDS history and doctrine. He welcomed questions and helped me to reconcile what I was learning in my science classes with the gospel.

DIALOGUE: What about your doctoral training in graduate school?

Arrington: In 1939 I went to the University of North Carolina to do graduate work in economics. I devoted my entire first year there to reading economics journals and books and attending lectures. I was the only Mormon attending the university, and the only Mormon in Chapel Hill. In January 1941, I went to North Carolina State College (now North Carolina State University) in Raleigh to teach, take classes in agricultural economics and rural sociology, and earn credit toward the doctorate. In reading for a rural sociology seminar, I found references to works on the Mormon village by Lowry Nelson, T. Lynn Smith, and other scholars. Indeed, I was delighted to learn of a professional literature on the Latter-day Saints and their social system. Fascinated, I read everything I could find on Mormon economics and sociology in the libraries at State College and at the University of North Carolina. In the process, I discovered articles by Bernard DeVoto and Juanita Brooks as well as by Lowry Nelson and other academicians. These stimulated me to write some papers on Mormonism for my graduate seminars.

DIALOGUE: Were your studies interrupted by World War II?

Arrington: In 1943, I went as a soldier to North Africa for sixteen months and then to Italy for fifteen months. My experience, particularly in Italy, was a "building" one. Although I was a "simple soldier," I was given responsibilities in the economic section of the Allied Commission for Italy. As an

Allied coordinator with the Italian Central Institute of Statistics in Rome and with the Office of Price Control for Northern Italy, I had experiences in economic investigation and reporting and in personnel administration, management, and decision-making that proved to be invaluable in my subsequent career as a teacher and administrator. I learned much about Italy, Europe, and human nature.

During my last year in Italy (1945), I thought a great deal about what I wanted to do for a doctoral dissertation and decided to propose to my committee a topic related to the economics of Mormonism. I wrote to John A. Widtsoe, who had been president of both the University of Utah and Utah State Agricultural College — now Utah State University (USU) — and who was then an apostle, asking him if the Church would grant me access to materials to do such a dissertation. His reply was friendly and encouraging. He suggested I talk with him whenever I got to Salt Lake City.

I was discharged from the army in January 1946 and resumed teaching at North Carolina State College. Although they offered me a permanent position, I wanted to get to the West. So I applied for positions at western universities. I was glad when the finest offer came from Utah State Agricultural College in Logan. My wife, Grace Fort Arrington, and I arrived there in July 1946, and I began traveling to Salt Lake City each week to do research in the Church Archives.

Dr. Widtsoe's counsel to me was, "They're very hesitant about sharing the abundant resources they have, Brother Arrington, so you must build up their confidence by beginning to use printed material, then asking for theses and dissertations, then the Journal History, and eventually you'll be able to see anything because you will have built up their confidence." He used the image of a camel that inches through the tent and eventually carries away the tent on his back.

DIALOGUE: Did you take his advice, and were you allowed unlimited access?

Arrington: Obediently, I conformed to the policy suggested by Dr. Widtsoe, and during the years that followed I was never denied access to anything in the Archives. Having located an enormous amount of material, I was able to report to my committee that I would write on Mormon economic policies, 1847 to 1900. I worked at the Archives for four summers, 1946 to 1949.

Grace and I and our first child, James, then returned to the University of North Carolina (UNC) for the 1949–50 academic year to finish all the course work I needed for the Ph.D. Since I had taught many different economics courses at Utah State, my graduate work at UNC was not difficult, and I spent much of the year putting together my research notes and writing drafts of articles for publication in journals. When I admitted this to one of my advisors, he tried hard to discourage me, but I felt very confident and went ahead working on these papers. I did well in my courses, passed the orals with an "excellent," scored well on the written examinations, and passed the required examinations in two languages — French and Italian.

By the time I resumed teaching at Utah State in the fall of 1950 I had the drafts of several professional articles, but I hesitated to submit them. Once when Bill Mulder, the editor of the *Western Humanities Review*, was visiting with us while in Logan for a lecture, I showed him two articles I had written. He was enthusiastic about both and published one in the next *Review* issue and the other in 1951. In the meantime I published articles in the *Journal of Economic History*, *Rural Sociology*, and *Pacific Historical Review*. Within twelve months after my year at the University of North Carolina I had published seven articles in professional journals. These launched my writing "career."

I took leave without pay from Utah State from January to June 1952 to finish up my dissertation and final orals.

DIALOGUE: Were all those articles basically out of your dissertation?

Arrington: I think that three appeared in somewhat different form in the dissertation. My major professor and principal advisor, Milton Heath, thought I should publish a book on the economic activities of the Latter-day Saints, not necessarily the dissertation but something that would be a comprehensive treatment of the Mormon economy, 1847 to 1900. He arranged for me to receive a grant from the Committee on Research in Economic History, so I could finish a book. By the summer of 1954 I had finished an 800-page, book-length manuscript entitled, "Building the Kingdom: The Economic Activities of the Latter-day Saints, 1847–1900." Some top economic historians read the manuscript and wrote detailed criticisms and comments, and I worked those over for a year.

I was almost ready in 1955 to send the revised manuscript to the Committee of Economic Historians for publication when I realized that it really had no focus, chronological or otherwise. Filled with detail, it was tedious, uninteresting. My good friend George Ellsworth, who is a brilliant, trained historian, declared, "This is a comprehensive treatise out of which a fine book can be written."

It dawned on me that I would have to quit thinking of myself as an economist writing an economics book. I must try to tell a fascinating story of a fascinating people as a good historian would. I managed to get a six-month fellowship to the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, California, and a six-month teaching fellowship to Yale University. Utah State granted me a sabbatical leave, and I was off.

On my first day at Huntington I started work on what became *Great Basin Kingdom*. The Huntington staff was impressed with what I was doing and urged me to remain for the entire year. During my thirteen months at the Huntington, I wrote an average of a chapter a month and finished *Great Basin Kingdom*. I sent copies of my chapters to George Ellsworth, and he generously sent back criticisms and comments. He noted with some surprise, "This is more history than economics, and I hope that doesn't disturb you." He was right. I began to see myself as a historian and began subscribing to historical journals

and attending historical conventions. My wartime experiences in North Africa and Italy no doubt gave me insights that were helpful in understanding the Mormon economy "under siege" in pioneer Utah. Under the sponsorship of the Committee for Economic Historians, *Great Basin Kingdom* was published in 1958 by Harvard University Press.

DIALOGUE: What hastened your leap into western history?

Arrington: I continued to teach a wide variety of economics classes, but a shift in emphasis in economics propelled me toward history. Economists had become fascinated with econometrics, statistics, and mathematical equations. One could hardly publish in economic journals without using algebra, geometry, calculus, and advanced statistics. Although I had some understanding of these and did publish three articles of this type, they were not my forte. My work was descriptive economic history and theory; I began submitting articles to historical journals, and they were readily accepted.

In 1958 and 1959 I served as Fulbright Professor of American Economics at the University of Genoa in Italy, taking leave from Utah State without pay. It was an enjoyable experience for me and my family. I lectured in Italian on the American economy to students at several Italian universities and to community cultural groups. Some of these lectures were published in Italian newspapers and journals of commentary.

After we returned to Logan, I continued to do research, mostly on aspects of Mormon and western American economic activity. In 1966 I took another sabbatical to lecture on western American history at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), substituting for John Caughey, who was on sabbatical leave.

DIALOGUE: Leonard, after your return from Italy, you did some intensive studies of businesses and industries in Utah and the West. You seemed to be moving out of Mormon history. What was the reason for the change?

Arrington: I did several things in the early 1960s that were related to Mormon, Utah, and western United States economics. I suppose that I felt the need to demonstrate to my department that I could contribute as an economist. The Utah State University Research Council generously granted me funds to employ a secretary part-time, covered part of my travel expenses, and allowed me some leave time to work on books. I did a book on the beet sugar industry, a biography of David Eccles as a western industrialist, a series on Utah's defense industry for the state planning department, another series for the *Utah Historical Quarterly* on Utah defense installations, and a series on reclamation projects in Utah. I wrote an article on the Civil War income tax and its impact on Utah and a series of articles on the economic base of the Wasatch Front. After returning from UCLA, I continued to work on books and articles about western American history and Utah economic history.

DIALOGUE: You have helped found journals and organizations and have fostered and aided young historians. Why did you feel these journals and organizations were needed, and why did you encourage young scholars? What was your role in establishing DIALOGUE, the *Western Historical Quarterly*, and later the *Journal of Mormon History*, which served as outlets for scholarly publication for both Mormon and western historians?

Arrington: When George Ellsworth came to Utah State in 1950, having just finished a Ph.D. at the University of California at Berkeley and beginning his brilliant lifelong teaching career at USU, I was very excited to see him. I knew he was very bright and a kindred soul. In 1951 Eugene Campbell came to Logan to direct the LDS Institute of Religion, after just finishing his doctoral dissertation at the University of Southern California. He was another kindred soul. Also at USU was Wendell Rich, who had been acting director of the Institute and was also interested in Mormon history.

We and our wives met at each of our homes, in rotation, once a month to read papers we were planning to submit for publication. In this way we heard chapters from all our dissertations and other research projects.

We met for at least three years, and the experience was extremely valuable for me. I learned how to do Mormon history! I learned how to do footnotes. I felt so strongly about my need to do something well that I took two seminars from George Ellsworth and wrote papers for the seminars, not for credit but because I wanted to learn. George taught me the sources and literature of Mormon history.

These "cottage meetings" were so profitable for us that we used every opportunity to bring in other scholars. We invited to our meetings every historical scholar and social scientist who happened to come to Logan, including Thomas F. O'Dea, Mario DePillis, Gustive Larson, Lowry Nelson, Juanita Brooks, T. Edgar Lyon, Richard Poll, David Miller, James Allen, Davis Bitton, and many others. They stimulated us, and maybe we stimulated them, too. At any rate, we developed a circle of people who were interested in Mormon studies and who were acquainted with each other. When we went to professional conventions, we all got together and drank milkshakes and talked. That went on for years.

Finally we decided that we needed a formal organization. When the Utah Conference on Higher Education met in Logan in 1965, we had a little rump session to discuss forming a society. Fourteen of us were present — some from BYU, some from the University of Utah (U of U), and some from USU. We decided to organize the Mormon History Association (MHA) in December during the American and Pacific Historical Associations' meetings in San Francisco. We wrote to all the interested persons we could think of telling them what we were going to do and inviting them to the meeting. Sixty or seventy people attended.

During that same year, I happened to sit next to Gene England on a plane. He told me he and a group at Stanford were planning to found DIALOGUE. (I didn't originally like the name "Dialogue," I'll confess.) Our MHA group

was looking forward to founding our own journal, but Gene tried to talk me out of it, saying that the DIALOGUE group would make all sorts of concessions in order to publish historians' work if the MHA wouldn't publish its journal.

When we brought the matter up in our December 1965 MHA meeting, Wesley Johnson represented DIALOGUE very well, and the group voted to give their loyalty to DIALOGUE — I think, unanimously. The next year the first issue of DIALOGUE came out, and I was thrilled, excited, pleased, and satisfied. I thought it was just wonderful. Historians have been supporting DIALOGUE ever since.

In 1974, at the suggestion of James Allen, Davis Bitton, and others, we established the annual *Journal of Mormon History*, which is a wonderful outlet for many of our best scholarly articles.

DIALOGUE: Please discuss how you have used other scholars' talents in your work.

Arrington: I had one advantage that not everybody had. Grants from the Utah State University Research Council enabled me to employ economics students and others on several research projects. Among the budding economists and historians who worked with me on these projects were Gary Hansen, Thomas Alexander, Richard Bennett, Wayne Hinton, Jon Haupt, Tony Cluff, Gwynn Barrett, Richard Jensen, and Mike Quinn. Given this start, these students have gotten advanced degrees and written praiseworthy books and articles. The projects were very fruitful for them and for me.

DIALOGUE: How did you get scholars from the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints involved with you?

Arrington: We continued our milkshake sessions at national historical conventions, bringing in not only LDS but RLDS people, originally through the graciousness of Bob Flanders, then a professor of history at Graceland College, who had completed a splendid dissertation on Nauvoo for the University of Wisconsin in 1964. We got acquainted with RLDS historians, they became acquainted with our people, and when they came to Logan and Salt Lake City and BYU they stayed with us and when we went back to Iowa and Missouri we stayed with them. These friendships with such historians as Richard Howard, Paul Edwards, Alma Blair, Bill Russell, and others have been warm and enduring.

DIALOGUE: Would you please describe your return to Mormon history?

Arrington: When I was at UCLA, Alfred Knopf, the New York publisher, wrote asking me to do a book on the Mormon frontier. Nothing really good had been done on that, he said, and he thought I was the right man to do it. I wrote to the First Presidency of the Church, telling them about this invitation and saying I would need full access to the material in the Church Archives.

Late one Friday afternoon I happened to be in my office at UCLA when President Nathan Eldon Tanner called to advise me that the First Presidency had reviewed my letter. "You will be getting a letter soon giving you permission to have full access to the material in the Church Archives to do this book," he promised. This gave me hope that something really good could be done in Church history.

After I returned to Utah, I spent all my available time in the Church Archives in Salt Lake City. I would drive down from Logan one or two days each week or in the summer spend several weeks at a time working on this book.

DIALOGUE: Again, did you have open access?

Arrington: Yes, and having unrestricted access to all the material helped me to realize how difficult writing such a history would be. So much of the story — and it was a *great* story — had never been examined.

I fussed around writing and doing articles and giving papers until 1972, when I received another call from President Tanner, "Brother Arrington, I would like to talk to you at your first convenience." I went down the next morning. That's when he asked me to be Church Historian. He wanted me to begin the work immediately, so I arranged with my department head to allow me to go to Salt Lake City on days when I didn't have classes. In June 1972 I officially resigned from Utah State University.

DIALOGUE: Bill Mulder, George Ellsworth, Eugene Campbell, and others were very open in helping you. You responded by helping others. Is that the kind of philosophy you took with you to the Church Historian's Office?

Arrington: I took that philosophy, yes. I personally shared notes with a lot of people, and a lot of articles that have been published were based, at least partly, on material in my files, sometimes with attribution and sometimes without, just as I've drawn from the work of other people for some of my publications. Of course, I have tried to give full credit to those who helped me. Sharing materials is important in Mormon history because the materials aren't always available to everybody. People who use the National Archives may not feel any obligation to share material with other people, but those who use LDS material feel a compulsion to share.

By becoming active in professional associations, I eventually became an officer of several historical societies, hoping that this would help the cause of Mormon history, that it would give a new respect, intellectual respect, to Mormon scholarship (I'm not speaking of myself personally but only of the field), and that Mormon articles, articles dealing with aspects of Mormon history, would come to be more readily placed in national, regional, and local historical journals and encyclopedias.

DIALOGUE: If you look at *Great Basin Kingdom* as one bookend and *Brigham Young: American Moses* as the other bookend, and everything else you've done in between, how do you describe your maturation process as a scholar?

Arrington: I have done many kinds of work. First, I've done studies of Utah economic institutions, such as the pioneer monetary system, banks, beet sugar companies, reclamation projects, missile plants, and so on.

Second, I've done studies of pioneer women. I became fascinated with the activities of women when I was working on my dissertation. I did a paper on the economic role of Mormon women in 1951, long before women's studies were of general interest. Recognizing the importance of Latter-day Saint women's history, in 1972 we hired Maureen Ursenbach Beecher to begin work with the Historical Department of the Church on that phase of our history, and she was later joined by Carol Cornwall Madsen and Jill Mulvay Derr. We also encouraged and assisted a group of LDS women in the Boston area, who produced *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah*; and another group who, under the editorship of Vicky Burgess-Olson, published *Sister Saints*. We now have some marvelous biographies, histories, and commentaries on Mormon women's history, but more needs to be done.

I try to do my share. My daughter Susan A. Madsen and I wrote *Sunbonnet Sisters* and *Mothers of the Prophets*, and I've published various other essays on aspects of women's history in books and journals. My second wife, Harriet Horne Arrington, and I just wrote a chapter in a new book, *A Heritage of Faith*, published by Deseret Book. We're continuing to work together on women's studies, preparing papers and articles, and hope eventually to do a book on Harriet's grandmother, Alice Merrill Horne, and great-grandmother, Bathsheba W. Smith.

Third, I've done some biographies. Biographies are a different art form, a different kind of historical scholarship. It never occurred to me to do a biography until a prominent Hollywood attorney, Roland Rich Woolley, asked me if I would, as a favor, review a biography of his wife's father, Governor William Spry, written by William Roper. I thought the manuscript needed some additional work and wrote to Mr. Woolley that I would be glad to furnish material from the Church Archives to Mr. Roper. Mr. Woolley replied: "I've talked with Mr. Roper, and we've agreed that we would like you to be a collaborator on the book and do the chapters that you can do that are necessary." I agreed, and Mr. Woolley made a grant to Utah State University to pay for my time and expenses. Utah State University was glad to have a grant because they took 25 percent of it for overhead. So I didn't get paid anything extra, I just did it as part of my job.

When we finished the Spry biography, Mr. Woolley proposed that I do a biography of his grandfather, Charles C. Rich, cofounder of the Mormon colony in San Bernardino, founder of the settlements in Bear Lake Valley, an apostle, and for many years general of the Mormon military forces. Mr. Woolley made another grant to Utah State University, and I enlisted the part-time help of Ross Peterson, Richard Jensen, and JoAnn Woodruff, my secretary. Again, I wasn't paid anything extra for it; I just did it as part of my university assignment.

I still did not feel that I had done a proper biography (the Charles Rich book was more a history than a biography). Then Noni Eccles (Nora Eccles

Harrison) asked me to do a biography of her father, David Eccles. She arranged a substantial grant to Utah State University to pay expenses, including part of my salary. I employed some students, particularly George Daines, to help me track down the many enterprises of David Eccles. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher helped me style the manuscript into a proper biography, and it was finally published by Utah State University Press in 1974.

In the process of doing that book I learned more about the art of biography. When Mr. Woolley came to me again and asked me to do a biography of his other grandfather, Edwin D. Woolley, I was ready. I thought I could do it — that is, with help. He made a grant, and I employed Becky Cornwall (now Rebecca Cornwall Bartholomew) as research assistant. She was marvelous. She has the skills of a novelist, and she helped shape the narrative into a really fine product. I sincerely regret that I could not persuade Mr. Woolley to list her as a collaborator.

When I was an advisory editor of DIALOGUE in 1966, Gene England and Wes Johnson asked me to edit a special Mormon history issue. I included in that issue an article entitled "Why a Biography of Brigham Young Will Never Be Written," by Philip Taylor, a non-Mormon Englishman who had written some fine articles on Mormon history. Then, during the year I was at UCLA, that terrible biography of Brigham Young (*Lion of the Lord*) by Stanley Hirshson came out. Imagine . . . he got a Guggenheim to do that biography! It's not based on sources in the Church Archives but primarily on articles published in New York newspapers of the time. Imagine writing a biography of Robert E. Lee based on what was reported in New York newspapers — or of Jefferson Davis or Queen Victoria!

DIALOGUE: Did Hirshson try to get access to Church Archives?

Arrington: He came to Salt Lake City and talked with A. William Lund, assistant Church historian, who tried to discourage him but did provide him with a list of things he could see that would have greatly enriched his book and given it credibility. Hirshson chose, instead, to return to New York and work primarily in the New York Public Library. Perhaps that was his intention all along — to be turned down so he could go back to New York and write the book there. Because he was not given blanket access, he chose not to make use of the many sources that might have been available to him.

I wrote a review of *Lion of the Lord* in *BYU Studies* (Winter 1970) in which I listed all the Brigham Young materials in the Church Archives, none of which he had used. (Of course, he would not have had access to all of them.) That made me think about doing a biography of Brigham Young myself. I wrote several articles using the available Brigham Young material. I hoped someone else, someone more qualified than I, would do a biography. After I became Church Historian, I finally induced Jack Adamson to agree to undertake a Brigham Young biography after he had finished his biography of Chief Joseph. Mormon biography suffered a serious loss when Jack died unexpectedly in 1975, before he was ready to start on Brother Brigham.

Who else could do it? We in the Church Historical Department decided to make a catalogue of all the Brigham Young materials, a task that took several years. The list was seventy-seven pages long.

When we had finished the catalogue in 1977, we went to President Spencer W. Kimball and explained the need for a good biography of Brigham Young. We proposed seven volumes, each focusing on one of Brigham Young's roles: colonizer, family man, businessman, Church president, governor, formulator of Indian policy, and contributor to Mormon doctrine and practice. President Kimball listened to us carefully, thought for a moment, then finally shook his head and said, "I would like to see a really good, one-volume biography of Brigham Young before I die." Of course, we were willing to do that.

"Here are the names of three people that we suggest as possible biographers," we volunteered. He replied, "I don't want to see the list. I want you to do it," nodding his head toward me. He had liked my biography of Edwin D. Woolley, his grandfather, which Camilla had read to him. Sister Kimball told me he'd chuckle every so often and say, "That sure is a good book, isn't it?" I suspect that because he liked the Woolley biography, he thought I could do justice to Brigham Young. That may be how I ended up with the assignment.

President Kimball recommended finding a national publisher, wanted the book written in a manner that would make it imperative for libraries to place it on their shelves, and specifically instructed me to consult with a variety of historians, both members and nonmembers, "liberals" and the more orthodox. Recognizing the enormous mass of Brigham Young manuscripts that had never been examined by any historian, President Kimball thought we had a marvelous opportunuity to present "Brother Brigham" as he was, in his greatness as a prophet and as a human being.

Shortly after that meeting our group of historians was transferred from the Church Historical Department to BYU. The Brigham Young biography would have to be a private project, not a Historical Department enterprise. I borrowed some money and hired four persons to help go through the mass of formerly unexplored material.

DIALOGUE: Did you still have access to the resources in the Church Archives after you had gone to BYU?

Arrington: I did, and of course, President Kimball had approved the project, so everything was available to me and the researchers who were working with me.

After we had gotten a good start, my son Carl said, "Dad, you're absolutely crazy. The publisher will give you an advance on royalties to cover your expenses." Well, I wrote to Alfred Knopf, who had agreed to publish the book, and they agreed to pay me some advance royalty so I could repay the loan I had contracted to pay for the help. Carl said, "Don't you realize, Dad, that if they give you an advance, they'll try harder to sell the book?" He was pretty persuasive.

DIALOGUE: That's a different experience for a historian, to get advance royalties.

Arrington: *Brigham Young: American Moses* came out in 1985, and it received good national reviews, was adopted by the History Book Club, and was nominated by the National Book Critics Circle as biography of the year. It didn't win the top award, but I felt that Brigham Young had finally come into his own. He was finally recognized as a prominent national leader. I was especially glad when Sister Kimball told me that President Kimball was pleased by the book and by its national reception.

DIALOGUE: Leonard, when you were employed as Church Historian did you ever feel a conflict between loyalty to the Church and loyalty to your profession?

Arrington: That's a very good question, and I am glad to respond. I was called to be Church Historian by the First Presidency. They often expressed to me their complete support and confidence in me. I had several conferences with them, and every time they concluded by saying, "Brother Arrington, we feel sure the Lord wants you in what you're doing, and we encourage you in your work." President N. Eldon Tanner and President Harold B. Lee were both very supportive, and when we had our first conference with President Kimball, he also reassured us and remained friendly, supportive, and helpful. I had reason to feel that we had their backing.

I kept hearing rumors that one or two of the Brethren were less than enthusiastic about some of the things we were doing, but I realized that one cannot please everybody. There are always people who find something to question, something to complain about. I knew that one of the Brethren, in particular, looked dimly upon some of the things we were publishing. He objected to two things. First, he felt that we tried to provide a secular rationale for activities and decisions that, in his mind, came straight from heaven. Second, he thought that Church officials should always be presented in a completely positive light — that they should never be presented in a manner that would suggest they had made a mistake or had human weaknesses.

DIALOGUE: Did his feeling apply to Church leaders of historical as well as contemporary times?

Arrington: Yes, but that didn't concern me because I had the prophet's reassurances. I felt that for our work to have national and Churchwide credibility, especially among informed people, we had to do it the right way. I felt we had good, continuing support.

I interpreted our move to BYU as a way to preserve our scholarly integrity. As several persons told us, the Church didn't want to be in the position of "approving" or "disapproving" what we wrote. Under university administration, we could continue our scholarly work in an atmosphere of academic freedom. I feel sure that we exercised it responsibly.

Any historian would acknowledge an inevitable tension between true professionalism and faith in a church, its leaders, its doctrines, and practices. When is it proper to leave out information that is private and personal — confidential? The answer is important not only in religious history but in business, diplomatic, and family history. For example, Fawn Brodie wrote a biography of Thomas Jefferson. She felt that there was more to his relationship with his woman servant than other historians had ever acknowledged. When she published these speculations, Jefferson historians were angry with her. In their view she had made more of that relationship than was really the case. She was guilty of sensationalizing. Maybe she was and maybe she wasn't. Every biographer faces that problem. Suppose you're doing the biography of someone you begin to suspect was homosexual. You can't prove it. You don't know it for sure, but you have found some indications. Do you mention your suspicions? How much do you make of them? Everyone who writes history feels conflicts about what is relevant, responsible, and essential.

DIALOGUE: Now, Leonard, let us get down to another professional question. Who takes your place? Who will help sponsor and groom scholars in Mormon history? State universities are reluctant to employ dedicated Mormon historians, and institutionalizing scholarship in one location like BYU is dangerous. What future do you see for people researching and writing Mormon history?

Arrington: Several people continue to encourage Mormon history. One of them is Davis Bitton at the University of Utah, a great historian in modern European history as well as LDS history. Another at the University of Utah is Dean May, who is doing a marvelous job and now has tenure. I'm sure his department is glad to have him. At BYU, Jim Allen and Tom Alexander are energetically pushing good scholarship in Mormon history. At USU, now that Chas. Peterson is about to retire, I'm sure Ross Peterson and the replacement for Chas. will ensure a continuation of good scholarship. There are others, some key persons in other colleges and universities and libraries: Richard Bushman at Columbia University, Howard Lamar at Yale, Stan Kimball at Southern Illinois, Jan Shipps at Indiana, Richard Bennett in Manitoba, Dave Whittaker at BYU, and Grant Underwood and Guy Bishop in Southern California.

I have no fear about the future of Mormon studies. The Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History continues to make important contributions as do many trained scholars at Ricks, BYU-Hawaii, and elsewhere. My colleagues in the Institute — Dean Jessee, Ron Walker, Maureen Beecher, Ron Esplin, Bill Hartley, Carol Madsen, Richard Jensen, Jill Derr — all are productive and careful scholars.

DIALOGUE: What are some of the unplowed fields that Mormon scholars should farm?

Arrington: More needs to be done on twentieth-century Mormon experience. Scholars continue to replow the nineteenth century, and contributions can still be made; but more attention needs to be paid to the twentieth century.

We need to continue to do more in women's studies. I'm trying to do some, and we have Carol Cornwall Madsen, Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, and Jill Mulvay Derr working in this field. They are splendid, industrious historians.

Much needs to be done on Mormonism outside the United States. We're in the process of organizing a Canadian Mormon Studies Association, and we hope we encouraged British and European scholars when we had our Mormon History Association meeting at Oxford in 1987. I understand also that scholars in Australia and New Zealand are now planning an annual get-together.

DIALOGUE: Do you think it would be possible for someone to write an economic history of the Church in the twentieth century as you did of the nineteenth century?

Arrington: Yes, I think it could be done. We could do something much better than *Mormon Corporate Empire*, but no work would have quite the unity of *Great Basin Kingdom* because the nineteenth-century world is so different from the twentieth-century world.

Another good field of study is Latter-day Saint Spanish-Americans, Hispanics, and Mexicans, various Indian nations, Japanese-Americans, Chinese-Americans, and so on.

DIALOGUE: Is it possible to study long-controversial issues of congregations that are segregated by race and language?

Arrington: Yes. Should we have German-speaking wards, Dutch-speaking wards, Korean-speaking wards, and so on? When we moved to Logan in 1946, a German-speaking congregation still met every Sunday afternoon just a few blocks from our home.

DIALOGUE: Leonard, can you explain again the chronology of your move to BYU? Was that about the time of Grace's death?

Arrington: She died in March 1982. We had been shifted administratively to BYU in 1980 but were allowed to remain in the Church Office Building until July 1982. She died while I was working on the Brigham Young book, and I was not emotionally prepared to work on the book for several months. I think I resumed writing in December 1982.

DIALOGUE: Do you think the Mark Hofmann bombings and forgeries set back Mormon historiography for a time? Do you feel that too many people started chasing those early interpretations rather than doing what they might normally have done?

Arrington: Well, some people did give up other projects. A good example is Ron Walker, who suspended his Heber J. Grant biography to work on early Mormon history. On the other hand, I wouldn't say that Mark Hofmann set Mormon historiography back, because we learned a great deal about the Joseph Smith period that we hadn't previously realized — not from Hofmann and his documents but because we had to study the period again looking for new insights. We got some first-rate articles from Ron Walker, Dean Jessee, Richard Anderson, and others.

You can look at the negative side of Hofmann and say that he led the historians astray, but his documents didn't have that much impact on our historiography. Basically he was forging documents that supported many traditional accounts. That is why many historians thought they were probably authentic; the documents simply reiterated what many historians had already concluded. The Hofmann episode had a positive side, too; we began to study previously neglected aspects of our history.

I had one such experience myself. I received from Brent Ashworth a photocopy of an 1867 letter Brigham Young purportedly wrote to a Weber County schoolteacher named Rose Canfield. I didn't see it until after the biography had been published, so I couldn't have used it even if I had thought it was authentic (we still do not know for certain whether it was forged, although several persons suppose it was). At any rate, I looked up Rose Canfield and discovered she had been a long-time teacher in Ogden and had taught the mothers of David O. McKay and George Albert Smith, Jr. I mentioned this in our book, *Mothers of the Prophets.* If Hofmann hadn't made up Brigham Young's letters to this woman (assuming that he did), I might never have studied her. I learned important things.

Dialogue: What do you think is the biggest difficulty facing Mormon historians in the 1980s and 1990s?

Arrington: The biggest difficulty is gaining unrestricted access to the wealth of material in the Church Archives. While I was in the Church Historian's Office (1972–82), we were able to make nearly everything available to scholars, both Mormon and non-Mormon, and that policy had a very positive influence on the image of the Church and its history. The atmosphere was one of openness and trust.

That policy has been abandoned. Permitting scholars to use materials only on a selective and restrictive basis gives the impression that the Church is hiding something. As one who had access to everything for years, I can say this policy represents excessive caution. Virtually everything in the Archives is positive and faith promoting. Denying access only keeps Church members and historians from reading uplifting, faith-promoting materials.

Dialogue: You found very little that would be embarrassing?

Arrington: Very little, and embarrassing only if it's taken out of context. Some day, I trust, Church officials will come to understand that.

Dialogue: Did you ever have an opportunity to argue that case?

Arrington: I did. President Lee seemed to agree with it, and so did President Kimball.

DIALOGUE: Actually, publications authored by people who worked with you in the Church Historian's department and had open access didn't embarrass the Church, did they?

Arrington: I don't know of any that did. Of course, some writings made individuals look human, and in some instances we gave some naturalistic explanations of events that some persons thought had only divine influence. In the long run, however, even the humanness is positive. We find imperfect humans easier to identify with.

DIALOGUE: Readers realize that their own problems and traumas can be handled if General Authorities have learned to handle their own.

Arrington: Exactly, and as they come to understand the imperfections of earlier leaders, current General Authorities can more easily reconcile their calling with their own problems and inadequacies.

DIALOGUE: What advice would you give to the young scholar of today who's interested in Mormon studies?

Arrington: Fortunately, innumerable topics can be studied without full access to everything in the Church Archives. In the first place, 80 percent of what is in the Archives is still available for study. Second, many materials in other archives and published material in other libraries would enable a student to treat interesting subjects.

Many biographies need to be written, and the principal sources are still in the hands of families, many of whom are willing to release them to a biographer. Because of the Church's policy, families now hesitate to give their material to the Church because they're afraid that even *they* — they who donated it — may lose access. I know of one instance where that happened. Years ago Hugh Nibley gave the Historical Department his grandfather's diary. I was present on one occasion when he came in and wanted to use it and the staff wouldn't let him, which was silly. He finally got permission to use it, but he had to argue long and hard.

Communities that started as Mormon settlements would be fruitful topics for research. Dean May and Ben Bennion are doing some fine things with that. I plan to do several village histories if I live long enough.

Before we conclude, let me emphasize the importance of Church history. It is the story of the Lord's dealings with his people. It is the story of our people's relationship with their environment, their neighbors, and with each other. It is a positive story — a story filled with hope, frustration, struggle, failure, and glorious achievement. It is the story of great people — people occasionally afflicted with human weaknesses but great nevertheless. Knowing our own history is as important as knowing the history of the people of the Bible and Book of Mormon. The Lord has told us to write our history, and we must do it!

Honoring Leonard Arrington

Stanford Cazier

How does one capture Leonard Arrington? It is a pleasure to attempt, but certainly no easy task. I see Leonard as scientists see nature: in four dimensions. But just as scientists are now discovering and exploring the fifth dimension and beyond, my portrait of Leonard will be incomplete. First, I see Leonard, the Man; the gentle and kindly optimist. Second, there is Leonard, the Scholar; the indefatigable producer of articles and books, the exemplar of the mind in action. Third, there is Leonard, the Mentor; the friend of would-be scholars, the source of steady encouragement, the reservoir of ideas to be explored. And finally, there is Leonard, the Institution; the standard-bearer of an era, the entrepreneur of a genre that some refer to as the New Mormon History.

Leonard, the Man, charges the atmosphere of every encounter with the energy of his personality but never offends. Even in moments of triumph, he does not raise his arms in victory but stands aside in unassuming modesty. He insists on sharing any accrued glory with others, with his "team." Many have been lifted by his buoyancy, his resilience, and his steadiness. His constant friendship is predictable, genuine to the core.

His concern for others, his good will, his careful avoidance of self-pity are well known. I have known Leonard for more than a quarter of a century, and I have never seen him upset over any personal abuse or slight. If he has displayed righteous indignation, it has always been in behalf of a colleague who might have been misinterpreted or misrepresented, or in defense of a moral issue.

Maureen Ursenbach Beecher captured this dimension of Leonard well. She wrote in 1987 about her years on the staff at the Church Historical Deartment when Leonard was its director:

> When, after three years' employment on Leonard's staff, I was going to lose my job because I was about to give birth and the policy was then in force against the mothers

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A version of this essay was presented at a banquet honoring Leonard Arrington in Logan, Utah, 4 November 1987.

of small children, he fought a very important bureaucratic battle. On the very day my baby was due, we were both summoned to the Church employment office to hear the decision in this case. No longer was it the matter of a waiver of policy in my behalf, but we were hoping to alter the policy across the board. The First Presidency had decided in our favor, and in the favor of all married women employees. It would thereafter be women's own decision whether or not to keep working after having children, and women applying for jobs would not be discriminated against by virtue of their motherhood.

From incidents such as these, I have learned of Leonard's high conscience, his devotion to principle, his compassion, his warmth and immediate acceptance of all people, his defense of his own against bureaucratic machinations, and the value he placed on personal autonomy, his own and others.

The electricity many feel in Leonard's presence is a reflection of his energy. In *Reflections Without Mirrors*, Louis Nizer wrote: "I have sought common characteristics among people of great accomplishment. There is only one common denominator — *energy*" (1978, 25).

Leonard exudes energy. I wonder how many GI's during World War II mastered the language of the countries in which they were stationed. Probably only a small minority. Leonard's energy drove him to capture Italian, if not Italy, before he returned to the States following the war. It was that command of Italian that earned him a Fulbright lectureship to Genoa later in his career. While in Italy, Leonard did not just lecture but also published a book and several articles in Italian — all products of his indefatigable energy and will.

Leonard's role as Scholar hardly needs citation. His monumental achievements have become part of our folklore. He accepted a position at Utah State University in 1946 and brought his lovely wife, Grace, from North Carolina, along with a trunkload of curiosity and enthusiasm. His colleagues in the economics department, the history department, the LDS Institute, and elsewhere on campus became his friends. A small group of these colleague-friends, including George Ellsworth, Eugene Campbell, and Wendell Rich, met regularly to discuss economics, history, the West, and Mormon culture. Leonard picked their brains, and they, his. George Ellsworth, in particular, introduced Leonard to the tools and methodology of the historian; Leonard soaked up ideas like a sponge. Davis Bitton has suggested that Leonard moved rapidly along the spectrum from agricultural economics to economics, to economic history, and finally, to history.

Methodically, Leonard began to explore those diverse ideas he has absorbed. In 1950, he published his first article. From then on, his career was not unlike the pace lap at the Indianapolis 500. Once the pace car was out of the way, Leonard put the "pedal to the metal" and, defying the co-efficient of friction, moved deftly from the back of the pack to the lead car, where he has stayed for the past thirty-seven years. He never even bothered to get out of the car long enough to change clothes. Grace, and later Harriet, have had to drop them on him along with food every dozen laps or so.

Leonard did not build to a crescendo; he leapt to it. He disciplined himself to a regular yearly output of articles, interspersed frequently with books.

During the mid-sixties, my wife, Shirley, and I had seats next to Leonard and Grace for the USU football games. Publication commitments and deadlines forced Leonard to miss as many games as he watched.

David Whitaker has compiled a thirty-page bibliography of Leonard's publications, published in the festschrift, *New Views of Mormon History: Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington* (Bitton and Beecher 1987). The diversity of Leonard's publications is as compelling as the quantity: economic history, institutional history (ranging from banks to defense installations), intellectual and interpretive history, and biography. As Dean May has reminded me, invariable Leonard was concerned with "the dispossessed (the study of Topaz), the poor, and the neglected (women in our history)" (1987). Davis Bitton did not exaggerate when he wrote, "Leonard James Arrington is the single most important Mormon historian of his generation" (Bitton and Beecher 1987, vii).

That should be accolade enough for any person, but Leonard was anxious to bring others along with him; he has been Mentor to a legion of scholars. Any young scholar with even the slightest potential for performance and productivity received his avid encouragement and ample opportunities to develop his or her potential.

Ross Peterson remembers going to see Leonard about a potential dissertation topic. A half hour later, he left with forty-two topics; all were western and none Mormon, in the event he wanted to return to Utah. There has been no end to Leonard's willingness to help as a teacher.

I have a vivid recollection of attending the annual meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association with Leonard in San Diego in the 1960s. I found it incredible that first, Leonard seemed to know everyone; second, he knew what they were working on; and third, he encouraged them to finish their projects and move on.

Thomas Alexander shared with me in 1987 Leonard's impact on him as a young man:

> My first contact with Leonard was as a student at Utah State University. I took his course on American Economic History and a seminar on Economic History. Like so many since, he asked me to work as a research assistant for him. For me, it was the opportunity of a lifetime. The first project I did was a history of the Utah State University Stake. I am not sure just what happened to it; I assume that it was not published, but he gave me my first chance at professional writing.
>
> Next he asked me while I was still a graduate student at Berkeley to work with him on a series of articles on the Defense Department installations in Utah. My wife Marilyn was very much against my working on the project. It would have meant that I would have to return to Utah each summer while at Berkeley to do research. I said that it would undoubtedly help me in my professional career, and I think that may have been the only time in our married life when I made a decision with which she did not agree. At any rate, for the four years we were at Berkeley, we returned to Utah each summer, got an apartment in Logan or lived with her parents in Ogden, and I conducted research and wrote on the defense installations. The result was a series of articles published by the *Utah Historical Society* and the *Pacific Historical Review.* After that, we began working on reclamation and several other projects together.

> Thus, largely because of Leonard, by the time I received my Ph.D. I had already published a number of articles. I am sure that his prestige helped in getting them published. After that, I joined the faculty at BYU, and I am sure that his recommendation helped me to get the position here.

At one time, Leonard thought that I had promise as a historian. He invited me to share my master's thesis with the Cache Valley Historical Society. The fact that I later had a small part in the creation of the Mormon History Association in 1965, was part of the team that helped found DIALOGUE in 1966, and was associated with the board of editors of *BYU Studies* for five years were all due to Leonard's encouragement. However, realizing Leonard's high expectations, I accepted an offer to pursue a career in academic administration rather than history.

Leonard's dimension as Institution originates from his roles as scholar, mentor, and finally, as head of the Church Historical Department. Davis Bitton, in his introduction to *New Views of Mormon History*, reports that important reorganization was taking place in the Church Historian's Office in the late sixties and early seventies. I would suggest that a key person in that reorganization was Elder Harold B. Lee. The responsibilities handed down to Elder Lee during this period cannot be overstated. I predicate this observation on my association with him as a nephew by marriage during a ten-year period prior to his death in 1973. I was pleased then to learn of his appreciation for history. He knew what a great treasure the Church Archives housed. Also, he was clearly cognizant of the rich human resource the Church had in its professionally trained historians.

On several occasions during that period, I spoke with him about the organization and operation of the Church in general, the role of the Correlation Committee, the use of consultants in the business affairs of the Church, the value of public higher education, and the specific role of Brigham Young University. I did not offer suggestions during our conversations but was fundamentally a grateful listener. I did not need to inform Elder Lee of Leonard's extraordinary accomplishments. But because I was a colleague of Leonard's, I could confirm what Elder Lee already knew. When Leonard was selected to be the Church Historian, no one had higher expectations and hopes for the office than President Lee; and during his short presidency, he was proud of Leonard and the profile of the new office.

Davis Bitton and others have referred to their experiences in the History Department in the 1970s as a decade in Camelot. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher has shared with me the atmosphere that Leonard created for his co-workers:

> Stuck as I was in comparative literature, on a topic for which I [had] read nothing after 1742, I had never heard of Leonard Arrington. Out of the blue, he called and invited me to come in. I had no idea it was a job interview; I just knew he sounded interesting on the phone.
>
> Warmly, as though we were old friends, Leonard ushered me into what had been Joseph Fielding Smith's office on the third floor of the old building. Pulling a chair for me behind his desk — Leonard seldom let his desk stand between himself and anyone he was talking to — he plopped himself into his own chair and we began talk-

ing. Here, I discovered in the first minute, was a kindred spirit, one to whom I could express my most radical ideas as well as my most spiritual yearnings, and find acceptance. He, for his part, shared with me aspects of his career: his experience at USU (he had hated to leave there); his homesickness for Grace (she having not left Logan yet); his education as an economist and what that viewpoint meant for Mormon history; his optimism about the feasibility of writing good history for disparate audiences; and his ambition some day to write Mormon theology.

Two hours passed before we separated, having barely touched on the matter of employment. . . . I [was] hardly aware of why I was there at all, Leonard had made it all so very comfortable.

I took the job, and began a new career in Mormon history under Leonard's tutelage. He was proud to have a woman on his staff, I think, and worked very hard (too hard — one staff member accused him of reverse discrimination in my behalf) to place opportunities before me. Pygmalion-like, he turned a teacher of literature into a writer of history as he has done for many other fledgling scholars. (1987)

Douglas Alder, though he did not participate in the Historical Department experience, is a professionally trained historian and a spiritual fellow traveler with those who were directly involved in the Camelot experiment. He shares my perspective that because of Leonard's leadership in that important venture and his other inimitable achievements, he has become an institution. Alder says:

Like Lowell Bennion and a few other giants, Leonard is a person for whom no title or office would be an elevation. His name alone stands for an era and a standard.

Perhaps Leonard's major achievement will really be as the entrepreneur of the so-called "New Mormon History." He generally knows every person in the world who is working on this topic. He shares his files with these scholars, he helps them apply for funds and seek publishers. When Leonard served as Church Historian he sold the Church leadership on the idea of writing the history of the Church instead of just collecting documents. He engaged many bright young scholars on fellowships. He helped them start their careers. He encouraged scholars not of the LDS faith to come to Salt Lake and use the Archives. He built ties to colleagues in the Reorganized Church who shared the idea of scholarly history. The driving idea of this movement was to use the professional craft of history as taught in the best graduate schools — objective examination and documentary corroboration — to examine the Mormon past. He argued that we had nothing to hide and that casting light on the subject from all directions would benefit in the long run.

Much continues from the grand experiment of professionalizing LDS Church History from the inside. The Oral History program continues. The Joseph Fielding Smith Institute continues. The historians continue to write. The Mormon History Association continues. And its fine journal continues—under Leonard's editorship. Especially Leonard continues — firm in his commitment to the two principles of his life, faith and scholarship. (1987)

If Davis Bitton is correct that the history division of the Church in the 1970s can be described as Camelot, Leonard was no Lancelot at Arthur's table. He cast no covetous eye toward Guenevere but brought to the court his own lady — Clio. Her charms were not physical and emotional but intellectual and cultural. All could share those charms without losing their virtue. They could remain loyal to Arthur. They could keep the faith and be enriched and blessed by leadership in quality scholarship as well.

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Fan back willow chair, Shawn Clark (Provo, Utah), 31″×42″×28″, willow, 1983; (Utah) State Art Collection.

Materialism and the Mormon Faith

Max Nolan

IN HIS LANDMARK STUDY OF EARLY MORMON ECONOMIC LIFE, *Great Basin Kingdom*, Leonard J. Arrington observed:

> Joseph Smith and other early Mormon leaders seem to have seen every part of life, and every problem put to them, as part of an integrated universe in which materialities and immaterialities were all of equal standing, or indistinguishable in God's kingdom. Religion was relevant to economics, politics, art and science. If Christianity was "the most avowedly materialist of all the great religions," as asserted by William Temple, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mormonism came near to being the most avowedly materialist of all the Christian religions. (1966, 6)

Arrington's observation focuses on Mormon materialism in its broadest sweep, but I will confine my attention to its metaphysical aspect, which derives its authority from Doctrine and Covenants 131:7–8: "There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine and pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes. We cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter."

The materialist character of the Mormon religion, in its historical context, is highly unusual. As Sterling M. McMurrin pointed out in his pathbreaking work, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion*: "An interesting and important facet of the Mormon conception of reality is the materialism that is defended so consistently and emphatically by Mormon writers. From very early times materialism has been found in both oriental and occidental thought, but its appearance within the framework of theistic philosophy is quite uncommon" (1965, 5).

This interest is compounded by the fact that, in both Western and Eastern civilizations, materialist doctrines have usually been associated with distinctively anti-religious points of view. Leslie Stephen, for one, noted in his *History*

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of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century: "I need not enquire how far it is possible to combine materialism and theism without an absolute contradiction. Historically speaking, the two doctrines are naturally opposed. Materialism and atheism are the final expression of a reaction against the attempt to frame a philosophy by rising into a supernatural world" (1927, 1:65).

The Carvaka materialism of ancient India offers an illustration. Although most of what we know of it comes through its enemies and critics, there can be no doubt that the proponents of this heterodox system of Indian philosophy combined a thoroughgoing materialism with an aggressive attack on religious beliefs of the day.[1] In the Western world, the first-century Roman poet, Lucretius, in spite of occasional perfunctory references to the gods, offered scathing criticism of religious belief and espoused a system of atomistic materialism that dispensed with any need for divine agency. In eighteenth-century France, we find the Encyclopediasts, particularly the German-born Baron Paul D'Holbach, whose best-remembered book today is *The System of Nature*, known by some as the "bible of the atheists." In it, he "sought to give a foundation for his atheism, and it proved to be the paradigm of materialistic philosophy in the eighteenth century" (Pecharroman 1977, 17).

Notwithstanding this historic tendency for materialist thought to be antireligious, I find evidence of a few rare exceptions. There is the third-century Latin theologian Tertullian, a vigorous Christian conservative, fiercely critical of Hellenistic intellectualism and anything remotely pagan, and ever associated with the famous phrase, "I believe because it is impossible." In seventeenth-century England the philosopher Thomas Hobbes maintained an uncompromising materialist view of existence while retaining assent to Christian belief.[2] Most notable, perhaps, was the eighteenth-century Englishman Joseph Priestley, a versatile scientist and nonconformist theologian/clergyman, who boldly proclaimed a metaphysical materialism. As one commentator has pointed out,

> Priestley's characteristic method of defending "Christianity" was to expose and remove its "corruptions," which for him included everything considered by the orthodox to be its very essence. The notion of the soul as a substance distinct from the body, he continues, was "part of the system of heathenism, and was from thence introduced into Christianity which has derived the greatest part of its corruptions from this source." This thought . . . furnishes the main clue to his advocacy of materialism. (Willey 1962, 168–69)

Interesting as these exceptions may be, the arresting thing about Joseph Smith is that he described himself as more than a mere commentator on the

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[1] The Carvaka attitude towards religious belief is summarized by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore in their anthology of Indian philosophical texts: "The soul is only the body qualified by intelligence. It has no existence apart from the body. . . . The postulates of religion, God, freedom and immortality are illusions. Nature is indifferent to good and evil, and history does not bear witness to Divine Providence. Pleasure and pain are the central facts of life. Virtue and vice are not absolute values but mere social conventions" (1957, 227).

[2] The genuineness of Hobbes's religious convictions has been denied in the past, an opinion which still has considerable sway today. However, Peter Geach (1981) has argued convincingly, I believe, for the sincerity of Hobbes's religious beliefs.

scriptures — he claimed to be in prophetic communication with God, a transmitting medium for new scripture. The fact that he established so vital a religious community, which has flourished over time and has been the subject of critical study, indicates a need to examine more seriously his theistic materialism — one of the few such belief systems that has met with any lasting interest.

MORMON DOCTRINE AND TRADITIONAL MATERIALISM

In an entry on materialism in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Keith Campbell writes: "Materialism is the name given to a family of doctrines concerning the nature of the world which give matter a primary position and accord to mind (or spirit) a secondary reality or even none at all. Extreme materialism asserts that the real world consists of material things, varying in their states and relations, and nothing else" (Edwards 1967, 5:179).

The denial of immaterial matter (overlooking the trite observation that it is a contradiction in terms) is the denial that there exists any substance other than matter. Since in Mormonism spirit is defined as material, albeit of a more subtle character than the tangible objects around us, it appears that the metaphysical materialism expressed in Doctrine and Covenants 131:7–8 is akin to the extreme materialism described by Campbell above. However, I believe that a more careful consideration of materialist doctrine and its ramifications, on the one hand, and the other doctrinal commitments of Mormonism, on the other hand, must lead to a more careful definition of the ontological commitment of the Mormon faith.

In this essay I will concentrate on five important affirmations in Mormonism as they relate to the question of materialism: (1) the survival of the individual after death; (2) freedom of the will; (3) the existence of intuitive knowledge as distinct from sensory perception; (4) the reality of the miraculous; and (5) the eternal nature of intelligence.

Immortality

Few ideas are more pervasive in the history of religion than the immortality of the soul — the notion that in one way or another the individual will survive the death of the mortal body. In contrast, materialists through the ages have emphasized human mortality, believing that there is ultimately no difference between mind (or soul) and body. This point of view may have been most succinctly stated by the Baron Paul D'Holbach, who declared: "An organized being may be compared to a clock, which, once broken, is no longer suitable for the use to which it was designed. To say that the soul shall feel, shall think, shall enjoy, shall suffer, after the death of the body, is to pretend that a clock, shivered into a thousand pieces, will continue to strike the hour, and have the faculty of marking the progress of time" (1970, 119).

Hobbes and Priestley shared the classic Christian conviction of a literal resurrection of the body. However, their views of what actually happens at death are quite indistinguishable from those of the anti-religious materialists. For Hobbes and Priestley, death is the literal extinction of the entire individual,

which logically follows from their materialist view of the human being. Whatever resurrection may occur, for them, is discontinuous with mortal existence.

Tertullian, on the other hand, assumes the continuance of the individual beyond death and through to the resurrection of the body — a position less obviously consistent with a materialist point of view.

The Mormon position appears at first glance even less consistent with any kind of materialist philosophy. Its vigorous belief in personal immortality is easily deduced from Mormon practices, such as temple rites and genealogical activity; more important, the Church's foundation is based on the reported appearances of Jesus Christ and biblical figures such as the apostles Peter, James, and John. But Mormonism further distinguishes its materialism by boldly declaring the individual's existence *before* birth — a juxtaposition of beliefs that a D'Holbach would find absolutely incredible.

Historically, the association between materialism and what might be called immortalism is so rare as to justify great caution in determining the precise nature of Mormon materialism. A materialism which allows eternal life in the face of the common-sense experience of death and bodily dissolution seems to imply a view of matter considerably more pliant than is usually associated with materialist metaphysics — an issue to which I will return later in this essay.

Free Will

The question of free will is another area where I find a telling divergence between Mormonism and traditional forms of materialism, due to radically different assumptions about human nature. A classic materialist statement would be the maxim of Thomas Hobbes, "Nothing taketh a beginning from itself," which reflects the hardline determinism so characteristic of materialist systems.

Since humans are as much an object in nature as anything else, in this view, they are as completely determined in thought and behavior as are less complex objects in nature. An early twentieth-century advocate of materialism, Hugh Elliot, stated that "if we knew the precise disposition at any moment of all the energy existing in the Universe, and the direction of motion of every moving particle, and if we were armed with a mathematics of infinite power, we should be able to prophesy the exact disposition of all the matter and energy in the Universe at any future time" (in Randall, Buchler, and Shirk 1957, 307).

Elliot went on to declare that any being who possessed such powers, and who in the distant past had acquired "absolute knowledge at some moment of the nebula from which the solar system arose," would have been able to predict the future existence of Hugh Elliot, his authorship of *Modern Science and Materialism* (from which I quote), and the readers of that book as well as the particular emotions stirred in them as they read his book. This grandiose claim seems typical of nineteenth-century materialists, who seem to have recognized and accepted its negative implications for free will.

Hobbes's dictum that "nothing taketh a beginning from itself" is directly contrary to important ideas in Joseph Smith's teachings. The basic scriptural

source for Mormon thought on this topic is Doctrine and Covenants 93:29: "Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created, neither indeed can be." Joseph Smith expanded this idea further in his King Follett discourse:

> I take my ring from my finger and liken it unto the mind of man . . . the immortal part, because it has no beginning. Suppose you cut it in two, then it has a beginning and an end; but join it again, and it continues one eternal round. So it is with the spirit of man. As the Lord liveth, if it had a beginning it will have an end. All the fools and learned and wise men from the beginning of creation, who say that the spirit of man had a beginning, prove that it must have an end; and if that doctrine is true, then the doctrine of annihilation would be true. But if I am right, I might with boldness proclaim from the housetops that God never had the power to create the spirit of man at all. (JD 6:6–7)

This concept of human beings as uncreated intelligences carries extraordinarily potent implications about human freedom that are the antithesis of materialist views of human nature.

Interestingly, both Hobbes and Priestley dismissed the notion of free will; indeed, Priestley saw it as incompatible with God's omniscience, a position similar to that of contemporary defenders of Mormon finitist theology (see Robson 1980). Priestley, however, rejected free will and retained an absolute conception of divine omniscience; Mormon defenders of finitist theology retain free will while arguing for a significantly modified concept of divine omniscience.[3]

Sensory vs. Intuitive Perception

A third area of divergence between Mormon and traditional materialism is in the field of epistemology, or theory of knowledge. Materialist epistemology has typically defined the limits of human knowledge within sensory perception only. In his *The System of Nature*, the Baron D'Holbach quotes with approval Aristotle's dictum that "nothing enters the mind of man, but through the medium of his senses" (1970, 79). Elaborating on this, D'Holbach adds: "For any man to think on that which has not acted on any of his senses, is to think on words; it is a dream of sounds, it is to seek in his own imagination for objects to which he can attach his wandering ideas" (p. 84).

Although Mormon epistemology lacks formal definition or systemization, it is evident that its breadth of scope contrasts strikingly with theories of knowledge generally associated with metaphysical materialism. Also it is probably not without significance that the only materialist-type epistemology in the Book of Mormon actually comes from the lips of the anti-Christ figure Korihor. Dismissing the prophetic claims of the believers (and, incidentally, the doctrine of life after death), Korihor argues, "How do ye know of their surety? Behold, ye cannot know of things which ye do not see; therefore ye cannot know that there shall be a Christ" (Alma 30:15). The Mormon reliance on

[3] Inherent in modern Mormonism is a tension between absolutist and finitist understandings of important theological beliefs. Among the General Authorities who advocate absolutism in a philosophically attuned way, Elder Neal A. Maxwell appears to be foremost; Kent Robson (1980) responds to his position on the issue discussed here.

prophetic experience as a mode of knowing, and in particular the role of the Holy Ghost in acquiring religious truth, puts Mormon epistemology well beyond the pale of other materialist theories of knowledge.

In his analysis of Mormon theological foundations, Sterling McMurrin remarks that Mormonism "exhibits sensory empirical leanings in its references to revelation" (1965, 5), an observation that brings to mind William James's description of Joseph Smith's revelatory experiences as "predominantly sensorial" (1962, 461). However, while many of the foundational revelatory experiences of Joseph Smith and others were sensory in character, these experiences were not necessarily accessible to all present in the revelatory situation. For example, on 16 February 1832 Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon experienced for about one hour what the Prophet termed "a vision of the glories" in the house of John Johnson in Hiram, Ohio, resulting in the writing of Doctrine and Covenants 76. This revelation records the experience as both visual and auditory, but apparently none of the twelve other elders present at the time were privy to the actual sensations experienced by Joseph and Sidney.

Such experiences do appear to be of a different class than the common run of sensory experiences, by virtue of their not completely public character. This need not disturb Latter-day Saints, since the Mormon canon is replete with admonitions setting certain conditions upon participation in theophanous experiences.[4] This transcendence of ordinary sense experience is, however, just the sort of thing that is roundly condemned by conventional materialist views, which leads me to conclude that the admission of intuitive modes of knowing above ordinary sense perceptions markedly distinguishes Mormonism from traditional materialism.

The Reality of the Miraculous

In his 1925 introduction to Frederick Albert Lange's monumental *History of Materialism*, Bertrand Russell remarked that one of the two essential dogmas of materialism is the reign of law (p. ix; the other is the claim that all that exists is material). For classical materialism, regarded as the legitimate philosophical counterpart to the scientific point of view,[5] the scientific principle of

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[4] See, for example, Matthew 5:8 ("Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"); Hebrews 12:14 ("Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"); Ether 4:11 ("But he that believeth these things which I have spoken, him will I visit with the manifestations of my Spirit, and he shall know and bear record. For because of my Spirit he shall know that these things are true; for it persuadeth men to do good"); and D&C 76: 114–16,

> But great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpass all understanding in glory, and in might, and in dominion;
>
> Which he commanded us we should not write while we were yet in the Spirit, and are not lawful for man to utter;
>
> Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him.

[5] According to Keith Campbell,

> The enduring appeal of materialism arises from its alliance with those sciences which have contributed most to our understanding of the world we live in. Investiga-

unexceptionable uniformities in nature is seen as the vanquisher of miraculous phenomena, and in turn of religions based on such phenomena. Writing from the perspective of nineteenth-century German materialism, the radical biblical critic David Strauss gave trenchant expression to this attitude when he declared:

> When the narration is irreconcilable with the known and universal laws which govern the cause of all events. . . . When therefore we meet with an account of certain phenomena or events of which it is expressly stated or implied that they were produced immediately by God himself (divine apparitions . . . voices from heaven and the like), or by human beings possessed of supernatural powers (miracles, prophecies), such an account is *in so far* to be considered as not historical. (1973, 87–88)

On the contrary, Mormonism is replete with belief in the miraculous, notably Joseph Smith's visions and his ability to translate the unknown tongue in which the Book of Mormon was written. There is also an unqualified belief in miracles related in the Bible: for early Latter-day Saints, the waters of the Red Sea truly parted for Moses and his people; Jesus truly multiplied loaves and fishes and turned water into wine. These convictions remain an integral part of mainstream Mormonism today.

However, Mormon expositors insist that the miraculous in no way infringes upon natural law. In his 1899 work *The Articles of Faith*, for example, Elder James E. Talmage wrote: "Miracles are commonly regarded as occurrences in opposition to laws of nature. Such a conception is plainly erroneous, for the laws of nature are inviolable. However, as human understanding of these laws is at best imperfect, events strictly in accordance with natural law may appear contrary thereto" (1975, 229).

Another way of stating this point of view was suggested by Sterling McMurrin, who wrote, "From the perspective of God there are no miracles" (1965, 2). This echoes Brigham Young's assertion, "There is no miracle to any being in the heavens or on the earth, only to the ignorant. To a man who understands the philosophy of all the phenomena that transpire, there is no such thing as a miracle" (JD 13:33).

This aspect of Mormonism could indicate a naturalistic concept of the miraculous, an outlook seemingly consistent with a materialist ontology; Mormon thought is, in fact, sometimes described as having a naturalistic thrust (O'Dea 1957, 233). But this description strains the term "naturalistic," particularly as it can be applied to a work such as Fawn Brodie's *No Man Knows My History*. The word is applied in this case precisely because Brodie's book rejects all elements of the supernatural in the Joseph Smith story. On the other hand, exponents of the mainline Mormon view fully accept these elements as the pivotal features of the Prophet's life. I believe that "naturalistic"

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tions in the physical sciences have a materialist methodology; that is, they attempt to explain a class of phenomena by appeal to physical conditions alone. The claim of materialists is that there is no subject matter which cannot be adequately treated with a materialist methodology. This claim cannot be established by any scientific investigation; it can be established, if at all, only by critical reflection on the whole range of human thought and experience. (in Edwards 1967, 178)

applies to Mormonism because it assumes an ultimate, natural explanation for everything. However, this does not lead Church members to assume that Jesus didn't turn water to wine, multiply loaves and fishes, or visit Joseph Smith in a vision, and this is exactly the difference between the naturalism of a Fawn Brodie and that of a James Talmage.[6]

Just as Mormon epistemology allows a much more expansive outlook than does conventional materialism, so is Mormonism's view of nature much more expansive. The supernatural is alive and well in the classic Mormon view of things and is simply at the opposite end of the spectrum from everyday experience. Such a continuity in the order of being is undoubtedly as much a matter of faith as is Mormonism's belief in what is conventionally called the supernatural.

The Eternal Nature of Intelligence

While one may argue that at least several of the Mormon affirmations discussed above can be reconciled with a materialist view of reality, the most cogent and interesting challenge to Mormonism as a consistent system of metaphysical materialism is the doctrine of eternal intelligence. This concept is, of course, found in the Mormon canon: "Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created, neither indeed can be" (D&C 93:29).

It is critical that we understand the meaning of the term "intelligence" in this doctrinal statement. Thomas G. Alexander, in his article "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine," comments on the historical danger of superimposing on an expression used in the past a meaning that may not have been current at that time: "Today, we interpret the term intelligence in those passages to mean the essential uncreated essence of each person. The passage, however, discusses intelligence as 'the light of truth,' which it declares eternal, and not the premortal essence of each person" (1980, 33).

Alexander further observes that the May 1834 issue of the *Evening and Morning Star* "uses the term intelligence to mean facts or information." While this latter observation is undoubtedly correct, it doesn't necessarily follow that this is the meaning of "intelligence" in Doctrine and Covenants 93:29. The compact edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, for example, makes it clear that "intelligence" had a number of different significations in Joseph Smith's day.

Moreover, Joseph Smith's own use of the word varied considerably. In a discourse attributed to the Prophet in June 1839, he distinctly refers to intelligence not as a body of facts or information but as a revelatory experience. The Holy Ghost, he said, has "no other effect than pure intelligence," a mind-expanding experience in which "the whole soul and body are only exercised by the pure spirit of intelligence." In the same discourse he is recorded as say-

[6] Writing of "supernatural" elements in the Joseph Smith story is certainly a delicate matter for modern LDS historians committed to both their faith and the integrity of their academic endeavors, since the elements of which I write elude the grasp of modern historiographic enquiry.

ing, "A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you *feel* pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas" (HC 3:379–81; emphasis added). These words unequivocally refer to intelligence as a subjective or psychic experience — or, to use an appropriate meaning given in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "The action or fact of mentally apprehending something" (1:1456).

The term "intelligence" appears more often in the King Follett discourse than in any other of Joseph Smith's known discourses. I maintain that it is primarily equated in that discourse with the human *mind* (JD 6:1–11).

I would suggest that in Doctrine and Covenants 93:29 "intelligence" means nothing less than the human ability to comprehend or perceive: the very subject of that verse is humankind. "Man was also in the beginning with God" is followed immediately by "Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created, neither indeed can be." Certainly this statement on intelligence is not the introduction to a new subject, but rather a development of the preceding sentence. This understanding of the passage is also, I believe, consonant with the use of "intelligence" in the much later King Follett discourse. In the context of this scriptural passage, "intelligence, or the light of truth" refers not to "facts or opinion" but to humans as percipient, experiencing individuals.

This interpretation seems to have been shared by Joseph Smith's contemporary and colleague in the Church, Orson Pratt. In his essay, "Absurdities of Immaterialism," Pratt carefully drew out the materialist aspects of Mormonism and indeed boldly identified them as materialism. Nevertheless, he disavowed some of the generally accepted implications of metaphysical materialism, in particular the idea that intelligence is a byproduct of material or physical processes: "No doubt but that the immaterialist absurdity was invented principally to combat the gross errors which have been embraced by some materialists, both of ancient and modern times. The great majority of materialists have contended that thought and feeling are the *results* of organization, beginning and ceasing with it" (Burnett and Pope 1976, 18).

As Orson Pratt well understood, matter was perceived in classical materialism as inert, purely mechanical; intelligence and associated phenomena were merely the temporary consequence of certain highly complex configurations of material particles. Pratt expressly disagreed with such a view, and I do not doubt that his view reflects the interpretation of Doctrine and Covenants 93:29 that I have suggested here.

The radical conflict between this traditional materialist view and the Mormon doctrine of eternal intelligence creates a chasm between the two. Materialism, whether defined as meaning that all that exists is material, or more liberally, that all that exists *at least* depends on the material for its existence, seems to rule out in either case the possibility of intelligence or sentience as a self-existing principle. This is a critical issue in view of the declaration in Doctrine and Covenants 131:7–8 that spirit is material in essence. The heart of the matter is, *what is the relationship between spirit and intelligence in Mormon theology?*

It seems unlikely that early Mormon thinkers believed that thoughts and feelings are reducible to brain states — a view that is a logical consequence of identifying intelligence with materiality. Mormon metaphysics are fairly extroverted: they do not include the kind of speculative probing into the nature of self and awareness that characterizes Eastern religions, for example. Nevertheless, rather than attribute to Mormonism the stark reductionism of the major forms of materialism, it would perhaps be truer to say that the real materialism of Mormon metaphysics lies in a conviction that all centers of intelligence and sentience in the universe are structured throughout the very real matrix of space and time. This would be more in tune with a religion which allows for the individual's existence through the eternities, for genuine human freedom, for the miraculous, and for a relatively unconstrained view of the ways of knowing. An archetypal materialist like Paul D'Holbach might well complain that Mormonism's materialism is merely verbal and paraphrase to his own end Orson Pratt's critique of immaterialist concepts of religion.

Defining Mormon Metaphysics: Materialism, Idealism, and Process Philosophy

Since Mormonism is so much at variance with traditional materialism, its concept of the nature of matter becomes an interesting and vital question. As noted earlier, Mormon materialism seems to imply a considerably more pliant view of matter than that usually associated with materialistic metaphysics. The absence of a formal definition in canonical literature and the lack of a vigorous philosophical life in the Mormon community have left this a curiously neglected issue. Paul M. Edwards rightly noted some time ago, in his stimulating essay "The Secular Smiths," that there are a "bevy of questions which cry for answers" in Mormon theology and history, including "What is intelligence? How does soul material differ from all other materials in the theology of Mormonism?" (1977, 5).

Could it be that the key to the ontological commitment expressed in Doctrine and Covenants 131:7–8 lies in the peculiarly Hebraic character of Mormon attitudes to things material? The same attitude expressed in Genesis towards the creation is faithfully reflected in Mormon attitudes and beliefs: "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was *very* good" (Gen. 1:30; cf. Moses 2:31). Huston Smith's remarks in his *The Religions of Man* are worth noting here:

> One specific element in the Biblical account . . . deserves special notice; namely, its estimate of nature, the physical component of things.
>
> Much of Greek thought, notably that dominated by Plato and Plotinus, takes a dim view of matter. In Hinduism and Theravada Buddhism the basic outlook is optimistic in spite of the material world rather than because of it. In India matter tends to be regarded as a barbarian, spoiling everything she touches. Liberation ultimately lies in extricating spirit from its material environment.
>
> How different from the first chapter of Genesis, which opens, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" and builds from there to its climax in which "God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was *very* good." Let the reader dwell for a moment on the wonderful little word "*very*." It gives a lilt to the entire

> religion. Pressing for meaning in every direction, the Jews refused to abandon the physical aspects of life as illusory, defective or unimportant. Fresh as the morning of Creation, they were to be relished with zest. (1958, 239)

Such remarks seem remarkably appropriate for Mormon values and beliefs as well.

Thus we may better understand the commitment to matter as constituting reality, expressed in Doctrine and Covenants 131:7–8, not as a reductive materialism but as an affirmation that the material world of our experience is at the heart of reality no matter *how* reality is understood. Certainly Joseph Smith perceived the diversity and color and vibrancy of this world as something woven into the very warp and woof of reality. This perception receives dramatic form in the boundless optimism of such Mormon doctrines as eternal progression and increase, the multiplicity of heavenly kingdoms, and the definition of the celestial kingdom as a perfected earth.

In *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion*, Sterling McMurrin notes, "It is typical of a materialist metaphysics, as for instance that of the pre-Socratic atomistic philosopher Democritus, to hold that matter is essentially lifeless and inert and that the motions of matter are due to external mechanical causes" (1965, 7). In contrast, McMurrin comments that the Mormon concept of matter "is essentially dynamic rather than static, if indeed it is not a kind of living energy . . . subject to the rule of intelligence" (p. 77). Such a conception of Mormon materialism — one which allows the preeminence of intelligence — is more compatible with Mormon beliefs in general than is the kind of reductionism to which I have referred.

It is interesting to consider these questions within the larger context of historic Christianity, which has almost universally adhered to the traditional sharp bifurcation between the nature of spirit and matter. There is reason to believe that even early Mormonism assumed such a bifurcation; the Book of Mormon in particular shows no evident departure from the traditional dichotomy of spirit and matter. And, as I indicated earlier in this essay, the epistemic aspects of this scripture appear to conflict with the presumptions of historic materialist theories of knowledge. Likewise, the *Lectures on Faith* (assuming they reflect Joseph Smith's views) seem to imply a traditionalist view of spirit and matter.

Gradually, as Joseph Smith's revelations emerged in the Doctrine and Covenants and in his later discourses, clear references to a materialist view became apparent. This materialism therefore must be seen as a part of the new corpus of teaching revealed through the Prophet in the course of his career.

The most sustained attempt to philosophically explicate this materialist metaphysics came from Orson Pratt. Departing significantly from traditional materialism, Pratt used Joseph Smith's teachings on the eternal nature of intelligence to reject the notion that intelligence is a temporary effect of organized (inert) matter. However, according to Pratt, intelligence, although eternal in its own right, is not ontologically distinct from matter but rather is intrinsic to it. This position is in effect panpsychic, admitting intelligence is copresent with materiality in *all* its manifestations, although in varying degrees.

While Orson Pratt's detailed explanation of Mormon metaphysical materialism never gained general acceptance in the Church, the fundamental philosophical assertions of the founding prophet remain, providing a continuing challenge to Mormonism to creatively synthesize all aspects of such a distinctive religious system. But in the search for such a synthesis, must the Mormon position be enmeshed in the age-old rivalry between materialism and idealism? Classic materialism, denying as it does the possibility of irreducible intelligence, is incompatible with Mormonism; classic idealism, with its denial of the reality of the material, likewise conflicts with Mormon doctrine. Neither of these options can adequately account for the inherent qualities of Mormon doctrine.

Looking past this traditional split, I find a potential answer in recent discussions of Mormon theology that are evocative of process philosophy, the modern philosophical movement that recognizes the primacy of change in its attempt to resolve the fundamental metaphysical question of what there is. The most striking element in Mormon theology and process theology alike (as exemplified in the work of the British/American philosopher A. N. Whitehead) is the idea that Deity itself is subject to process. In the Mormon context, this daring doctrine was most explicitly detailed in the King Follett discourse and is epitomized in Lorenzo Snow's familiar aphorism, "As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may become." Closely related to this doctrine is the absence of absolutism and the sheer pluralism in Mormon metaphysics: the material constituents of the world, and the intelligences embodied in the world, are uncreated and co-eternal with Deity.

Such a metaphysics, with its continuing upward thrust towards the attainment of godhood, exalts the reality and positiveness of change and appears to be perfectly in accord with the tenor of process philosophy. Parallels such as these are certainly of the greatest interest to Latter-day Saints committed to a philosophically literate articulation and defense of the metaphysical foundations of their faith.[7]

Process philosophy is also relevant to the central issue of this essay — the ontological commitment of the Mormon faith. It answers the question of whether the Mormon position need be assimilated to either materialism or idealism. Clearly, the answer is *neither*. Process philosophy seeks a conceptual understanding of reality that casts aside the reductive limitations of both materialism and idealism. To use Alfred North Whitehead's terminology, these viewpoints both commit the fallacy of "misplaced concreteness," identifying the real with what is essentially an abstraction. Reality is much more dynamic than either and is best summed up in the immensely suggestive metaphor of process. Mormon doctrine, with elements that elude both philosophies, encompasses a broader spectrum than either materialism or idealism allows.

The open texture of process philosophy seems therefore to offer a useful way to approach the question of the Mormon metaphysical commitment.

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[7] Recent articles that have begun exploring parallels between Mormon theology and process philosophy include Ostler (1984); Ross (1982); and Tickemyer (1984).

Orson Pratt's valiant attempt to reconcile the Mormon doctrines of materialism and the eternal nature of intelligence led him to espouse a panpsychic solution. Process philosophy, with its emphasis on the unity and dynamism of existence, has similarly tried to reconcile the divergent features of human experience and thought.[8] It is therefore encouraging to note the growing attention of Mormon scholars in recent years to this modern philosophical movement, one which holds potential insights in developing a contemporary understanding of the implications of Mormon ontology.

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[8] Panpsychism, in one form or another, has a pedigree that reaches back as far as the early Greeks and includes distinguished figures from many periods. American philosopher Charles Hartshorne is currently perhaps its most outstanding advocate.

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Rag rug, sego lily design, Ada Jensen (Logan, Utah), 34″ diameter, mixed fabrics, 1976; (Utah) State Art Collection.

Of Truth and Passion: Mormonism and Existential Thought

Michelle Stott

IN THE FIRST CENTURY A.D., PONTIUS PILATE, confounded by Jesus Christ's forceful witness to his mission to "bear witness unto the truth," asked, "What is truth?" (John 18:38) This was neither the first nor the last time that an individual has asked this question, either in genuine torment or in harried evasion. Since the dawn of historical recollection, men and women have pursued truth with an unquenchable thirst.

For Latter-day Saints, the great determining truth of existence is that there is a God.[1] And, since God set the forces in motion that called this world into being, it follows that all truth, from whatever source, relates to him and his existence. Perhaps for this reason basic Mormon doctrine constantly challenges us to seek for knowledge, wisdom, and truth. Accepting the gospel, with its accompanying gift of the Holy Ghost (the spirit of revelation), signifies a first step toward the endless acquisition of new truths, for as has been promised, "by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:5).

And yet, just as God did not create the earth *ex nihilo*, he does not bring a knowledge of truth out of nothingness. Truth is not a gift which is given *gratis*, like the presents showered on a child by wealthy parents. Quite the contrary, truth is gained through great mental effort, aided by enlightenment from the Holy Spirit. Those who desire to attain this prize are commanded to actively seek it. Although the Church frequently admonishes us to search for truth, no definitive method or exclusive source has ever been dogmatically prescribed. As a general guide, we are, of course, directed first to both ancient and modern scripture. Beyond this, we are exhorted, "Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning even by study and also by faith" (D&C

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[1] For the purposes of this article, it will not be necessary to distinguish between God the Father and God the Son. The more general term "God," therefore, refers to Deity.

88:118). Certainly, within the realm of world literature and thought there lie great riches of wisdom and truth, often the result of lifetimes of concerted effort and struggle on the part of poets, thinkers, and scholars.

A study of the widely varied results of human efforts to understand existence reveals certain strands of thought, observation, or fact that appear again and again in essentially the same form, even among extremely divergent areas of inquiry. These universal strands, insofar as they do not contradict the determining fact of God's being, can be extremely significant in a quest for truth. And particularly, as these recurring insights and observations lead to an enhanced understanding of our place in the world and our relationship to God, they can be very valuable within the context of LDS theology.

One particular group of thinkers and writers, frequently labeled "existential," [2] has been profoundly concerned with individuals' attempts to create a meaningful pattern from the often seemingly chaotic elements of life. This manner of thought frequently parallels Mormon conceptions in some profound ways, and existential ideas often seem to provide flashes of insight into LDS readers' personal religious beliefs and understanding of life. This article will examine some of the most striking points of congruence and interplay between existential thought and the tenets of Mormonism as they relate to three concepts basic to both: (1) God, (2) humankind, and (3) existence.

God

It is often mistakenly assumed that an existential orientation to life automatically excludes religious belief. Actually, neither Christianity nor belief in God is incompatible with this philosophical outlook. In fact, several prominent existential thinkers, including Soren Kierkegaard, Gabriel Marcel, and Martin Buber, are deeply committed to the religious implications of this particular world view. Even atheistic existentialists propound many principles and means of confronting life which correspond closely to LDS belief.

Although terminology differs, most existential thinkers agree that humans exist in a state of delusion and attempted escape from the realities of existence. This mode of being is called "inauthentic," a life lived out in "bad faith." An inauthentic individual tends to confuse personal existence in the world with the objects that demand practical attention. In addition, this type of person desires to escape responsibility for individual opinions, decisions, and actions by becoming part of the faceless crowd. In fact, decisiveness is generally avoided whenever possible, as the inauthentic individual attempts to flee the perils of freedom and the uncertainties of existence.[3] Kierkegaard, who describes this escapist level of existence as the "aesthetic," shows that an "aesthetic" attitude will lead us to concentrate on filling our lives with what is

[2] The terms "existentialist" and "existentialism" apply to a particular twentieth-century philosophical tendency. Since not all existential thinkers can or would even desire to be grouped in this classification, I will use the expression "existential thought" throughout this discussion.

[3] For an excellent discussion of authenticity/inauthenticity, see John Wild, *The Challenge of Existentialism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), especially pp. 126–50.

beautiful or pleasurable. But however refined, such epicurean pursuits can afford no lasting meaning or self-understanding.

In stark contrast would be the life lived "authentically" or in "good faith." Most existential thinkers would define the authentic individual as one who accepts the freedom that characterizes human status, acknowledges the risks involved with this freedom, and makes the decisions necessary to structure life. In making those decisions, however, one must also accept responsibility for choice and resist the temptation to abandon oneself to the depersonalization of the mass. To live authentically we must accept our own possibilities and our own uniquely differentiated futures. In addition, authentic existence always implies action, a caring or passionate involvement with being; most existential thinkers concur that truth must be *lived* in order to be truth.

Religious existentialists, such as Kierkegaard, Buber, Marcel, and Paul Tillich, go a step further and assert that authenticity also means defining one's identity in relationship to God: each individual must find his or her own path to that being beyond the self. In fact, Kierkegaard, in suggesting that religious conviction is the highest form of being available to humankind, rejects even an authentically ethical mode of existence as ultimately incapable of fully endowing life with meaning. According to Kierkegard, the entire conception of the ethical is problematic. That is, although it is fairly easy to discuss morals on paper and to work out a score of possible ethical solutions for life's situations, it is in reality extremely difficult to *live* ethically. Even if one does manage to translate theoretical ethics into concrete action, that individual is then forced, by the nature of the ethical itself, to apply every judgment and moral ruling universally. There can be no exceptions and no middle ground. Everything must be clearcut, good or bad, ethical or unethical.

Kierkegaard holds that this type of black/white determination cannot fully grasp and describe the endlessly varied demands of human existence. The purely ethical also limits the possibilities open to us, since there are many situations for which ethical ideals fail to supply answers. This becomes particularly evident as we attempt to align our existence with God, the transcendent Other. Kierkegaard cites as an example the total impossibility of purely ethical decision in the case of Abraham, who is commanded by God to sacrifice his son Isaac.

Even those existential thinkers whose writings are the most completely atheistic, such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Friedrich Nietzsche, show themselves to be deeply concerned with the relationship of the individual to God. Heinrich Heine once remarked that only those who are indifferent, and who therefore do not speak of God at all, truly deny him (Heine 1886, 8). There is clearly no indifference to God evident in the thought of either Sartre or Nietzsche. In fact, the atheism which pervades the writings of these two philosophers seems in large part to be the bitterly resentful outcry of those who, driven by a deep spiritual need, seek desperately for God but are unable to find him. Goetz's speech in Sartre's *The Devil and the Good Lord* represents, not the arrogance of one who chooses his own strength before that of God, but rather

the despair and anguish of a man who is denied the sustenance he so deeply craves from an omnipotent source:

> I supplicated, I demanded a sign, I sent messages to Heaven, no reply. Heaven ignored my very name. Each minute I wondered what I could *BE* in the eyes of God. Now I know that answer: nothing. God does not see me, God does not hear me, God does not know me. You see this emptiness over our heads? That is God. You see this gap in the door? It is God. You see that hole in the ground: That is God again. Silence is God. Absence is God. (Sartre 1960, 141)

Implicit in this denial of God is a strong critique of established Christianity. Nietzsche attacks traditional religion even more directly. His impassioned statement concerning the death of God echoes Kierkegaard's concern that Christian institutions have failed to keep belief in God alive.

> Have you not heard of the madman who . . . ran to the market place, and cried incessantly, "I seek God! I seek God!" As many of those who do not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Why, did he get lost? said one. . . .The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his glances.
>
> "Whither is God" he cried. "I shall tell you. *We have killed him* — you and I. All of us are his murderers. . . . God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we, the murderers of all murderers, comfort ourselves? What was holiest and most powerful of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives." (Nietzsche 1968, 95–96)

According to the madman, modern cynicism and unbelief have divested God of life. If truth must be lived in order to be truth, then human unbelief murders God. Particularly when viewed from an LDS perspective, this statement rings true in two ways: first, since the Christianity of Nietzsche's time (1844–1900) existed only in an apostate form, humanity had in fact closed the door on the true, living God. To them he would therefore seem to be absent or dead. And second, the only God Nietzsche knew, the only God known to the Christianity of his time, was a being without body, parts, or passions, who is everywhere and nowhere, a God who was the product of a council of men and therefore dead at its very inception. In this sense, God had been "murdered" not only by lack of belief but also by the lack of correct knowledge concerning him.

As Nietzsche rightly perceived, the wall that cut humankind off from contact with God had been erected by human hands. One of the prime differences between the atheistic and the religious existential thinkers is that the former believe there can be no further contact with God, that we are utterly and irrevocably alone, while the latter believe that a relationship with God can be restored through a rigorous, authentic attempt to live the true essence of religion.

In either case, the key element in an existential approach to God is passion. An existentialist does not relate to Deity passively as an abstraction; the intellectual and spiritual intensity of existential thought transforms the God-experience into a living, vital force in human life. Whether the conclusions drawn concerning God are positive or negative, from an existential point of

view, a relationship to him cannot be indifferent. God must be either passionately, actively denied or passionately sought and affirmed.

Religion

Both the religious and the atheistic proponents of an existential world view are united in their criticism of the historical institution of Christianity. The standpoint of two atheistic thinkers has already been mentioned. However, the level of religious conviction demanded by Kierkegaard is also radically different from that generally regarded as "religious." Although the theologians of Kierkegaard's age (1813–55) seemed bent on making it increasingly easy and more pleasant to "believe and be saved," Kierkegaard urged the opposite course. In his assessment, traditional Christianity had become so encumbered by tradition and dogma that it had completely lost the original rigor of belief and action characteristic of Christ and the early apostles: that is, the institution had eclipsed the essence. It was this conviction that propelled Kierkegaard into a full-scale war against a soulless historical Christianity which had forgotten what it means truly to *be* a Christian.

In addition to their criticism of established Christianity, the majority of existential thinkers tend to regard dogmatic religion as a form of bondage that hinders inherent human freedom and discourages individuals from exercising the decisive choice necessary to authentic existence. Institutional religion can be used as a shelter from the burden of individual choice, a means of shifting responsibility away from the individual. Furthermore, religiously oriented existential thinkers denounce the fact that dogmatic religious tradition has been allowed to stifle the individual-God relationship and that rote belief has too often been adopted in the place of committed Christian action.

This criticism is compatible with one of the most basic tenets of LDS doctrine, the Mormon view of free agency. Because even God himself refuses to obstruct the individual exercise of this agency, Mormons believe that church organization optimally should serve as a vehicle to aid us in learning to discipline and fully employ this gift — and burden — of choice. According to Mormon belief, then, an institutional structure can aid rather than obstruct the exercise of agency. However, an LDS member who abdicates his or her free agency and hides within the structure of the Church would be guilty of the inauthentic Christianity denounced by Kierkegaard or Nietzsche.

The existential concept of "care" or "passionate inwardness" also typifies the core of true Mormon belief. For example, William Barrett, noted scholar of existential thought, points out that Kierkegaard consistently centers his religious beliefs upon the assertion that "religion is not a system of intellectual propositions to which the believer assents because he knows it to be true, as a system of geometry is true; existentially, for the individual himself, religion means in the end simply *to be religious*" (1962, 70).

In other words, baptism into a Christian denomination does not make one Christian any more than picking up a violin qualifies a person as a musician. Similarly, baptism into the LDS Church and belief in its doctrines do not automatically transform one into a Latter-day Saint. This transformation from

a potential "saint" to an actual "saint" requires that internal conviction — in LDS terms, testimony — be actualized in existence. True religious faith must exist within the individual as "passionate inwardness," or *the truth that one is*, rather than as an abstract intellectual dogma. Religion is not a set of beliefs, but a state of being. In effect, one's belief so colors every thought and action, that one is propelled to righteous behavior by the force of internal conviction.

Although they often employ differing terminology, the religious existentialists generally agree that faith is the force that endows the God-relationship with existential passion. Faith, as defined by these existential thinkers, is an entirely different substance than intellectual or dogmatic belief. Faith is in fact an action. Marcel intensifies this understanding of faith into the concept of "creative fidelity" or loyalty to God. According to Buber, faith characterizes the I-Thou relation and is the medium by which we enter into the immediacy of personal dialogue with God, who is the transcendent *Thou*. Tillich insists that "infinite passion" must impel the faithful as they seek relationship with Jesus Christ. Similarly, Kierkegaard maintains that living faith arises from love for a living being — for Christ himself. In his view, logic and reason can lead only to a certain point, beyond which one can no longer rely on intellectual proofs. Inevitably, the moment will arrive when each individual must choose to venture all for his or her confidence in Christ and make the "leap of faith." Faith is a risk. As Kierkegaard so vividly describes the dual sense of jeopardy and assurance, having faith means "at the same time to lie upon seventy thousand fathoms of water and yet be joyful" (1945, 430).

Faith is, then, an active force ignited by real love for a living God and an assurance that he will not fail in his promises. In practice, the venture itself, taking the leap of faith, develops faith: the more we must sacrifice for our confidence in God, the stronger that assurance grows. As Joseph Smith has affirmed: "A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary [to lead] unto life and salvation" (1898, 62).

Joseph Smith clearly sensed the same need for passionate intensity in the exercise of faith as did these religious existential thinkers. As his life showed, his faith was a matter of intense inner relationship and involvement with God, a matter of risk and action rather than passive intellectual or dogmatic formulation.

In this sense, conformity to the laws of God should also be a matter of passionate inwardness, not list-making obedience. One great failing of the Jews in Christ's time was that they had enslaved themselves to regulation by believing that the law was an end in itself. As they understood it, the purpose of life was obedience; individuals existed for the law, and therefore, although they felt obligated to do no less than the rules demanded, they also felt no necessity to do anything more. As a result, the whole purpose behind God's commandments was lost, since the Lord's laws and admonitions are vehicles to help mortals cleanse themselves from impurity, develop faith, and rise toward perfection. In this context, the spirit of Christ's injunction to "go the extra mile" is of utmost importance. It is not enough to hold scrupulously to

the letter of the law, merely because an outside source, be it divine or human, requires it. Commandments are not restraints to be imposed externally, like a bridle on a horse. They must become an internal, integral part of our very natures.

This principle may be effectively illustrated with the analogy of a dancer. A beginner in a dancing class is painfully awkward, since the novice must execute every movement exactly as the dancing master instructs, counting each step and consciously willing muscles into a semblance of graceful motion. However, as the dancer becomes more accomplished, movements become easier and less conscious, until at last the grace of bodily motion becomes such an integral part of the dancer's nature that grace carries over unconsciously into every action. The dancer, in effect, at last reaches a level at which he or she *is* grace in motion.

In the same sense, as beginners in the gospel of Christ, we may struggle with this law or that commandment, but if we attempt to live them faithfully, these principles eventually become such a part of our nature that we no longer live *laws* at all — we live *righteousness*. In essence, as we approach perfection, we transcend the laws. Rather than being concerned with not smoking or not bearing false witness, we are occupied with the higher goal of being Christlike in every thought and action. In this state of passionate religious inwardness, we will have "no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually" (Mosiah 5:2). At this point, the laws of the gospel become identical with the essence of the individual; we *are* what we believe.

It is this existential concept of authenticity, and the absolute identity of the professor with that which is professed, that provide the avenue through which abstract religious belief can be transformed into a living, active way of life, powered always by the impassioned inwardness of conviction.

Perfection

In his novel *Nausea*, Sartre illustrates poignantly the feeling of meaninglessness which engulfs the person who becomes suddenly aware of being in a world cluttered with objects that seem to have no real reason for being there. In fact, the entire novel represents the protagonist's attempt to find some sort of meaningful coherence within the absurdity of his existence. To varying degrees, this vision of the chaotic and impenetrable nature of the universe is basic to all existential thought.

Although many individuals may never experience as acute a sense of universal absurdity and incoherence as these thinkers recorded, there will be moments when even the deeply religious find themselves, as Sartre's Roquentin, grappling for meaning within the vagaries and challenges of mortal life. Some frustration inevitably results from the natural weakness and imperfection of mortality. In addition, life itself is a confusing duality. Although this earth and all its inhabitants are in a mortal state, the greatest truth and meaning discernible in the world most often relate to the transcendent and perfected being who is its creator. As a result, those things that lend the greatest joy and meaning to human existence tend to be those that belong to the realm of spirit: beauty, truth, knowledge, love, service, and so forth.

As Roquentin illustrates, mortals are propelled by an innate yearning to be complete and whole, lasting and self-existent, a state not entirely possible on earth. From an LDS standpoint, the "stranger here" feeling that troubled Roquentin, and that often seems to reduce mortal existence to meaninglessness, may be seen to spring, at least in part, from barely waking half-memories of a premortal state in the presence of God, a state that was indeed solid, eternal, and perfect. Whatever its source, the sense of estrangement which at times arises between the mortal and spiritual realms can best be bridged by God himself. Since Roquentin has no God-orientation, from a religious perspective he is cut off from the essential heart and core of existence. It is no wonder that for Roquentin even the drive toward perfection seems to be unrooted, meaningless, absurd. What Roquentin feels in *Nausea* is the emptiness of the world severed from God, who is the moving force behind all being, and whose divine plan alone can provide a sense of meaning and purpose in existence. Roquentin therefore illustrates a negative extremity of the search for meaning in existence.

A more positive outcome develops from the basic existential imperative that one must turn inward to search out one's inherent possibilities and create the Self, an idea that finds its most radical expression in Nietzsche's conception of the "Uebermensch," or "Overman." This concept of striving to actualize one's optimum possibility is actually compatible with LDS doctrine. What the existential atheist performs in defiance of an absurd universe and an absent God, the seeker within the gospel of Jesus Christ performs under the tutelage of the Divine, who can help reveal us to ourselves and thus lead us to heights we might otherwise never attain.

Humankind

The modern world tends to push toward conformity and homogeneity. In many cases, society structures itself in ways that reduce individuals to membership in an indistinguishable mass, much like the Greek innkeeper who made all his guests fit his beds by stretching the bodies of those who were too short, and cutting off the legs of those too tall. It is convenient to neatly categorize and pigeonhole people as Jews, blacks, women, hippies, yuppies. In modern society, people are rarely viewed as individuals with unique needs, aptitudes, and possibilities. All major existential thinkers from Kierkegaard on, as well as thinkers and writers in other fields of expertise,[4] have diagnosed and denounced this trend toward uniformity.

In fact, a vast respect for the existing individual and a ceaseless rage at those who attempt to reduce humankind to a mindless crowd devoid of responsibility for personal opinion and action is one unifying thread running through the entire body of existential thought. This view is also basic to LDS doctrine and is a recurring theme throughout the scriptures. The conception

[4] For a thorough discussion of this phenomenon, see David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1953) and William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956). Oswald Spengler also deals with this topic in *The Decline of the West* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926).

of the individual may actually be the point at which Mormonism most closely approximates existential thought.

From an existential standpoint, the most basic ground of all human existence is freedom. Although it is always possible to abdicate freedom, this still is the quality which distinguishes human beings from all lower forms of life and from which both the greatest possibilities and the greatest suffering arise. In the existential view, the only way to reach a wholeness of authentic being is through conscious choice and decision. This view is once again entirely compatible with the LDS concept of free agency.

According to existential thought, freedom entails the responsibility to accept and *be* one's Self. When considering society as a whole, we may observe that people are often not comfortable, or to put it more pointedly, not at home with themselves. Often an individual seems to be so frightened of possible confrontation with the Self that he or she prefers crowds, noise, or idle chatter to the silence in which one's only companion is oneself. This inauthentic flight from the Self can have many causes. One of the most predominant is that the actual Self rarely measures up to the Self that we wish we were or feel we ought to be.

LDS doctrine would ascribe this sense of absurdity and inadequacy directly to the mortal state itself, in which the indignity and weakness of fallen earth is superimposed upon the refined matter of the spirit. When faced with guilt at "not measuring up," we have two choices: to abdicate the Self and remain in an inauthentic existence; or to choose the Self, whatever its condition, and struggle through decisive action to transform it into something higher.

This concept of acceptance and transformation of the Self is not unlike the LDS emphasis on overcoming weaknesses and striving for perfection. When we begin to repent and pray with our entire soul, we must first turn inward. Repentance entails a painfully honest evaluation of the Self in the presence of God. Meditation within the framework of prayer provides a great advantage: the Holy Spirit can help us see the blocks to our greatest possibility more clearly and can teach us to overcome them in ways that very often far surpass what we could achieve alone.

However, existential concepts provide no haven for narcissists, despite the emphasis on the Self. The demand to choose and transform the Self does not excuse solipsistic irresponsibility toward the Other. Existentialist thought demands that other individuals be respected as autonomous beings within their own spheres of existence. Most existential thinkers denounce the common worldly practice of treating the Other as an object, a thing, rather than as a Subject. Too often we strip Others of their inherent autonomy and transform them into the object of personal feelings and ambitions: scorn, lust, violence, power, and so forth. In this regard, the existential view again agrees with the scriptural concept of the individual.

In general, God relates to each person Subject to Subject, individual to individual. Christ performed no mass healings; he dealt with individual cases, healing the one in need. Both ancient and modern scriptures indicate that God knows each person individually and will relate to us on a one-to-one basis,

if we are willing. The gospel view of each individual as a valued child of God is clearly congruent with the profound existential respect for each individual as an autonomously existing Subject. As Kierkegaard observed: "I have never ignored any man, the humblest farmhand or housemaid — for he who is 'before God' must simultaneously shudder deep in his soul at the thought: suppose now that God in recompense ignored me" (1975, 6:9).

Existence

One striking feature of existential thought is that it returns philosophy from the realm of abstraction back to everyday reality: individuals standing alone, face to face with their own existence. As a general rule, however, people tend to be extremely threatened by the possibility of a head-on encounter with themselves. Instead of choosing the Self and then building consciously on that foundation, many individuals simply close their eyes and run. The world is engrossed in the search for "pain relievers" to deaden the pangs of life, even though this pursuit often leads to a desperate and dangerous overdosage.

According to existential thought, those who flee in this way before the possibility of facing the Self are guilty of bad faith, are willfully inauthentic, trapped in a state of dishonesty. In order to reverse this bad faith, we must choose our Self, no matter how imperfect or incomplete that may seem. The authentic Subject can neither live through the eyes and opinions of others nor fashion a conception of Self according to their desires. The Self must be what it is.

However, authentic existence does not, as is sometimes believed, give license to recklessly "do your own thing." Even though individual decisions are influenced by circumstances and other people, in the end, authenticity requires that any decision we may make be embraced as our own, with full personal acceptance of responsibility and any consequences that may follow. To become authentic, we must each take upon ourselves the pain of facing our Self and our lives, in spite of all inherent absurdities, weaknesses, and conflicts, and then proceed onward from that point. An image that captures the magnitude of character required by authentic experience is that of a lone individual standing on a beach in front of a tidal wave, in terrible dread of the future, and yet consciously willing to remain and face what may come.

This full empowerment of the individual as a free agent also invests the very heart of LDS doctrine. The scriptures state quite plainly: "And the Messiah cometh in the fullness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon" (2 Ne. 2:26).

Because of this imperfect mortal state, however, it is inevitable that where the freedom to choose and to act is granted, bad decisions will often follow. That is, the way will automatically be opened for us to stumble and fall into sin. The antidote to this human frailty is repentance, a principle which is entirely existential in its ramifications. Through sincere repentance, we are

brought face to face with our own guilt. We must be completely and authentically honest with ourselves, as well as with God, and accept the responsibility for personal misdeeds, along with all attendant mental anguish. God has instituted this freedom of choice in order to insure "that every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I have given him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgement" (D&C 101:78).

At the moment of judgment, each unrepentant individual will presumably stand alone before the omniscience of God, stripped of all masks and delusions, in the ultimate conflict with the Self. This confrontation can be softened, however, through the ongoing process of repentance, in which as individuals we face ourselves before God over and over again throughout the course of our mortal existence. In this way, through dealing with sins, weaknesses, and shortcomings one at a time, through accepting the consequences of our actions, settling matters and moving on, we can neutralize the terror of that ultimate judgment: if we have nothing hidden, if we have attempted at all times to live authentically and honestly, it may well be that the judgment will be no judgment at all.

The driving force behind this process of choice and consequence must be a burning religious inwardness or passion, which binds us in an unshakable reliance on God. Such inwardness must be developed individually. Those who appear to be religious, and yet whose belief is founded merely on tradition or on the words of others, actually exist in a state of religious inauthenticity. According to LDS doctrine, every individual must have a personal testimony of each principle, ordinance, and teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Only this conviction, this intensity of religious inwardness, empowers and enables us to face and overcome the ceaseless challenges and difficulties of mortality. If the image of existential courage is a person standing rootless and in dread before the elemental forces of the cosmos, then the image of authentic Mormonism must be that of a tree standing on the same beach before the same tidal wave. However, this tree has roots which extend down as deeply as the tree has worked to send them, into the foundation of faith in and communion with God. These roots serve to dissipate the dread which characterizes an existential confrontation with life's terrible uncertainties.

CONCLUSION

The concepts discussed in this article at best only briefly sketch the correspondence between key concepts within existential thought and the basic tenets of Mormonism. In countless ways, the two are congruent: the practiced eye cannot fail to recognize the powerfully existential nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The philosophical tenets of existential thought challenge us to strive for a rigorous authenticity which permits no deception of Self, others, or God. In particular, the religious existential thinkers emphasize inner commitment and battle the petrifaction of outward form and tradition which far too often strangle the passionate inwardness of true religious fervor. The existential

approach to life requires an inward search to understand the "I," a quest which transforms the tendency to flight before an undesirable Self into a process of self-discovery, self-creation, and refining. The keys to individual development are decision, action, and assumption of responsibility for choices — in short, a full acceptance of and passionate involvement in one's own existence.

Divested of their special philosophical terminology, these concepts closely resemble basic LDS doctrines. However, the philosophical vocabulary and particular emphasis of existential thought on agency and authenticity can enhance understanding of many doctrinal points of Mormonism and bring the sense of what it is to be a Latter-day Saint into brilliantly sharp focus.

Particularly in their demand for inner passion in relation to God, truth, and existence, existential concepts can eloquently verbalize much that is inherent, but not explicitly stated, in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Existential philosophy strives to focus on truth as it is actualized in existence, rather than as it is formulated in an abstract system of ideas. Existentialists are, therefore, deeply interested in the *how* of truth. "The essential sermon is one's own existence. A person preaches with this every hour of the day and with power quite different from that of the most eloquent speaker in his most eloquent moment" (Kierkegaard 1975, 1:460). The key to actualizing truth is inner passion and existential courage. As Kierkegaard exclaims: "What I need is a man who does not gesticulate with his arms up in a pulpit or with his fingers upon a podium, but a person who gesticulates with his entire personal existence . . . , with the willingness in every danger to will to express in action precisely what he teaches" (1975, 1:265).

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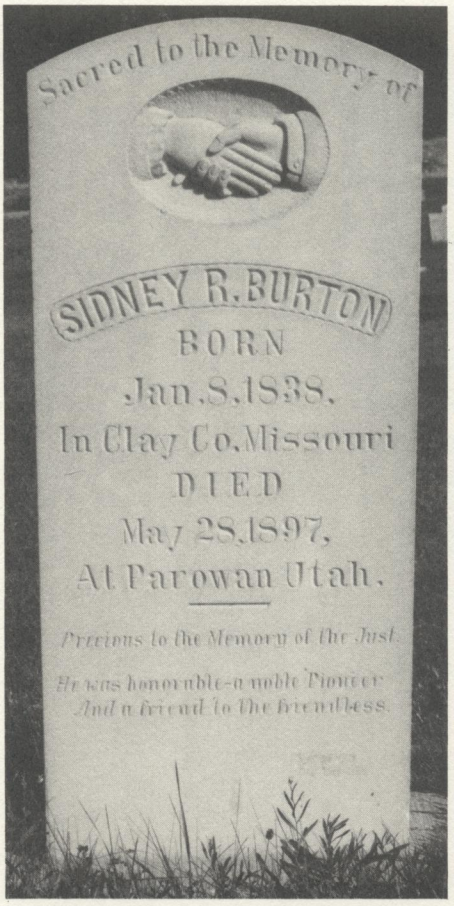
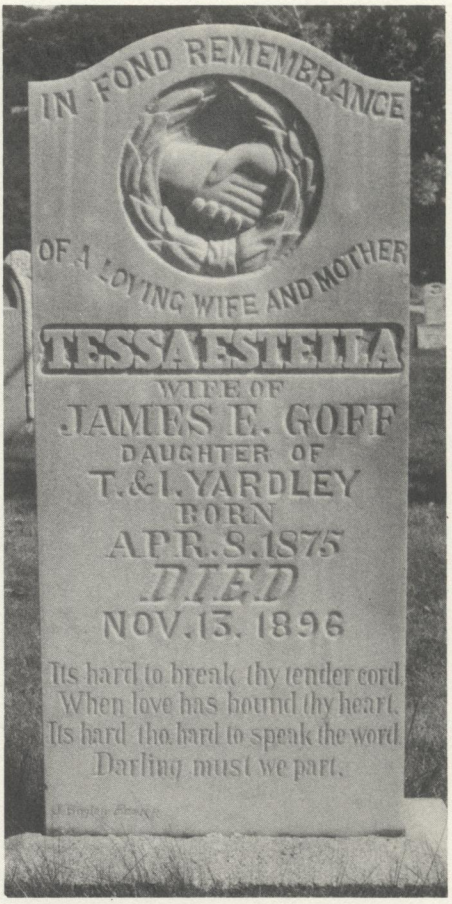
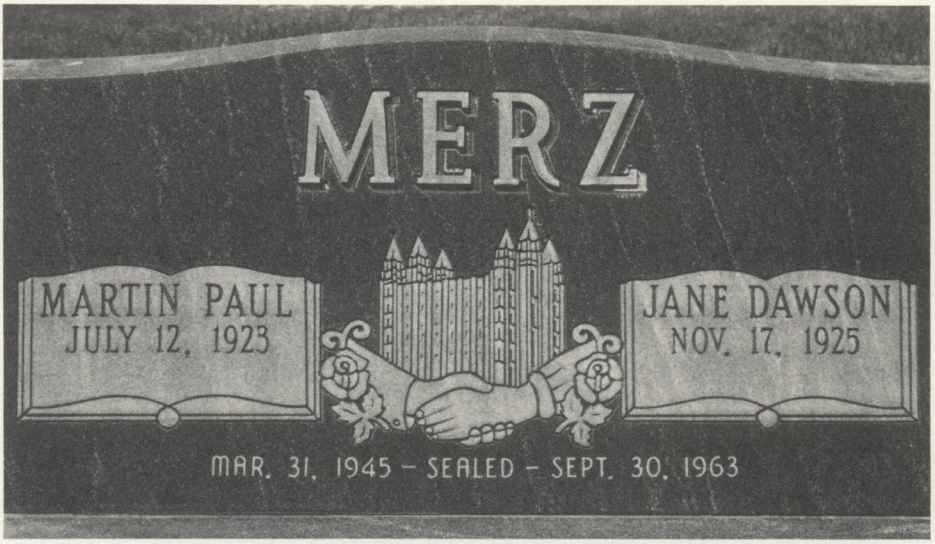

Sacred to the Memory of
SIDNEY R. BURTON
BORN
Jan. 8. 1838.
In Clay Co. Missouri
DIED
May 28. 1897.
At Parowan Utah.
Precious to the Memory of the Just.
He was honorable-a noble Pioneer
And a friend to the friendless.


IN FOND REMEMBRANCE
OF A LOVING WIFE AND MOTHER
TESSA ESTELLA
WIFE OF
JAMES E. GOFF
DAUGHTER OF
T. & I. YARDLEY
BORN
APR. 8. 1875
DIED
NOV. 13. 1896
Its hard to break thy tender cord
When love has bound thy heart.
Its hard tho hard to speak the word
Darling must we part.


MERZ
MARTIN PAUL
JULY 12, 1923
JANE DAWSON
NOV. 17, 1925
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Mormon Gravestones: A Folk Expression of Identity and Belief

Carol Edison

FOR YEARS CULTURAL GEOGRAPHERS, folklorists, and other researchers have identified and delineated the Mormon region of the American West by charting characteristic elements of its cultural landscape. In his 1952 work *The Mormon Village*, Lowry Nelson studied the village settlement patterns and the grid system of intersecting streets typically used by Mormon settlers from the Canadian provinces to the Mexican colonies. Likewise Richard V. Francaviglia's 1978 study, *The Mormon Landscape: Existence, Creation, and Perception of a Unique Image in the American West*, discussed several distinctive features including in-town irrigation ditches and outbuildings as well as the widespread use of Lombardy poplars by Mormon homesteaders. But other less prominent yet equally significant expressions may be found in the Mormon cultural landscape. Gravestones, with their visual symbolism and wealth of cultural information, represent a category of expression offering another way to recognize and understand this unique cultural region.

During the nineteenth century, the image of a handshake or handclasp, often described as the clasped-hands motif, appears to have been the most commonly chosen gravestone symbol within the Mormon cultural region. As Allen Roberts noted in a 1979 *Sunstone* article, this symbol was most likely of ancient Egyptian or Hebrew origin and was used extensively in Masonic ritual. Incorporated into Mormon symbology during the Nauvoo period, clasped hands appeared on numerous other nineteenth-century objects including the east facade of the Salt Lake Temple. In a 1982 study, Richard Poulsen proposed that although this symbol was found in graveyards throughout the United States, its widespread use in the Mormon West suggests its appropriateness and perhaps even special significance to Mormons. Certainly, whether Mormon or non-Mormon, hands clasping each other, with cuffs depicting

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male or female clothing or with gender ambivalent robes, logically represent either parting at death or greeting at rebirth between friends, family members, or deity. What better symbol could nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints have chosen to represent their concept of life after death?

Although clasped hands were sometimes carved onto locally produced sandstone markers before 1869, the popularity and widespread use of this symbol roughly coincided with the availability of upright, hand-chiseled marble markers. Such grave markers were either imported from eastern quarries or made locally from imported marble. They became accessible after the completion of the transcontinental railroad and were in common use from that time through the first quarter of the twentieth century. But by the 1920s, with the advent of a new stonecarving technology based on air-powered or pneumatic chisels, granite began to replace marble as the stone of choice. And as gravemarkers became more horizontal in design to accommodate the new material and styles, the amount of lettering diminished and the sculpted images, like clasped hands, were soon replaced by geometric designs and decorative borders.

Yet even as these changes were beginning to take place, a new, albeit short-lived trend in marble gravestones emerged to succeed the popular clasped hands. Temple gravestones — that is, gravestones featuring an image of a Mormon temple — began to appear around 1910. Originally carved and distributed by New England marble companies attempting to serve a growing regional market, the first temple stones displayed a recognizable Salt Lake Temple along with the names, birthdates, and deathdates of those being memorialized. Like their predecessors with clasped hands, these stones communicated a message of reunion after death between husband and wife or between the deceased and God, a concept central to Mormon belief.

For the next fifty years, aside from an occasional metal plaque, the image of the temple was not commonly used on gravestones. But by the 1960s, the monument industry had again shifted to a newer technology that relied on finely tuned sandblasting equipment instead of air-powered chisels to incise and sculpt images into stone. Latex stencils made it not only possible, but commonplace, to engrave a variety of images onto granite, including very detailed renditions of the various Mormon temples.

Today commercially produced double gravestones featuring a temple as a central symbol more and more frequently mark the graves of faithful Latter-day Saint couples. Over the last twenty-five years, without any particular institutional sanction, these temple gravestones have become increasingly popular. Their distribution, like that of Lombardy poplars, is an important indicator of cultural boundaries. Yet it is their unauthorized development, acceptance, and use that make them both a folk expression of organizational affiliation and religious beliefs and a particularly rich source of information about contemporary Mormon culture.

From the Church's early years, the temple has been a central symbol in Mormonism. Just as the children of ancient Israel built temples for their most holy ordinances, so the early Saints, considering themselves modern-day "Isra-

elites," constructed temples for God's work. The construction of temples in Kirtland and Nauvoo was followed by ground-breaking for the Salt Lake Temple, built in the Gothic Revival style popular during the nineteenth century from granite blocks quarried from nearby mountains. For Latter-day Saints, the forty years it took to complete the temple made it both a "symbol of Mormonism's triumph over adversity" (Hamilton 1981, 6) and a "visual statement of faith, commitment and permanence" (Oman and Oman 1980, 120). The temple's location at the center of the city's grid system puts it at the geographic center of a city that has become the theocratic headquarters of a worldwide church. Throughout the world, the Salt Lake Temple has come to symbolize the city, the state of Utah, and Mormonism. The image of a temple, particularly the Salt Lake Temple, often serves as an institutional symbol of Mormonism in much the same way as the variously styled Christian crosses represent Roman Catholicism, Greek or Russian Orthodoxy, or various Protestant sects. Hence, the image of a temple on a gravestone becomes a universally recognized form of identification.

It is interesting that another Mormon symbol, the Angel Moroni, has been chosen by the Mormon hierarchy for use by the United States military as the official symbol of the Church ("Gravestone Emblem" 1980, 13). But despite the institutional sanction of this symbol, it is not Moroni but the image of the temple that accounts for 25 to 30 percent of all current gravestone orders at monument companies in Salt Lake City, the heart of the Mormon cultural region.[1] It is also interesting to note that not one of the gravestones memorializing a Mormon prophet includes an image of a temple.

Thus using the image of a temple to mark a grave appears to be an unofficial "folk" practice, neither sanctioned nor discouraged by Church leaders, that represents much more than a mere statement of religious identity. Like the engraved likenesses of temples on wedding or funeral announcements or the small replicas of temples placed atop wedding cakes, the image of the temple symbolizes temple marriage and eternal relationships. Marriage within a Mormon temple is more than a peripheral component of the Mormon belief system. The sacred ordinances performed within the temple, for both the living and the dead, are at the core of Mormon theology. Thus the image of the temple on a gravestone becomes a rich, multifaceted symbol that embodies, serves as a reminder of, and visually demonstrates the core precepts and beliefs of Latter-day Saint theology.

Basic Mormon beliefs of eternal progression, marriage for time and eternity, and the sealing together of families are displayed and expressed through the various components of the Mormon temple gravestone. First, the stones are generally double markers that memorialize a husband and wife, or a family unit, rather than an individual. Second, the family name is prominently displayed across the top of the stone. The given names of the husband and wife,

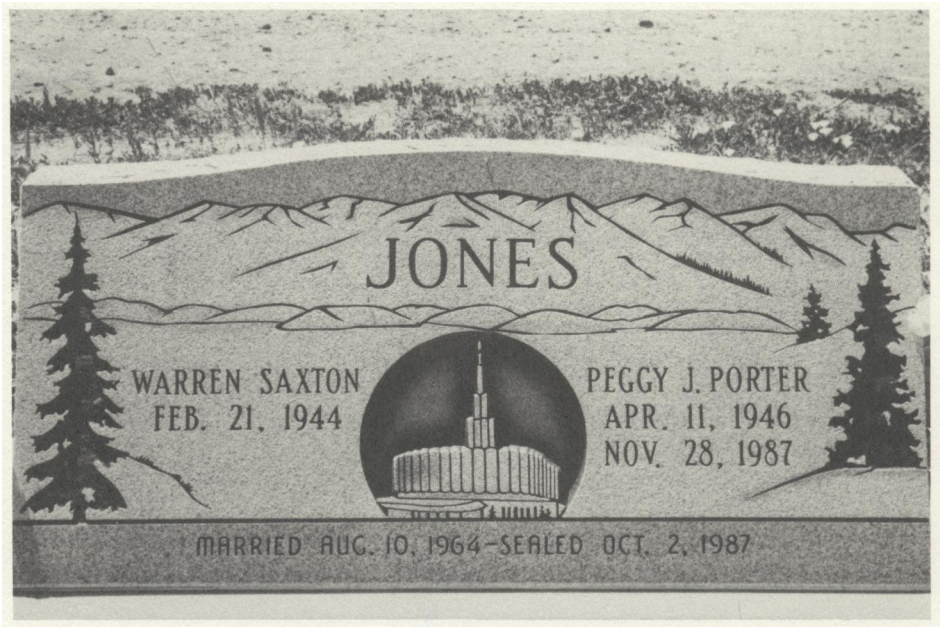
[1] These statistics are based on information gathered through interviews during October 1985 with several monument producers/dealers in northern Utah including David Bott (Bott Monument in Ogden), Mike Ellerbeck (Salt Lake Monument), Hans Huettlinger (Hans Monument in Salt Lake City), and a representative of the Boyd Mildon Company.

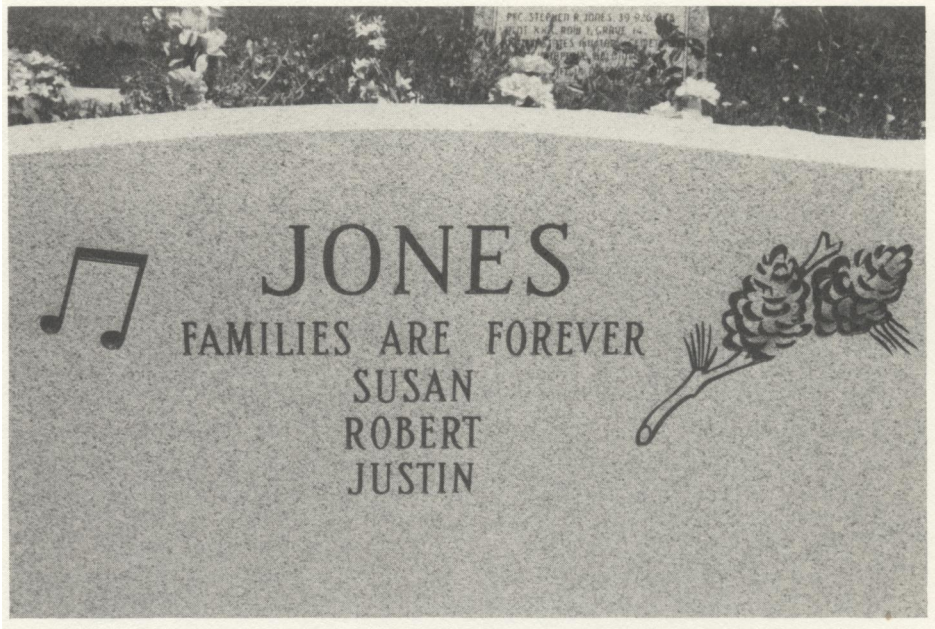
including the wife's maiden name and both of their birth and death dates, are written on the left and right sides of the stone. Third, in the center, above these facts and under the family name, is a recognizable representation of one of the Mormon temples. Fourth, the date of marriage is included, and for couples initially married in a civil ceremony the date of the temple sealing ceremony may be noted. The names of the couple's children are often included, either along the bottom edge of those markers positioned flush with the ground or on the backside of those that stand upright.

The theme of family unity is central to each of these components — from the double configuration of the stones themselves to the specific information contained on them. Inclusion of the wife's maiden name and the names of all of the children underlines the importance of the family unit. It also creates a permanent genealogical record similar to those used to establish family relationships so that temple ordinances may be performed by proxy for those who have died — an activity leading to unity of the extended family in the afterlife. The marriage or sealing date, signifying that the husband, wife, and any children born after that date have been sealed together for eternity, represents the temple ordinance that is a prerequisite to the reunion of the family after death. Most graphically, the image of the temple itself symbolizes the place and the means through which the goal of eternal marriage and family unity is achieved.

Additional elements on the markers often amplify these ideas. Birth and death dates written on an open book suggest that life is a chapter in a much longer story, that the story of a person's earthly life has been written, or perhaps that writing life's story is important. Roses may represent the love shared by marriage partners or family members, the rebirth suggested by growing flowers, the beauty of maturity, or the fragility of beautiful things, such as life and relationships. Such phrases as "TOGETHER FOREVER," "LOVE EVERLASTING," or "OUR END IS OUR BEGINNING" explain the purpose of temple marriage and the sealing ordinances. Individual temples are not only recognizable on the stones, they are often depicted in the tops of the mountains or high in the clouds, calling to mind Chapter 5 of Isaiah, where he prophesied that the saints would be established in the tops of the mountains. While some temple stones incorporate personalized motifs representing occupations, avocations, or organizational affiliations (an increasingly popular contemporary style of western gravestones), the temple generally provides the central theme (Edison 1985, 184–89).

Temple gravestones are a folk expression of organizational affiliation and religious belief. They speak not only to outsiders as a statement of Mormon religious identity, but also to insiders as a reminder and visual reinforcement of the essence of Mormon belief. Temple gravestones remind believers of the possibility of family unity after death for all who are worthy. The image of a Latter-day Saint temple represents more than the success of the Saints' nineteenth-century westward migration and their triumph over adversity. It symbolizes the belief that there is a way to achieve victory over death, not just for the individual, but for the family unit, both nuclear and extended. What better, more appropriate place than a gravemarker to proclaim, through sym-





All photographs by Carol Edison, courtesy of the Utah Arts Council.

bolism, a belief in an afterlife and the reunion of the family? Certainly the widespread acceptance and use of temple gravestones throughout the Mormon cultural region, just like the preference for stones with the clasped-hands motif in the previous century, point to their significance as an unofficial, twentieth-century folk expression of personal and community beliefs. An understanding of Mormon gravestones not only helps identify the Mormon cultural region but can lead to a better understanding of both historical and contemporary Mormon culture and identity.

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The Study of Mormon Folklore: An Uncertain Mirror for Truth

William A. Wilson

IT IS AN HONOR FOR ME TO SPEAK HERE, partly because of the standard of excellence set by those who have preceded me at this podium, but primarily because of my respect for the man in whose name these lectures are held — Parley A. Christensen. I took four classes from Professor Christensen during my undergraduate years — Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, and History of the English Language. I would hope that the literature that nurtured us both has instilled in me the same respect for the dignity of life and the same belief in the worth of all human beings that characterized his life. And I would hope also that the man who gave his collection of essays *All in a Teacher's Day* (1948) the subtitle, *Essays of a Mormon Professor*, would not be disappointed by his former pupil's choosing to speak in the Christensen Lecture Series on the folk literature of the Mormons.

When I began graduate work at Indiana University in 1962, I had no intention of studying Mormon folklore; indeed, my only experience with that subject had been mild shock when my English Romanticism professor, Orea Tanner, referred to stories of the Three Nephites as "folklore." I had come to IU to pursue a much more serious end — to learn as much as possible about Finnish folklore as a necessary prelude for my intended study of Finnish literature. But then I met Richard M. Dorson, head of the Indiana University Folklore Program and the dean of American folklore study. Relying on the works of Mormon folklorists — Thomas Cheney, Hector Lee, and Austin and Alta Fife — Dorson had written a chapter on Mormon folklore for his very popular text, *American Folklore* (1959); he lectured on Mormon folklore in his survey courses; and he made sure his students paid attention by asking questions on the subject in doctoral examinations.

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When I arrived in Bloomington, he was delighted to have a real Mormon in his program and soon set me the task of studying my own cultural heritage. During the fieldwork class I took from Dorson, I turned to Mormon faculty members and graduate students at the university and collected and annotated forty legends of the Three Nephites — I hope Professor Tanner would have been pleased. Professor Dorson was amazed to discover that Mormon folklore could be collected outside Utah, and I was hooked. A shortened version of this collection became my first publication in a professional journal (1969); and, though I have continued to study Finnish folklore and literature, I have from that time to the present devoted much of my energy to collecting and trying to understand the folk literature of the culture that produced me.

In the classes I have taught at Brigham Young University and Utah State University since completing my study at Indiana in 1967, I have required students to collect, interpret, and submit to the archives folklore they have encountered in their own lives. Though they have been free to collect whatever they wish, many, probably believing that following their professor's enthusiasms is the better part of valor, have turned their attention to their own Mormon traditions, with the result that the archives at both USU and BYU are brim full with Mormon materials. The slim file of Three Nephite narratives I collected at Indiana University now contains about one thousand separate stories; the missionary collection John B. Harris and I have brought together includes well over three thousand items; and these are only parts of the whole. The total Mormon collection contains thousands of separate items, mostly narratives — a data base large enough, I trust, to warrant my making some generalizations this evening and suggesting some directions for future research.

Before trying to draw a picture of the Mormon world that emerges from narratives in the folklore archives, I must make a few statements about the premises that underpin the work of most folklorists.

First, the people who possess a body of lore — that is, the folk — are not, as was once thought, unlettered, mainly agrarian people bound together by some kind of psychic unity that stretches relatively unchanged across cultural boundaries and from age to age. This concept of "the folk," which, unfortunately, some historians writing about Joseph Smith's magical practices still adhere to, is both outdated and misleading, and any research conclusions based on it should be accepted with great caution, if at all.

Who then are the folk? We all are. Each of us has a number of social identities — for example, I am a father, a college teacher, a Democrat, a westerner, and a Mormon. When I am with people who share my Mormon identity and in a social context that brings that identity to the fore, my other identities will be at least partially suppressed and I will think and act in traditionally prescribed ways, in ways similar to those in which other members of my group will think and act. As we relate to each other and to our Mormon world, we will attempt to manipulate the social environment to our advantage by generating, performing, and transmitting "lore," by communicating, that is, through traditional forms ranging from the stories of inspiration and courage

we recount about our pioneer ancestors, to the advice and comfort we give to a friend mourning the death of a loved one, to the jokes we tell about our bishops. Again, this is a process we all participate in. We are all the folk.

Second, narratives shared by members of a like-minded group serve as a mirror for culture, as a reflector of what members of the group consider most important. Thus the stories we Latter-day Saints tell provide valuable insights into our hopes, fears, dreams, and anxieties. This is so for the simple reason that folklore depends on the spoken word for its survival. Like all people, we tell stories about those things that interest us most or are most important to us. Each individual Latter-day Saint is in some ways different from all other Latter-day Saints, but if a story does not appeal to a sufficient number of us to keep it alive, if it does not somehow relate to what I have called our "value center" (1976, 45–46) — a consensus center of attitude and belief that ties us all together — it will either be altered by the tellers to make it conform to that value center or it will disappear. Those stories that continue to be told can serve, therefore, as a barometer of our principal concerns at any given time. If we want to understand Mormon hearts and minds, we should pay close heed to Mormon oral narratives.

Third, storytellers themselves recount their narratives not to help scholars better understand what is important to them but rather to satisfy their own ends and meet their own needs. A Mormon missionary who tells his junior companion about another missionary who decided to test his priesthood power by ordaining a post to the priesthood and then was struck dead by a bolt of lightning does not tell that story to satisfy intellectual curiosity. The story does reflect the Mormon conviction that God will not be mocked and is useful, therefore, to the student of Mormon belief; but the missionary tells the story primarily to persuade his companion, and to remind himself, that if they don't want to be zapped by lightning they had better take serious things seriously. In other words, folklore has significant functions for both tellers and listeners.

Finally, every telling of a story is in some ways an exercise in behavior modification, an employment by the narrator of a rhetorical strategy designed to persuade the audience to accept a certain point of view or to follow a certain course of action — to convince one's fellows, for example, that ordaining posts to the priesthood is not a very healthy practice. Few storytellers would consider themselves artists, but they know that if they are to encourage the righteous or reform sinners they must make their stories artful — that is, they must imbue them with power. There are, of course, good and bad storytellers just as there are good and bad creative writers. The principal difference between successful oral and written storytelling lies not in the artistic merit of the works created but in the methods of composition. The writer achieves artistic power by carefully arranging words on the written page. The speaker of tales, in a dynamic process that cannot adequately be captured on the written page, achieves the same end by responding to an active audience. It is this interplay between teller and listeners which in the final analysis will give shape, meaning, and power to the story created. The art of folklore, therefore, lies not in the tale told, but in the *telling* of the tale. Some of the stories I will

turn to now, reduced to paper, may seem fairly pedestrian; but in actual performance many have had the power to move listeners to laughter or to tears.

If a dreadful holocaust were somehow to destroy all Mormon documents except those in the BYU Folklore Archives, what sort of picture of our contemporary Mormon world would a future generation of scholars, using only these surviving manuscripts, be able to draw? From the manuscripts, they would discover, first, that we have ennobled our pioneer past and made it a model for present action; second, that we see ourselves as actors in a cosmic struggle between the forces of good and evil; and, third, that in spite of the seriousness of this struggle, or perhaps because of it, we have developed the saving grace of easing tensions by laughing at ourselves and sometimes at the system we live under. In what follows, I offer a brief glimpse of each of these constituent parts of our Mormon world as revealed in folklore.

Every culture has its own creation myths — a body of narratives explaining how the social order came into being and providing models after which people in the present should pattern their behavior. People from all cultures tend generally to believe that the first way of doing things was the best way; therefore, when they struggle to solve contemporary problems, they seek answers in the primordial reality reflected in their origin narratives. Jews and Christians turn to the Bible, Communists to the words and deeds of Marx and Lenin, Americans to stories of their founding fathers, and Latter-day Saints to accounts of their pioneer ancestors.

From the outset, our Mormon forebears found themselves in sharp conflict with established American society. Their insistence that only they possessed the "correct" way to salvation, their tendency to establish political control in the areas they settled, their attempts to establish a theocratic state, and, later, their practice of polygamy engendered the hostility of their fellow citizens, who drove the beleaguered Latter-day Saints from New York to Ohio to Missouri and, finally, to Illinois, where in 1844 Joseph Smith paid a martyr's price for his vision of the kingdom of God restored. Two years later Brigham Young led the Saints out of the United States in search of peace and refuge in the mountains and deserts of territorial Utah. There they struggled to overcome an unfriendly natural environment, colonized the Great Basin, sent out missionaries to gather in the elect, and set themselves single-mindedly to the task of "building up" a new Zion in preparation for the second coming of the Savior.

Out of this cauldron of struggle and conflict were forged many of the stories we still tell today, stories that inculcate in both tellers and listeners a great sense of appreciation for the sacrifices of these first Latter-day Saints and a determination to face present difficulties with equal courage.

Perhaps the most gripping cycle of stories has to do with the migration west in the years between 1846 and the coming of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. Many who took part in this migration traveled in covered wagons; others, who could not afford wagons, pushed and pulled their meager supplies across thirteen hundred miles of prairies and mountains in homemade two-wheeled handcarts. The stories resulting from this experience tell of hardships

endured and of the spunk of the people who made the trip. In almost every instance, the stories remind us of the debt of gratitude we own those who prepared the way for us, persuade us to hold fast to the church for which they paid such a dear price, and encourage us to face our own trials with similar fortitude. Consider the following story:

> We were six in family when we started — father, my stepmother, two brothers, a sister sixteen years of age and myself. It seems strange that there were more men and boys died than there were women and girls. My two brothers died on the way, and my father died the day after we arrived in Salt Lake. The night my oldest brother died there were nineteen deaths in camp. In the morning we would find their starved and frozen bodies right beside us, not knowing when they died until daylight revealed the ghastly sight. I remember two women that died sitting by me. My mother was cooking some cakes of bread for one of them. When mother gave her one of them she tossed it into the fire and dropped over dead. I remember distinctly when the terrible storm came, and how dismayed the people were. My stepmother took my little brother and myself by the hand and helped us along the best she could while sister and father floundered along with the handcart. How we did struggle through that snow, tumbling over sage brush and crying with cold and hunger.
>
> When we camped they had to scrape a place to camp on, and not much wood to make a fire with. The food rations became scarce — there were four ounces daily for an adult and two for a child, and sometimes a little piece of meat. Oh! I'll never forget it, never!
>
> When we arrived in Salt Lake we were taken to the assembly room and the people were asked to take as many of us into their homes as they could take care of. My father and mother were taken to one place and my sister and I each to another. I did not see my father again — he died the next day. . . . I did not stand on my feet until the sixth of March. I lost the first joints of six of my toes. My step-mother then carried me twelve blocks to [a] man's home who had been a friend of father's. Mother would carry me as far as she could, then she would put me down in the snow. Then we would cry a while and go on again. (Ricks 1924)

The important thing, of course, is not the crying for a while, however necessary that may be, but the going on again — a lesson generations of Mormon young people raised on stories like this have had drilled into their heads as they have been encouraged to press on and on in whatever tasks they may be given in building up the kingdom. This particular narrative was recorded in 1924 from a woman who had crossed the plains in 1856. Most of the material in the folklore archive, like the following story, is many hands removed from the actual events described:

> The McCareys were among the several thousand Mormons who lost all their worldly possessions in the tragic mid-winter exodus from their beloved homes in Nauvoo. With little food and scant protection from the elements, they suffered greatly from hunger and disease at Winter Quarters and during their long migration to Salt Lake City. Yet on reaching the Platte River crossing, they were still in sufficiently good condition to kneel together and thank the Lord for getting them through the worst part of the journey.
>
> During the river crossing cholera broke out among the members of the company. The terrible disease raged throughout the camp. Dozens died. It was necessary for James McCarey to assist in digging graves for the victims. James was a willing worker and finished three graves that October morning, even though he began to feel a little ill as he started the third. A short time after the last grave was completed, James was

> dead from the effects of cholera. His young daughters Victoria and Mary helped their mother wrap him in an old blanket, place him in the grave, and cover him with the dirt he had spaded up two hours earlier.[1]

The teller of this story, the great-great-grandson of one of the little girls who helped bury her father, will not easily turn from the faith his ancestor died for.

Once safely across the plains and established in their Great Basin communities, the Mormon settlers continued to experience hardships and convert them into stories as they endured severe winters, dry summers, failed crops, swarms of crickets, attacks by unfriendly Indians, and arrests and jailings by federal officers for practicing polygamy. Some faltered and lost the faith that had brought them there, but many were sustained in their struggle to conquer the western wilderness by a belief, a belief clearly evident in the stories, that they were engaged in a cause that could not fail. Individuals might fail, but the new Zion would not.

As the pioneer era passed, the world in which Mormon stories circulated changed markedly. But the telling of stories continued unabated. The reason for this is that the generating force behind Mormon storytelling was not the persecutions of the Church nor the hardships of frontier life but rather the theological beliefs of the people. The external world may have changed, but these beliefs remained, and continue to remain, constant. Most of us still hold fast to the visions of Joseph Smith, we still believe that only through the restored gospel can the world be saved, and we still believe we have a sacred obligation to take our message to the world. Thus in a changed physical world but inspired by the same deeply held convictions, stories continue to play a significant role in Mormon life.

In many ways, the roles of these stories in our New Zion are similar to those played by accounts of remarkable providences in the Bible Commonwealth American Puritans once established in their new land. In 1694 the Puritan divines Increase and Cotton Mather and the Fellows of Harvard College instructed the New England clergy to record the remarkable providences that would show the hand of God in their lives. They said:

> The things to be esteemed *memorable* are specially *all unusual accidents*, in the heaven, or earth, or water: All wonderful *deliverances* of the distressed: *Mercies* to the godly; *judgments* on the wicked; and more glorious fulfillment of either the *promises* or the *threatenings* in the Scriptures of truth; with *apparitions*, *possessions*, *inchantments*, and all extraordinary things wherein the existence and agency of the *invisible world* is more sensibly demonstrated. (Mather 1853, 2:362)

This passage seems not unlike instructions on how to keep a Book of Remembrance. Puritans and Mormons alike have told stories to illustrate the hand of God or the influence of Satan in all things, to bring vividly alive the dramatic conflict in which the powers of good and evil struggle for mastery of our souls.

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[1] This and all other narratives given here, as well as names of collectors and names and comments of informants, are located in the Brigham Young University Folklore Archive, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602. In all instances where names of individuals appear in the stories, I have changed them to pseudonyms.

Perhaps our most frightening stories, as I can testify after collecting a lot of them, are those in which Satan or his evil spirits attempt to take control of our bodies to thwart the work of the Lord — to hinder a missionary from going tracting, for example, or a convert from joining the Church, or a bishop from carrying out his duties. In most of these stories the evil spirit is exorcised by prayer or by the power of the priesthood. But in some instances the spirit cannot be exorcised because the possessed individual courts disaster by seeking out the Devil: "A girl from Torrence, California," for example, "was playing with a [ouija] board. She asked by whom the board was controlled. The reply came back, 'The Devil.' An undescribable force picked her up and slammed her against the wall. The jolt of the slam damaged her spine. She is now paralyzed from the waist down."

In another story, known widely in the mission fields, a young elder actually prays to the Devil:

> [A story] had been going around the mission field about an elder who decided that he would test the powers of Satan. So he decided that he would pray to him. He left his companion and went into the closet that was in their apartment. His companion, after missing him, noticed that the closet door was open only about an inch, and so he walked over to the closet and tried to open up the door and couldn't get it open. And he called the mission president, and the mission president came over with his assistants, and together all of them pried at the door. And finally when they got it open, the elder was kneeling in prayer, but he was up off the ground about two feet, suspended in air. And so they immediately administered to him, and he fell on the floor, dead.

In other versions of this story, the praying elder is slammed against the wall, instant death the result; in another story, the missionary is found in bed, burned from one end to the other; in still another the shell of a body remains, but the insides have been cooked out. Logically, these stories make little sense; one would expect the Devil generously to reward those errant individuals who turn to him in prayer, but instead he kills them. Logic notwithstanding, the narratives serve as forceful warnings that one does not provoke the powers of Hell with impunity.

In a number of stories, Satan seeks to destroy Church members not by possessing their bodies but by enticing them to sin. These cautionary tales, and their number is legion, show what happens when one surrenders to the alluring powers of evil. One example will have to do:

> A missionary had been on his mission for twenty-three months and had served a very honorable mission, been an assistant to the mission president and held every leadership position in his mission. He had been successful in baptizing many people into the church. But one night he and his companion were cooking dinner and when they got ready to eat they discovered they were out of milk. This one elder told his companion he would be right back; he was going to run to the store on the corner and get some milk. Both of them thought that since the store was only a block away there would be no problem. But on the way, somehow a neighbor woman enticed the elder into her house. He then committed an immoral act with this woman, was excommunicated, and was sent home dishonorably from the mission field.

Narratives like this are similar to those war stories in which the protagonist is killed on his last bombing raid or on his last patrol just before his scheduled return home. Both sets of stories emphasize that one is never safe (from an enemy's bullet or from the sexual enticement of the world) and that one must therefore be constantly on guard to the very end.

Almost as frightening as stories of the Devil's terrible actions are those in which a vengeful God wreaks havoc on the enemies of Zion. In their book *Carthage Conspiracy*, Dallin Oaks and Marvin Hill write: "A persistent Utah myth holds that some of the murderers of Joseph and Hyrum Smith met fittingly gruesome deaths — that Providence intervened to dispense the justice denied in the Carthage trial. But the five defendants who went to trial, including men who had been shown to be leaders in the murder plot and others associated with them, enjoyed notably successful careers" (1975, 217). The myth Oaks and Hill refer to is that perpetuated principally by N. B. Lundwall's oft-reprinted *The Fate of the Persecutors of Joseph Smith* (1952); the popularity of this book suggests, unfortunately, that Latter-day Saints are as capable as anyone of taking uncharitable and unChristian pleasure from the discomfort of those who oppose them.

But perhaps the issue is more complicated than that. One of the best ways to prove the validity of a cause is to prove that God is on one's side. Thus Mormon tradition is replete with accounts of God fighting Zion's battles. Consider, for example, the following story:

> There was a preacher in Yakima, [Washington], who hated Mormons and the Mormon Church. Because of his constant efforts, the man became well known for his feelings. One Sunday he delivered an unusually fiery speech against the Mormon Church in which he denounced Joseph Smith as a liar and the Book of Mormon as a fraud. In his closing remarks he stated that if everything he said wasn't true the Lord should strike him dead. After the services, he walked out of the church and fell dead upon the lawn.

A spate of stories tells how the Lord pours out his wrath on those who oppose or abuse missionaries. In these accounts, the elders, following biblical example, shake dust from their feet and thereby curse the people who have treated them ill. The Lord responds to the missionaries' actions in a dreadful manner. In Norway a city treats missionaries harshly; they shake dust from their feet, and the city is destroyed by German shelling during the war; after the war the repentant townspeople invite the missionaries back. Throughout the world, other cities that have mistreated missionaries suffer similar fates. Towns are destroyed in Chile by floods, in Costa Rica by a volcano, in Japan by a tidal wave, in Taiwan and Sweden by fire. In South Africa a town's mining industry fails, in Colorado a town's land becomes infertile, and in Germany a town's fishing industry folds.

Individuals who have persecuted missionaries may also feel God's wrath. An anti-Mormon minister loses his job, or breaks his arm, or dies of throat cancer. A woman refuses to give thirsty missionaries water and her well goes dry. A man angrily throws the Book of Mormon into the fire only to have his

own house burn down. In one story, widely known, two elders leave their temple garments at a laundry, and when the proprietor holds them up for ridicule, both he and the laundry burn, the fire so hot in some instances that it melts the bricks. In all these stories the implication is clear: the Church must be true because God protects it and its emissaries from harm.

If the wrath of God is kindled by outsiders who attack the Church, as these stories would suggest, it is still more easily aroused by Church members who fail to do their duty or who engage in blasphemous acts. A large number of stories, in which Cotton Mather would certainly find evidence of the "judgments on the wicked," teach us to do right by showing what will happen if we don't. In Idaho, the wayward son of a stake president consecrated a glass of beer; he passed out immediately, fell into a coma, and died a few days later. In 1860 Brigham Young dedicated "Salem Pond," a new irrigation project, and promised that no one would die in the pond if the people refrained from swimming on Sunday; the eight people who have since drowned there were all swimming on Sunday. In Southern Utah, a young man refused a mission call; about a month later he died in an automobile crash. And, as I have already noted, a missionary who attempted to ordain a fence post or, depending on the version, a Coke bottle, a broomstick, a fire hydrant, or a dog was struck dead. All these stories attempt to inculcate in the listeners the moral appended by the narrator to the following account:

> This is a story about two South American missionaries — I don't remember who told it to me. As the story goes, the two missionaries were in a place where the people didn't like them very well at all. And . . . [these people] decided that they'd get rid of 'em quick and had some kind of poison food that they fed them. I don't remember what it was, but I think it was some kind of poison meat. And the missionaries blessed it and ate it and didn't die from it. And all the people were very impressed, ya know, and told 'em what happened and said, "Truly, you must be men of God," ya know; and they got a lot of converts from it. They went to another town and decided that they would try the same thing. And so they said, "See now we can eat poison meat, and we won't die." And they ate it, and they died. And the moral that I got from it, from the person who told me, was that "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Listening in one sitting to all these stories — to accounts of evil spirits and of the judgments of God on the unrighteous both within and outside the Church — can be a pretty grim experience. Fortunately, the bulk of Mormon folklore falls under what Cotton Mather would have called, "Mercies to the godly." Stories that fall under this heading testify to the validity of the gospel in a positive way by showing the rewards that come, or will come, to those who live righteously. A number of these stories simply recount the advice, comfort, and protection individuals receive for individual problems. But many of them cluster around and mirror major emphases in the Church — missionary service, genealogical research, and temple work.

The following four stories stress these themes. The first one illustrates the protection worthy missionaries may receive in dangerous situations; the second story ties missionary labors into the important task of binding the hearts of the fathers to their children; the third story demonstrates the kind of help those

intent on turning the hearts of parents and children toward each other may receive in their genealogical research; and the fourth account, one of the most wide-spread narratives in recent years, shows how those who save the spiritual lives of the dead may, in turn, expect physical protection in their own lives:

> [A missionary was assigned to New York City.] And they had a lot of gangs and stuff, and they were in a bad part of town. And they were in teaching a family, and when they came out there was a gang waiting to beat up these missionaries. And the missionaries got really scared and ran to the car and got in it . . . , and it wouldn't start. Meanwhile, the guys with the chains and the knives were starting to get closer and closer to the car. So they got real scared, and the one says, "Well, let's have a prayer." So they said the prayer and turned on the ignition, and sure enough, the car started up and they took off. And they got about five or ten miles away or so — anyway they decided to find out why the car wouldn't start, and they got out, and they opened the hood, and there's no battery. That's the story this girl told in my Book of Mormon class.
>
> One family . . . said they would never be baptized but that they would listen to what the missionaries had to say. The elder had faith that if he lived right the family would accept the gospel, so he set their baptism date for two weeks away. After the family had been given the sixth and final discussion, they were still not willing to be baptized. The missionaries asked them if they could have a word of prayer and return tomorrow. When the prayer was finished and they looked up, the man was crying. While they were praying he didn't want to close his eyes, for behind the missionary he saw his [deceased] father. He asked them. "What does this mean?" The missionary explained to him about work for the dead — baptism and other ordinances. The man and his family were baptized.
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> [A group was sitting together talking after a session in the Los Angeles temple. One woman said] that she'd gone as far in her genealogy as she could and she couldn't do anything else; she'd just reached a dead end. So while the group was sitting there and they were talking about genealogy and such, . . . a little old lady with gray hair came up. She was carrying a briefcase, and she sat down in the group, and everybody thought everyone else knew her. You know, she'd just joined the group, and so then all of a sudden, a few minutes later they noticed . . . she was gone. But she'd left her briefcase. So they picked it up and tried to talk to the temple workers and see if anyone had seen her or knew where she went — tried to find her, and they couldn't. So they decided, "Well, maybe if we open the briefcase, then it'll have her name or something in it, and we can locate her that way." So when they unlatched the briefcase, undid the fasteners or whatever, it just flew open, you know, because it was so filled with papers and things, and the pressure was pretty great. And it turned out that the information that was on the papers was this lady's genealogy who'd remarked to the group that she'd gone as far as she could go.
>
> A dear LDS lady left her small family in Phoenix to go to the temple in Mesa. While she was in the middle of a session, she got a strong feeling that she should go home — that something was terribly wrong. The feeling wouldn't go away, so she told the temple president and asked him what she should do. He said, "Have no fear. You are doing the right thing by being here. All is well at home." So she continued the session. She hurried home when she was through and found her six-year-old daughter in bed. She asked her daughter if something was wrong. She told her mother that she had left the house while the babysitter was busy with the other children and had gone out by the canal near their house. While she was playing, she slipped on some grass and fell in. She couldn't swim, and the canal is deep. Many people drown this way. But a lady all dressed in white came along just then and got her just before she would have drowned. The lady set her on the bank and made sure she was okay. The little

girl asked the lady who she was because she knew that the lady didn't live near by. So, the lady told her what her name was. The lady who saved the little girl was the lady whom the mother had done work for in the temple that day.

In all these stories there is what I would call an "if/then" structure. If the Lord really saved the missionaries from the gang, if the investigator's father really appeared to him, if the frustrated genealogist's family data were really given to her in a remarkable way, and if the daughter of the woman who had attended the temple was really saved by the woman for whom saving gospel ordinances had just been completed — if all these events really happened, then missionary work, genealogical research, and temple work must be true principles; and if they are true principles, then we should more diligently seek after them; and if we seek after them, then the Lord will bless us, protecting us from harm and guiding us to success as good finally conquers evil.

Heroic though it may be, this struggle between good and evil can wear us down a bit — especially those of us painfully aware of our own imperfections in a society that demands perfection. Some crack under the pressure, but most of us make it through, primarily because of our convictions, but partly because we, unlike the Puritans, have learned to laugh at ourselves and at the system that controls us. Consider, for example, the poor bishop who must urge his people on to a standard of conduct he seems not capable of reaching himself:

There was a Mormon bishop in a small Utah town who, like all Mormon bishops, worked so hard at his calling that he never had time for his own activities. One Sunday, when the pressure had gotten unbearable, he decided to skip meeting and go golfing. This he did and had quite an enjoyable time. Upon returning home, however, he found his town had vanished. A bit bewildered, he went to his house where he found a note tacked to his door. It read: "Sorry we missed you. — Enoch."

Or consider another bishop who must commit himself to an ideal world while pragmatically learning to deal with the real world:

A bishop who was conducting a church building fund in his ward preached a sermon from the pulpit one time about being blessed for contributing to the building fund. After his sermon, a member came up to him and said, "Bishop, that was a damned fine sermon." The bishop replied, "Brother, you had better watch the swearing." The member continued, "Yes sir, Bishop, that was such a damned fine sermon that I gave an extra $650 for the building fund." The bishop paused, then said, "Yes, brother, it takes a hell of a lot of money to build a church."

Or consider the long-suffering Relief Society president:

A Catholic priest, a rabbi, and a Mormon bishop were bragging about how much their various congregations believe them. So they decided to test a member of each faith to see which one would believe a strange thing. They went to a Jew's home. "Hello, Mrs. Goldstein: I'm a holy cow," said the rabbi. "Oh, come on," said Mrs. Goldstein, "you're a lot of strange things, but I know you're not a holy cow." So they went to a parishioners home, and the priest said, "Hello, Mrs. Florentin; I'm a holy cow." "Oh, father," she said, "I know you're not a holy cow, but come on inside anyway." So they went to a Relief Society president's house with whom the bishop had had many meetings. He knocked on the door. As soon as she saw who it was, she exclaimed, "Holy cow, is that you again?"

Or consider, finally, the poor stake president in the following story:

> At a stake conference in Idaho once the stake president was sitting up on the stand, and somebody else was talking. The stake president noticed three people standing up in the back because they didn't have a seat. He proceeded to attract the attention of one of the deacons to have him go get three chairs. He was motioning, signaling "three" with his fingers, moving his lips wide and slow, mouthing the words "three chairs." But the deacon still hesitated. The stake president kept it up, getting more insistent all the time and finally said, "Come on, get up." So the deacon finally dragged himself up [in front of the congregation] and said: "Rah, rah, rah, stake president!"

If there is any central figure in Mormon folk humor it is not J. Golden Kimball — who today belongs more to popular culture than to folk culture — or any of the revered, and sometimes frightening, General Authorities. The central figure is the beleaguered bishop, his counterpart, the Relief Society president, and occasionally a high councilor or stake president — in other words, people not too different from you and me. If we have not already become the very leaders the jokes poke fun at, we are likely to do so if we mind our manners. These leaders are bedeviled by the same problems that plague us. Hence there is a more affectionate feeling toward the objects of Mormon humor than there is in the anticlerical jokes of many other groups. As we laugh at the jokes, we are perhaps laughing more at the circumstance of being Mormon than at the imperfect bishop or stake president. We are laughing, that is, at ourselves—and through that laughter finding the means to deal with stresses that might otherwise be our undoing.

This, then, is the Mormon world scholars of a future age would discover if they were to turn to the materials in the folklore archive and to publications based on those materials. In this world, people take great pride in their pioneer heritage and seek in the heroic deeds of their founding fathers and mothers models of conduct for the present day; they see themselves engaged in a struggle between good and evil and attempt to encourage proper behavior by recounting faith-promoting stories, or remarkable providences, of the tragedies that will strike the wicked and of the rewards that await the righteous. And when the burdens of their religion sometimes weigh too heavily upon them, they seek to ease the pressures by laughing at both themselves and at the system in order to face the new day with equanimity.

But is this an accurate picture? To answer this question we must consider carefully the nature of folklore inquiry. As I said at the outset, folklore is an unfailing mirror of what is most important in a society. The problem is that what the nonspecialist sees in that mirror will be what the scholar chooses to collect and study. In defining legends, Richard M. Dorson once wrote: "There would be little point . . . in remembering the countless ordinary occurrences of daily life, so the legend . . . is distinguished [from regular discourse] by describing an extraordinary event. In some way the incident at its core contains noteworthy, remarkable, astonishing or otherwise memorable aspects" (1962, 18). But in far too many studies, what is considered memorable has been determined not by the people who tell the stories, but by those who collect

and study them. Thus while folklore remains a true mirror for culture, the cultural reality reflected in a published work depends very often upon the predisposition and presuppositions of the scholars holding the mirror. (And that, of course, is true also for historical and sociological studies of Mormon culture.)

In 1948 Austin Fife wrote in the *Journal of American Folklore*:

> The roots of the theology of divine intercession are so deeply implanted in the Mormon folk mentality that forces for the cultural absorption of Mormonia into the current of intellectual life have, at best, made only superficial penetration. The integrity of the philosopher and the objectivity of the man of science are in Utah as a thin crust over a pie of spiritualism and propitiatory ritual still hot from the oven. Humanists and scientists of Mormonia are compelled either to bury their ideals in speechless serenity or to resort to a fantastic set of mental calisthenics in order to appear to accommodate their beliefs to the spiritualistic impulse of their environment. Failing this, they must depart Zion to take refuge among the Gentiles, for the time has not yet come when they may aspire to become prophets in their own land. (1948, 30)

Now I would argue that this statement is not overburdened with scholarly detachment and that the sentiments expressed there would have to shape the images reflected in Fife's Mormon folklore study — that is, in his mirror for Mormon culture. When he and his wife Alta published *Saints of Sage and Saddle: Folklore among the Mormons* (1956) eight years later, much of the anger evident in this statement had disappeared, but enough of it remained to color at least the tone of the writing through which some of the data were presented in the book.

But I am concerned here not so much with the Fifes, whose enduring contributions to Mormon and American folklore studies are incontrovertible, as with my own work, with the research and writing I have conducted in Mormon folklore for the past twenty years. Once again, does the picture I have drawn give an accurate view of Mormons? Two months ago I might have answered, "Yes." After all, the picture does capture principal concerns in the Church — the reality of Satan, the need for constant vigilance in adhering to gospel principles, the importance of missionary work to save the living and of genealogical research and temple work to save the dead. But, in spite of all this, I must now answer the question, "Only in part."

During the Christmas break, my wife, Hannele, and my son and I visited Hannele's mother in Finland. The night before I returned I had my own remarkable experience, which I recorded in a letter to a friend:

> Hannele's mother has excellent home teachers. One of them keeps her drvieway clear of snow, and the other takes her and an even older blind sister to church each Sunday. The day before I left Finland this good blind sister, Sister Vassenius, was having problems with her back and asked her home teachers to give her a blessing. One of them couldn't make it, so the other asked me to join him. We went into her darkened old home, where she still lives alone, in spite of her blindness and eighty-eight years. He anointed, and I blessed. I heard no voices, saw no visions, witnessed no miracle — except the miracle of heart touching heart. When I finished, she stood up, put her arms around me, and thanked me for blessing her with peace. And I realized, perhaps better than I have for a long time, that what I had just experienced was the essence

> of the gospel. The gospel's not to be found in intellectual discussions about God's omniscience, nor in scholarly debates over the nature of Joseph's first vision or over whether or not he used a divining rod. It's to be found in the homes and hearts of the Sister Vasseniuses throughout the church, where people take seriously the Savior's injunction, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," and as a result find rest to their souls. I wish the missionaries who brought Sister Vassenius into the church long years ago could have been there to witness this fruit of their labors, to see the gospel they had preached bring light to blind eyes and joy to a tired heart.

As I sat on the plane the next day thinking of this experience, I recalled another good Finnish member whose husband had been a chain-smoking alcoholic who in a drunken stupor had thrown up all over the rug the first time the missionaries visited but who gradually turned his life completely around and embraced all the virtues he had once scorned. His wife told me, "Before the missionaries came, my life was hell on earth; now it's heaven." "If experiences like these are at the heart of what it means to be Mormon," I wondered — at the heart of that value center I talked about — "why aren't they a part of Mormon folklore." And then I realized that, of course, they are — they have just not been collected and studied. I have probably told the story of the alcoholic's conversion a hundred times; and I have heard a hundred stories like it. Yet rarely have I attempted to collect that kind of material.

During my first year in graduate school at Indiana University, I reviewed the Fifes' *Saints of Sage and Saddle* in Professor Dorson's seminar on theory and technique. In the main, I praised the book — and it deserves praise; but I also criticized what struck me as the work's exaggerated emphasis on the supernatural at the expense of any discussion of Mormon moral and spiritual values and of the motivating principles of sacrifice and service which I knew from experience were essential parts of being Mormon. I wrote:

> The missionary returning from the field will probably tell of a healing or two he has witnessed and of a miraculous conversion he has had a part in, but primarily he will talk about the change of character he has observed in the lives of those who have accepted the gospel. He will tell many stories about people who have abandoned their own interests to devote themselves to the service of others. These stories are just as much a part of Mormon oral tradition as are tales of the supernatural, and no survey of Mormon folklore is complete without them. (1963, 5)

When I wrote those lines, I feared that Professor Dorson would attack me for being a narrow Mormon apologist. Instead he wrote on my paper: "Splendid appraisal and statement of unnoticed Mormon traditions." As I continued Mormon folklore research in the coming years, I should have followed my own instincts; I should have followed Professor Dorson's counsel and turned my attention to these unnoticed traditions. When I left Indiana, I did break new ground in my studies of Mormon folk history (1973 and 1979), of the contemporary era (1976), of Mormon humor (1985), and, with John Harris, of missionary lore (1981 and 1983b); but in my work with Mormon traditions in general I let myself be too easily influenced by what folklorists generally have considered to be memorable in religious folklore — that is, with dramatic tales

of the supernatural — rather than with the quiet lives of committed service that I knew really lay at the heart of the Mormon experience.

Mormon supernatural stories do indeed exist in rich abundance (sometimes too rich for my taste). And they do play the roles I have described. But they are only part of a larger, more important, whole. The picture I have drawn here is not inaccurate; it is simply incomplete or, perhaps better, not quite in focus. It is, therefore, an uncertain mirror for truth. Fortunately, scholarship is usually a self-correcting process. The task for future Mormon folklore study will be to enlarge the picture, and to bring the images reflected in it into sharper focus.

Let me end on a personal note. I attended Indiana University under a National Defense Education Act Fellowship that paid more than I had been earning as a full-time faculty member at BYU and made possible my completing a second major in Uralic-Altaic Studies and picking up an additional minor in anthropology. At the time I made a private vow to pay back to the American public in service the debt I owed them for making my education possible. I have genuinely tried to do that through my teaching, through my involvement in public folklore programs, and especially through my research and writing. By studying closely one group of human beings — the Latter-day Saints — I have hoped to discover the universal truths manifested in specific ethnographic facts and thereby to increase awareness of and sympathy for the human condition in general.

During this past semester, after suffering strength-sapping bouts of ill health and carrying a heavy administrative assignment, I found myself thinking, "You've published some twenty articles on Mormon folklore now. Maybe it's time to bring the best of these together in a book and then to stand by at last and, as Robert Frost might say, watch the woods fill up with snow. Then came my trip to Finland. Rejuvenated now by three weeks away from the office, with my earlier commitment always in memory, and with new research designs for making the study of Mormon folklore a more certain mirror for truth swirling through my mind, I guess I'll have to let the woods go for a while, or let them fill up with snow without my being there to watch. I still have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep.

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Tahitian tifaifai, flower design, Henriette Munanui (Salt Lake City, Utah), 83″×93″, cotton, 1977; (Utah) State Art Collection.

Christmas Morning—1906

Aldyth Morris

BY NOW THE CHRISTMASES OF MY LIFE — all but one — have escaped restrictions of time and place and have arranged themselves, undated, in an intricate mosaic of memories, which can be instantly evoked by such small things as a scrap of tinsel or the smell of pine trees. When this occurs, I see the Christmases of my childhood as vividly as on the moment of awakening. I hear sleigh bells and Christmas carolers and see magnificently trimmed trees, ceiling tall and glittering with lights. With one exception, there are no religious associations with early Christmases — my father was an agnostic. But the Christmas of the year that I turned five stands alone, not part of the mosaic.

Winter of 1906 came late to Logan, Utah, the small Rocky Mountain town where I grew up. The mild autumn weather had held through Thanksgiving, but next day large feathery flakes began to fall and continued, silent and relentless, for days. When at last they stopped, volunteers turned out to clear the sidewalks, leaving snow banks so high that when Bishop Newbold passed on his way to the Fourth Ward meeting house all I could see from our parlor window was the tip of his black hat.

The feel of Christmas was in the air at once, and the sound and fragrance of it, too, as college boys, with sleigh bells jingling, swept down Canyon Road with loads of fresh-cut trees. Papa bought a fine one for a quarter, and we decorated it with last year's trimmings and a new star for the tip. Mama started making fruitcake and plum puddings, letting me shell the walnuts and chop the candied orange peel. Everything was just the same as usual — except that I was worried over Mama. Her feet and hands were swollen — she'd had her wedding ring filed off. She'd taken to wearing her kimono all day, till time for Papa to come home from Brigham Young College where he was a professor, and every day he brought a sack of grapes which she kept in the icebox, for herself alone. It wasn't like Mama not to share.

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Sunday of Christmas week, Grandpa, whom I actually suspected of being Santa Claus, took me riding in his fancy new sleigh. Once beyond the village limits he gave the horse a smart flick with his whip, and we went flying through a soft white world to the music of sleigh bells and the sight of bare poplar trees against the winter sky.

When Grandpa brought me home, Mama was in the parlor with Sister Ricks, a neighbor with a pale angelic face and an ugly goiter. "That child's got a fever," she said and went in the bathroom for a thermometer. It registered 104, and Mama immediately telephoned Dr. Budge. Sister Ricks sent me upstairs, telling me to take off my clothes and get into bed without my nightgown. After a while she came up with a washtub containing two dozen two-quart Mason jars packed tight full of snow, which she put in bed around me. By the time Dr. Budge arrived, my chest was hurting and my throat was sore. He said I was very sick — la grippe.

For several days I was delirious. Then one night I awakened to the sound of choirs singing. Sister Ricks was dozing in her chair. From the window I could see the Fourth Ward meeting house ablaze with lights. I got out of bed, made it to the door, and clinging to the banister, crept downstairs.

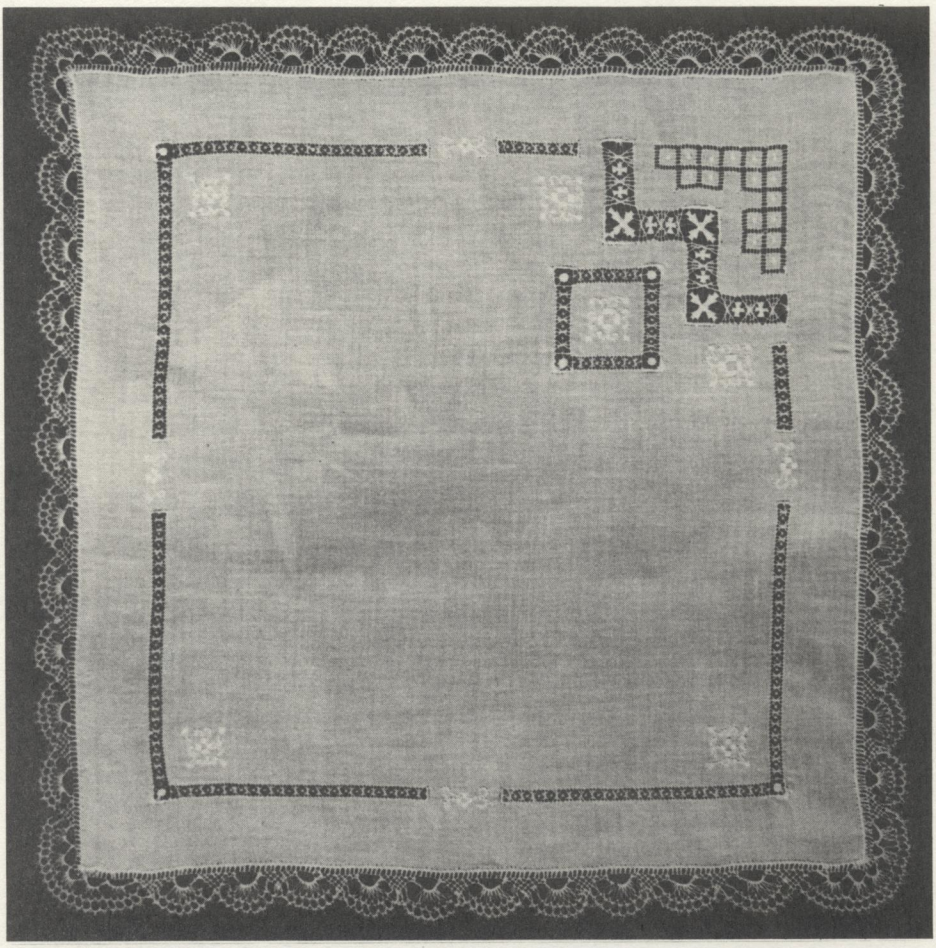
As I lifted my hand to turn the doorknob I heard an agonizing groan and then another. Through the crack I could see Mama lying on the bed, her dark hair fanned out on the pillow. Papa was sitting by her, Aunt Rachel was holding a basin of blue water in which Dr. Budge was washing his hands. On the far side of Mama's bed was — no, I wasn't dreaming — the cradle from the attic that Mama had said was brought across the plains by the handcart pioneers. Shaking with fear, I crawled into the room and tried to hide.

There was another groan — the worst yet, then another and another and another. Dr. Budge kept telling Mama to press down, and Papa, looking awfully worried, had moved away. All of a sudden Dr. Budge was holding up by its feet a baby boy. He spanked it once. A second time. Aunt Rachel said, "Dear God, let it breathe." Then she saw me. Jerking me to my feet, she marched me to the hall and out onto the porch. Pointing to the meeting house, she said, "Tell the bishop to come. A baby's dying."

In no time I was pounding on the big doors of the meeting house. Eventually they opened from the inside. Past the usher, down the chapel aisle I ran and up onto the platform. The choir kept on singing. I pulled the bishop to his feet, and he came with me down the aisle, grabbing his hat as we flew through the vestibule. He ran ahead of me down the block, and I, determined to be fair, cried after him, "My father's not a Mormon, you know." Aunt Rachel met him at the gate.

I arrived in time to see Mama give the limp and tiny figure to the bishop. Holding it in one big hand, without even warming it, he placed the other one on the baby's chest, closed his eyes and began — I supposed — to pray. I was watching Mama's face. There never was again or ever will be for me a more agonizing moment. Then, gradually my mother's face grew beautiful once more, Papa put his arm around her, Aunt Rachel said, "God be praised," Dr. Budge said, "I'll be damned," and my little brother let out a lusty yell.

My father stood up and shook hands with the bishop, and I, who in a few short moments had beheld the miracle of birth and death and resurrection, knew that things would never be the same again. I went upstairs alone. Sister Ricks was still dozing in her chair. Out there, the meeting house was still ablaze with lights, and the choir was still singing. In a little while it would be Christmas morning — 1906.



Needlelace-edged handkerchief, Melva Emrazian (Salt Lake City, Utah), 13½" square, cotton thread, 1988; (Utah) State Art Collection.

...of the Book...

Helen B. Cannon

MY FRIEND'S TWO-YEAR-OLD LOVES THE STORIES IN BOOKS. He loves them so much that sometimes he takes a book from his mother's hands, places it on the floor, and tries to step into the story. All my life I have been doing that — trying to step into the books I read. Sometimes it is not even a matter of trying. I am sucked into a story, helpless as a fly in a drain.

One summer when our boys were small, I remember, we rented a cabin at Bear Lake for a couple of days. The cabin turned out to be a dirty, ramshackle affair, and we had rain the entire space of our beach vacation. But it was not these facts alone that made me irascible — it was the book I had stepped into. Henny Pollit, in Christina Stead's *The Man Who Loved Children*, was a discontented woman, trapped in her life, as I was trapped in that dingy, leaking cabin. My husband, Larry, found my anger inexplicable, not realizing that I had pulled him into the story with me — the kids too — and they were all paying for the abuse Henny took from life. Her loathing became my own, and that Bear Lake cabin, a Pollit-y universe.

Author Joan Didion says that she *writes* to find out what she knows. I *read* to find out what I know. Not only that, I read to determine how I see. When I was a child, I used to make visits with my parents to their south-central Utah home in Emery County. The trip from our home in Logan, the state's northern tip, to that desert region seemed very long. As I lay, carsick and drowsy, on the back seat of Daddy's 1942 Chevy, my parents' talk would drift back to me. From those snatches of overheard conversation, I gathered that the desert country to which we traveled was barren, dry, and empty — a dull expanse of sand, where even cedar, sage, and bunchgrass had no names or beauty. When we returned to our mountain-valley home, I mimicked their sighs of relief, grateful to be back in a green world. These sighs were echoes of those uttered by pioneer Saints, who looked upon desert as Old Testament wilderness from

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which they prayed to be delivered. At six I had heard enough pioneer stories to know that the main burden of the Saints was to make the desert blossom as a rose, not as a cactus.

Like early eastern artists who traveled West to paint but saw and painted only verdant, memory hills of home, my own visual palette allowed only green shades, never the vermillion or burnt-umber colors of desert country, not the black gloss of desert varnish on slickrock walls, not the gray-blue of sage, nor the creamy lace of Indian rice grass. Not until I was grown and had read Mary Austin's *Land of Little Rain* and Joseph Wood Krutch's *The Desert Year* did I open my eyes to desert beauties. Not until I walked through Arches with Edward Abbey's *Desert Solitaire* as my guide did I awaken from my stupor to see the crenellated splendor of cliff, the intensity and largeness of desert skies, the delicate color of tamarisk-lined banks.

If books opened my eyes to beauty, they also showed me the mundane to which I had been oblivious. On other childhood road trips with my parents, nothing seemed quite so grand as a motel room. I liked the turquoise chenille spreads, the calendar landscapes framed on the walls, the tiny Camay soaps, and in those days, the knotty-pine walls, diminutive kitchenettes, and Gideon Bibles on night tables. Even as I grew up and motels became more slick and generic, I still felt excited and pampered — intrigued by massage mattresses, "sanitized" toilet seats, and glitter-stuccoed ceilings. Was it Nabokov's *Lolita*, then that alerted me to the sleaziness of it all — the American landscape peppered with Nitey-Nite and Kozy Korner clones; Pine View Cabins, Komfy Nooks, Cliffview Inns, Bar Z Motor Courts, evolving beyond Humbert Humbert's worst nightmares, to the ubiquitous eighties' motel, with its color TV, shag rug, plastic tub, and heavily chlorinated pool. It is not entirely a case, then of *tabula rasa*, but of *tabula erasa*. Books erase old notions I've had; they are my taste makers.

Always the edges of my life have been fuzzy, bleeding into books as the books bled into my consciousness, so that I've never been able to tell where one stops and the other begins. Proust said that a good enough book makes its readers into people who believe in it because they can't help themselves. For me it is more than that. Like an onion with layers of skin, I seem to be made up of levels of book-induced awareness. Peel me back, and I fear you would find only a shriveled sheath of unbooked sensibilities.

Yet my consciousness is not entirely passive. Without books, I still would have grieved over my salesman father's death on Montana's icy highway. But Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* encapsulates my own father's tragedy, and as I touch the play, like a rosary bead, I tell out the sorrow.

> Nobody dast blame this man. . . . Willie was a salesman. And for a salesman, there is no rock bottom to the life. . . . He's a man way out there in the blue, riding on a smile and a shoeshine. And when they start not smiling back — that's an earthquake. And then you get yourself a couple of spots on your hat, and you're finished. Nobody dast blame this man. A salesman is got to dream, boy. It comes with the territory. (1949, 138)

I understand my father better through these lines; I grieve more deeply over his life and his death through them.

Admittedly I am a hoarder of the printed word, unable to part with books, reluctant to lend them, appalled at the thought of destroying or of throwing them away. My books may be dog-eared, underlined, patterned with my sophomoric marginalia, or stuffed with clippings and pressed flowers, but they remain on my shelves till they crumble to dust. I fully understand the reverence for books central to Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, and as keeper of our books, I am zealous as that book's medieval librarian with his labyrinthine passages and secret doors to the illumined pages.

To lose a book is to lose part of myself, my character, my taste, my auxiliary memory bank, and certain precious friends. Colette and Sido, Clarissa Dalloway, and Emma Bovary — how can I part with them when they have so extended my awareness, heightened my understanding, tapped my joys, and accentuated my sorrows? These are friends almost as real and dear as my flesh and blood ones, usually more articulate, and sometimes more constant. Mrs. Ramsey is not ephemeral, though she dies in a single paragraph. I can bring her back by reading *To the Lighthouse* again and again.

I acknowledge books as transforming. Born in the Church, I remember the transformation to true personal belief that came when I first read the Book of Mormon. And whenever my conviction lags, I can go back to "that ancient record brought forth from the earth, as the voice of a people speaking from the dust." I can't conceive of my faith taking impetus or permanence from a video. Separated and made distinctive by The Book that set them apart, the Jews became known as "the People of the Book." In a similar way, Latter-day Saints, defined by their books of faith, are also a People of the Book. I would hate to think we could evolve into a People of the Video Presentation.

Isaac Bashevis Singer, having grown up with the Torah, once said that he thought of God as an "eternal *belle lettrist*," and that we are at once his immortal characters and readers. Yet I am realist enough to know that I could no more limit myself, say, to Book of Mormon reading than I could play a harp throughout eternity. I look at the Church section of our bookshelves, bulging with twenty years of DIALOGUE, with each *Sunstone* and *Exponent II* issue since the first, with Mormon fiction and history, biography and poetry, theology and criticism, and I realize that my testimony depends on more than scripture, just as my way of life is illumined by more than the "classics." I do not dismiss the prophet's injunction to read and reread the Book of Mormon, any more than I align myself with those who would eliminate the classics from the curriculum. Though I love reading Shakespeare and appreciate Homer (to name two of the most canonical of canonic authors), I reject the notion of being limited to any fixed canon — in either religious or secular reading. Tony Morrison's *Beloved* is more relevant for me, certainly, than Spencer's *Faerie Queene*. And the landmark "pink issue" of DIALOGUE was more a spiritual lifeline for me than a fifth reading of the Book of Mormon would have been at the time. To relinquish my range of reading would be to diminish my humanity and to smother my belief.

In fact, a plentitude of good books is the reward I receive in this life and the one I seek in the next — it is my way of touching eternity. Of course it is a book that inspires my closing image, and I smile and cry as I read again Virginia Woolf's words, hoping I can, by virtue of my bibliomania, be among her number:

> I have sometimes dreamt, at least, that when the Day of Judgment dawns and the great conquerors and lawyers and statesmen come to receive their rewards — their crowns, their laurels, their names carved indelibly upon perishable marble — the Almighty will turn to Peter and will say, not without a certain envy, when He sees us coming with our books under our arms, "Look, these need no reward. We have nothing to give them here. They have loved reading." (1932, 245)

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Women's moccasins, rose design, Hazel and Wallace Zundel (Clearfield, Utah), 4½"×9½"×3", buckskin, glass beads, 1982, (Utah) State Art Collection.

On a Denver Bus

Anita Tanner

Out of the cold Christmas streets
we climb to an old woman
raising her scarfed face to us,
scarred and hollow-nosed,
lowered at the shock in our eyes.
"What happened to her face?"
over and over from my daughter.
I ponder birth, burning,
frostbite, and the ice in a city street
crackling under the burden of rubber,
and hear someone's words
that ice splits starwise,
then utter the cry:
Make us whole
from the confusion of this face,
the face reflected
in every bus window.

ANITA TANNER has a perpetual interest in poetry and literature and resides in Cortez, Colorado, with her husband and six children.

Grandpa's Coffee

Dennis Smith

IT IS A MORNING FLIGHT. We have gained altitude and are somewhere over the Colorado Rockies. Below, through breaks in the clouds, a thin film of early snowfall covers the mountaintops like a veil. High mountain lakes, cupped in pockets, look black and cold in the early morning light, and the sound of the jet engines covers thinking.

I am alone in row 10, right behind the bulkhead, so there are no seats in front of me. A thin airline blanket warms my stocking feet. It is so peaceful after a hectic week of getting ready for this flight that I am very relaxed.

The stewardess bends toward me. Do I want some breakfast? Yes. A minute later she comes with orange juice, a baking powder biscuit, scrambled eggs, and sausage. Coffee?

A long, almost awkward pause.

Shocked at the sound of my own voice, I hear myself say yes. She pours the coffee into a styrofoam cup and hands it to me. The warm, brown coffee is steaming. Almost ritualistically, I set the coffee gently on the tray. She hands me a packet of sugar and a little plastic cup of creamer, a cup identical in size to the little sacrament cups in church.

Alone again (there is a man in a gray suit across the aisle, but he is absorbed in a book and three empty seats away), I carefully tear the sugar packet and pour the white granules in a thin stream into the steaming coffee. The cream pours from the little cup like white blood, coloring the coffee a lighter brown.

Something deep is welling up.

I stir the coffee with a red plastic stir stick, slowly. I lift it to my mouth, and the scent of Grandpa's coffee overwhelms me.

Grandpa's kitchen. I am across the table from him. Grandpa bows his head in a patterned little prayer, lifts his head, and begins to eat. On the stove to his left and behind him the coffee percolates, bubbling up into the little

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round glass knob at the top of the pot — the sound of it like bubbling water in a spring from deep in the earth.

Grandpa, I love you.

The scent of coffee from the styrofoam cup embraces me, and I am filled with an overwhelming sense of sorrow and loss. Grandpa's arms close over me. He lays my head against his tan, cotton shirt and begins to cry. I turn my head to the window, toward the sun-sprayed clouds below, and my whole upper body tightens with the deep ache you feel when everything breaks and the boards of the irrigation headgate are pulled away. The scent of Grandpa's coffee engulfs me. I drink deep and full, bringing Grandpa back into my consciousness, pulling him back into a comforting embrace to hold the hurt and cleanse it.

We are somewhere east of the Mississippi now. I think I heard the captain say something about St. Louis a little while ago — but I wasn't really listening. His voice was like that of someone in another room, and I was too preoccupied to notice exactly what was being said.

Emotionally, I am exhausted. I have not felt so exhausted — or so at peace — for a very long time. It is, in fact, a new feeling, this peacefulness. It is as if I have made a peace with myself in some odd sort of way, but no concessions have been necessary. Just gentle reconciliations. I would not have thought it could be so settling, this unexpected feeling of self-acceptance that comes with the beauty of cloud orchards as a backdrop, spread over an endless horizon, and the power of coffee, filling and purifying the reverent space of a retired farmer's kitchen no longer there.

Pure Thin Bones

Lisa Madsen de Rubilar

José Luís was sick. That was why Michelle and Renata stopped by to see him on their way home from missionary zone meeting. They walked with Nielsen, his companion, who had gone to the meeting alone and who told them that José Luís was more sick of working than sick with anything else. "But you can come and visit him anyway, if you want; that's why he's home in bed," Nielsen said, "He'd have people sitting around with him and drinking *máte* with him all day if he could. He'd have you holding hands with him next, if you would." Nielsen looked right at Michelle when he said this, and he laughed. Renata laughed too; but Michelle turned as if she hadn't heard and watched the wheels of a city bus spin to a halt beside them.

A flash of purple flickered at the edge of her sight; then something hit her, hard, and she fell forward onto the pavement. From her hands and knees she saw the man who had jumped from the doorway of the moving bus take lunging steps off his toes, patting the ground lightly with his fingers at each step. Nielsen grabbed Michelle's arm just as the man righted himself and looked back at her in astonishment. Then he was jogging on up the street with a gym bag bouncing against his bright purple sweat pants.

"I know that guy," Renata cried.

"What a pig!" Nielsen said. "He could have at least said I'm sorry."

"I know him from a dance back home in Santiago." Renata picked up Michelle's book bag and handed it to her.

"Are you ok?" Nielsen said. Michelle was rubbing the heels of her hands together, but she started walking fast as Nielsen spoke.

"I'm ok," she said.

"I wonder what he's doing here," Renata said. "He's a real crazy; that's why I'd know him anywhere."

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"A real pig, I'd say," Nielsen said. Michelle rubbed her hands against her skirt. Her knees hurt, too. She could still see the man who knocked her down loping unevenly along the crowded sidewalk ahead. He was very thin. His gym bag, his thick boots, even his low-slung sweat pants dragged at him terribly. It seemed impossible that a person so fragile could hit with such force. Michelle massaged her shoulder. His bones had been very hard.

"After the dance we were all just talking and sort of milling around. All of a sudden this guy runs to the stage and screams until his neck turns red — like a chicken about to get his head chopped off: 'Shut up! Fernando's trying to give the closing prayer.' Then Fernando's too embarrassed to even walk out in front. 'Shut up!' the guy yells again. 'So I'll give the prayer if you won't do it.' He folds his arms and shuts his eyes up tight and bellows out a prayer. He says he hopes we get home without sinning and without being hit by a truck. None of us even closed our eyes. We just laughed the whole way through. He's a real crazy. I'd heard of him before."

They watched the man in the purple sweats disappear around the next corner.

"What a pig," Nielsen said.

When they got to the *pensión* where José Luís and Nielsen boarded, Nielsen told Michelle and Renata to wait in the front room. "I'll go see if Piña's decent for visitors," he said.

As he spoke, the *mamita* of the house walked in carrying a basket of rolls in one hand and a pitcher in the other. "Elder Piña's got one visitor already," she said, her double chin brimming eagerly over her collar. Then she disappeared into the dining room where they could hear her calling, "And how are you Sisters today?"

"I guess you can come on back, then," Nielsen said, leading the way down the hall.

He pushed open the bedroom door and walked straight across the room to slam the window up. "Man, what a smell!" he said. When Michelle reached the doorway, she noticed first the heavy odor of Vicks and steamed eucalyptus leaves and then the man in purple sweat pants standing at the foot of the bed. He didn't turn around as she and Renata edged into the room, or even look over at Nielsen's loud bustlings by the window. Michelle could see his ribs through his t-shirt. His gym bag dangled down his back supported by a single thread left in the strap.

José Luís was working at folding a pillow in half and stuffing it behind his neck at the right angle. His knees jerked back and forth with the effort, sending his handkerchief and various wads of toilet paper skittering across the sheet. An open wallet jiggled at his side. When he glanced up and saw Renata and Michelle in the doorway, he smiled, his eyes and nose as red as an all-night mourner's. "Hello hello!" he said. He coughed and snorted into his handkerchief and told them the man at the foot of his bed was his friend.

"Adrian's from my ward back home in Santiago. He's following the bike race, the one that's over a thousand kilometers long. It started in Santiago;

it'll end in Puerto Montt two days from now. Adrian arrives ahead of the racers in every city to see them come in. So today he's here in Valdivia."

"Your friend must have been in a big hurry to see you," Nielsen said.

"This is my *compañerito*, Elder Nielsen," José Luís told Adrian, who looked around for the first time. Leaning over to Nielsen, Adrian grasped at his hand quickly, as though afraid it might escape him. Then he stepped over to where Renata and Michelle stood near the door. "And this is Sister Godoy and Sister Lowell," José Luís said.

The perspiration on Adrian's hand made Michelle's raw palm smart. When he turned back to the bed, she wiped it against her skirt. Then she said to José Luís, "How are you feeling?"

"Better than some; worse than most," José Luís replied. He laughed; then he coughed into his handkerchief. "How was zone meeting?"

"Nothing special," Renata said.

Nielsen had seated himself on the bed across from José Luís and was scribbling on a weekly planning sheet. His pen made hard biting sounds against the stiff paper.

"Can I ask you a favor?" José Luís said to him. Nielsen looked up. "Could you walk with Adrian down to Picarte Street and show him where the buses pass on their way out of town? That would save him a trip back down to the terminal."

"I would," Nielsen said, capping his pen and placing it in his shirt pocket, "but I'm going with the García boy at noon to visit the Lagos family." He began stuffing a large binder into a backpack.

"We could go with him," Michelle said. She caught herself almost before the words were out, but not soon enough to disguise them. She added quickly, despairingly, "Is that all right with you, Sister Godoy?"

It was too late. Renata was already gazing out the window, saying, "If that's what you want." Michelle was silent. "Miss Alicia will have lunch ready at home," Renata added.

Michelle pulled a thread out of Nielsen's bedspread and wrapped it in a tight spiral around her fingertip, examining the contrast between red and white flesh. She could feel the blood pulsing there, trying to force its way past the thread barrier. Adrian watched her fingers.

"It is the heart that is alone in this lonely world," Adrian said. He walked to the head of the bed and gave José Luís a loud slap on the shoulder. "My good brother," he said, then he turned and walked out of the room. José Luís looked after him without saying anything.

"He sure didn't stay long after being in such a hurry to see you," Nielsen observed, hitching his backpack onto one shoulder and standing up.

"He wants to get to Osorno," José Luís said. "He needed some money for the bus."

"And you gave it to him."

"He's my friend. That's why he came here."

"You're not even supposed to give *me* any money if I ask for it. Now I'll have to pay your way to the conference next week; so then I'll be the one breaking the rules."

"I'll write home."

"You know that's not the point. You know I don't care about money. I have enough and to spare. I just wish you'd take care of yours — and not let every blood-sucker who comes along —"

José Luís sat up. "I said he's my friend."

"What kind of friend travels nine hundred kilometers to a bike race without any money, then expects other people to pay his way back?"

"He's going on to Osorno. I only had enough for him to get to Osorno."

"And then what? How's he going to get back to Santiago?"

"I gave him all I had."

"And you think that's the way to help him? You could've paid his way back to Santiago with that money, not left him stranded in some city further south."

"He didn't want to go to Santiago."

Nielsen lifted one shoulder and grated breath across the back of his throat. "So what kind of friend are you? You shouldn't have given him the money. From what Sister Godoy was telling us, he has some real problems; and from what we've seen, he's not even safe on the streets."

"Don't you think I know he could get into trouble?" José Luís's throat buzzed. He lifted his handkerchief from near his knee. He coughed into it and looked up with red eyes. "He stood right there and took off his sweats because I said I liked them. Then he would have gone to Osorno anyway — in his underwear — so stand there and tell me I shouldn't have given him the money." José Luís offered Nielsen the interior of his handkerchief. "Tell me trust isn't worth even this much," he said.

"*Estúpido*," Nielsen said and went out to eat lunch.

José Luís shoved his wallet under the sheet and pulled it taut over his knees. He eyed its smoothness, adjusted his grip, retightened it. Michelle felt tired. She sat down on Nielsen's bed and dropped her book bag on the floor. Leaning forward, she saw that bright spots of blood had dried on her knees.

"You know," José Luís said at last, "just before you got here I was saying to Adrian, 'Hey, you look great in those purple sweats.' The next thing I know, he's got them down around his knees. 'They'd look greater on you,' he says. 'They're too big for me.' I say, 'I have some already,' but by then he has one leg out and he's starting on the other. 'But these are much better — softer. And they're purple. Like the sun's eye,' he says. I had to argue for five minutes to get him to put them back on, and I don't think he ever would've if he hadn't heard you coming down the hall." A city bus shifting gears outside changed whine to roar and sent exhaust through the open window.

José Luís looked over at Renata. "Elder Nielsen mentioned that you know Adrian, so I guess you know how he is."

"I don't know him much."

"It was drugs — a long time ago. Before he was baptized. He feels things more than other people. Hate makes him mad."

"He has no reason to be upset," Renata said quickly. "I was just thinking of Miss Alicia waiting with lunch. But we can probably walk down to Picarte with him if we hurry." She didn't look over at Michelle.

"I mean," José Luís said, "that hate makes him crazy. He can't fit it in his mind anywhere. It knocks over the china." Michelle stared at the pattern of blood specks on her knees.

A sudden breeze flowed into the room, like one of those brief ocean waves that fills every fissure of a cavern and then recedes. Renata spoke into the well of its departure. "Well, I guess we better go if we're going to walk him down there."

"I think he's already gone," Michelle said.

"He's not gone," José Luís smiled. "He'll be waiting for you outside." Then he laughed aloud. "Adrian knows people, I tell you!"

Michelle stood up and swung her book bag in a slow arc from the floor to her shoulder. Something inside her head felt suddenly lighter. "See you later," she said to José Luís. "I hope you feel better tomorrow."

José Luís was right. The *mamita* of the *pensión* met them in the living room and told them that Elder Piña's visitor had refused to stay for lunch, or even to rest on the sofa — he was waiting outside for them to take him to the bus stop. "And Elder Nielsen's already gone, too," she said, jiggling her folds of chin. "He never will sit still a minute. Gulped his soup down, hot as it was, and wouldn't eat any baked milk for dessert. That's why he's so thin. He just won't eat the way he should. Always looking at the clock. 'Got to go, Mamita,' he always says, and poor Elder Piña just starting on dessert. 'Elder,' I say to the Gringito, 'your companion might like a little something hot to drink after lunch, you know. It's his habit. You'll give him indigestion.' But Elder Nielsen just laughs; 'I have to cure him of his *máte*, Mamita. It's bad for his nerves.' He's a good one for laughing, that Elder Nielsen. So Elder Piña gets up from the table with a spoon still in his mouth, and he throws me one of those faces of his — like a cat in love — and drags one foot along the floor as he goes. 'You'll mar the wax, Elderito,' I yell. 'Do you think I want to break my back polishing every day because of you?' He just laughs, too. The Chileno laughs even more than the gringo. He never stops unless he's eating, but he eats like no one — except for now, of course, when he's so sick. *Pobrecito.*"

Michelle shielded her eyes from the sun as she stepped out onto the porch. Pebbles sparked in the asphalt road beyond the iron fence. She could not see Adrian at first and thought again that he had already gone. It was not until she approached the gate that she saw him hunched over some flowers on the other side of the bars. A space had opened up between his purple sweat pants and green t-shirt, showing a stripe of flesh and two jagged vertebrae. He was rooting around with his hands, trying to stand the flowers straight again after last night's rainstorm. At least, that's what Michelle thought he was doing.

"Those flowers are pretty," she said as she approached. Adrian looked up and then down again quickly, against the sunlight. Michelle was surprised because he was so much younger than she had thought, and because he had thrust up at her, along with his eyes, a dirty hand uncurling itself like a leaf.

"It's trash," he said. A piece of greenish cellophane glinted in his palm along with some shreds of yellowed newspaper. Then the hand turned fist and jerked back, just as his eyes had jerked up and away from the light. Without looking up again, he headed to where a candy wrapper stuck wetly to the concrete flanks of the fence. His fingers were delicate quick; the trash went into his back pocket. He murmured to himself as he ran and crouched and ran and crouched, "And this, and this, and this. . . ." Michelle and Renata looked at his curved back, at the white strip of skin above purple, at the two vertebrae jutting up like clenched knuckles.

"Shall we go?" Renata said loudly. Adrian straightened immediately. He looked at her for several seconds, a piece of clear plastic fluttering from his fist.

"Let's go then," he said, and placed himself between Michelle and Renata as they started down the sidewalk.

When they got to Picarte Street, Adrian said, "Will you wait here with me for a minute?" He said this to Michelle, but she was looking at a bike shop across the street where a little boy was trying to climb onto one of the model bikes outside. The bike was too tall for him to get his leg across the bar. Adrian said again, "*Sólo un minuto.*"

Michelle turned to Renata. "Yes," Renata said, "We can stay for a minute. Is that ok with you, Sister Lowell?"

"Yes," Michelle answered.

"We who are in the midst of darkness shall see a great light," Adrian said. He walked to the edge of the sidewalk, balanced there on the balls of his feet, and peered sideways down the street.

"You know," he said to Michelle, "if I stood one meter further south, I would be dead by now."

Michelle looked at him quickly, starting a smile. But then she said, "I thought that once, too. Right after my friend got killed in an accident." They watched the cars whiz by in front of them. Each flash of noise and color pushed a wave of hot air against their bodies.

"Has anyone ever tried to kill you?" Adrian asked. He stepped off the sidewalk and stood in the street facing Michelle. A truck passed near his heel and lifted black hair away from his collar.

"Please step up here," Michelle said.

"When I was in prison, they tried to kill me. They all hated me, of course. In there an informer is a worm on its slimy belly. That's what they called me: Informer. And they wanted to stomp out my worm guts. Sure, I had been a snake around the guy's filthy ankles when he tried to get away with that girl's purse. Broke out two of his teeth when he hit the pavement. I took him in myself, with the purse still in his hand; but the police — did they thank me for it? They cursed me for the blood on the floor and for getting there at lunch hour. They let the thief go. And me they locked up — to be killed in there as an informer."

"Why did they lock you up?"

"There was this whole pile of garbage on the floor by the door. A real pigsty. So I yelled "Trash!" as I went out. The police thought I was yelling at them; they grabbed me, slammed me in the mouth, and threw me in jail."

"This might be it," Renata said. A bus was approaching. Adrian leaned back from the waist to look. A car honked and swerved toward the center lane. Adrian said, "That's El Directo. It goes to Puerto Montt without stopping." And the bus blasted by in a cloud of exhaust.

From the gutter, Adrian could look straight across at Michelle, the space between their eyes untilted and serene. He said, "If I could get my head through the bars, I knew the rest of my body would fit, too. Then I'd stop eating until I was pure thin bones. *Huesitos.* And out I would go onto my head."

Michelle didn't say anything; she just looked across the level space to where his gaze lay on a level horizon.

"I think this one is it." Another bus's wind plastered Adrian's sweats against skinny thighs, and he began to run with its slowing. He disappeared inside. Then he was back in the gutter flapping his forearm behind the bus in wide circles. He held up four fingers to Michelle. "*Cuatrocientos,*" he said. "Too much."

"But that's the rate," Renata said.

"From the station, not the street."

Renata hissed between her teeth. The slant of light had already shifted on the tin rain gutters across the street, and the bridge of her nose was moist from long sun.

"Jesus," Adrian said, "told us to love each other. That bus driver talked with his lips together like this, and said like this, '*Cuatrocientos,*' with hate snaking around his teeth." Adrian stepped up onto the sidewalk and said close to Michelle's face, "Do you know why I escaped from prison?"

Michelle held her neck still and breathed through her mouth.

"Hate hate hate hate. I knew I would die in it. My own meat was packed in it. I had to get my own flesh away from my pure bones, and then I got through the bars and fell out onto my head. 'This gravel in my skull means Jesus loves me,' I said to myself and crawled home like the other times. They can't keep me in. I go home with my pure bones."

"Have you been in prison more than once?" asked Michelle.

"No. Just in the mental house. They lock me in there. But listen! I say Jesus said to love everyone. They lock me up so that my pure bones can scrape against his love. '*Y después de deshecha esta mi piel* . . . yet in my flesh shall I see God.' Job 19:25. And before that: '*Se levantará sobre el polvo.* King of the dust he calls himself."

"Here comes another bus," Renata said.

Adrian stepped into the street. "Please!" said Michelle.

"No," Adrian said. "It's a cement truck with silver grating out front." A wrinkled man on a three-wheeled bike loaded with cabbage swore at Adrian as he went by, mouth and leg tendons working in rhythm.

"God," Adrian said, "He looks down from his blue to all this. To all this green and brown. Green for what we grow. Brown for what we rot. Some say he doesn't dare look at the really ugly stuff — the rooty reds of what we

kill; but I saw his iris in the sun's ball one morning, watching; and at night there was this big old orange star that didn't ever blink."

A flatbed truck puffed strands away from his ears.

"Watch out!" Michelle said.

Adrian stepped out of the gutter. He ran toward two people, a man and a woman, who were walking along the sidewalk. When they saw him, they veered abruptly toward the crackled wall of the *panadería*. Between that and Adrian's body, they had to stop.

"Hey!" Adrian said to them, "I want to introduce you two to some friends. Remember, I stood by you at the finish line. And these people over here are some missionary friends."

The couple looked over to where Renata was squinting up the street and Michelle was just turning her head. The man widened the space of pavement between his feet as Adrian pulled on his arm in the direction of the gutter. The man had a sports jacket over his shoulder and big blotches of damp under each arm. The woman's narrow-strapped dress did not conform to the angle of her bra straps, and her toes did not conform to her narrow-strapped sandals. One little toe spilled onto the sidewalk.

Adrian dropped his hands to his sides and said loudly, "García would've won if the other guy hadn't bumped his wheel from behind, don't you think? I told them they should disqualify his points for this lap because he cheated, but they wouldn't listen to me. I went right up and told the guys with the stopwatches, and they wouldn't listen."

"Well, you know . . ." said the man.

"So the dirty cheater'll get the ribbon. That's what I know? That's what I call the justice of God!"

"Well," said the man, "there's really nothing . . ."

"I would've spit in that cheater's face if I could've. I told the judges he'd won by cheating. I told them."

"Listen," said the woman from behind the man's shoulders, "there's nothing we can do."

Adrian aimed his voice at her, very loudly, through the space between the man's ear and shoulder. "García should've won. He would've won if everybody there would've had the guts to say something."

"I never saw the other man cheat," the man said. "But you better calm down. They said they were going to throw you out if you didn't calm down. You should be careful. You should calm yourself down."

The woman walked out from behind the man's shoulders and past Adrian. "There's really nothing we can do," she said and kept walking.

"Hey!" I'll see you at the next race!" Adrian yelled as the man walked past him, too. Before he got back to the gutter, Adrian picked some foil from a jag in the concrete. It turned gold at the edges before it went into his pocket.

"*No podeis decir que sois aún como el polvo*," he said, kicking dust with dust-creased boots. "Nevertheless from the dust you were created."

"Please step onto the sidewalk."

"Mosiah 2:25."

"The point is," Adrian said, "Jesus loves the dust of the earth."

"You mean the salt —" said Renata, who caught his words between truck roars. Her eyes were slitted against the sun, tiny balls of mascara stuck fast in the corners.

"And if the salt loses savor?"

Renata walked very fast on the way home. Michelle tried to keep up, but her bag was enormously heavy and there were shards of things in her mind that made crackling noises with each step. Soon she was watching the decisive pendulum of Renata's skirt from half a block behind, observing in detail the varying angles of hem from pavement. But her sight was elsewhere. It was edging backwards through fragments and slivers to another detail she'd memorized without seeing — Adrian's gym bag twisting gently on its thread, hanging sideways from the bone in his shoulder. Then, the bone pressing a spot of damper green into green t-shirt.

By that time, the owner of the bicycle shop was slamming metal covers over windows and shutting padlocks with quick upward thrusts of his palm. And Adrian was saying, his breath on her face, "One night when it was hot in there and I was holding the bed leg tight like this all sweaty under the sheet, I thought, 'Even a hug from God I wouldn't want right now to add to all this sweat.' I was thinking of Nephi who said he was always hugged with those huge arms of love. I could understand why Jesus wanted to sweat out his blood all by himself. He needed room to breathe. But I couldn't understand why he can't stand to let anyone else sweat in peace."

Then Adrian twisted abruptly toward Renata, "He said that nothing can get him away from us. Not hunger or trouble or nakedness — Romans. I was naked, but I was hot, running sweat-rivers, fear-rivers onto the stinking bed. So tell me —" He stepped in front of Renata, squinted up at her from the gutter, demanded, "if you are drowning in sweat, how can you stand to have Jesus there sweating too, hugging you with those huge arms of love?"

Renata stepped backward and wiped her lips with her fingertips.

"Please step up," Michelle had said. Adrian stepped up; he stepped over to her, close enough for his gym bag to bump against her leg. She looked at him. She looked at his eyes, which seemed drier than the rest of him, like a strip of dry earth between two running furrows.

Adrian said to her, "Then I knew what this means: '*Me ha llenado con su amor hasta consumir mi carne* — Unto the consuming of my flesh, his love.' I got the flesh away from my bones so he could get near me, so I could stand his love. And with pure thin bones I came out of there, through those bars, onto my head. Got his gravel-love stuck right to my skull."

"You should put on some weight, then," Renata said, but a bus wind had flattened hair black against Adrian's ears. He ran with the gust, gym bag flying up from his hip, bits of Coca-Cola cardboard and gum foil flitting randomly, like stars, behind him. The bus door received him, but it didn't whoosh shut until after he'd thrust three fingers back into the sun.

"Tres cientos!" he yelled. "Jesus said! Like this we should love each other. And my pure bones have scraped against his love."

Early Through Winter

Jill Hemming

Someone went shooting rabbits last night
blasting any flesh too slow to dodge.

I track the powdered ground until I toe
a scarlet gash melted to concrete.

The red drags a few feet to a white jackrabbit
whose stiff legs thrust outward.

I try kicking snow to cover its trail
but the dead eye reminds me

of the chill
in my hands and I step away
to the street.

JILL HEMMING has an associate degree in English from Ricks College and is currently pursuing independent study in Dijon, France.

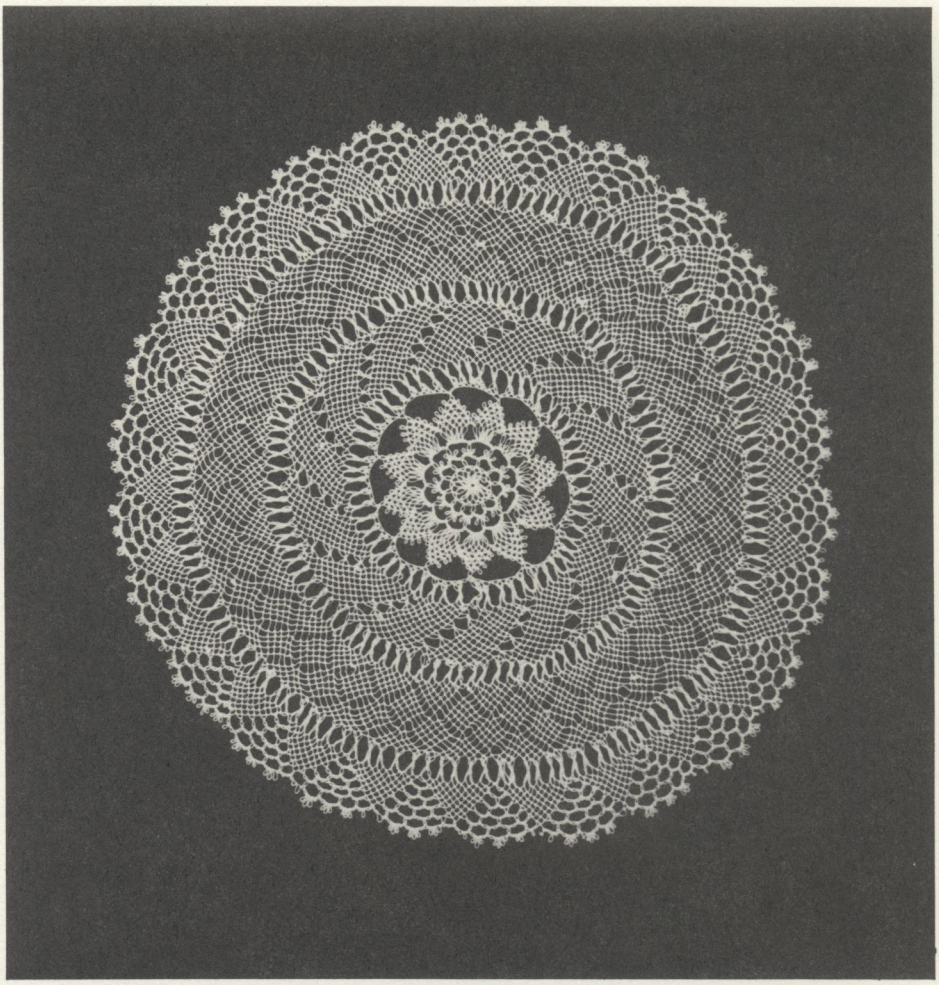
A Case for the Rain

Paris Anderson

Rains came
— ruined the day.
We wanted to walk
in the wood.
We would have laughed
in cool shadows,
sat on dry pine needles
and watched shoots of sun
filter to the ground.
But rains came,
covered the sky
and wet the ground.
We stay in.
She paints.
One bulb burns
above her head.
"Don't move,"
she says.
I don't.
But I know
it still won't look like me.
I sit quiet,
look out the window.
I see two sparrows
on a dry limb.
— close together
— fluffed up big.
The road by their tree
shines dark.
Silver puddles
where potholes were.
She turns on her radio.
It crackles.
The song fades and builds.
But, I suppose, something
is better than nothing.
She snaps it off.

PARIS ANDERSON, author of Waiting for the Flash *(Provo, Utah: Scotlin Co., 1988), is a freelance writer living in Provo, Utah.*

Nothing, I guess,
is better than somethings.
— red on her fingers
— blue on her nose
— she will have color —
"Don't move."
I don't.
The sky outside is dark.
Slate clouds slowly roll.
Winds whisper in the trees.
I feel safe
in the quiet cabin
— as if in a heavy quilt
on a cold night.
We are safe.
"Don't move."
But I want a fire.
I go for wood.
The log stack is wet.
I burrow for dry.
I carry back and kneel.
Soon gentle flames
grace the wood.
Then, flames build
and snap in anger.
"Don't move,"
she says.
I don't.
I stare at the fire
and wish I had a yellow dog
— a retriever.
I wish I had a dog
to lie before the flames.
"Don't move."
I don't.
But I wish I had a dog
to make the moment whole.



Needlelace doily, Rose Peterson (West Valley City, Utah), 9½″ diameter, cotton thread, 1988; (Utah) State Art Collection.

Jews in the Columns of Joseph's *Times and Seasons*

Steven Epperson

On 21 May 1839, Joseph Smith introduced an unusual entry in his journal history, writing, "To show the feelings of that long scattered branch of the house of Israel, the Jews, I here quote a letter written by one of their number, on hearing that his son had embraced Christianity" (HC 3:356–57). An impassioned letter follows. Joseph quotes it at length and verbatim without further editorial remarks. "A. L. Landau, Rabbi" of Breslau,[1] pleads with his son in Berlin, who is planning conversion to Christianity:

> Do not shed the innocent blood of your parents. . . . Do you think that the Christians . . . will support you and fill up the place of our fellow believers? . . . [Do] not change our true and holy doctrine, for that deceitful, untrue and perverse doctrine of Christianity.
>
> What! will you give up a pearl for that which is nothing . . . ? Why hast thou forsaken that holy law which shall have an eternal value; which was given by my servant Moses, and no man shall change it?

The distraught parent calls his son to come to his senses and his duty, then concludes the letter "because of weeping."

Why does this letter appear in Joseph's historical narrative? The entry leaps out from a page whose notations otherwise give one-sentence summaries of Smith's work days: "Saturday. May 18 — Finished my business at Quincey for the present. . . . Monday 20. — at home attending to a variety of business" (HC 3:356). With Tuesday's entry comes a cataract of words and tumultuous emotions from a devastated Jewish father a continent away.

Contemporary events among the Saints in the early Nauvoo period cannot account for this dramatic addition to Joseph's record. Neither apostate Mor-

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[1] The letter is dated 21 May 1839 and is entered into Smith's journal history on that same date. It is most likely that Joseph learned of this letter after May 1839 and inserted it, according to the date of the letter as he either received it or as it was published in a second source, with the brief comment cited.

mons, the persecutions in Missouri, nor Mormonism's controversy with Christendom figure in Smith's brief introduction to the letter. The journal entry was made simply, Smith writes, "to show the feelings of . . . the Jews."

The entry is a striking example of Joseph Smith's deliberate, lifelong preoccupation with the relationship between Israel and the Latter-day Saints. During his fourteen-year tenure as the Church's first president and prophet, he inaugurated a theological tradition that affirmed the covenantal integrity and autonomous mission of both the Latter-day Saints and the Jews. In a nonsystematic manner, Joseph Smith articulated this tradition through a variety of sources, including the new scriptures he introduced, temple dedicatory prayers, numerous sermons and articles, editorials in various LDS publications, and encounters with contemporary Jews.

This emergent perspective repudiated one of the keystones of traditional Christian dogma and apologetic theology: the Christian churches' displacement of the Jews as God's new covenant people. This doctrine is called supersessionism. To supercede means to render obsolete or inferior; to make void, annul or override; to take the place of by dint of a presumed superiority to that which is displaced. In Joseph's eyes this was not the prerogative of the Church. Rather, Joseph sought out the voices of contemporary Jewry, not only to revalue Israel's significance in its own right, but also to affirm Israel's enduring witness to the church of Christ. Joseph's conclusions also removed the express, programmatic evangelization of the Jews from the Latter-day Saints' agenda. To Latter-day Saints in the 1980s, aware of the Holocaust and the modern, complex renewal of Jewish national identity, Joseph's theological heritage seems particularly constructive.

In this article I will discuss one way Joseph Smith attempted to refashion the terms of Jewish/Christian encounters. In February 1842, Joseph began a short term as editor of the *Times and Seasons*, the bi-monthly "official" publication of the Church. During his brief proprietorship over the paper, editorials and columns devoted to the Jewish people bore the impress of Smith's theological revisionism and set the *Times and Seasons* distinctly apart from ante-bellum Christian literature.

THE *TIMES AND SEASONS* BEFORE AND AFTER SMITH

The paper's first issue came off the press in November 1839. Ebenezer Robinson and the Prophet's younger brother, Don Carlos, were its editors. Subsequent issues appeared under the editorship of a number of individuals besides Robinson and Smith, including Robert B. Thompson and John Taylor (Crawley and Flake 1984). Under the editorial direction of these men, the paper's position about the Jewish people fit comfortably within accepted social and dogmatic conventions. The paper forthrightly denounced the persecution of Jews and their communities and encouraged their return to Palestine. But it also printed stories and doctrinal articles reflecting the traditional Christian supersessionist assessments of Israel's "religion" and the reasons for its "exile" into the world.

The first editorial position blended well with the predominant American journalistic temperament. Religious persecution was repugnant to the enlightened, constitutional sensibilities of Americans and their journalists. Thus the *Times and Seasons* attacked and deplored the outrages of the notorious "Damascus blood libel," a position championed in the pages of *Niles' Weekly*, *Frazier's Magazine*, and the *New York Herald*, from whose columns the *Times and Seasons* liberally borrowed.

On the other hand, although the editors of the *Times and Seasons* enthusiastically greeted any rumor or report of Jews gathering to Jerusalem or rebuilding the city, theologically the periodical condemned Israel's religious heritage. Resettlement movements, the editors opined, laid bare the fact that "the judgements which the Lord denounced against that people, in consequence of their repeated transgressions have indeed been fulfilled to the very letter; and the promises of their restoration, to the land of their Fathers, with their ultimate splendor and glory, now remains to be accomplished" (Robinson and Smith 1840, 154). According to these first editors, the "judgements which the Lord denounced against that people" [i.e. destruction of the temple, loss of homeland, etc.] were "clearly manifest to the religious Jews, that they had departed from the principles delivered unto them through the messengers whom God had inspired" (1840, 197).

In a major, unsigned article entitled "The Gospel," printed 1 November 1840, the conceptual negation of the Jewish people is complete. The author writes: "Every person in every degree acquainted with the Jewish history . . . knows, that God, previous to the days of the Savior's coming in the flesh, was withdrawing from that people, and that he continued to do so until they were abandoned to destruction" (1840, 197–98).

This pronouncement and the dubious exegetical presuppositions it reflects are part of a long-standing, wholly orthodox theological commitment. According to Christian supersessionist premises, the Judaisms practiced during the Second Temple period were bankrupt and apostate. Any acknowledgment by ecclesiastical historians or students of scriptures to Israel's national identity or its modern ingathering was consistently undercut by a Christian interpretation of such events. Therefore, the roads and seas Jews traveled to return to their homeland, the fields they cultivated, the foundations they laid, the walls they erected, the blood spilled, the infants born, all ultimately confirmed Christian textual and prophetic divination and vouchsafed adventist expectations. Jewish lives were not their own but were lived at the behest of Christians who alone knew Israel's story and very destiny.

When Joseph Smith began working at the *Times and Seasons* with the 15 February 1842 issue, these traditional interpretations of Jews and Judaism immediately changed. Comparing the 15 December 1841 issue with Joseph Smith's first issue two months later illuminates his divergent editorial perspective.

The 15 December issue features an article entitled "Charity," reprinted from Benjamin Winchester's LDS periodical, *The Gospel Reflector*, published independently in Philadelphia (see Crawley and Flake 1984, no. 20). Win-

chester, the "presiding elder" of the Church in Philadelphia, extolled Christian charity by denigrating presumed Jewish ethics in first century Palestine. Jews "at the time of Christ," Winchester wrote, were broken into "sects" and had "apostatized" from Israel's ordinances and covenants by vaunting "traditions over law" (1841, 628–29). Their acts of charity, he assumed, were grudging concessions of legalists, performed not with the benevolent intent of a disinterested heart, but mechanistically, with an eye to perfunctory service and quantifiable merit.

With the 15 February issue, Joseph, now the editor, begins publishing letters and articles culled from outside sources written by and apparently for Jews. Smith, unlike Winchester, presents these items essentially without theological comment. The effect is remarkable. Jews directly address Christian readers by letting them drop in on Jewish voices and concerns.

Thus, in Joseph Smith's editorial debut, he presents an article about the status of Jews living among Gentiles to show "the feelings of one of the seed of Abraham, upon this subject" (1842, 692). The anonymous author of the letter, entitled, "A word in season from an Israelite, to his brethren," asserts that as a result of the fidelity of Jews in "keeping those imperishable truths [of the Written and Oral Torah] . . . we are as completely a nation as when first established as such for we acknowledge ourselves now, as then, as being under the immediate government of the Sovereign of the universe, with the same law for our obedience as was vouchsafed to our ancient fathers" (1842, 692–93).

The constitutive intent of that law has produced, the writer continues, a concrete historical fact — a chosen people, an independent "nation" — and at the same time has furnished that people with its restless, creative *raison d'être*. "We are," the article continues, "a separate people from all the nations of the earth . . . . The greatest object of our selection was to constitute us the instrument to work out the redemption of mankind, from the darkness, and unhappiness of a false worship." Until that day, Israel's purpose, according to the writer, has not yet been fulfilled. With such a calling and agenda he asks:

> Shall we cast aside our real law at the bidding of the "London Society?" [The London Society for Propagating the Gospel Amongst the Jews] and the written law at the command of Deists, and self-styled philosophers? Ought we merely to accommodate our religion's observance merely to suit our conveniences? . . . What, if we were so lost to a sense of our own dignity, would become of the trust reposed in us by the Supreme Being? what of our religion? — of ourselves as a people, of our offspring? ("A Word" 1842, 693)

The subject of this letter accorded well with Smith's own prophetic preoccupation and agenda — how to forge a collection of diverse individuals into a holy nation and kingdom of priests, a distinct people. The letter's appeal to Israel to remain faithful to their redemptive, convenantal commission in spite of Christendom's cultural solvents would have no doubt appeared to address some of Joseph's central concerns.

The Prophet was seeking a vernacular appropriate for the "restoration of all things." Throughout his career he turned to Israel's institutions, categories,

and practices to distinguish the Latter-day Saints from Christendom and to underline Mormon continuity with covenant Israel. Having "translated" the Book of Mormon, and being cognizant of that text's belief that law and doctrine had proceeded forth "in purity" from "the Jews" before Christian designs had distorted the scriptural canon, perhaps Joseph was now providing a limited forum for Israel's voice to again edify the Saints.

It is uncertain whether Joseph knew of the debates over basic and widespread reform, hinted at in this letter, that were raging within the Jewish communities in America and Europe at that time. There is no documentation to argue that Joshua Seixas, teacher of Hebrew at the Latter-day Saints' School of the Prophets in Kirtland, had informed Smith of the heated conflict within Judaism over the identity and leadership of modern Jewry. Nor is it certain that Alexander Neibaur, a German Jew who converted to Mormonism in England and subsequently moved to Nauvoo, provided any detailed, informed description of Orthodox or Reform movements and their respective platforms.

Neibaur could have provided the Prophet with the articles he began to quote or insert into the columns of the *Times and Seasons*. Both Smith's record and Neibaur's diary reveal that the two met often for German and Hebrew tutorials.[2] Yet neither indicates that they discussed the state of contemporary Jewry, particularly the dramatic developments within and between Reform and Orthodox camps. Though the Prophet later cited articles originating from proponents of both Reform and Orthodoxy, he never referred to the controversy or the differences between the groups.

This lack of comment, however, does not lessen the impact of the Prophet's citing "A Word in Season from an Israelite." The break from the obtrusive theologizing and commentary of his predecessors is abrupt and clear.

As if to underline the distinction of his argument, the 15 March 1842 issue of the *Times and Seasons* featured an extract from an essay by Rabbi Sampson Raphael Hirsch, modern Orthodoxy's founder and earliest prominent exponent. "Horeb: Essays on Israel's Duties in the Dispersion" discussed "tsaadekau," or charity, what Hirsch called "essential righteousness." Smith hoped to show, by printing this selection, how "Jews . . . maintain principles of benevolence and charity which many of our professed enlightened Christians would do well to imitate" (p. 725). Latter-day Saint readers were directed to the words and "feelings of the Jews" in their own right, with their own particular pitch and timbre.

In rapid succession during his six-month term as editor of the *Times and Seasons*, Joseph followed up the 15 February letter with an affirmation of the "literal gathering of Israel" in one of the thirteen Articles of Faith (1 March 1842) and the extract from S. R. Hirsch's "Essays on Israel's Duties in the Dispersion." Prefacing the latter column, Smith again took pains to express, unlike Winchester and others, that he sought to "show what the feelings of the Jews are, in regard to moral rectitude, and that although persecuted, afflicted,

[2] See Neibaur Journal entry for 24 May 1844; and also Neibaur 1876: "Had the honor of instruction [sic] the Prophet Joseph Smith until he went [to Carthage] in the German (and Hebrew) from which text he Preached several times to large Congragations [sic]."

robbed and spoiled, they still adhere with great tenacity to their ancient moral code, and maintain principles . . . Christians would do well to imitate" (15 March 1842, 725).

The following issue, 1 April 1842, included a reprint of the "dedicatory prayer" offered by Mormon apostle Orson Hyde from the summit of the Mount of Olives (pp. 739–42). Hyde had been commissioned by the Saints, in the spring of 1840, to gather information from European Jewish communities regarding contemporary attitudes about territorial restoration. In addition, Hyde was directed to dedicate and bless Palestine for the return of the Jewish people. In October 1841, Hyde arrived in Jerusalem. In the dedicatory prayer, he expressed Mormon hopes for both the gathering and the restoration of the Jews as an independent nation in Palestine and blessed and dedicated the land to flourish politically, spiritually, and agriculturally.

In the next bi-monthly issue of the *Times and Seasons* (13 April), "Rabbi" Landau's impassioned letter to his son, which first made its appearance in Joseph's journal in 1839, was quoted in its entirety. However, unlike the terse introduction it received in Smith's journal, the *Times and Seasons* preface, also written by the Prophet, contains several dozen lines.

The thrust of Joseph's introduction is polemical and combative. He begins by critizing the Christian world for persecuting the Jews. Christians have created a "merciless" adversary to the Israel of God, a "religion . . . so at variance with the principles of righteousness" that Jews have little recourse but to "cherish in their bosoms, feelings of disgust and abhorrence at the idea of their children embracing it" (p. 754). Though he laments at this destructive and alienating visage of Christianity — "What a pity that the glorious precepts of the Redeemer should be so misrepresented" — he declines to deliver what ordinarily would have been the resolution to this bit of internal criticism. The reader looks in vain for the standard conclusion that figured in countless mission and denominational treatises on the Christian duty toward the Jews: "But we have the gospel in its purity, we will go and convert them to those glorious precepts." Joseph does not write it.

Editorially, the Prophet was complementing the work of his distant apostle Orson Hyde. Both men had focused their attention upon contemporary Jewry; but unlike the vast majority of their non-LDS peers, in that most evangelical of periods, neither advocated missions to the Jews. Taking up this theme, the very next issue of the *Times and Seasons* (2 May) directly addresses Christianity's time-honored nostrum for the "Jewish question." Smith attacks contemporary mission societies. "Did God," he asks, "ever tell the London Society, to send out missionaries?" Commenting on the reported spectacle of the attempts by a "Mr. Ewald, London Missionary" to convert a "Rabbi Judea," Smith concludes, "What consummate ignorance is displayed in missionaries quoting the New Testament to the Jews. . . . As if the Rabbi was going to be damned by not bowing with deference to his [Ewald's] ipse dixit" (p. 781).

After publishing several more letters from Elder Hyde during the summer months of 1842 the Prophet abruptly resigned as editor of the *Times and Seasons*. The last "Jews" column he was to edit featured an extract, in English

translation, from Michael Creizenach's, *Schulhan Aruch, oder Enzyklopaedische Darstellung des Mosaischen Gesetzes. . . .* Creizenach was an early and radical spokesman for the Jewish Reform movement. In his multivolumed work, he had attempted to show "that talmudic Judaism was a reform of biblical Judaism, and, thus, that the Reform Judaism of his own time was a legitimate approach to Judaism" (Kressel 1971, 107). The *Times and Seasons* included Creizenach's plea for a revival of education and for an informed piety that would continue the work of "reform" which the Talmud had only begun.

Joseph's final, terse introductory comment on the Creizenach article summed up the intent of "The Jews" columns over which he had presided as editor. He concludes on 1 June that the subjects of the column, the Jewish people, "inculcate attendance on divine worship" and manifest, to any "disinterested reader," "true piety, real religion, and acts of devotion to God" (p. 810). For a man who claimed that he had been told by divine revelation that "all the sects . . . were an abomination" in the sight of the Lord, such a confession of respect for another religious community is striking.

Joseph's own sense and vision of Judaism and the Jewish people were thrown into high relief at both the beginning and the end of his "career" as the proprietor of the *Times and Seasons.* The transition from Winchester's article on "Charity," to the Prophet's own editorial on the imitability of Jewish benevolence and charity was marked by an abrupt shift of perspective. Similarly, as the editorial duties passed from Smith to the solid, former English dissident Methodist lay preacher, John Taylor, now a Mormon apostle, the editorial slant of the *Times and Seasons* reassumes a more conventional attitude toward Jewry.

Subsequent "Jews" columns were entered without comment and basically contained uncredited notices about Jewish immigration plans underfoot in Europe and population statistics taken from the popular press, included as interesting curiosities. The one major exception was a 1 February 1843 article, "Both One in Christ," written by a converted Jew, Alfred Morris Myres, taken from a "Gentile" Christian religious publication. The focus of the article is upon the heretofore halting attempts to convert European Jewry to Protestant Christianity, with the author citing the "Church of Rome" as the greatest obstacle to the missionary endeavor. The author invokes sympathy for Jews with the attendant hope that the Jewish "miracle" will soon be crowned with the "future blessings for them in store," that is, the blessings of Christ and his [Protestant] church.

The step from Hirsch and Creizenach to Myres signaled the demise of the "Jews" column as a conduit of Jewish expression to Mormon readers. Entries continued to be fairly frequent, but inconsequential, until Joseph Smith's death in the summer of 1844. His assassination signaled a new round of violence that climaxed in yet another mass expulsion of Mormons from dearly won homes and temple. Smith's halting approach to Israel was waylaid by death and the greater challenges forced upon his successors.

What emerges from the assembled articles and editorials printed in the *Times and Seasons* during Joseph Smith's six-month supervision is a picture

at once clear and strange. On the American frontier, in the 1840s, a Christian religious leader was editing a newspaper which featured articles on modern Jewry and its concerns. Smith was eavesdropping on conversations scripted by and for Jews, not for the purpose of disputation and displacement, but for imitation and instruction.

The Prophet stands at the head of a significant Mormon theological "tradition" that sought to rewrite the terms of the encounter between Jews and Christians. The editorials and articles in the *Times and Seasons* join other works by Joseph Smith in delineating this new perspective. In sum, he denounced Christian anti-Jewish bias, repudiated programmatic evangelization of the Jewish people, and denied the corporate guilt and punishment traditionally assigned the Jews for the death of Jesus of Nazareth. In sermons, scriptures, periodicals, and encounters with Jewish contemporaries, Joseph sought to rehabilitate Christian theological and historical judgements of Jewry, Judaism, and Jewish institutions of both the past and the present.

The effect of Smith's work was a strong affirmation of Israel's enduring covenant. They were, in his estimation, a people of "true piety and real religion." Joseph Smith's recognition of the integrity of Israel's worth independent of the Church of Christ is at once a troubling and constructive theological heritage to the church he organized as it confronts and encounters the traditions and claims of other religious communities.

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Forever Tentative

Charles L. Boyd

I WAS STIMULATED, CONCERNED, and saddened simultaneously as I read David Bailey's article in DIALOGUE (Summer 1988) and reread Richard Pearson Smith's Spring 1986 article, both discussing science and the LDS Church.

I was stimulated to research and assess for myself if the problem was as dramatic as these two seemed to think. I was concerned that neither Bailey nor Smith seemed to recognize, or at least to acknowledge in these articles, the key difference between scientific *facts* and scientific *theories*, which are very different things. Neither writer mentions the inherent limitations of the "certainty" of scientific theories. Finally, I was saddened to note that, for Smith at least, "science" was "right" and the Church was "wrong," and that, as Smith put it, the situation is "a reason to question the Church, not science" (1986, 109).

Bailey in a general way, and Smith in a more personal fashion, gives a synopsis of "the generally accepted scientific position" on the main issues of "science versus the LDS Church." Neither one acknowledges, that I can see, that even within the scientific community itself these "theories" are (and doubtless always will be) hotly debated. Both articles left me with the impression that, in the authors' opinions, the only opposition to these theories comes from the "creationists" Bailey mentions, and within the LDS community from certain General Authorities such as Joseph Fielding Smith, Bruce R. McConkie, Mark E. Peterson, Boyd K. Packer, Ezra Taft Benson, and others "who prefer a literalistic interpretation of the scriptures" (1988, 72).

To cite one example, Bailey states that Einstein's theory of relativity is "now considered to be among the most universal and firmly grounded of all scientific theories" (p. 62). This is true, but he fails to point out that some credible

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scientists disagree with the theory and argue for alternative theories that explain the observed facts. For instance, Melvin Cook, noted LDS scientist and author of two controversial books (1966; Cook and Cook 1968), directed me to a book, *The Einstein Myth and the Ives Papers: A Counter Revolution in Physics* (Hazelett 1979), which discusses the fact that "Herbert Ives, a Bell Laboratories physicist, arrived at a comprehensive theory which accounts for all of the phenomena and experiments that Einstein's theory is supposed to encompass" ("Book News" 1979, 1). Ives's credentials in this matter are substantial; he was an accomplished physicist, "responsible for the momentous Ives-Stillwell experiment, the first proof that moving clocks slow down" ("Book News" 1979, 2). (Bailey, Smith, and others may be interested to know that this book was brought to Melvin Cook's attention by President Benson, who, Cook assures me, is very much aware of and interested in these issues.)

Moreover, an afternoon with the computerized magazine index at a branch of the Salt Lake County Library turned up evidence of a lively debate on this matter (Findlay 1987; "DI Herculis" 1985; Barber 1986; Fischbach 1986; Thomsen 1983). According to the *Science News* article: "One of the dangers of writing down a universal theory of gravitation, as Einstein did with his general relativity, is that it lies open for any obscure object in the universe to detract from it" ("DI Herculis" 1985, 74). This article then reports " 'an apparent discrepancy with general relativity' in the motion of the binary star system DI Herculis," a very dim object discovered thirteen years after the publication of Einstein's theory. A competing theory advanced by University of Toronto physicist John W. Moffat can, however, account for the discrepancy.

A few months later, Moffat's theory resurfaced in the press (Barber 1986) in a completely different connection, providing a fascinating insight into the way science *really* works. After reexamining data from a 1922 experiment, University of Washington physicist Ephraim Fischbach (1986) of the Seattle Institute for Nuclear Theory reported findings contrary to relativity that "will fundamentally alter man's conception of the universe" (Barber 1986, 42). Moffat commented, "This could be one of the most important scientific discoveries of the century" (in Barber, 1986, 42). Moffat, who has been collecting data to support his theory since 1979, remains undaunted by his colleagues' skepticism: "It is not easy to do what I'm doing. It was not easy for Einstein either. He had a difficult time with his colleagues because he was overthrowing Newton" (in Barber 1986, 42).

Further insight comes from an article on the 1983 Second New Orleans Conference on Quantum Theory and Gravitation held at Loyola University of New Orleans. The debate was vigorous, the viewpoints varied. The article's concluding paragraph reveals things in a very different perspective from the certainties of science portrayed by Bailey and Smith: "In spite of much theoretical progress the basic questions remain open: how to mate quantum physics with gravity and cosmology and whether it can be done through Einstein's theory or needs some serious modification of it. The future, cosmologists hope, will have answers" (Thomsen 1983, 157). To this degree of "certainty" the Church and its members should scramble to adjust the gospel?

The 1983 conference by no means encompasses the controversy. In his recent book, *A Brief History of Time* (1988), Stephen Hawking, one of the most respected figures in modern physics, adds fuel to the fires of debate raging about relativity. Hawking is the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge University, a chair once held by Isaac Newton. The bottom line of Hawking's book? "He has unsettled both physics and theologians by suggesting that the universe has no boundaries, was not created and will not be destroyed" (Jaroff 1988, 58). Noting some problems that relativity has encountered, Hawking suggests that "Einstein's general theory of relativity would have to be modified" (Jaroff 1988, 60) and postulated some solutions different from the currently accepted theory Bailey urges us to accept.

The second topic in Bailey's overview is quantum theory. Bailey tells us: "Its basic notions are, like relativity, on extremely firm ground" (Bailey 1988, 63). Quantum theory, like relativity, is widely accepted, but its foundation of "extremely firm ground" more closely resembles shifting and unsteady sand. In a 1988 *Scientific American* article, June Kinoshita observes:

> The Pauli exclusion principle, named for its author, the cantankerous Austrian physicist Wolfgang Pauli, is a keystone of modern physics. Indeed, without it physics, if not matter, would collapse. Physicists consider the principle to be airtight. But now two theorists . . . have formulated a relativistic quantum field theory that could poke a small but detectable hole in Pauli's principle. (p. 27)

Her comment, "It will be some years before results are in," implies that the small hole may be just the beginning. A *Scientific American* article on "Gravity and Antimatter" (Goldman et al. 1988) is subheaded "New Ideas Challenge Independence of Gravitational Acceleration from Mass and Substance." Again we see that these "basic notions" are not quite as settled as Bailey and Smith suggest.

The third major theory Bailey summarizes is the "big bang" theory of creation. Here he qualifies, "I must emphasize that the big bang theory is not as fundamental and well-established as relativity and quantum theory. However, the weight of evidence supporting the theory has increased to the point that it must be taken seriously" (p. 64). Again Bailey notes no alternative theory by credible scientists. A quick check on the computerized index, however, turns up ample evidence for alternate scientific theories (Lerner 1988; Peratt 1988; Horgan 1987; Burbridge 1988).

These articles underscore the fact that this debate has been going on for at least thirty years and that aside from Nobel Prize laureate Hannes Alfven and the "plasma dissidents," there is also a group known as "the red-shift dissidents" who, led by Halton Arp, challenge the big bang interpretation of the crucial "red-shift" phenomenon. And, perhaps most important to me, the tales of Hannes Alfven and Halton Arp offer critical insight into the "objective and impartial" world of scientific research.

First a brief look at Alfven, as told by Los Alamos National Laboratories physicist Anthony L. Peratt:

> In 1939 Alfven advanced a remarkable theory of magnetic storms and auroras that has widely influenced contemporary theory of the dynamics of the earth's magnetosphere.

> He used the notion . . . to calculate the motions of electrons and ions. This method came to be universally adopted by plasma physicists . . . Yet in 1939, when Alfven submitted the paper to the leading American journal *Terrestrial Magnetism and Atmospheric Electricity*, the paper was rejected on the ground that it did not agree with the theoretical calculations of Chapman [British-American geophysicist Sydney Chapman, whose theories were widely accepted until finally proven wrong in 1974, four years after Chapman's death, by satellite measurements vindicating Alfven's theory] . . . . Alfven was forced to publish this seminal paper in a Swedish-language journal not readily accessible to the worldwide scientific community. (1988, 195)

Peratt points out that this was not an isolated incident in Alfven's career.

> For much of his career Alfven's ideas were dismissed or treated with condescension. He was often forced to publish his papers in obscure journals (p. 192). . . . At no time during his scientific career prior to winning the Nobel Prize was Alfven generally recognized as a leading innovator by those in the scientific community who were using his work (p. 195). . . . None of his work has been published in the *Astrophysical Journal*, the information organ and policy setter of the American Astronomical Society, of which Alfven is a member. (p. 197)

Peratt's speculations concerning the causes for American opposition to Alfven's work are especially relevant to our discussion.

> One probable reason is that a matter-antimatter symmetric universe [Alfven's theory] is irreconcilable with Big Bang cosmology, currently the dominant model. . . . Because his ideas often conflict with the generally accepted or "standard" theories, Alfven has always had trouble with the peer-review system, especially as practiced by Anglo-American astrophysical journals. "I have no trouble publishing in Soviet astrophysical journals," Alfven says, "but my work is unacceptable to the American astrophysical journals." (p. 197)

Science writer and plasma physics researcher Eric Lerner observes: "A more typical assessment of Alfven's ideas is the one given by James Peebles of Princeton, a Big Bang pioneer: 'They're just silly,' he says flatly" (1988, 72). Now there's a dedicated, objective, and open-minded scientist seeking after truth!

As John Gribbin, another noted science writer, has pointed out, "There are those who think of science as 'cut and dried' — which merely proves they don't understand how science is really done" (1987, 68). Lawrence Krauss of Yale University, while *defending* the big bang theory, concedes, "There are a lot of fundamental assumptions we base our model on that may be wrong" (in Horgan 1987, 24).

Next let us consider the tale of Halton Arp, the putative dean of the so-called "red-shift dissidents," as told by Geoffrey Burbridge, a world-renowned astrophysicist, former director of Kitt Peak National Observatory and currently at the University of California, San Diego. Burbridge has been at the forefront of quasar astronomy for more than two decades. When Arp was working at the Mount Wilson and Las Campanas Observatories some years ago, he was considered to be among the top twenty or thirty scientists in the world in his field. Then he began to point out some troubling problems regarding the red-shift phenomena, a critical piece of evidence in the argument for big bang cosmology.

> Skip Arp started with impeccable credentials. Educated at Harvard and Cal-tech, after a short spell in Indiana he was appointed to a staff position at the Mount Wilson

> and Palomar observatories, where he remained for 29 years. A little more than 20 years ago Arp began to devote all his time to extragalactic astronomy. . . . Soon he found many cases of apparent association between galaxies and quasi-stellar objects, or quasars.
>
> All of this would have been completely acceptable if the associated objects had the same results, but they did not. Yet Arp believed in the reality of the associations, and after struggles with referees, his papers were published. Others were finding similar results, and . . . entered the literature. (1988, 39, 41)

How was this prominent scientist received in bringing out his ideas and observations?

> Arp's ranking in the "Association of Astronomy Professionals" plunged from within the first 20 to below 200. As he continued to claim that not all galaxy redshifts were due to the expansion of the universe, his ranking dropped even further.
>
> About four years ago came the final blow: his whole field of research was deemed unacceptable by the telescope-allocation committee in Pasadena. Both directors (of Mount Wilson and Las Campanas, and Palomar, observatories) endorsed the censure. Since Arp refused to work in a more conventional field, he was given no more telescope time. After abortive appeals all the way up to the trustees of the Carnegie Institution, he took early retirement and moved to West Germany [where he now works at the Max Planck Institute for Physics and Astrophysics]. (p. 41)

In Arp's case, the scientific community does not provide a model of impartial and benevolent tolerance for alternate opinions. As Burbridge observes:

> The community of astronomers is totally polarized by this argument. Most do not want to hear about it. The strong disbelievers hold that those who propose or believe in this hypothesis are variously naive, ignorant of how to do statistics, overly zealous, or worse. They claim . . . that in fact the redshift controversy is over; that is, the status quo has been maintained. This last statement is often made in meetings to which the proponents of unorthodoxy are either not invited, or not allowed to speak. (p. 40)

In the next to last chapter of his book, Arp gives his account of the way he was barred from the telescopes. He writes, "The six-person telescope allocation committee . . . sent me an unsigned letter stating that my research was judged to be without value and that they intended to refuse allocation of further observing time" (in Burbridge 1988, 43).

Alfven has been arguing his position for decades, and Arp for some twenty years (Arp et al. 1973). Furthermore, not one of the participants in these scientific debates is a "creationist" of any sort, so far as I can determine. Shouldn't Bailey's review at least have mentioned that there are a number of prominent scientists who dissent from the mainstream opinion, especially when the information is so readily available?

That Bailey does not even mention such opposition within the scientific community itself is distressing to say the least. Either Bailey didn't bother to look, or he chose not to tell us. Neither seems defensible to me if he is serious about "systematically examin[ing] this subject" (p. 61). Bailey, Smith, and others who want to "accommodate" the gospel to the current scientific theories would do well, it seems to me, to remember physicist Max Born's famous statement, "Physics, as we know it, will be over in 6 months" (in Hawking 1988,

156). He delivered that pronouncement in 1929, nearly sixty years ago, and still the debate rages on.

I do not suggest that we can casually abandon the theory of relativity, quantum mechanics, and the big bang theory just because some discrepancies and contrary opinions exist. These theories *may* turn out to be correct, or at least partially so. For the most part, scientists have good reason to believe the dominant theories in science today. These theories have come to be dominant because they do the best job, in the opinion of many in the scientific community, of explaining a lot that needs explaining. Most scientists are conscientious seekers after truth (although they are clearly as susceptible to human foibles as anyone else). As David Bailey points out in his "Reply" in this issue, some of the competing theories I have mentioned differ only subtly from the mainstream views he espouses, and the conventional theories have recently received some important support. My point is not that these theories are necessarily wrong — only that they are not nearly as certain as Bailey contends. The famous scientist Jacob Bronowski pointed this out:

> There is no permanence to scientific concepts because they are only our interpretations of natural phenomena. Why are they only provisional? Because the part of the world that we can inspect and analyze is always finite. We always have to say the rest of the world does not influence this part, and it is never true. We merely make a temporary invention which covers that part of the world accessible to us at the moment. (1978, 96)

In his "Reply," Bailey also responds that the gospel too is "forever tentative," citing polygamy, the Adam-God doctrine, blacks and the priesthood, and so on. Apostle and scientist John A. Widtsoe rebuked such a notion when he said:

> I belong to various scientific societies. In them I find that theories come and go. . . . I can cling safely to the church, to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it has steadying power, it does not change nor vary. It is the same today, yesterday and forever. . . . Do not misunderstand me as I speak on this theme. . . . I do not mean that this Church and kingdom is static, that we stand still. I believe in a living, growing Church, which is in need of and does receive revelation from day to day. Nothing is more certain to me than that we are founded on revelation from God, and that we are guided daily by such revelation. We shall have revelation for our guidance to the end of time. (1934, 9–10)

As for the "theological" questions both Bailey and Smith raise, many become much less formidable once we recognize the limitations of science pointed out earlier. Henry Eyring addressed this issue years ago, when he said:

> I am convinced that, wise as men are, and in spite of the wonderful things they have done, the Creator of this universe goes so far beyond anything that men understand that it is ridiculous to talk of the two in the same terms. . . . Since all truth has a single source, the apparent conflicts that often trouble us reflect only our incomplete understanding and must eventually be happily resolved. (1969, 45)

Instead of asking, as Keith Norman does in a 1985 *Sunstone* article, "Mormon Cosmology: Can It Survive the Big Bang?" we might more profitably

inquire, "Can the Big Bang Survive Herbert Ives, Hannes Alfven, Halton Arp, John Moffat, and Others?" Bailey contends that the big bang theory "creates some problems for Mormon theology" (p. 74) and cites Norman's essay. Yet in another paper Bailey cites, Russell T. Pack, a theoretical chemist doing research in quantum mechanics at Los Alamos, notes that "Norman's essay is a collection of red herrings. I know many Mormons who are professional physical scientists, but don't know any of them who are troubled by the questions raised by [Norman's] essay" (Pack 1987, 4). This is an interesting omission from Bailey's paper.

Scientific theories are by their very nature "forever tentative," as Hugh Nibley puts it (1986, 213). Why should we worry about accommodating our religious beliefs to scientific theories that almost assuredly will change in twenty years, just as today they are different from what they were twenty years ago?

I also object to the word "theology" as a label for the religious philosophy of a church based on revelation. As Leeman Perkins pointed out in a 1966 letter to DIALOGUE: "The religion of the Latter-day Saints does not have its foundations in theology in the traditional sense in which McMurrin treats it, but in revelation. . . . The epistemology of the church is vastly different from that utilized by traditional philosophy and her theological stepchild" (p. 8). Hugh Nibley discusses this subject at length in *The World and the Prophets* (1987, see especially chapters 5–7, 9, and 15).

Science is wonderful — as far as it goes. But scientific theories come and go, almost always marked by wrangling between factions. This is the very nature of scientific theorizing, an inescapable part. It seems to me critical that we keep this limitation firmly in mind, lest science become something that could "deceive even the very elect." Commenting on those students at BYU who lost, or abandoned, their testimonies because of the neat "ascent of man" schematic of twenty years ago (now in complete disarray, as the Leakey-Johanson debate shows), Nibley laments, "It is sad to think how many of those telling points that turned some of our best students away from the gospel have turned out to be dead wrong!" (1986, 57).

In conclusion, I for one am glad that President Benson and other Church prophets have steered the Church away from the quicksands of ever-changing "scientific" debates, lest our church, like apostate Christianity, someday find itself in the position of that learned Pope who had to summon his friend Galileo and force him to recant his findings because that church had not been so wise. That some General Authorities have from time to time become embroiled in the debate is regrettable, although here too a check of the pertinent sources finds the men in question much more moderate and less "anti-scientific" than Bailey, Smith, and others have suggested.

Even if they were right, however, we would be wise to remember Boyd K. Packer's April 1988 conference address, offering thanks for the principle of repentance in his life. He points out that one of our tests of faith is that sometimes all-too-human men and women do the Lord's work here on earth, making mistakes as they go. (And this is no less true of science.) There is no need to "choose" between the Church and "science" — this is a false dichotomy. I

believe the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true, and I urge Bailey, Smith, and others, when faced with an apparent contradiction between the Church and science, to stick with the Church, for science will eventually come around. As Heber J. Grant said:

> When I was a young unmarried man, another young man who had received a doctor's degree ridiculed me for believing in the Book of Mormon. He said he could point out two lies in that book. One was that the people had built their homes out of cement and that they were very skillful in the use of cement. He said there had never been found and never would be found, a house built of cement by the ancient inhabitants of this country, because the people in that early age knew nothing about cement. He said that should be enough to make one disbelieve the book. I said: "That does not affect my faith one particle. I read the Book of Mormon prayerfully and supplicated God for a testimony in my heart and soul of the divinity of it, . . . and I have accepted it and believe it with all my heart." I also said to him, "If my children do not find cement houses, I expect that my grandchildren will." He said, "Well, what is the good of talking with a fool like that?" Now, since that time houses made of cement and massive structures of the same material have been uncovered. (1929, 129)

To all interested in the issues raised by Bailey, Smith, and others, I close with the counsel of President Gordon B. Hinckley: "Fundamental to our theology is belief in individual freedom of inquiry, thought, and expression. Constructive discussion is a privilege of every Latter-day Saint" (1985, 5). To that end, may the dialogue continue!

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Reply to "Forever Tentative"

David H. Bailey

I WISH TO THANK CHARLES BOYD for bringing to light some additional material relevant to the topics discussed in my article on science and Mormonism. I will briefly respond to some of the issues he raises. I will include, where possible, references to recent articles in *Scientific American*, since for many readers the original scientific papers may be either inaccessible or excessively technical.

Boyd appears to make several claims in his letter. One of these is that the real world of active scientific research is far from the serene, polite image popularly held. He claims that in fact the scientific world is roiled with controversies, that the ranks of scientists include pugnacious characters who propose dissident theories and demand incontrovertible experimental evidence for even the most widely held theories, and that even the foundation rocks of science are regularly questioned and reexamined. How does the scientific community plead to such claims? "Guilty as charged!"

Indeed, the history of any well-established theory is one of repeated demands from skeptical scientists for experimental proof. In the case of relativity, most scientists were reluctant to take Einstein's theory seriously until impressive experimental evidence began to accumulate. Even then, some scientists continued to advance alternate theories that agreed with relativity for experimentally verified phenomena, but that made different predictions for untested phenomena. Relativity is well-established today precisely because it has withstood these challenges for eighty-five years. For example, recently Einstein's general theory of relativity received impressive verification by the observation of "gravitational wave" effects (Schramm and Steigman 1988; Jeffries 1987) and "gravitational lenses" (Turner 1988).

While I am speaking of Einstein, I should mention that he staunchly maintained a dissident position about the random indeterminancy inherent in

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quantum theory. He simply could not believe that "God plays dice with the universe," and until his death he disputed experimental evidence that indicated otherwise, proposing "hidden variables" to account for these phenomena. Unfortunately for Eintsein, his view has now been soundly refuted by recent experimental evidence (Shimony 1988), which dramatically confirms the most fundamental (and "spooky") notions of quantum theory.

However, Boyd seems to be alluding to more than just significant debate within the scientific community regarding these scientific theories. He suggests that these controversies might upset some of the fundamental scientific notions on which I based my article. However, I feel that a careful examination of these dissident theories shows that this is not the case—these alternative theories either differ only in sophisticated details from the orthodox theories (and the basic notions are not at issue), or else their experimental support is still somewhat weak.

For example, Boyd mentions the work of John W. Moffat, who has proposed what is known as the nonsymmetric gravitational theory, an alternative to the standard general relativity theory of Einstein. As Boyd has pointed out, some recent experimental evidence appears to confirm Moffat's theory. What are the facts here? Is Einstein's work about to be repudiated?

Moffat's theory is simply a mathematical extension of general relativity. Even in those highly exotic circumstances where the predictions of relativity significantly differ from those of classical Newtonian mechanics, Moffat's theory usually predicts the same results as general relativity. Only in some highly unusual circumstances, for instance in certain binary star systems, does Moffat's theory give rise to results significantly different from those of general relativity. By the way, Moffat's theory has recently received an additional experimental boost (a discrepancy similar to that of DI Hercules has now been observed in another binary star system), and so it is possible that one day Moffat's theory will supplant Einstein's. But Moffat's theory does not upset the basic notions of either special or general relativity. For example, black holes and the big bang can be derived from Moffat's theory as well as from general relativity.

An even more dramatic example of this point is Boyd's mention of the fact, which has long been known, that the current mathematical formulation of general relativity is not completely compatible with quantum theory. What Boyd did not mention, however, is that a revised "quantum theory of gravitation" would only affect phenomena that occurred in the first 10^{-40} second following the big bang (Schramm and Steigman 1988, 69).

The public disagreement between Richard Leakey and Donald Johanson over the ancestry of modern humans, mentioned by both Boyd and myself, is another case in point. Some creationists, and even the likes of Hugh Nibley, have cited this case to show that the study of human evolution is far from settled. This may be true. However, even a brief review of the issues involved in the Leakey-Johanson debate makes it quite clear that the notion of humans evolving from hominids over millions of years is hardly in doubt. Certainly neither side of this debate can offer the slightest comfort to those who cling to a fundamentalist interpretation of creation scriptures.

What of the plasma theory of Hannes Alfven, which Boyd lists as an alternative to the standard big bang cosmology? Here again, there may be some substance to Alfven's ideas. Indeed, many scientists now agree that these plasma effects may be more widespread and important than previously thought. But Alfven's claims that the big bang never happened, and that these plasma effects are the dominant force shaping the large-scale structure of the universe, are at present not very well substantiated. Similarly, Arp's data is simply not yet compelling enough for his theory to seriously compete with the established theory. Indeed, neither of these theories is able to account for some of the most important experimental facts of cosmology, such as the observed abundances of light element isotopes in the universe today. By contrast, a straightforward application of the big bang theory correctly predicts these abundances, even though they span nearly ten orders of magnitude (Schramm and Steigman 1988, 66). Also, the number of lepton families observed in particle accelerator experiments is entirely consistent with the big bang cosmology but is not easily explained by other theories (Cline 1988). In short, the big bang theory simply explains too many things too well to be casually discarded in favor of theories that still have only limited theoretical and experimental support.

So what is the bottom line of the controversies that Boyd mentions? It certainly is regrettable that in some cases solid scientific work was blocked from scientific journals, although for every case of this sort there are a hundred cases where shoddy work has been published. But as for their impact on this discussion, it appears to me that the alternative theories listed by Boyd either differ only in subtle ways from the standard theories, or else they do not yet have strong experimental support and cannot yet explain some well-established experimental facts. As far as I can see, the basic notions of the scientific theories mentioned in my article are not at present seriously threatened.

But what if they were, or what if in the future one or more of these theories is supplanted with more precise theories? Why is it so threatening to think that one's current conception of the universe may have to be revised, particularly in a Church that professes belief that "[God] will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the kingdom of God"? Indeed, the continuing refinement of modern scientific theories has a perfect parallel in the evolution of LDS doctrines. One need only consider the changes that have occurred in the understanding of such principles as race and the priesthood, the Adam-God doctrine, blood atonement, polygamy, the role of seventies, the temple ceremony, and the gathering of Zion to conclude that LDS doctrines are "forever tentative" also.

Certainly I agree with Boyd that it would be highly improper at the current time for Church leaders to make an authoritative pronouncement in favor of a scientific theory, particularly one as unsettled as the big bang now is. On the other hand, given the weight of evidence that now supports many of these theories, it seems to me rather unwise for a leader to blithely criticize one of them in a public speech or article. In a similar vein, while it may be unwise to base one's system of personal philosophy on a tentative scientific theory, it

would be even more foolish to adopt an inflexible personal philosophy that contradicts one or more well-established scientific principles.

Finally, I reiterate my belief that it is high time for the LDS intellectual community to consider the theological and philosophical implications of recent scientific discoveries. Granted, the possibility always exists that some of these discussions will be rendered moot by future scientific developments that may place these matters in a different light. But in the absence of such discussions, there is the susbtantial risk that the Church may one day appear much as the Catholic church of old, or as the fundamentalist Christian churches of today: forever fighting a rear-guard action against certain scientific theories that become more incontrovertible with each passing year.

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Bag, buffalo design, Mae Parry (Clearfield, Utah), 11½"×16", buckskin, fabric, glass beads, 1988; (Utah) State Art Collection.

Living the Principle

Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle by Jessie L. Embry. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), xvii, 238 pp., $19.95.

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UNFORTUNATELY BUT UNDENIABLY, the practice of polygamy is closely associated in the popular mind with the Mormons, fascinating both scholars and casual readers, generating a plethora of anecdotal studies, and resulting in many oversimplifications and stereotypes. For this reason, the University of Utah is to be commended for choosing Jessie Embry's important study to begin its new series, Publications in Mormon Studies. Embry's monograph describes the lifestyles of Mormon families living the principle of celestial (plural) marriage, using recollections of plural family members interviewed in the 1930s, 1970s, and 1980s. The bulk of these interviews with descendants from plural marriages contracted before 1904 were conducted by the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at Brigham Young University. As the project developed, Embry included interviews with children from monogamous families of the same period for purposes of comparison.

According to Embry, the "practice of polygamy is essential to fully understand Mormonism historically," and "complete insight into the practice requires that we study the 'motives, beliefs, perceptions, and experiences' of those who were part of these families" (p. xvi). Embry carefully examines previous writings about polygamy and tests their validity using both the memories of her interviewees and simple quantification of their responses. This approach, in fact, is one of the most important contributions of the book. By carefully reviewing all the major literature, Embry identifies most of the important historiographic questions and evidence about polygamy. Her chapter headings are a skeletal construct of the topic, ranging from the demographic and geographic characteristics to the motivations underlying polygamy.

Embry is at her best when she identifies unanswered questions and areas needing further research. For example, her research sample revealed that between 40 and 50 percent of polygamous husbands and wives were born in Mormon settlements in Utah and southern Idaho and that less than one-third were born outside the United States, a finding at variance with two important earlier studies conducted by Nels Anderson and Gene Pace. She was quick to note that further research was needed to examine the question of "the relationship between immigrants and polygamy" (p. 32) and concluded that although the "stereotype of immigrant women being funneled into polygamy is not supported statistically, anecdotal evidence shows some men married immigrants . . . [to solve] dual problems of economic support and assimilation" (p. 68).

In some cases, the interviews confirmed what was already known, for example that most polygamous husbands (60 percent) married only one plural wife; that 25 percent of the time plural wives were actual sisters; that men tended to choose women

as plural wives who were as old as their first wife when she married, even though the husband was now ten to thirty years older.

Since the interviews dealt with a later period of polygamy, the impact of anti-polygamy laws is apparent. The practice of polygamy among the Latter-day Saints was affected by the interplay of the faithful who practiced it and the non-Mormon opposition. Embry notes that had the interviews been conducted a generation earlier, they would have captured the memories of those who lived "the principle" before the intense opposition began. She speculates that "from an anthropological viewpoint" it was unfortunate that plural marriage did not continue without harassment so that differing responses of later generations in polygamy could be charted (p. 49).

Embry's central thesis is that "Mormon polygamous families were not much different than Mormon monogamous families and other non-Mormon families of the same era" (p. xiv). However, this thesis is not completely convincing, in part because of the admitted limitations of the methodology. Most interviews were the product of "adult memories of childhood." Embry herself acknowledges that children would not be privy to information about parents' sexual and economic activities and, moreover, would tend to remember the most positive elements of their childhood experiences. These adult informants also carried with them contemporary ideals of marriage and a vested interest, which might have colored or distorted their family memories. It is also disconcerting to find that over one-half of the informants initially refused to be interviewed (p. xv). With these potential difficulties, I wonder why Embry did not attempt the types of analyses required of historians utilizing slave narratives (see Woodward 1974). Additional subtlety may have been added to the investigation if the interviews gathered in the 1930s (by James Hulett and Kimball Young) had been compared with the more recent (1980s) recollections. Did the different groups show evidence of discernible differences in models of ideal family life or moral strictures?

Embry too hastily dismisses the question of how polygamous Mormons reconciled romantic love with the necessity for shared marital love. She accurately concludes that the decision to enter polygamy, and the willingness to make adjustments to the challenges of such a life, were primarily determined by religious conviction. She adds, however, that "plural marriages resulted from courtships that were not that much different from other romantic involvements in the nineteenth century. The modern perception of men and women marrying for love was rarely mentioned in marriage manuals" (p. 66). This contention, that romantic love as a prerequisite for marriage is a modern concept, is not born out by recent study. While early Americans distrusted romantic love, by the middle of the nineteenth century the popular culture was "preoccupied with romantic love," and falling in love had become almost compulsory (Rothman 1984, 103–5). Despite Embry's efforts here, the case is not closed. The issue of dissonance created by plural marriage in the nineteenth century "age of romance" is still an open question, one that historians will continue to explore using anecdotal evidence.

The least compelling case in this book is Embry's conclusion that there were no differences in the economic roles of polygamous and monogamous wives. The chart Embry provides comparing both groups reveals a very small sample of monogamous women. A change of only three outside salaried monogamous women (widows) would have resulted in a great percentage difference (p. 96). Besides, are widows and outside salaried polygamous wives interchangeable? Furthermore, Embry's figures reveal a significant increase in the use of "home skills" by polygamous wives to raise money. Added to Embry's later observation that "polygamous homes were usually separate, each wife . . . responsible

for her own household and her own children" (p. 169), this information leads to a contradictory conclusion. We need not argue that plural wives were economically independent, but certainly home skills used to make money for a woman often alone with her own children differ from similar activities when the father is always present. Evidence from both the chart and from the nature of the living arrangements suggests dynamic differences between polygamous and monogamous homes. Recognizing that economic independence for women was not an appropriate Victorian ideal and that interviewees reporting here had a preconceived image of "father as breadwinner," it is possible to differ with Embry's conclusions.

Returning to the historiography of slavery for some perspective, other limitations to Embry's methodology become apparent. When the controversial study *Time on the Cross* (Fogel and Engerman 1974) was written, scholars noted that its statistical information raised some interesting points, but in no way replaced the anecdotal material already assembled. Similarly the available quantification of responses in Embry's study of Mormon polygamous families often only partially answers vital questions. While the author can give us the frequency of certain living arrangements for these families, she very honestly notes that "what cannot be determined with any certainty is the degree to which decisions about these matters were made solely by the husband or by the husband in consultation with one wife or with all of his wives" (p. 87). Without knowing this, we cannot really understand the essence of these marriages.

Embry's meticulous scholarship helps us to appreciate the individual diversity of polygamous families. Often the very richness of her anecdotal examples support opponents of her views who argue for the increased independence of polygamous wives. Her examples stimulate readers to new questions and conclusions. For example, the polygamous families she describes were not always accepted by their monogamous Mormon neighbors. Early in the book, a plural wife on the "underground" describes hiding from visiting ward teachers (p. 20). Later, a child from a plural family reports that "we were called bastards by some Mormon people" (p. 190).

Both of these incidents lead interested readers to wonder about the attitudes, perceptions, and tensions that existed between polygamous and monogamous Mormons. It would have been an interesting question to include in the interviews.

Despite the limitations of the interview data and some of the inconclusiveness of the central thesis, this is an important study, an indispensable starting point for students of Mormon history and of interest to the widest of reading publics.

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BRIEF NOTICES

So God Created Man . . . Latter-Day Alternatives by William Lee Stokes (Salt Lake City: Starstone Publishing [1283 E. South Temple #504, Salt Lake City, Utah 84102], 1988), 141 pp.

THIS PRIVATELY PRINTED WORK was first written in 1964 but was never accepted for publication because of its "controversial" topic. A response to Joseph Fielding Smith's *Man, His Origin and Destiny*, the book

examines the argument used by various Church leaders in the past to refute theories of evolution, and gives careful exposition of a theory of evolution based equally on scientific theories and the scriptures.

The Fantastic Life of Walter Murray Gibson, Hawaii's Minister of Everything by Jacob Adler and Robert M. Kamins (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), xiv, 243 pp., $24.95.

READERS DISMAYED BY CURRENT fraud scenarios, whether in historical documents or finance, may find some consolation in this story of a nineteenth-century con artist. Walter Murray Gibson was born in England in 1822, lived in Quebec and New York City, and at fourteen ran away from home. He turned up in South Carolina (with a credible southern drawl), was married at sixteen, widowed at twenty-two, and left three children with in-laws to travel the world.

Gibson bought a schooner in New York, sailed to South America (smuggling arms) and the Netherlands East Indies (without navigational equipment), where the Dutch government imprisoned him for a year. After escaping he tried unsuccessfully to press charges against the Dutch and settled for a two-year public speaking tour instead, which earned him a fair income. At this point he was baptized a Mormon (in 1860), ordained an elder (although he took to calling himself a "High Priest of Melchizedek"), and ended up in Hawaii with a mission call he saw as an open-ended invitation to build the kingdom.

Gibson's peculiar methods of proselyting, however, led to his excommunication and alienated him from Hawaiian authorities, who suspected sedition. Although he spent the rest of his life there in influential positions, he was ultimately expunged from most Hawaiian history books. Adler and Kamins have written an engaging, well-documented look at a unique nineteenth-century character whose path crossed briefly with the early Church.

Unto the Islands of the Sea by R. Lanier Britsch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 527 pp., index, $16.95.

THIS BOOK, THE FINAL PRODUCT of a fourteen-year project partially sponsored by a Church historian grant, is divided geographically into sections on Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, and Guam-Micronesia. *Unto the Islands of the Sea* will interest more than just former missionaries from these areas. Those with a topical, rather than a regional, preference will be pleased by the meticulous indexing.

When the gospel was first introduced in the Pacific, the Church authorities were unusually tolerant of the differing sexual mores of the island people, which they attributed to cultural factors, not sin. The islanders appeared to be uniquely innocent despite extremely loose sexual practices.

But true commitment to the Church requires close adherence to central doctrines. The Maori were congenial to the missionaries but presented a problem because they were widely adulterous and easily offended when specific moral repentance was commanded. One mission leader, considered highly successful in converting the Maori to proper marriage, convinced 168 cohabitating couples to wed in that many weeks.

In addition to cultural obstacles, the missionaries faced economic problems as well. Samoans were tenderly taught not to borrow tithing to spend on cigarettes, and they eventually understood why they could not be paid for their missionary work. Hawaiian Saints reluctantly gave up their profitable narcotics crops.

Tonga, with six national governments and ten major languages, presented a variety of challenges. Most shocking was the presence of cannibalism. Also, because of a large migration from India, a majority of the population was Hindu, and Hindus did not adopt westernized Christianity easily.

An exceptionally readable book, this volume stands alone as a reference volume on proselytizing in the islands of the Pacific.

From Acorn to Oak Tree: A Personal History of the Establishment and First Quarter Development of the South American Missions by Frederick S. Williams and Frederick G. Williams (Fullerton, Calif.: Et Cetera, Et Cetera Graphics, 1987), 375 pp.

FREDERICK S. WILLIAMS served as both missionary and mission president in South America and here presents autobiographical sketches of mission life in the South American Mission (1927–29), the Argentine Mission (1938–42), and the first years of the Uruguyan Mission (1947–51). The book contains personal history, descriptions of events and mission programs, biographies of South American members, and collected data about the four South American missions from 1925–51. Appendices include biographies of the earliest missionaries and of mission presidents; a brief history of the early Brazilian Mission; baptismal records, 1925–35; and a list of missionaries who served in South America during that quarter-century.

Copies are available from Et Cetera, Et Cetera Graphics, 3026 Brea Blvd., Fullerton, California, 92635.

Evolution? The Scriptures Say Yes! by William Lee Stokes (New York: Vantage Press, 1988), 125 pp., index, $10.95.

WRITTEN TO RECONCILE "creationist" criticisms of evolution with scientific truths, this book is presented as a scientist's defense of the Bible's compatibility with the theory of evolution. Stokes provides many basic examples of scientific knowledge to refute too-literal readings of the Bible, but his arguments taken from the Bible are based on an English reading of the King James Bible. This reading allows for an eclectic view of divine creation that includes evolution. He proposes, for example, that the first chapter of Genesis describes the first six days of the earth's creation and that the second chapter describes the resulting seventh day — a day that is still in process and that includes the millions of years required for the natural evolution of life on earth.

While the book is far from a final statement on this topic and leaves many questions unanswered, it is a basic statement for a general audience and may provide an antidote for extreme views on either side of the evolution controversy.

Stephanie by Jack Weyland (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1989), 209 pp., $9.95.

A GOOD MANY LATTER-DAY SAINTS will read this book, and a good many will like it. As a cautionary tale for young adults, perhaps this book about a young girl's problems with drugs and alcohol serves. But the "all's well that ends well" ending may suggest to young readers that they can experiment with drugs and alcohol for a season, then reenter the fold as welcomed prodigals.

As Stephanie Bradshaw kicks the habit, her bishop asks her to talk in church, ward members respond to her candid, open talk with tears and hugs, both her "bad guy" and "good guy" friends admire her — and she gets the missionary. Such happy endings and the implicit message they carry may be difficult for families who struggle with the complex and painful problems of addiction and who find no simple answers at all.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DeWITT PALMER, a lifelong resident of northern Utah's Cache Valley, developed a lasting interest in ranching during his youth. After retiring from a career in business, Palmer taught himself to braid rawhide, calling upon boyhood memories, determination, and the help of braiders throughout the West. Palmer's finely constructed reins, headstalls, hobbles, and bossals are popular locally and outside of Utah. Palmer is affiliated with the national Rawhide Braiders' Association and received the Utah Governor's Folk Art Award in 1987.

GLEN THOMPSON of Huntsville has constructed more than five thousand saddles in Utah during his career. Known for their made-to-order, leather ground seats, artistic tooling, and overall quality construction, each requires between eighteen and thirty hours of labor. Thompson's Beehive saddle has been displayed throughout Utah and at the Renwich Gallery in Washington, D.C. In 1984 he received the Utah Governor's Folk Art Award.

HAZEL and WALLACE ZUNDEL were born and raised in the small Shoshone settlement of Washakie, just south of the Utah-Idaho border. Both learned their crafts in their traditional community, which fostered age-old skills like basketmaking, hide tanning, and beadwork. The Zundels have displayed their bead and leather work in numerous galleries, art shows, and fairs and have taught their skills in both schools and festivals.

Like the Zundels, *MAE PARRY* was born and raised in Washakie and grew up observing and imitating the arts of her Shoshone heritage. She has demonstrated and displayed her art work at numerous festivals, art shows, and schools and has devoted many hours to speaking and writing about her people.

ADA JENSEN learned to make rag rugs at Relief Society during the Depression and since then has crafted more than 550 rugs for family and friends. Using donated rags, she likes to work with durable bright colors and bold patterns. She has demonstrated her rug-making skills in her church and community, at the Festival of the American West, and at the Jensen Historical Farm in Cache Valley.

SHAWN CLARK makes bentwood furniture from willow and other soft woods that grow near his home. His work represents a centuries-old craft tradition. In the last few years, Clark has improvised with this tradition by incorporating antlers, rawhide, and other natural materials into his furniture. He has demonstrated at numerous public festivals and has sold his furniture to people from many parts of the country.

MAO LEE VANG, a Hmong refugee from southeast Asia, learned in her early girlhood the distinctive techniques used to decorate ceremonial clothing, infant carriers, and burial clothing. Mrs. Vang's fine needlework, representing the best of this tradition, has been displayed throughout Utah, and she demonstrated her skill at various places, including the Utah Arts Festival, before she died in 1985.

HENRIETTE MUNANUI was born in Tahiti, where she learned to make traditional textiles, *tifaifai*, from her mother. She has lived in Utah since 1969 and has continued her craft, often sending to Tahiti for the right type and color of cotton fabric for her appliqued textiles. Her work was featured in a traveling exhibit of Polynesian quilts, and she has frequently demonstrated her skills.

Sisters *MELVA EMRAZIAN* and *ROSE PETERSON* come from a family that endured fifty years of exile in Syria before immigrating in the mid-1960s to rejoin earlier Armenian-Mormon immigrants in Utah. During their exile, the family earned a living by weaving rugs. The girls learned to knit, crochet, make lace using only a needle and thread, and reproduce an item simply by looking at it. Both sisters create textiles, and Rose works as a professional tailor.