

Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies

Volume 10
Number 1 *Fall 2019*

Article 1

2019

IMW Journal of Religious Studies Volume 10 Number 1

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"IMW Journal of Religious Studies Volume 10 Number 1." *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* 10, no. 1 (2019). <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/imwjournal/vol10/iss1/1>

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journal
of Religious Studies

Foreword

Christopher James Blythe

From Loving to Obergefell and
Beyond: Plural Marriage as the
Next Sexual Justice Issue

Philippa Juliet Meek

Heavenly Mother in the Vernacular
Religion of Latter-day Saint Women

Charlotte Shurtz

Returning to the Sources:
Integrating Textual Criticism
in the Study of Early Mormon
Texts and History

Colby Townsend

Book Reviews

Interviews with Philip
Barlow and Patrick Q Mason

Mormon Women and Art
Curated by *Christine Elyse Blythe*

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Christopher James Blythe was the founding editor of the *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* between 2008 and 2011. After receiving his master's degree from Utah State University, he obtained a Ph.D. in American Religious History from Florida State University. He is currently a faculty research associate at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship at Brigham Young University, as well as the co-editor of the *Journal of Mormon History*. Blythe's first monograph, *Terrible Revolution: Latter-day Saints and the American Apocalypse* will be published by Oxford University Press in summer 2020.

FOREWORD

It is my honor to open this 10th anniversary issue of the *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies*. Reader, please appreciate just what an oddity that is in the world of student-run journals. The problem with student (and thus editorial staff) turnover is very real. The typical student journal lasts only a few issues before consistency in publishing begins to wane. The fact that the *IMW Journal* has remained afloat and regularly publishing for a decade is a monumental accomplishment for the program in Religious Studies at Utah State University and the staff of the journal. My congratulations.

There are at least three possible reasons I have been invited to write this foreword. First, in 2008, I became the founding editor of the journal, a position I held for three years. For me to write this foreword is a nod to the institutional history of the journal. Second, I am a scholar of Latter-day Saint Studies and the current editor of the *Journal of Mormon History*. That is to say, I am going to write about things that are in my wheelhouse. And, finally, I am married to the current editor of the journal, leading to the possibility that there is some nepotism underfoot. Regardless, it is my privilege to acknowledge the hard work of 10 years-worth of editorial staff, academic advisory board members, and student authors. Many individuals have contributed to, influenced, and shaped this project.

We wanted the *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* to be unlike other venues for student publication. Most importantly, we envisioned a journal that would subject undergraduate and graduate student research to the critique of leading scholars in the field. I fondly remember that initial team including my co-editor Jay Burton and managing editor Mark Rasmussen, working long days to get the journal up and running. I remember the thrill we felt as we invited scholars to participate in the first incarnation of IMWJ's academic review board and as we navigated, for the first time, the peer review process. While several

of the editorial staff have gone on to work with other journals, we did not have the benefit of their experience then. Instead, we had a hands-on education. The journal has professionalized over the past decade, including the addition of a professional editor to mentor the ever-shifting student editorial staff. I commend the Religious Studies program at Utah State University for their continued nurturing of the journal.

Now to turn our attention to the matter at hand: Mormon Studies, which has become a major subject in the field of American Religious History. A special issue on Mormonism is appropriate for a journal housed at Utah State University. It was Religious Studies at USU that in 2007 became the first program ever to acquire a Mormon Studies chair. Philip Barlow held the Leonard J. Arrington Chair of Mormon History and Culture until his retirement over a decade later. In 2018, the program was able to entice Patrick Mason from the Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies at Claremont University that he had held since 2011. (For more about Barlow and Mason, see their interviews published in this issue of the journal.)

The *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* has published several important articles on Latter-day Saints over the years.

Trenton Olsen, "Conflict of Church and State: Two Latter-day Saint Poets' Perspectives on the Utah War of 1857-1858," *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* 1 (2009): 1-21.

Joshua Wheatley, "The Prophet-Editor: Joseph Smith's Revisions to Two Revelations," *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* 1 (2009): 65-85.

Nate Olsen, "Marriage and Divorce in Islamic and Mormon Polygamy: A Legal Comparison," *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* 1 (2009): 87-106.

Benjamin E. Park, "'A Uniformity So Complete': Early Mormon Angelology," *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* 2 (2010): 1-37.

Justin R. Bray, "Excessive Formalities in the Mormon Sacrament, 1928-1940," *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* 4 (2012): 61-75.

Hadyn B. Call, "Mormons and Muslims—An Ongoing Encounter," *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* 6 (2015): 2-21.

If you enjoy this issue, you may also want to look back at these past contributions.

This issue consists of three student articles, a set of interviews with the two scholars who have held the Leonard J. Arrington Chair of Mormon History and Culture, and a section showcasing contemporary Latter-day Saint women's art. As I read the articles in this issue, I was impressed with just how central each topic was to current directions in the field of Latter-day Saint studies. Philippa Meek, a doctoral candidate at the University of Exeter, examines the legal implications of U.S. Supreme Court cases on inter-racial marriage and same-sex marriage and the impact it could have on laws that criminalize plural marriage. This is a fascinating subject that invites us to consider the continued impact of American law on polygamy-practicing Latter Day Saints. Meek's work also serves as a reminder that Mormonism is not one church but a religious tradition with many expressions, including contemporary Fundamentalist Mormons.

Charlotte Shurtz, an undergraduate at Brigham Young University, has written on Mormon women's reception of a goddess figure, referred to as Heavenly Mother. She argues that through artistic expression women have developed a vernacular theology about this feminine divine. The series of interviews that Shurtz conducted for this essay offer insight as to how belief in a Heavenly Mother figure is expressed and interpreted on the ground. Scholars of Mormonism have contributed to Feminist studies and women's history for the past few decades; however, it is only in recent years that we have begun to see a series of major publications devoted to the study of Mormon women.

Colby Townsend, who recently completed his master's degree at Utah State University, looks at the importance of textual criticism in historical analysis, particularly as it pertains to the early Latter-day Saint past. Townsend's critique is particularly focused on scriptural studies, which has become a growing topic in scholarship on Latter-day Saints and throughout American religion. Finally, Christine Elyse Blythe's selection of art from Latter-day Saint women artists represents the increasing attention paid to Mormonism and the Arts as well as to how lay Latter-day Saints creatively and personally navigate their religion.

I want to conclude by recognizing the effort it takes for a student-scholar to publish in a peer-reviewed journal like the *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies*. Our authors must possess more than an original insight into a topic related to religion. It requires courage for students to subject their ideas and their writing to the scrutiny of anonymous reviewers particularly so early in their career. It requires that students take revisions in stride and diligently revise and refine their work to meet the standards of the editor. It takes motivation and perseverance to see a submission through to publication. Such tenacity has resulted in more than 15,000 downloads yearly and over 122,000 over the life of the journal. We invite you to engage their work.

Here is to ten more years,

Christopher James Blythe, PhD
Founding Editor, 2008-2011

Philippa Juliet Meek is a doctoral researcher at the University of Exeter in England. Her research examines public perceptions of Mormon fundamentalists as based on depictions in popular culture. Through ethnographic field research, her work explores the accuracy of public perceptions and examines the stereotypes and biases that exist among the general public. Her work has been presented at several national and international conferences and has been featured in a number of podcasts.

Philippa Meek[†]

From Loving to Obergefell and Beyond: Plural Marriage as the Next Sexual Justice Issue

In 1967, the Supreme Court of the United States unanimously ruled that anti-miscegenation laws were unconstitutional, citing the Due Process and Equal Protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.¹ The ruling struck down laws in sixteen states that banned inter-racial marriage and overturned an earlier 1883 Supreme Court ruling; *Pace v. Alabama*.² Richard Loving, a white man, and his wife Mildred, a woman of colour, had been sentenced to a year in prison for marrying contrary to Virginia law; their sentence was suspended upon condition that they leave the state and not return for at least twenty-five years.³ Their 1958 marriage, which took place in the District of Columbia where inter-racial marriage was legal, was considered invalid in Virginia and the couple were arrested after establishing their marital home in the Virginian county in which they grew up.⁴ With the support of the American Civil Liberties Union, the Lovings appealed their convictions and took their case all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States, resulting in the landmark ruling that concluded,

[†] This is where you can put the author's attributions.

¹ *Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U.S. 1 (1967).

² *Loving*, 388 U.S. 1 at 6; *Pace v. Alabama*, 106 U.S. 583 (1883).

³ *Loving* 388 U.S. 1 at 3.

⁴ *Loving* 388 U.S. 1 at 2.

‘marriage is one of the “basic civil rights of man,” fundamental to our very existence and survival’.⁵

In 2015, the Supreme Court ruled, with a five to four, majority that state laws preventing the issuance of marriage licences to same-sex couples, and recognition of marriages carried out in a state where such unions were legal, were unconstitutional, again citing the Due Process and Equal Protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.⁶ James Obergefell and John Arthur lived together as a committed couple for over twenty years before Arthur was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a degenerative disease with no cure. Following Arthur’s diagnosis, the couple decided to travel to Maryland, where same-sex marriage was legal, from their home in Ohio, where it was not, in order to marry.⁷ When Arthur died a few months after their marriage, Obergefell discovered that because their marriage was not legally recognised in the State of Ohio, he was not able to be recognised as Arthur’s surviving spouse.⁸ Obergefell brought a suit against the state arguing that refusal to recognise him as a surviving spouse was unconstitutional. A number of related cases from Ohio, Tennessee, Michigan, and Kentucky were brought together with Obergefell’s in a class action suit that made its way to the Supreme Court, resulting in another landmark ruling that decided, ‘same-sex couples may exercise the fundamental right to marry in all States’, that the plaintiffs, ‘ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law. The Constitution grants them that right’.⁹ Dissenting arguments questioned whether the ruling would restrict states in retaining, ‘the definition of marriage as a union between two people’, suggesting that the ruling in *Obergefell*, could open the door to those seeking the right to plural marriage.¹⁰

The cases of *Loving v. Virginia* and *Obergefell v. Hodges* are two examples of civil rights cases in which those in committed and loving relationships, sought to have their right to legally marry under federal and state law permitted and recognised, and afforded the same rights that

⁵ *Loving*, 388 U.S. 1 at 12.

⁶ *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 135 U.S. 2584 (2015).

⁷ *Obergefell*, 135 U.S. 2584 at 4-5.

⁸ *Obergefell*, 135 U.S. 2584 at 5.

⁹ *Obergefell*, 135 U.S. 2584 at 28.

¹⁰ *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 135 U.S. 2584 (2015), Chief Justice Roberts, with whom Justice Scalia and Justice Thomas join, dissenting at 20.

MEEK: FROM LOVING TO OBERGEFELL

heterosexual couples of the same race were already privileged to enjoy. In the years since both of these landmark Supreme Court rulings, the numbers of mixed-race and same-sex marriages have risen consistently, with support for such unions rising too. This paper aims to demonstrate that in light of *Loving*, *Obergefell*, and other examples of case law, as well as longitudinal survey data gauging public opinion, the fight for the decriminalisation and legal recognition of plural marriage in the United States is the next civil rights issue relating to marriage and sex in the United States.

The fight for the rights of those who practice plural marriage is a social justice issue that would lead to the recognition of the rights of non-legally recognised spouses, and children of those spouses, who currently have few legal rights with regard to inheritance, in the case of death of a non-legally recognised spouse, and alimony or child support in the event of a non-legally recognised marriage breaking down. For many who practice plural marriage in the United States today, decriminalisation and legalisation for them is not simply about gaining the right to marry whomever they wish, and have those marriages recognised as in the cases of *Loving* and *Obergefell*, but is also about gaining the right to practice something that is a central tenet of their faith, something that is protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, but has been prohibited in the country since the nineteenth century. Polygamy advocates have therefore used Fourteenth Amendment arguments like those used in *Loving* and *Obergefell*, as well as arguments based on the First Amendment.

SUPPORT AND JUSTICE FOR INTER-RACIAL MARRIAGE

At the time of the *Loving* decision, only 3% of new marriages in the United States were between individuals of different racial identities, by 2015 that number had risen to 17%.¹¹ Likewise, the Pew Research Center found in its analysis of data from the General Social Survey that those who would oppose a relative marrying someone of a different race dropped in number

¹¹ Gretchen Livingston and Anna Brown, 'Intermarriage in the U.S. 50 Years After Loving v. Virginia' Pew Research Center, 18th May 2017, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2017/05/18/intermarriage-in-the-u-s-50-years-after-loving-v-virginia/>.

significantly, particularly when it came to a relative marrying a black person. In 1990, 63% of non-blacks surveyed stated that they would oppose a relative marrying someone who was black; by 2016 this number had dropped to only 14% of non-black people surveyed.¹² Additionally, the number of Americans surveyed who said that inter-racial marriage was good for society has also risen in recent years. In 2010 24% of those surveyed stated that they thought people of different races marrying each other was generally good for society; by 2017, this number had risen to 39%.¹³ Between 2011 and 2017, the number of those who stated it did not make much difference dropped from 64% to 52%.¹⁴

Gallup polls have also demonstrated the same trends. In 1959, the year after Richard Loving married Mildred Jeter, only 4% of Americans polled approved of marriages between blacks and whites. By 1968, the year after the *Loving* ruling, 20% of Americans polled approved of such unions. By 2013, 87% of Americans polled approved of marriages between blacks and whites; support increased year on year since the question was first asked in 1958, with a significant jump in support occurring in the 1990s.¹⁵ Significantly, the same report found that support for inter-racial marriage was highest amongst younger generations suggesting that trends will continue as the current population ages. In the eighteen to twenty-nine year old age group, 96% approved of marriage between blacks and whites, compared to only 70% among those aged sixty-five or older; support for inter-racial marriage is almost universal among younger generations.¹⁶

In the decennial census carried out in the United States, respondents are asked questions about the racial make-up of their household. Data from the United States Census Bureau shows that according to the 2010 census, 7% of American households were made up of an inter-racial married couple; additionally 14% of households were made up of inter-racial unmarried

¹² Livingston and Brown, '50 Years After Loving', 2017.

¹³ Livingston and Brown, 'Intermarriage in the U.S. 50 Years After Loving v. Virginia: Public Views on Intermarriage' *Pew Research Center*, 18th May 2017, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2017/05/18/2-public-views-on-intermarriage/>.

¹⁴ Livingston and Brown, 'Public Views on Intermarriage', 2017.

¹⁵ Frank Newport, 'In U.S., 87% Approve of Black-White Marriage, vs. 4% in 1958', *Gallup*, 25th July 2013, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/163697/approve-marriage-blacks-whites.aspx>.

¹⁶ Newport, '87% Approve of Black-White Marriage', 2013.

couples.¹⁷ Comparatively, results from the 1960 census showed that only 0.4% of households were comprised of inter-married couples, increasing to 0.7% in the 1970 census, and to 2% in the census of 1980.¹⁸ A Census Bureau report attributes the rise in inter-racial marriages, in part, to the rising number of marriages between U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens.¹⁹ Nevertheless, marriage between individuals of different races in the United States demonstrates a rising trend.

The longitudinal survey data detailed above demonstrates how attitudes towards inter-racial marriage have changed positively since the ruling in *Loving*, with indications that trends will continue to show support for inter-racial unions. Additionally, U.S. Census data demonstrates that the number of such unions has increased over time and that this trend is also likely to continue. Americans are now more likely than ever to marry someone of a different race, and opposition to a relative marrying someone of another race is at an all-time low. One could argue, that with inter-racial marriage being supported by the vast majority of Americans, with particular support among younger generations, the issue of inter-racial marriage as a social justice and civil rights issue, is now settled, with few objecting to the practice.

SUPPORT AND JUSTICE FOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

While the ruling in *Obergefell* found that same-sex couples had the same rights to marriage as couples of the opposite sex, this was not the first landmark ruling in the fight for sexual civil rights for same-sex couples. In 2003, the Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Lawrence v. Texas* invalidated anti-sodomy laws in Texas, and other states, that outlawed sexual relations between men. The Supreme Court ruled that anti-sodomy laws were unconstitutional under the Due Process and Equal Protection clauses of the

¹⁷ Daphne Lofquist, Terry Lugailla, Martin O'Connell, and Sarah Feliz, 'Households and Families: 2010: 2010 Census Brief', (United States Census Bureau, 2012), 17.

¹⁸ United States Census Bureau, 'Historical Census Data', *United States Census Bureau*, 10th June 1998, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/marriage-and-divorce/interracial-couples.html>.

¹⁹ Luke J. Larsen and Nathan P. Walters, 'Married Couple Households by Nativity Status: 2011: American Community Survey Briefs', (United States Census Bureau, 2013).

Fourteenth Amendment.²⁰ The six to three majority ruling overturned an earlier Supreme Court decision that upheld the ban.²¹ The *Lawrence* case has been cited by polygamists as precedent in arguments stating that private consensual behaviour, such as the marital practices of polygamists, ought not to be an issue for the law to interfere with.²² Pro-plural marriage arguments cite *Lawrence* as evidence that authorities ought to stay out of polygamist's bedrooms so long as relations are private and between adults who give full and free consent, however, courts have been reluctant to apply *Lawrence* in this way.²³

In longitudinal surveys carried out by the Pew Research Center, in which participants were asked if they approved of same-sex marriage, only 35% of respondents in 2001 were in favour of same-sex unions, with 57% opposed.²⁴ By 2011, for the first time, those who supported same-sex marriage overtook those who opposed it with 46% being in favour, and 45% against.²⁵ In 2015, the year the Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 55% of Americans surveyed stated that they were in favour of same-sex marriage; by 2017 that number had risen to 62%.²⁶ As with inter-racial marriage, support for same-sex marriage is highest among younger populations. Pew found that in 2017, among those born after 1980, 74% of those surveyed supported same-sex marriage, up from 53% in 2007 from those in the same demographic. Comparatively, of those born between 1928 and 1945, only 41% supported same-sex marriage in 2017, compared to 24% in 2007.²⁷ This demonstrates that particularly amongst the younger generations, support for same-sex

²⁰ *Lawrence v. Texas*, 539 U.S. 558 (2003).

²¹ *Bowers v. Hardwick*, 478 U.S. 186 (1986).

²² *State v. Holm*, 2006 UT31, 137 P. 3d 726, (2006).

²³ *Holm*, UT31, 137 P. 3d 726 at 13.

²⁴ Pew Research Center, 'Changing Attitudes on Gay Marriage: Public Opinion on Same-sex Marriage', *Pew Research Center*, 26th June 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/fact-sheet/changing-attitudes-on-gay-marriage/>.

²⁵ Pew Research Center, 'Support for Same-sex Marriage Grows, Even Among Groups that had been Skeptical', *Pew Research Center*, 26th June 2017, <http://www.people-press.org/2017/06/26/support-for-same-sex-marriage-grows-even-among-groups-that-had-been-skeptical/>.

²⁶ Pew Research Center, 'Changing Attitudes on Gay Marriage', 2017.

²⁷ Pew Research Center, 'Support for Same-sex Marriage Grows', 2017.

marriage is high, and support is likely to continue to grow as the population ages.

As with the case of inter-racial marriage, Gallup longitudinal polls also show the same trends as Pew survey data. When asked the question, 'Do you think marriage between same-sex couples should or should not be recognised by the law as valid, with the same rights as traditional marriage?', only 27% of respondents said that same-sex marriage should in 1996 when the question was first asked. By 2018, this had risen to 67%.²⁸ In 1996, 67% of respondents were opposed to same-sex marriages being afforded the same legal validity as traditional marriage, but opposition had dropped to 31% by 2018. This data demonstrates a complete flip of public opinion in just twenty-two years. In the first poll following Massachusetts becoming the first state to legalise same-sex marriage in 2004, only 37% of Americans in the poll supported the move, compared to 59% who opposed legalising same-sex marriage.²⁹ In just a decade, these figures would change considerably.

In 2015, the year the Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell*, the numbers had also flipped compared to a decade earlier when Massachusetts legalised same-sex unions; 60% of Americans polled now thought same-sex unions ought to have the same legal rights as traditional marriage, compared to 37% who did not.³⁰ The same study concluded that 10.4% of LGBT adults were married to someone of the same gender, meaning that Americans were more likely than ever to know someone in a same-sex marriage. The study concluded that this, in part, likely contributed to changing views, supposing that if an individual knows someone in a same-sex marriage they are more likely to be supportive of such unions.³¹ In 2017, 72% of Americans polled by Gallup thought that same-sex sexual relations between consenting adults should be legal, compared to only 43% in 1978 when the question was first asked. Support for legal sexual relations between same-sex couples dropped to an all-time low during the period of the survey in the 1980s, perhaps

²⁸ Gallup, 'Marriage', *Gallup*, 2018, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/117328/marriage.aspx>.

²⁹ Justin McCarthy, 'Two in Three Americans Support Same-sex Marriage', *Gallup*, 23rd May 2018, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/234866/two-three-americans-support-sex-marriage.aspx>.

³⁰ McCarthy, 'Two in Three Americans', 2018.

³¹ McCarthy, 'Two in Three Americans', 2018.

attributable to public perceptions during the AIDS crisis; support in 1986 was as low as 32%.³²

The same 2017 analysis argued that since the ruling in *Obergefell*, public debate of the same-sex marriage issue had waned as activists moved on to other LGBT issues such as transgender bathroom access, although the same-sex marriage debate was still continuing in some states to a lesser degree.³³ Success for gay rights in the form of *Lawrence v. Texas* and *Obergefell v. Hodges*, has firmly solidified equal rights for same-sex couples in United States law. Despite ongoing issues such as the recent case in which a baker in Colorado refused to bake a wedding cake for a same-sex wedding celebration citing religious objection, same-sex couples are enjoying more rights and support than ever before. In the case of *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*, the Supreme Court found that baker Jack Phillips, had a constitutional right under the Free Exercise clause of the First Amendment to refuse to bake a cake for a gay couple based on his religious beliefs.³⁴ An earlier ruling in *Mullins v. Masterpiece Cakeshop Inc.*, in a lower court, found in favour of Charlie Craig and David Mullins, the couple who requested the cake to celebrate their same-sex marriage, however the Supreme Court decision in 2018 overturned this ruling.³⁵ Craig and Mullins were supported by the American Civil Liberties Union in their legal fight, and the ACLU later collaborated with the Colorado Civil Rights Commission when Phillips took his appeal to the Supreme Court.

While census data is not yet available on the number of households with same-sex married couples, there have been a significant number of same-sex weddings since the practice became legal, first in Massachusetts in 2004, and throughout the United States in 2015. While support for inter-racial marriage is almost universal today in the United States, there is still a significant minority of Americans who oppose same-sex marriage, particularly among older generations. While arguably the civil rights and social justice issue that is same-sex marriage is firmly decided in United States law, there is

³² Justin McCarthy, 'U.S. Support for Gay Marriage Edges to New High', *Gallup*, 15th May 2017, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/210566/support-gay-marriage-edges-new-high.aspx>.

³³ McCarthy, 'U.S. Support for Gay Marriage', 2017.

³⁴ *Masterpiece Cakeshop, Ltd v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*, 138 S. Ct. 1719 (2018).

³⁵ *Mullins v. Masterpiece Cakeshop Inc.*, 2015 COA 115 (2015).

still a small way to go in the court of public opinion. Ultimately though, the civil rights fight for equal rights among same-sex couples is over from a legal perspective, leaving one to question what the next civil rights movement from a sexual justice point of view might be in the United States.

This is the question to which this paper now turns. *Loving v. Virginia* and *Obergefell v. Hodges* redefined how marriage was understood and accepted in the United States. Moving away from nineteenth century norms of marriage tradition being between a man and a wife of the same race, the United States now allows inter-racial and same-sex unions, affording marriage rights to those outside of the heterosexual racially endogamous norms that once were. Cases such as *Lawrence v. Texas*, which preceded that of *Obergefell*, show that questions of sex between consenting adults, often precedes questions of non-traditional marital unions in the twenty-first century. Comparatively, at the time of *Loving*, both sexual relations between whites and people of colour and marriage between whites and people of colour were outlawed in many states. The ruling in *Loving* overturned prohibitions on inter-racial sex alongside its ruling on inter-racial marriage.³⁶

Whereas once, sex outside of marriage was socially unacceptable, today the majority of Americans are permissive of sex outside of marriage between consenting adults; 68% of Americans in a Gallup poll stated that sex between an unmarried man and woman was morally acceptable in 2018.³⁷ With the permissibility of a range of sexual relationships being accepted by the majority of Americans today, a natural progression from the issues of inter-racial and same-sex relations, moves to questions around the permissibility of polyamorous relationships and plural marriage. While polyamorous sexual relationships are permitted under United States law, marriage between more than two people is not.

SUPPORT AND JUSTICE FOR PLURAL MARRIAGE

In the United States there are two distinct groups that make up the majority of practicing polygamists: Muslims and fundamentalist Mormons. A minority of Sephardic Jews, those identifying as Christian polygamists, as well

³⁶ *Loving*, 388 U.S. 1.

³⁷ Gallup, 'Marriage', 2018.

as a small minority of individuals who practice polygamy from a secular perspective, also have a vested interest in plural marriage rights. Most polygamists in the United States practice polygyny; one man married to multiple women. Polyandry, or one woman married to multiple husbands, is relatively rare, not only in the United States, but globally as well. While the rights of Muslims who wish to practice plural marriage in the United States, particularly among immigrants in plural marriages solemnised overseas, is somewhat of a recent issue, Mormon polygamists have had a tense relationship with legislators and courts since plural marriage was first practiced by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) in the nineteenth century. The mainstream LDS Church, under pressure from the federal government, publicly renounced polygamy in an 1890 statement known as The Manifesto, although privately the message was somewhat different and plural marriage approved by the Church continued to be practiced somewhat surreptitiously until the early twentieth century. This reversal on the Church's view of plural marriage caused a schism, resulting in a number of fundamentalist groups emerging over the course of the twentieth century; these groups continue to practice Mormon polygyny today.

Fundamentalist Mormon groups in the United States today include the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (FLDS); the Centennial Park group, which emerged in an FLDS schism in the 1980s following leadership disputes, also known as the Second Ward in an acknowledgment of the division between it and the FLDS, The Work of Jesus Christ, or simply The Work; the Apostolic United Brethren (AUB) also known as the Allred Group; and the Latter Day Church of Christ also known as the Davis County Cooperative Society and also often referred to as the Kingston Clan. These are just a some of the largest, and most well-known, groups that exist today. Some groups extend beyond the United States, for example, the FLDS also has a branch in Canada and the AUB has a small number of members in Western Europe and a larger community in Mexico.

A fifth group, which has been known by several names following periods of change and transition such as, the Church of the Firstborn of the Fulness of Times, the Church of the Firstborn of the Lamb of God, the Church of the Lamb of God, and often referred to as the LeBaron group, is now mostly based in Mexico, although most of its members retain, or acquire

through naturalisation, United States citizenship.³⁸ It is possible that many in the LeBaron group currently living in Mexico would return to the United States if changes to the law occurred. Additionally, there are many smaller fundamentalist Mormon groups, as well as a growing number of families who identify as independent Fundamentalist Mormons who practice plural marriage but do not claim membership of any particular group. Most of these groups have formed due to schisms or leadership disagreements with larger groups or have simply emerged separately. While these Mormon fundamentalist groups and independents differ in some of their doctrinal beliefs and the hierarchical structures of church leaders, they all encourage or require their members to practice polygyny.

Most Mormon polygamists in the United States attempt to circumvent laws preventing plural marriage by only having one legal marriage, usually between the husband and first wife, with subsequent marriages being simply spiritual unions, celebrated in their faith tradition. In the state of Utah, anti-bigamy laws prevent individuals from legally marrying, or purporting to marry and cohabitating with, more than one person.³⁹ Other states, however, define bigamy in a way that requires multiple legal marriages at once in order for individuals to fall foul of the law.⁴⁰ In these states, polygamists are able to stay within the spirit of the law by only having one legal marriage, with additional marriages being simply religious unions only.

Somewhat ironically, if polygamists did not have any legal marriages, and only had spiritual marriages between the husband and each of his wives, no laws would be broken; some secular polygamists and Muslims practice in this way by having their own marriage ceremonies which lack legal documentation. For many polygamists practicing from a religious perspective, the recognition of their marriage by their faith tradition is enough to insure the spiritual needs of their family, however, the lack of legal recognition means their other needs are not protected. Practicing polygamy in this way has implications for things such as health insurance coverage or inheritance rights, particularly for children.

³⁸ Janet Bennion, *Polygamy in Primetime: Media, Gender, and Politics in Mormon Fundamentalism*, (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2011), 29-30; 35; 43-44.

³⁹ UT Code § 76-7-101 (2017).

⁴⁰ For example NM Stat §30-10-1 (2016).

The first hints of public support for Mormon polygamy came in the 1950s following a 1953 raid on a fundamentalist Mormon community known as Short Creek which straddles the Utah and Arizona state border, made up mostly of members of the FLDS. During the raid, authorities arrested thirty-six men, and took 192 women and children into state care in Phoenix, Arizona, almost 400 miles from their homes.⁴¹ Law enforcement officials were depicted negatively by the press when images emerged of happy families torn apart simply for practicing their faith. The American public sympathised with parents who had children taken from them, and with the children taken from loving homes and placed into the care of strangers.⁴² The raid was a public relations nightmare for authorities who were accused of interfering with religious practices, for the cost of the raid, and related legal cases which resulted in only a few convictions for minor crimes. Courts found insufficient evidence to continue separating children from their parents, and Howard Pyle, the Arizona governor, later stated that he regretted his decision to sign off on the raid.⁴³

In 2008 a similar raid on an FLDS compound in Eldorado, Texas also saw public opinion favour the polygamist families. Acting on an anonymous, and unverified, tip, authorities raided the community, arrested a number of men, and took 129 women and 468 children to a large state holding centre.⁴⁴ Children were later separated from their mothers and placed into the Texas care system.⁴⁵ Media reports again depicted law enforcement officials negatively and criticised the raid when it emerged that the tip off was a hoax, for the lack of substantive prosecutions that resulted, and the cost of the operation which ran into millions of dollars.⁴⁶ The children taken into care

⁴¹ Brian C. Hales, *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism: The Generations after the Manifesto*, (Salt Lake City, UT: Greg Kofford Books 2006), 312.

⁴² Hales, *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism*, 315.

⁴³ Hales, *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism*, 315.

⁴⁴ Cardell K. Jacobson with Lara Burton, eds., *Modern Polygamy in the United States: Historical, Cultural, and Legal Issues*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011), xvii.

⁴⁵ Linda F. Smith, 'Child Protection Laws and the FLDS Raid in Texas', in Cardell K. Jacobson with Lara Burton, eds. *Modern Polygamy in the United States: Historical, Cultural, and Legal Issues*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011), 306-7.

⁴⁶ Dan Glaister, 'Families Welcome Back 400 Children Taken From Sect', *The Guardian*, 3rd June 2008, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/jun/03/usa.religion>; Ben Winslow, 'A Decade Later, Hildale Reflects on the FLDS Raid that Became the Nation's Largest Child

were not used to the lifestyles practiced by their foster families, most suffered more trauma in their foster homes than they had ever experienced with their own families, were exposed to things not compatible with their religion, and questions were raised as to why children were split from their mothers, who had not been accused of any crimes.⁴⁷ The legal fight to have children returned to their parents was supported by groups such as Liberty Legal Institute, an advocacy group supporting parental rights and religious freedoms, and the American Civil Liberties Union.⁴⁸

In recent years a number of polygamists have come forward into public life in order to demonstrate the realities of plural marriage. They have done this in order to dispel stereotypes and misconceptions about their beliefs and practices. Among these figures is Kody Brown, who along with his wives and children, feature in a reality television show called *Sister Wives*.⁴⁹ The show attempts to depict the normalcy of the Brown family, that they are like any other American family, suffer the same financial stresses when their children head off to college, and have the same marital disputes as other Americans; the only difference being that in the case of the Browns and other polygamist families, these trials of family life are multiplied by the number of wives and children in the marriage. Joe Darger and his family have also used the public gaze to show the normalcy of their family life. The Dargers have featured in a number of documentary films and published a book on their lifestyle; *Love Times Three: Our True Story of a Polygamous Marriage*.⁵⁰ In 2016 Joe Darger ran for mayor in Herriman, Utah, and dared the Utah authorities to arrest him for breaking Utah bigamy laws.⁵¹

Custody Case', *Fox*, 31st March 2018, <https://fox13now.com/2018/03/31/a-decade-later-hildale-reflects-on-the-flds-raid-that-became-the-nations-largest-child-custody-case/>.

⁴⁷ Jacobson and Burton, *Modern Polygamy in the United States*, xx.

⁴⁸ Smith, 'Child Protection Laws and the FLDS Raid', 313; 315.

⁴⁹ *Sister Wives*, TLC, 2010-.

⁵⁰ Joe Darger, Alina Darger, Vicki Darger, Valerie Darger, and Brooke Adams, *Love Times Three: Our True Story of a Polygamous Marriage*, (New York, NY: Harper One 2011).

⁵¹ Nate Carlisle, 'He's Dared Utah to Prosecute him for Polygamy. Now He's Running for Mayor. What if Someone Calls his Bluff?', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 5th July 2017, <https://www.sltrib.com/news/polygamy/2017/07/05/hes-dared-utah-to-prosecute-him-for-polygamy-now-hes-running-for-mayor-what-if-someone-calls-his-bluff/>.

Both the Browns and the Dargers have actively fought for plural marriage rights at a state and federal level. In 2011, following the airing of the first season of *Sister Wives*, the Browns found out they were being investigated by law enforcement in their hometown in Lehi, Utah when Jeffrey R. Buhman, the County Attorney for Utah County, stated that his office was investigating the Browns on suspicion of breaking state bigamy laws.⁵² Fearing arrest and prosecution, the family moved to Nevada, a state in which their marital arrangements would not risk investigation. According to court documents, Utah Attorney General, Mark Shurtleff, swore under penalty of perjury that his office would only seek to prosecute polygamists under the Utah bigamy statute if other crimes were evident, such as 'child or spouse abuse, domestic violence, [and] welfare fraud' and that his office would not, 'prosecute polygamists under Utah's bigamy statute for just the sake of their practicing polygamy'.⁵³

The Browns sought public support for their legal campaign which was initially successful in 2013 in a district court in Utah, when a judge ruled that portions of the state's bigamy law were unconstitutional. However, a later decision in the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeal overturned the lower court decision, arguing that the judgement should not have been made in that case as the fact that the Browns moved out of the state of Utah, in addition to statements from the Utah Attorney General stating that the Browns did not face a real risk of prosecution, rendered the case moot.⁵⁴ The Browns appealed to the United States Supreme Court, but the justices denied their petition for writ of certiorari in 2017.⁵⁵ Had their case been heard in the Supreme Court and had it been successful, it would have nullified laws banning plural marriage throughout the United States and would have overturned the 1879 Supreme Court decision in *Reynolds v. United States* which ruled the practice of polygamy illegal.⁵⁶

When the Tenth Circuit overturned the 2013 decision which had stuck down the Utah statute, Utah legislators worked to reinstate bigamy laws

⁵² *Brown v. Herbert*, 850 F. Supp. 2d 1240 (2012).

⁵³ *Brown v. Buhman*, 822 F. 3d 1151 (2016) at 7.

⁵⁴ *Brown*, 822 F. 3d 1151.

⁵⁵ *Brown v. Buhman*, 137 S. Ct. 828 (2017).

⁵⁶ *Reynolds v. United States*, 98 U.S. 145 (1878).

with the introduction of House Bill 99 in 2017.⁵⁷ Hundreds of polygamists, and pro-polygamy advocates protested outside of the Utah State Capitol against the bill. One protester held a sign reading, 'If Adam and Steve can be together, then why can't Adam, Eve, and Lily? #familiesnotfelons'.⁵⁸ Those opposing the bill objected to the clause in the bill that included purporting to marry and cohabitation, as being covered by the umbrella of bigamy.⁵⁹ One reason why Joe Darger has dared the state to arrest him on bigamy charges is because he would then have the legal standing to act as a test case against the constitutionality of laws preventing polygamous marriages between consenting adults. The Browns lacked this legal standing because they were never indicted, despite being investigated. This ultimately led to the decision in the Tenth Circuit court, which rendered the lower court ruling invalid because their case, lacking actual charges of bigamy, was moot because they never faced prosecution.

Public support for those who wish to practice polygamy has grown over time, arguably helped by positive depictions of plural marriage on television, in the form of shows like *Sister Wives*, and the HBO drama, *Big Love*.⁶⁰ These portrayals counter negative news stories that cover the cases of individuals like Warren Jeffs, who was once on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list and is currently serving life plus 20 years in prison for crimes including child sex abuse.⁶¹ Indeed, a Gallup longitudinal poll on polygamy saw a slight drop in support for plural marriage following the conviction of Jeffs.⁶² Pro-polygamy advocates aim to educate the public by reassuring them that cases like that of Warren Jeffs are rare, and not endemic within polygamy.

In fact, abuse is no more likely in polygamous marriages, than it is in monogamous unions.⁶³ The fact that women have close support networks with their sister-wives makes abuse less likely than in monogamous marriages

⁵⁷ H.B. 99, Bigamy Offence Amendments, 2017 General Session.

⁵⁸ Ben Winslow, 'Sister Wives' Kody Brown and Wives Join March against Polygamy Bill on Utah's Capitol Hill', *Fox*, 10th February 2017, <https://fox13now.com/2017/02/10/sister-wives-kody-brown-and-wives-join-march-against-polygamy-bill-on-utahs-capitol-hill/>.

⁵⁹ UT § 76-7-101, 2017.

⁶⁰ *Big Love*, HBO, 2006-2011.

⁶¹ Bennion, *Polygamy in Primetime*, 32.

⁶² Gallup, 'Marriage', 2018.

⁶³ Bennion, *Polygamy in Primetime*, 37.

where a woman may be isolated from others by an abusive husband. Executive producers of *Big Love*, Will Sheffer and Mark V. Olsen, saw comparisons between their own quest for gay rights, they are themselves partners in life as well as in business, and those of polygamists.⁶⁴ Similarities can be drawn between the frequent stereotypes of abuse within fundamentalist Mormon polygamy, and the stereotypes of gay men as sexual deviants in the twentieth century.⁶⁵ Comparisons can be drawn between the treatment of the gay community during the AIDS crisis, and the polygamous community following the widely publicised conviction of Warren Jeffs. Evidence of this can be drawn from survey data noted above that shows drops in support for the legalisation of gay sex in the 1980s, and of polygamy following the conviction of Jeffs.

In a Gallup longitudinal poll, only 7% of Americans responded that they felt polygamy was morally acceptable in 2003. By 2018, that number had risen to 19% of those polled.⁶⁶ The poll data indicate a jump from 7% in 2010, to 11% in 2011 after the first season of *Sister Wives* aired. While this may simply be a coincidence, the data does show that support for polygamy has risen since real life polygamists have used the media and television to educate American audiences about their lifestyle. This upward trend shows no signs of reversing or slowing down. The results are significant when compared to the views on inter-racial marriage discussed above. In the year after the ruling in *Loving v. Virginia*, 20% of Americans polled by Gallup approved of marriages between blacks and whites. In 2018, with 19% of those polled by Gallup approving of plural marriage, support for such unions is at the same level it was at for inter-racial marriage when it was legalised throughout the United States. While the 16% rise in support for inter-racial marriage in the nine years between 1959 and 1968 occurred faster than the 12% rise in support for plural marriage in the nine years between 2009 and 2018, obvious similarities can be seen between the trends. When one considers the boost in support for inter-

⁶⁴ Felicia R. Lee, 'Big Love': Real Polygamists Look at HBO Polygamists and Find Sex', *The New York Times*, 28th March 2006,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/28/arts/television/28poly.html>.

⁶⁵ Grace M. Jantzen, 'AIDS, Shame, and Suffering', in Marvin M. Ellison and Kelly Brown Douglas, eds., *Sexuality and the Sacred: Sources for Theological Reflection*, 2nd ed., (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 338.

⁶⁶ Gallup, 'Marriage', 2018.

racial marriage that may have occurred immediately after *Loving*, it is easy to defend an argument that a similar boost might occur if plural marriage were to be legalised today.

A 2011 Pew poll of members of the LDS Church asked respondents about their views on polygamy, given that the LDS Church no longer permits the practice and those found to be in plural marriages face excommunication from the Church, the results are interesting. In the poll, 13% of respondents stated that polygamy was either not a moral issue, or was morally acceptable, compared to 86% of LDS Church members who agreed with Church doctrine that it was morally unacceptable. While the overwhelming majority of LDS Church members in the poll agreed with the Church that polygamy was morally wrong, it is significant that 13% of Latter-day Saints polled disagreed with Church teachings and are somewhat supportive of the practice.⁶⁷ In the 2016 Next Mormon Survey, an online public opinion survey conducted by Jana Riess and Benjamin Knoll, the same question was asked of former and current members of the LDS Church.⁶⁸ In the survey 69% of all current Latter-day Saints surveyed stated they found polygamy morally wrong, compared to 86% in the Pew poll just five years earlier.⁶⁹ While this data comes from two different surveys meaning comparisons should be considered with caution, it still indicates a significant change in view in just five years.

There is evidence to suggest that some members of the LDS Church consider polygamy as an option for them, and there are some reports of Latter-day Saints practicing or trying out plural marriage, albeit surreptitiously.⁷⁰ Recent evidence suggests that members of the mainstream LDS Church are building working relationships with fundamentalist Mormons, and some Latter-day Saints, such as Connor Boyack, are coming

⁶⁷ Pew Research Center, 'Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life Mormon Survey', *Roper Center Collaboration*, 2011, https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/psearch/question_view.cfm?qid=1801750&pid=50&ccid=50#top.

⁶⁸ Jana Riess, *The Next Mormons: How Millennials are Changing the LDS Church*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, 179.

⁶⁹ Riess, *The Next Mormons*, 185.

⁷⁰ Nancy Ellsworth, 'I Do... to You and You and You', in Holly Welker, ed, *Baring Witness: 36 Mormon Women Talk Candidly about Love, Sex, and Marriage*, (Urbana, IL: University Press of Illinois, 2016), 135-141.

forward to openly support the rights of fundamentalist Mormons in their endeavours to fight for plural marriage rights.⁷¹ The 2016 Next Mormon Survey, published in 2019, found that fewer millennial Latter-day Saints, than members of previous generations surveyed, felt that having more than one wife was morally wrong, with only 63% of millennials stating this compared to 76% of Latter-day Saints in the baby boomer and silent generations, and 68% of generation X Latter-day Saints.⁷² Younger generations of Latter-day Saints are becoming more tolerant and accepting of plural marriage despite LDS Church opposition to the practice.

Many comparisons have been drawn between the fight for same-sex marriage, and the current fight for plural marriage. In 2004, a Pew Research Center poll found that among those opposed to legalising same-sex marriage, 51% were opposed to it because they felt it would open the door for polygamous marriages.⁷³ For some, it was seen as a slippery slope that would erode what they considered to be traditional marriage; that is, marriage between one man and one woman. Indeed, as mentioned above, in dissenting comments in the *Obergefell v. Hodges* Supreme Court decision, Chief Justice Roberts argued that the legal arguments used in *Obergefell*, could be equally applied to plural marriage. A number of scholars and commentators have seen the show *Big Love* as an analogy for same-sex relationships at a time when the fight for same-sex marriage was still ongoing.⁷⁴

CONCLUSIONS

⁷¹ Nate Carlisle, 'How younger Latter-day Saints and 'Fundamentalist Mormons' are Building Bridges, Looking Past their Differences', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 14th October 2018, <https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2018/10/14/how-younger-latter-day/>.

⁷² Riess, *The Next Mormons*, 179.

⁷³ Pew Research Center, 'Pew Internet & American Life Project Poll', *Roper Center Collaboration*, 2004, https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/psearch/question_view.cfm?qid=1611983&pid=50&ccid=50#top.

⁷⁴ Kyra Hunting, 'Love Between Sisters: Queering Polygamy in *Big Love*', *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 47, No. 1, (2014), 129-152; Jessica Kean, 'A Stunning Plurality: Unravelling Hetero- and Mononormativities Through HBO's *Big Love*', *Sexualities*, 18, (2015), 698-713.

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While the legal fights for inter-racial and same-sex marriage have been won, and public support for such unions is growing every year, the fight for plural marriage is still ongoing. Support for plural marriage is still relatively low, with only around a fifth of Americans supporting the practice. However, the current level of support is similar to the level of support for inter-racial marriage in 1968; the year after the Supreme Court found that anti-miscegenation laws were unconstitutional. In 1996, a little over a quarter of Americans were in support of same-sex marriage, should the support for plural marriage continue on its current course, support for plural marriage will reach the level of support that same-sex marriage had in the 1990s in less than a decade.

However, in the cases of inter-racial marriage and same-sex marriage, laws had already been passed in a number of states that allowed inter-racial and same-sex couples to obtain marriage licences in order for legally recognised weddings to be performed. The fight in *Loving* and *Obergefell* was, in part, to have legal marriages entered into in some states recognised in others. Currently no states legally allow those wishing to enter into plural marriages to legally acquire multiple marriage licences. In other words, simply put, polygamy is currently illegal throughout the United States. While some states turn a blind eye to consenting adults practicing plural marriage, so long as only one legal marriage exists and no evidence of other crimes exists, those who practice plural marriage have few legal protections and no legal recognition for additional spouses. The implications being that women are often denied alimony and child support upon the break-down of a marriage if they are not legally married to their husband, and like the case of James Obergefell, are denied the right to be named as a surviving spouse in the event of their husband's death.

So far attempts by polygamists, such as Kody Brown, to appeal current laws have been unsuccessful, and given the reluctance that some states have in bringing charges against openly practicing polygamists, such as Joe Darger, the prospects of a suitable test case on the issue seem slim in today's climate. Many states are making efforts to work with polygamous groups and in 2004 the offices of the Utah and Arizona Attorney's General collaborated on a guide for law enforcement officials known as *The Primer*. The document, last updated in 2011, aims to educate law enforcement officials who may interact with polygamous families about the practices and beliefs of fundamentalist

Mormons.⁷⁵ Efforts such as this aim to foster an environment in which law enforcement and practicing polygamists can work together and build positive working relationships. The basis of these efforts is to adopt an approach in which law enforcement officials do not target practicing polygamists simply for practising plural marriage. It could be argued that an official position of tolerance is emerging, in which polygamists are allowed to practice their lifestyle without fear of prosecution, so long as they otherwise comply with the law.

In my opinion, this is a positive step on the road to decriminalisation, and ultimately legalisation of polygamy. Given that prosecution against polygamists is increasingly unlikely, the move to decriminalisation is unlikely to come from a test case making its way to the Supreme Court in an effort to have *Reynolds v. United States*, and state bigamy laws preventing polygamy, overturned. But instead, decriminalisation is more likely on a state by state basis, with legislators changing the language in bigamy statutes in order to exclude cases of polygamy in which consenting adults enter into the relationships freely, and that bigamy laws be only used in cases where deception is involved with one individual having multiple spouses who are unaware of the existence of the others. Polygamists could then be free to seek legal marriage licences between each dyadic couple, or group licences covering all individuals in the marriage. Legal experts, such as Adrienne Davis, have suggested ways in which plural marriage could be regulated, suggesting a model based on commercial partnership law.⁷⁶

Once polygamy is legal in at least one state, polygamists would find themselves in the same position as the Lovings and James Obergefell, in which their legally entered into marriages are recognised in some states, but not others. They would then have a good legal standing to bring a case based on the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process and Equal Protection clauses of the Constitution, as in *Loving* and *Obergefell*. Additionally, Mormon polygamists, and others who practice plural marriage for religious reasons,

⁷⁵ Mark Shurtleff, Tom Horne, and Bonnie L. Peters, *The Primer: A Guidebook for Law Enforcement and Human Services Agencies Who Offer Assistance to Fundamentalist Mormon Families*, (Utah Attorney General's Office and Arizona Attorney General's Office, 2011).

⁷⁶ Adrienne D. Davis, 'Regulating Polygamy: Intimacy, Default Rules, and Bargaining for Equality', *Columbia Law Review*, 110, No. 8, (2010), 1955-2046.

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could find legal arguments in the Free Exercise and Freedom of Speech clauses of the First Amendment. The steps that polygamists would have to go through on the road to legalisation would follow in the footprints of those who fought for the right of inter-racial and same-sex marriage. Like the Lovings and Obergefell, polygamists have support from organisations such as the American Civil Liberties Union whose lawyers support the rights of those wishing to practice plural marriage legally.

This paper has demonstrated similarities in the legal strategies and cases between those arguing for inter-racial and same-sex marriage rights, and those that have, and could, be used in the fight for plural marriage rights. Additionally, this paper has demonstrated the changes in public attitudes toward plural marriage and how changes in attitudes toward polygamy mirror those towards inter-racial and same-sex unions. Today support for inter-racial marriage is almost universal in the United States, and support for same-sex marriage is at an all-time high. Likewise, support for plural marriage is also at an all-time high and evidence discussed above shows that support is growing. With these facts in mind, I believe that the fight for the right to marry polygamously in the United States is the next civil rights issue in the fight for sexual justice. With support from the ACLU and others, fundamentalist Mormons are in a good position to explore legal avenues and continue gaining support for their right to plural marriage.

Charlotte Shurtz graduated from Brigham Young University with a BA in English and a minor in Professional Writing & Rhetoric in 2019. She studies and writes about rhetoric, feminism, and Mormonism. She is also a co-founder of Seeking Heavenly Mother, a project collecting material and creative expressions of religious belief in the feminine divine.

Charlotte Shurtz[†]

HEAVENLY MOTHER IN THE VERNACULAR RELIGION OF LATTER-DAY SAINT WOMEN

Creativity is one of the few culturally appropriate ways that Latter-day Saint women seek for and learn about Heavenly Mother. In my research, I draw on twenty-six interviews with women ages 21 to 55 from around the world who self-identified as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or “Mormon.” According to their interviews, these women seek Heavenly Mother because She is the manifestation of their potential, a topic I will discuss in more detail. Their beliefs and practices—which I define as vernacular beliefs, that is, personal rather than official expressions of religion—are centered around the idea that creativity is a uniquely female power. For example, some women drew on visual art and music as a vehicle for interacting with the female divine, while others feminized scripture, adopting female pronouns and imagery where women were otherwise absent from the scriptural canon. As such practices are unofficial and have been discouraged at times by the Latter-day Saint Church hierarchy, many informants expressed their fears surrounding unsanctioned practices, most particularly the fear of praying directly to the divine Mother. However, I have found that creativity—both physical art forms and more abstract forms of creativity, such as childbirth—offers women greater freedom to create and express their personal theologies.

[†] This is where you can put the author’s attributions.

SHURTZ: HEAVENLY MOTHER IN THE VERNACULAR

To situate myself within this discourse, I am a woman and a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As a child, I learned about a Heavenly Mother and was taught that She is the wife of God the Father. This was the only information I had about this divine parentage. After my marriage in 2017, I started to have questions about my role as a woman in the Church, both here and in the afterlife. Thus, I started researching the topic of Heavenly Mother. I was particularly interested in how She exemplified my potential as a woman. While my personal beliefs and practices related to Heavenly Mother are not discussed in this article, my research on the topic was motivated by those religious beliefs, and my religious beliefs are not wholly separate from those of the women who I have interviewed.

Methodology and Sources

The following questions were pertinent to the analysis of this article. 1) How do women first learn about Heavenly Mother? 2) What vernacular beliefs do women hold about Heavenly Mother? 3) Are there unique traditions associated with Heavenly Mother which women maintain or practice? 4) Are there distinct tropes that stand out in the folklore I have collected? These questions guided my interactions with the women whom I interviewed.

While Latter-day Saint men may also hold unique beliefs about Heavenly Mother, I have limited my scope to women who are religiously and culturally LDS or “Mormon.” First, because I had access to a much larger group of women through my participation in several women’s social media groups. Second, because I was explicitly interested in how women interacted with Heavenly Mother. Participants were sought among friends, family members, acquaintances, and from among two social media communities. Using social media to find women who were interested in participating proved especially effective, and over seventy women volunteered to be interviewed. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, only twenty-six of those women were able to participate. The women who participated live in or are from the United States, Europe, Brazil, and Australia. (See the Appendix for additional demographic information.) Although it was not a requirement for participation, most of the women who volunteered already held strong beliefs about the subject. As such, this paper does not reflect LDS women broadly. Because most of the responses were collected from the Aspiring Mormon Women Facebook

group, which provides support for women interested in or currently pursuing a career, the sample also leans towards educated and, in my experience, politically liberal women.

Interviews were carried out face-to-face in my home or on Brigham Young University campus. For non-local participants, I captured audio recordings from our conversations on Facebook messenger video calls or phone calls. Interviews ranged from six minutes to forty-seven minutes long. The interview questions were very open-ended and are as follows:

- Do you remember when you first learned about Heavenly Mother?
- Can you tell me about what you've heard about Heavenly Mother from others? You don't have to personally agree with what you've heard.
- Do you have any personal beliefs or feelings about Heavenly Mother that you would be willing to share?
- Do you have any practices, traditions, or rituals associated with Heavenly Mother?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with me relating to Heavenly Mother or the things we have talked about?

There were a couple of obstacles to conducting these interviews. First, because historically it has been culturally taboo to talk about Heavenly Mother, some women were apprehensive about participation. Multiple women expressed concerns about the potential repercussions of sharing their personal beliefs. As a result, I decided to only use first names and last initials of my informants in this paper.

In addition to drawing heavily from the interviews I conducted, I acknowledge that my work intersects with the broader scholarship on Heavenly Mother. I would like to recognize David L. Paulsen and Martin Pulido's "A Mother There": A Survey of Historical Teachings about Mother in Heaven" as an influential resource for approaching this topic. Their research examines what church authorities have said about Heavenly Mother and the myths that surround the figure. The belief that She is too sacred to talk about, for example, is folklore that has been widely adopted by Latter-day Saints. Many of the women I interviewed had previously found comfort in Paulsen and Pulido's assertion that instead of promoting secrecy, "many General Authorities have openly taught about" Heavenly

Mother.¹ Susana Morrill's "Mormon Women's Agency and Changing Conceptions of the Mother in Heaven" was also useful in my exploration of the historical discourse among members of the church. Morrill argues that to fully understand modern women's discussion of and beliefs in Heavenly Mother, scholars must look outside of official church publications. Amy Easton Flake's "Poetry in the Women's Exponent: Constructing Self and Society," similarly examines how early Mormon women used poetry to share personal beliefs in the public sphere and discuss "vernacular theology"² with other women. My work suggests that contemporary women in the Church are using art for some of the same purposes, carrying forward a tradition held among LDS women from as early as the 1840s. Additionally, there are many creative works related to Heavenly Mother—from Rachel Hunt Steenblik and Carol Lynn Pearson's poetry, to Caitlin Connolly and J. Kirk Richard's paintings that I perceive as integral to this conversation. Finally, I analyzed and compared the content of the interviews using a folkloric lens, which was heavily influenced by the works of folklorists Lynne S. McNeill, Eric Eliason, and Leonard Primiano.³

¹ David Paulsen and Martin Pulido, "'A Mother There': A Survey of Historical Teachings about Mother in Heaven," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (2011), 16, <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/mother-there-survey-historical-teachings-about-mother-heaven>.)

² "Vernacular theology is a phrase coined by Christine Blythe in her master's thesis "Vernacular Theologies, Home Birth and the Mormon Tradition." See Christine Blythe, "Vernacular Theology, Home Birth and the Mormon Tradition," Master's thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland (2018), 25, <https://research.library.mun.ca/13350/1/thesis.pdf>.

³ Lynne S. McNeill, *Folklore Rules: A Fun, Quick, and Useful Introduction to the Field of Academic Folklore Studies*, (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2013).

Eric Eliason, "Spirit Babies and Divine Embodiment: PBEs, First Vision Accounts, Bible Scholarship, and the Experience-Centered Approach to Mormon Folklore," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (2014), <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/spirit-babies-and-divine-embodiment-pbes-first-vision-accounts-bible-scholarship-and>.

Leonard Primiano, "Vernacular Religion and the Search for Method in

Folklore Definitions

Members of the Church hold a wide variety of personal beliefs which stem from official doctrine, including the doctrine of Heavenly Mother. This is partially because of the lay-leadership structure of the Church. As Richley Crapo writes, “It is mainly by unofficial means—Sunday School lessons, seminary, institute, and BYU religion classes, sacrament meeting talks and books by church officials and others who ultimately speak only for themselves—that the theology is passed from one generation to the next. Indeed, it would seem that a significant part of Mormon theology exists primarily in the minds of its members.”⁴ Because local Church leadership positions are held by unpaid and untrained lay members, theology is often filtered through the personal beliefs of local church leaders. This theology that is verbally passed from one generation to the next and which exists primarily in members’ minds rather than institutional publications can best be described as folklore.

I draw my definition of folklore from *Folklore Rules* by Lynne S. McNeill, which defines it as “a part of informal culture, it moves via word of mouth and observation rather than by formal or institutional means.”⁵ Because of this, folklore is not limited to a single correct or true version but is marked by variations between people, times, or places. As Eric A. Eliason writes, folklore is interesting because it provides “a window into *actual* beliefs and practices rather than the ideal types sometimes proffered by normative proclaimers.”⁶

Religious Folklife,” *Western Folklore* 54, no. 1 (1995),
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1499910.pdf>.

⁴ Richley Crapo, “Grass-roots deviance from official doctrine: A study of Latter-day Saint (Mormon) folk-beliefs,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26, no. 4 (1987), 467.

⁵ Lynne S. McNeill, *Folklore Rules: A Fun, Quick, and Useful Introduction to the Field of Academic Folklore Studies*, (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2013), 11.

⁶ Eric Eliason, “Spirit Babies and Divine Embodiment: PBEs, First Vision Accounts, Bible Scholarship, and the Experience-Centered Approach to Mormon Folklore,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (2014), 22,
<https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/spirit-babies-and-divine-embodiment-pbes-first-vision-accounts-bible-scholarship-and>.

The religious folklore discussed in this paper is what Leonard Primiano calls “vernacular religion,” which he defines as “religion as it is lived: as human beings encounter, understand, interpret, and practice it.” Vernacular religion includes “the process of religious belief, the verbal, behavioral, and material expressions of religious belief.”⁷ Drawing on these definitions and using folklore as a lens, I examine not the official, but the personal beliefs which are informally shared by Latter-day Saint women.

History and Context on the Latter-day Saint Heavenly Mother

Over the past ten years, there has been an increase of public interest in and discussion of Heavenly Mother by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The LDS Church, which is a Christian restoration church, was founded by Joseph Smith Jr. in 1830.

The Church is organized with a president, a global leader who is revered as a prophet by church members. Under him are twelve male apostles, followed by other male general authorities whose responsibilities include overseeing the Sunday School and youth programs. Local congregations are led by lay male priesthood leaders. Although women cannot be the highest-ranking leaders of the global or local church, women lead the women’s and youth programs on both local and global scales. The church functions as a patriarchal system, with only men eligible to hold the priesthood and the highest ecclesiastical positions. Thus, conservative, traditional gender norms are the standard, and men’s roles and opinions are often privileged.

Unlike the traditional view of the trinity, in the theology of the Church, each member of the trinity is a separate being. The Godhead consists of God the Father and Jesus Christ, who are separate divine beings each with a body and a spirit, and the Holy Ghost, who only possesses a spirit. Heavenly Mother is the spouse of God the Father and also has a body and a spirit. She does not replace God the Father, but is His partner. However, She holds no recognized place in the Godhead. As spirit children of Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother, all human beings

⁷ Leonard Primiano, “Vernacular Religion and the Search for Method in Religious Folklife,” *Western Folklore* 54, no. 1 (1995), 44, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1499910.pdf>.

are what John Taylor (a president of the Church) referred to as “gods in embryo.”⁸

The belief in a Heavenly Mother figure is rooted in the belief that God the Father is a resurrected being with a body that is anatomically and biologically similar to man’s. That is to say, according to current policy practices, gender is believed to be a divine feature, and is integral to mankind’s divine purpose, specifically that of creating families which are eternal in nature. Note that within the Church, the word “gender” refers to both performance of traditional gender roles and binary biological sex. In contrast, in academia gender is a social construct and biological sex is exists on a spectrum. Joseph Smith taught Zina Diantha Huntington Young that when she reached heaven she would “meet and become acquainted with your eternal Mother, the wife of your Father in Heaven”⁹ Both W.W. Phelps and Eliza R. Snow, early Church leaders and poets, wrote songs that mention a Mother in Heaven.¹⁰ The concept of Heavenly Mother was widely accepted in the early Church, as writings about Heavenly Mother in Edward Tullidge’s *Women of Mormondom*, the *Women’s Exponent*, and the *Relief Society Magazine* show. Written by

⁸ This specific quote is from John Taylor. However, other presidents of the Church have taught the same concept in different words, including Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. “The Origin and Destiny of Mankind,” *Teachings of John Taylor*, (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2011), 2, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/teachings-john-taylor/chapter-1?lang=eng>

See also Joseph Smith Jr. “The King Follett Sermon,” *Ensign*, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1971. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1971/04/the-king-follett-sermon?lang=eng> and “Knowing and Honoring the Godhead,” *Teachings of Brigham Young*, (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997), 30.

⁹ Martha Sonntag Bradley and Mary Brown Firmage Woodward, *4 Zinas: A Story of Mothers and Daughters on the Mormon Frontier* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000), 107.

¹⁰ Jill Mulvay Derr, “‘The Significance of ‘O My Father’ in the Personal Journey of Eliza R. Snow,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1996-97):100, <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/significance-o-my-father-personal-journey-eliza-r-snow>.

Tullidge under Eliza R. Snow's direction and published in 1877, *Women of Mormondom* was an attempt to show the rest of the world what Mormon women were like and what they believed. One chapter, titled "Eliza R. Snow's Invocation," explains the belief in Heavenly Mother and describes how the hymn now called "Oh My Father" had been "familiar in the meetings of the saints" for almost forty years.¹¹ In 1888, a poem by Emily H. Woodmansee, called "Apostrophe," was published in the *Woman's Exponent*, a periodical written and published by LDS women.¹² This poem envisioned Eliza R. Snow returning to her Heavenly Parents and being welcomed by Heavenly Mother in death. Other poems and stories including Heavenly Mother were published in the *Woman's Exponent* and the *Relief Society Magazine*.¹³

In 1909, the First Presidency of the Church issued a statement in the *Improvement Era*, an official magazine for the youth of the Church, which taught that all humans are literal sons and daughters of Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother.¹⁴ However, between 1930 and 1970 there was one mention of "Mother in Heaven" and no mentions of "Heavenly Mother" during General Conference addresses.¹⁵ According to Susanna

¹¹ Edward Tullidge, "Eliza R. Snow's Invocation," *Women of Mormondom* (New York, 1877), 187-194,

https://books.google.com/books?id=KWkwaQAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbg_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

¹² The *Women's Exponent* was a magazine run by the women of the Church for the women of the Church from 1872 to 1914 with approval from President Brigham Young and Eliza R. Snow. The *Women's Exponent* was replaced by the *Relief Society Magazine*.

¹³ Susanna Morrill, "Mormon Women's Agency and Changing Conceptions of the Mother in Heaven," *Women and Mormonism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Kate Holbrook and Matthew Bowman, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), 83.

¹⁴ First Presidency of the Church, "The Origin of Man," *Improvement Era* 13, no. 1 (Salt Lake City: General Board, 1909), 75-81, <https://archive.org/details/improvementera1301unse/page/74>.

¹⁵ General Conference is a semi-annual worldwide meeting where the president of the Church, the twelve apostles, and other general church leaders speak to the entire membership of the Church. Their words are treasured by members as modern-day scripture. This information about the use of "Heavenly Mother" and "Mother in Heaven" was gathered by

Morrill, the hymn “Oh My Father” also “became less pervasive and authoritative than it had been in the late nineteenth through early twentieth centuries.”¹⁶ Morrill suggests that the decreasing frequency with which Heavenly Mother was discussed in official channels during this period was a result of the attempt to “create a unified, smoothly functioning institution that would be accepted within the wider American religious landscape” through correlation and centralization.

In more recent years there has been a resurgence of conversations that include Heavenly Mother. References to “Mother in Heaven,” “Heavenly Mother,” and “Heavenly Parents” in General Conference addresses began to surface in 1970’s and have increased, with fifty-seven references to Heavenly Mother, explicitly or implicitly, in General Conference from 2010 to 2019.¹⁷ In 1995 President Hinckley, then the president of the Church, shared “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” which states that each individual is “a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents,” thus implicitly giving space to the feminine divine.¹⁸ In the last fifteen years, discussion of Heavenly Mother has become much more open. Publications unofficially associated with the Church—such as Exponent II (a Mormon feminist blog and magazine) and Sunstone Magazine (a periodical devoted to sponsoring “open forums of

searching those phrases in the LDS General Conference Corpus. The phrase “Heavenly Parents” was also rarely used, except for the decade from 1940-1949 when it was used six times. However, five of those uses were by a single speaker, Elder Milton R. Hunter, suggesting it was just the word choice of an individual rather than a common cultural phrase. (See Mark Davies, “Corpus of LDS General Conference Talks, 1851-2010,” LDS General Conference Corpus, <https://www.lds-general-conference.org/>.)

¹⁶ Susanna Morrill, “Mormon Women’s Agency and Changing Conceptions of the Mother in Heaven,” *Women and Mormonism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Kate Holbrook and Matthew Bowman, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), 84.

¹⁷ Mark Davies, “Corpus of LDS General Conference Talks, 1851-2010,” LDS General Conference Corpus, <https://www.lds-general-conference.org/>.

¹⁸ “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, (Salt Lake City, 1995), <https://www.lds.org/topics/family-proclamation?lang=eng&old=true>.

Mormon thought and experience”¹⁹)—have published numerous essays about Heavenly Mother. Online discussion boards from the same timeframe show a multitude of posts discussing Heavenly Mother and sharing questions and beliefs about Her. These discussions go outside of the official doctrine of the church.²⁰ In 2011 BYU Studies published “‘A Mother There’: A Survey of Historical Teachings about Mother in Heaven,”²¹ as discussed above. Because this article was published by a church-sponsored school, it carries more weight with the general church membership than publications like *Exponent II* and *Sunstone*. Then, a gospel essay titled “Mother in Heaven”²² was posted on LDS.org—the official website of the church—in 2015 which provided an overview of the theology surrounding Heavenly Mother and its historical evolution. The “Mother in Heaven” essay was written as one within a collection of essays on more controversial topics such as plural marriage, race and the priesthood, and the Book of Mormon and DNA studies.

Paulsen and Pulido’s article” is the most comprehensive summary of the public words of church authorities about Heavenly Mother. To summarize Paulsen and Pulido, ecclesiastical leaders of the church have taught that Heavenly Mother is the Wife of Heavenly Father, the Mother

¹⁹ “Sunstone Magazine,” (Sunstone Education Foundation), accessed November 19, 2019, www.sunstonemagazine.com/.

²⁰ For a few examples of blog posts and online discussion boards discussion Heavenly Mother, see the following.

Gaia. “Heavenly Mother.” *ThirdHour*. July 01, 2012. Accessed July 29, 2019. <https://thirdhour.org/forums/topic/6173-heavenly-mother/>.

MarriedJen. “R/lds - Could Someone Tell Me More about Heavenly Mother?” *Reddit*. November 2017. Accessed July 29, 2019. https://www.reddit.com/r/lds/comments/7fw6wm/could_someone_tell_me_more_about_heavenly_mother/.

Rachel. “What I First Learned about Heavenly Mother.” *The Exponent*. February 01, 2016. Accessed July 29, 2019, <https://www.the-exponent.com/what-i-first-learned-about-heavenly-mother/>.

²¹ David Paulsen and Martin Pulido, “‘A Mother There’: A Survey of Historical Teachings about Mother in Heaven,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (2011), 85, <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/mother-there-survey-historical-teachings-about-mother-heaven>.

²² “Mother in Heaven,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, (2015), <https://www.lds.org/topics/mother-in-heaven?lang=eng>.

of the spirits of all humans, co-creator of the world, co-framer of the plan of salvation,²³ that she is involved in Her children's mortal lives, and that after death, humans will return to both Heavenly Parents.²⁴ This short list summarizes all the "official" doctrines²⁵ taught by church leaders on the topic of Heavenly Mother. These were gleaned from over a hundred years of church talks, showing how Heavenly Mother has been a relatively minor focus within the official instruction of the church.

As Heavenly Mother is infrequently discussed at official church meetings, some believe that members are not allowed to talk about Her at all.²⁶ This belief is not wholly without precedent. Several Latter-day Saint scholars have been excommunicated for their published works on controversial topics, including works about Heavenly Mother. Most notably, Maxine Hanks, Janice Allred, and Margaret Toscano were

²³ The plan of salvation is a plan created by God to bring his children back to heaven through the atonement of Jesus Christ.

²⁴ David Paulsen and Martin Pulido, "'A Mother There': A Survey of Historical Teachings about Mother in Heaven," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (2011), 85, <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/mother-there-survey-historical-teachings-about-mother-heaven>.

²⁵ The generally accepted definition is that official doctrines are teachings that have been repeatedly taught by multiple prophets or apostles in public settings. However, which teachings are and which teachings are not doctrine is sometimes contested. See Anthony R. Sweat, Michael Hubbard MacKay, and Gerrit J. Dirkmaat. "Evaluating Latter-day saint Doctrine," *Foundations of the Restoration: Fulfillment of the Covenant Purposes*, ed. Craig James Ostler, Michael Hubbard MacKay, and Barbara Morgan Gardner (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2016), 23–44.

²⁶ The earliest known explanation that Heavenly Mother is too sacred to mention was by Melvin R. Brooks, a seminary teacher, and has not been repeated since by prophets or apostles. This is an excellent example of folklore in the Church. It started with one man orally passing on his personal theology, which was then passed on, and passed on again until it became a common belief. (David Paulsen and Martin Pulido, "'A Mother There': A Survey of Historical Teachings about Mother in Heaven," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (2011), 85, <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/mother-there-survey-historical-teachings-about-mother-heaven>.)

excommunicated from 1993-2000.²⁷ However, Paulsen and Pulido have argued, “We have found no public record of a General Authority²⁸ advising us to be silent about our Heavenly Mother; indeed, as we have amply demonstrated, many General Authorities have openly taught about Her.”²⁹

Vernacular Beliefs about Heavenly Mother

Among the women that I interviewed, the most consistent belief that I encountered was that Heavenly Mother is a divine woman from

²⁷ Maxine Hanks was excommunicated on September 19, 1993. She edited the book *Women & Authority: Re-Emerging Mormon Feminism*, which includes essays on Heavenly Mother. Janice Allred was excommunicated on May 9, 1995. She is known for writing on child abuse within the Church and on Heavenly Mother, including in the book *God the Mother and Other Theological Essays*. Margaret Toscano was excommunicated November 30, 2000. She co-wrote the book *Strangers in Paradox: Explorations in Mormon Theology* with her husband Paul Toscano (who was excommunicated on September 19, 1993), as well as authored many papers on Heavenly Mother, priesthood, and other topics. Although for each of these women, their published works on Heavenly Mother were only partly and not primarily why they were excommunicated, Margaret Toscano later observed “No doubt the publicly discussed excommunications of feminists like Janice Allred, Lynne Kanavel Whitesides, Maxine Hanks, and me, all of whom were disciplined in part simply for talking about the Heavenly Mother, adds to the general sense that discourse about her is strictly forbidden.” (Margaret Toscano. “Is There A Place For Heavenly Mother In Mormon Theology? An Investigation Into Discourses Of Power,” *Sunstone: Mormon Experience, Scholarship, Issues, & Art* 133, (July 2004), 16.)

²⁸ General Authorities are a group that includes the prophet, apostles, and other global church leaders over Sunday School, and youth and adult class organizations, such as Relief Society, Young Men’s, Young Women’s, and Primary.

²⁹ David Paulsen and Martin Pulido, “‘A Mother There’: A Survey of Historical Teachings about Mother in Heaven,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (2011), 85, <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/mother-there-survey-historical-teachings-about-mother-heaven>.

whom women inherit an innate creative power. In many ways this belief aligns with the gender norms³⁰ of the Church, but it also expands upon them.

For example, nearly all women that I interviewed shared the belief that Heavenly Mother was involved in the creation of the world. For some women, like Amy,³¹ this belief was based on logic. “If Abraham is right, and the creation is the work of gods - then it makes sense to believe that Heavenly Mother was there at the creation (maybe even the main architect if nurturing/creating is a divine woman thing).”³² Amy referred to the scripture Abraham 4:1, which states “and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth.”³³ Heavenly Mother is not explicitly described in these verses, nor have general authorities officially interpreted it to include Her. By including Heavenly Mother among the “gods” who created the earth, Amy broadens the canon with her interpretation. While most informants described this belief more simplistically, like in Sarah N.’s statement, “I also believe that Heavenly Mother was involved in the Creation,”³⁴ others were more imaginative, such as in Ariana B.’s interview.

And if God was like, ok, so when we create our world, I want to have this, this, this, and this. And She was like m-mhh, we need to cut out a little bit of this. . . Maybe create a couple more practical things, like maybe trees should be this color . . . like you have your creative vision, my dude, but I’m here to level with you. We have all these little celestial babies running around and I kinda want to give them a nice place to live and be tested and all that. . . So I picture God as being like above and beyond in his aspiration. He’s just so lofty sometimes. He’s got these great big ideas. And I

³⁰ The Church teaches that mothers are “primarily responsible for the nurture of their children,” and that women, more generally, are stewards over the youth. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, (Salt Lake City, 1995), <https://www.lds.org/topics/family-proclamation?lang=eng&old=true>.

³¹ Amy requested that only her first name be used.

³² Amy, interviewed by the author, October 26, 2018.

³³ The Book of Abraham, which details the Biblical prophet Abraham’s life, was translated by Joseph Smith Jr. from Egyptian papyri. Members of the Church consider it scripture, like the Bible. (Book of Abraham 4:1.)

³⁴ Sarah N., interviewed by the author, September 28, 2018.

picture Heavenly Mother being like, that's really good, but let's think about the practicality of this a little bit. Let's find a compromise to see your creative vision but also like maybe have less explosions. And let's desaturate this color a little bit, let's even out these values a little bit. And we'll make something really beautiful together.³⁵

Ariana B.'s imagery portrays Heavenly Parents as having not only a very human relationship but a distinctly gendered one, as well. According to her beliefs, Heavenly Mother is a practical mom, engaged in child-rearing and homemaking. Such a portrayal reinforces gender roles as taught by the church. Yet, by describing in detail what she believes Heavenly Mother does, Ariana B. also writes women into Latter-day Saint cosmology.

Another common motif that I encountered was the belief that women are created in the image of Heavenly Mother, the female goddess. As Callan O. explained, "I'm not created in the image of God the Father, but God the Mother."³⁶ Once again, some women talked about how this is a very logical belief. For example, Kristen S. explained,

Also, just the whole thing that we're created in God's image. And, I guess I've, I don't know that I've always understood this, but I'd say that my understanding of that would be that as a woman I must be created, not just, not in my Heavenly Father's image, but in my Heavenly Mother's image because I'm a woman. And that makes more sense to me than being created just in Heavenly Father's image.³⁷

This group of beliefs uses logic to expand on the Genesis creation account. Genesis 1:27 reads, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them."³⁸ That is, that God is either androgynous or that women were created in the image of their mother. And for Latter-day Saints who believe in eternal biological gender, the latter is a logical extrapolation. As Nicole G. explained, "my

³⁵ Ariana B., interviewed by the author, October 26, 2018

³⁶ Callan O., interviewed by the author, October 27, 2018.

³⁷ Kristen S., interviewed by the author, September 22, 2018.

³⁸ Gen. 1:27 KJV.

body is an inheritance of my Heavenly Mother, [and] that She has a real woman's body."³⁹

Some women discussed their belief that their creativity was also inherited from their Heavenly Mother. Sarah N. explained, "Women are creators. You know, even by their mortal sleeve, if you will. There's the flesh that they live inside of. The flesh in and of itself is a creative force."⁴⁰ She believes that women are essentially creators because creative (and life-giving) powers rest in their reproductive organs. Nicole G. shared a similar belief. However, her belief was more expansive.

You know, God created man in his own image, but we are created in Goddess's image, in our Heavenly Mother's image. And that there is power in Her body. And I'm not really one that subscribes to the idea that Motherhood is the end-all-be-all and that creation, or that when we describe ourselves as creative beings that we are referring directly to anything relating to Motherhood. That's not part of my personal theology. I mean, I understand the power of that rhetoric, and the power of believing in that rhetoric, but it's not really something that I subscribe to. So when I say Her body has power, our bodies have power. I'm not even really sure what that means exactly. I know it's related to creative power, but I'm just thinking I don't want to limit that to having a baby or Her having children. But that that is also an inheritance from Her. She is also a creative being and that is inherent in me because I have Her body. And men can also be creative, but it is given to them as a blessing whereas in me and in Her, it is inherent, it is inseparable from our physical and spiritual identity.⁴¹

Nicole G.'s responses remind me of Valerie Hudson's "The Two Trees" which argues that women are given the gift and responsibility of bringing life to the world through motherhood and men are given the gift and responsibility of leading life to the next world through priesthood ordinances like baptism.⁴² Hudson defines a woman's "apprenticeship to become like their heavenly mother" as pregnancy, childbirth, and

³⁹ Nicole G., interviewed by the author, October 23, 2018.

⁴⁰ Sarah N., interviewed by the author, September 28, 2018.

⁴¹ Nicole G., interviewed by the author, October 23, 2018.

⁴² Valerie Hudson, "The Two Trees" (presentation, 2010 FairMormon Conference, Sandy, UT, August 2010).

<https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2010/The-Two-Trees>.

lactation—creation of life. She also claims that only by “being a woman married to [her] sweetheart and having children forever” can a woman have the fullest joy. Thus, Hudson excludes unwed and childless women from apprenticeship to Heavenly Mother. Generally, the women I interviewed view gifts of creativity and power from their Heavenly Mother as encompassing more than just reproductive creation. By expanding the definition of creative gifts from Heavenly Mother, they include women who are unable or who choose to never physically give birth as equal heirs.

Customs that invite Heavenly Mother

Because there are no official or culturally accepted practices associated with Heavenly Mother in Latter-day Saint culture, I did not expect that many women would have specific customs that invite Heavenly Mother into their day-to-day devotion. Thus, I was surprised at what I found. The most common customs included either praying directly to the divine mother or incorporating her into their personal prayers, using feminine or inclusive pronouns when discussing God or reading scriptures, and performing creative acts to express and explore their personal theologies about Heavenly Mother.

Traditions related to prayer were varied. Many of these women identified a sense of conflict between the words of the late church president, Gordon B. Hinckley, and their own personal yearning for a direct relationship with Heavenly Mother. In an address to the membership of the church, Hinckley stated, “I have looked in vain for any instance where any President of the Church, from Joseph Smith to Ezra Taft Benson, has offered a prayer to ‘our Mother in Heaven. I suppose those ... who use this expression [of prayer to Heavenly Mother] and who try to further its use are well-meaning, but they are misguided. The fact that we do not pray to our Mother in Heaven in no way belittles or denigrates her.”⁴³ Because this statement has neither been supported nor refuted by more recent presidents of the church, some members consider it doctrine, while others consider it an opinion or suggestion. About praying

⁴³ Gordon B. Hinckley, “Daughters of God” (speech, Salt Lake City, UT, October 1991), The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1991/10/daughters-of-god?lang=eng>.

to Heavenly Mother, Abby A. explained, “This is one that I, well, over the last five years I’ve been like kinda grappling with this. I really want to have more of a relationship with Heavenly Mother—sorry, I’m getting emotional. . . But I just don’t feel like we’re allowed to. I know President Hinckley talked about not praying to Her, but I’ve always had this question in my heart of if we can’t pray to Her, then how can we have a relationship with Her, if we can’t talk with Her?”⁴⁴ Brittani M. expressed a similar feeling of conflict about praying directly to Heavenly Mother, but has come to a different conclusion. Describing her journey to develop a relationship with Heavenly Mother, she said, “One major step of that was beginning to pray to Heavenly Mother, which I felt very conflicted about initially because of President Hinckley’s talk about that, but, so I think I had started before that talk and I think I stopped briefly, but I started again.”⁴⁵ She didn’t explain why she started praying to Heavenly Mother again but did acknowledge the conflict she felt between her positive experiences praying to Heavenly Mother and President Hinckley’s direction not to pray to Her.

Some women have identified ways to work around the direction not to pray directly to Heavenly Mother but still feel like they are including Her in their prayers. For example, Melissa A. explained, “when I’m in really, really dire straits, when I’m really feeling down, sometimes I’ll ask Heavenly Father, hey, can you send Heavenly Mother down here to send me some guidance.”⁴⁶ Similarly, Callan O. said, “So when I pray, I think of Heavenly Mother kinda being on a speaker phone. So, maybe I can’t pray directly to Her because we’ve been told not to do that. At least, that’s my belief that She’s somewhat inaccessible that way, even though I don’t know why. I try to think of Her as being there and being available and my Heavenly Parents being a team.”⁴⁷

There is also a group of women who have developed the practice of praying directly to Heavenly Mother through reasoning and revelation. Adrienne W. was very logical in how she talked about praying to Heavenly Mother. Comparing her Heavenly Parents to her mortal parents, Adrienne said, “I believe you can pray to Her and that’s fine. Sometimes you’re just sick of men. You don’t really want to talk to Heavenly Father,

⁴⁴ Abby A., interviewed by the author, October 25, 2018.

⁴⁵ Brittani M., interviewed by the author, October 23, 2018.

⁴⁶ Melissa A., interviewed by the author, October 26, 2018.

⁴⁷ Callan O., interviewed by the author, October 27, 2018.

which I think makes sense, because sometimes you don't want to talk to your mom, you just want to talk to your dad and vice versa."⁴⁸ Similarly, Ariana B. said, "I include Her in my prayers and sometimes I like very, very occasionally, I'll pray specifically to Her. Like if there's something going on that I'm like I need another woman's touch in this. Sorry, dad. But I need mom right now."⁴⁹ One thing that is interesting about Ariana B.'s prayer tradition is that she also believes that Heavenly Mother plays a unique role in answering prayers as well. "I think a lot of times people get revelation; they'll think it's from God, but I wonder how many times it's really from our Heavenly Mother. She's like, this is a lady problem, I've got this. I'll see you in like five minutes. I'm gonna go down and comfort this child right now."⁵⁰ In these narratives, women depict Heavenly Mother as actively engaged in their lives.

Although she does not pray to Heavenly Mother herself, Rachel O. said, "I think if a person feels personally prompted to and especially, in particularly, Mormons, or whatever, if that's something they need for their spiritual connection with God, then that's totally valid."⁵¹ Other informants also expressed a general openness towards privately praying to Heavenly Mother or including Her in prayer if the individual feels it is beneficial to their own spiritual journey. The women's openness to these practices reflects the deeply personal nature of their vernacular theology of Heavenly Mother.

Another tradition among the women I interviewed is changing words to songs or scriptures in order to include Heavenly Mother in their daily devotion. Among Latter-day Saints, applying scriptures to oneself by adding one's own name to the scripture where pronouns are used or a personal challenge where a scripture character faces a challenge is a common practice for spiritual learning. These women described how they have adapted this practice to fulfill their desire to learn about Heavenly Mother. Several women talked about changing the words of songs to include Heavenly Mother as something that helps them feel close to Her. Abby A. said, "I don't know if this is sanctioned or not, but I change the words to 'I am a child of God' and I sing it as 'I am a child of God / And

⁴⁸ Adrienne W., interviewed by the author, September 22, 2018.

⁴⁹ Ariana B., interviewed by the author, October 26, 2018

⁵⁰ Ariana B., interviewed by the author, October 26, 2018

⁵¹ Rachel O., interviewed by the author, October 25, 2018.

They have sent me here.”⁵² In comparison to Abby’s inclusive “They,” the original words to this song, “I am a child of God / And He has sent me here” only describe a male God.⁵³ Callan O. described how she and her husband include Heavenly Mother in scriptures and songs.

When we read scriptures with our kids, we do the little picture books that have the animations. But he tries to, when it says Heavenly Father, tries to incorporate Heavenly Mother, too, and our Heavenly Parents. And I try to do that too. Just kinda switching the language around sometimes. Which is hard to do because literally everything is Heavenly Father. Even singing “I am a Child of God” and being able to help our children understand that that means they are children of two Heavenly Parents and that both of those people are significant to them has been helpful.⁵⁴

In addition to changing lyrics in songs, Callan O. and her husband also regularly teach their children about both Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother. Brittany O. said that this is a tradition she and her husband are currently trying to implement for when they have children in the future. “We started kinda a tradition where when we are referring to Heavenly Father, we say ‘and Heavenly Mother’ when we are talking about gospel related topics. We acknowledge that they are both up there and we want to create a home where we will teach our future children that they are both there and we use Her name more often.”⁵⁵ By including the words “Heavenly Mother” in their daily scripture study and in conversation, these women lead their families in reinterpreting the scriptures and doctrine of the church.

Many women also found that artistic expression was a powerful means for articulating and exploring their beliefs, even within more public settings. Other women discussed how consuming that art—poetry, plays, children’s books, music, and visual art—invited them into a conversation about Heavenly Mother that radically shaped their beliefs.

⁵² Abby A., interviewed by the author, October 25, 2018.

⁵³ Naomi Ward Randall. “I am a child of God,” *Children’s Songbook of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2011), 2.

⁵⁴ Callan O., interviewed by the author, October 27, 2018.

⁵⁵ Brittany O., interviewed by the author, November 1, 2018.

Poetry seemed to be a major force for shaping personal beliefs. *Mother's Milk: Poems in Search of Heavenly Mother* by Rachel Hunt Steenblik seemed to have a powerful impact on the women I interviewed. Although I was unable to interview Rachel Hunt Steenblik for this project, the introduction to *Mother's Milk: Poems in Search of Heavenly Mother* is important to understanding the book's role in these women's lives. The introduction to *Mother's Milk* reads, "These are the poems I could write with my questions, my hurt, my hope, and my reaching. Others could write other poems with theirs. I hope that they will. We need them all."⁵⁶ As both the title and the introduction say, in writing poetry Steenblik seeks for Heavenly Mother. She also encourages other women to write their own poems to seek Heavenly Mother and interact with their belief in Her. Abby N. described how she had "heard whispers or small mentions from people, but not enough" about Heavenly Mother and then a friend introduced her to *Mother's Milk*. She explained, I "immediately purchased it on Amazon. I was like I need this right now! I love reading through those short poems and just being able to recognize that other people know Her and have experiences with Her and are discovering Her too, and I'm really thankful for that."⁵⁷ For Abby N., reading *Mother's Milk* was both a way to learn about Heavenly Mother and realize that she is not alone in yearning to know more. Brittany O. shared that when others have asked her how they can learn more about Heavenly Mother, she "would always recommend *Mother's Milk*, the book of poems by Rachel Steenblik."⁵⁸ *Mother's Milk* was not the only literary work mentioned. *Dove Song*, a collection of poetry about Heavenly Mother, was also discussed as being influential. As an anthology, *Dove Song* gives voice to many women's vernacular beliefs about Heavenly Mother. Lorraine M. also pointed to the renowned Carol Lynn Pearson's work which has impacted the beliefs of women for several decades. Carol Lynn Pearson described her one-woman play *Mother Wove the Morning* as "an historical and personal search for the Divine Mother."⁵⁹ For Pearson, writing and performing this play is

⁵⁶ Rachel Hunt Steenblik, *Mother's Milk: Poems in Search of Heavenly Mother* (Common Consent Press, 2017), introduction.

⁵⁷ Abby N., interviewed by the author, October 19, 2018.

⁵⁸ Brittany O., interviewed by the author, November 1, 2018.

⁵⁹ Carol Lynn Pearson. "Healing the Motherless House," in *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism*, ed. Maxine Hanks (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 241.

engaging in a creative process to seek Heavenly Mother by being creative like Her. For Lorraine, Pearson's poetry and her play *Mother Wove the Morning* was the main sources from which she has learned about Heavenly Mother. Lorraine also identified a recent children's book, *Our Heavenly Family, Our Earthly Families* by Caitlin Connolly, Bethany Brady Spalding, and McArthur Krishna, as a source for teaching children about Heavenly Mother. She said "There was a book I found at a church bookstore recently that I got for a friend who just had a baby, and it's about just our Heavenly Family and all of the art is very much our Heavenly Parents. And you know, it's just like, I think it's neat that that's something that is being marketed to mainstream members of the church now because, you know, because so many people believe it. We don't have very much information about it, but we want our children to grow up seeing and hearing about it. . ."⁶⁰ Lorraine has consumed art to seek Heavenly Mother and is now encouraging others to do the same.

Another type of art described in the interviews is visual art. Sherry M. talked about appreciating paintings as a way to learn about and remember Heavenly Mother. After talking about how little of the artwork in church buildings shows women, Sherry M. mentioned, "I think it is important to point out our Heavenly Mother. We are made in Her image and I think that's important to point out. I love the Heavenly Mother artwork. There's one by J. Kirk Richards that I think is amazing. I love Caitlin Connolly, the one that shows Heavenly Mother and Heavenly Father and all of the children in all their varieties. That really touches me. I really love the artwork that includes Heavenly Mother."⁶¹ For her, viewing artwork depicting Heavenly Mother is comforting and touching. It teaches that she is made in Heavenly Mother's image and reminds her that she has a Heavenly Mother.

Kay B. talked about two different art projects at BYU that helped her learn about Heavenly Mother: a maze of white cloth with embroidered references to Heavenly Mother created by Katie Payne and a collection of photos with quotes about Heavenly Mother created by Anna C. (whom I also interviewed). Kay B. also collects artwork depicting Heavenly Mother.⁶²

⁶⁰ Lorraine M., interviewed by the author, October 23, 2018.

⁶¹ Sherry M., interviewed by the author, October 23, 2018.

⁶² Kay B., interviewed by the author, November 2, 2018.

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Anna C. talked extensively about art and as a way she has come closer to Heavenly Mother, both through appreciating the art of others and creating art herself. As an undergraduate student at BYU, she saw Katie Payne's art installation, a maze of white cloth and quotes about Heavenly Mother.

When I started my BFA project at BYU, right before I started it I saw Katie Payne's installation at BYU. She did this really lovely installation piece with like white sheets and she'd embroidered quotes about Heavenly Mother, or she'd changed the YW theme to say like "We are daughters of a Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother who love us and we love them" and things like that. . . And she had all these white, embroidered panels kinda organized in a circle and you'd walk through them. When you got to the center, there was a giant pillar of light, essentially. It was really beautiful. . . And as soon as I saw it, I was like this is something I want to talk about. Like this is something I want to hear more about, and I want to hear how other people think, what other people think about Her. And if other people have similar feelings as I do, or if other people have been taught similar things as I have and things like that. So that, I feel like, kinda opened the desire in me to like learn more and explore about it.⁶³

For Anna C., Katie Payne's artwork led to a desire to learn more about Heavenly Mother and eventually, to her own artwork on the Divine Mother. As a photographer, she used photographs and quotes from a survey of women to create a beautiful collection of images that were displayed at BYU. In our interview Anna C. spoke extensively about this project. She identified the creative process, from the survey to planning and taking photos to the actual exhibit, as how she has learned the most about Heavenly Mother.⁶⁴

Other women described seeking Heavenly Mother through creative processes, such as music. Julie de Azevedo-Hanks (a popular LDS songwriter) shared a song that she wrote a called "Mother, where art thou?" expressing her yearning to find Heavenly Mother. Rachel O. said "I have one child, so I think that while nursing my son when he was an infant or singing to him, and especially like singing primary songs that

⁶³ Anna C., interviewed by the author, October 27, 2018.

⁶⁴ Anna C., interviewed by the author, October 27, 2018.

talk about motherhood or about childhood, I've found those to be ways to help me connect to the Divine Feminine or to Heavenly Mother."⁶⁵ Although she doesn't write her own songs like De Azevedo-Hanks, Rachel O. creates music by singing. She creates this music more informally and privately than De Azevedo-Hanks. While singing to her son, Rachel O. is being creative like Heavenly Mother and at the same time inviting Heavenly Mother into her relationship with her infant.

One woman talked about feeling connected to Heavenly Mother when cooking. Sarah N. shared how cooking food for her children has recently become a spiritual experience.

So, women are creators. And I think too, you know, it's actually, just, literally been in the last month of my life that I have had the experience of, of seeing how when I make dinner for my children I am, I am infusing my love. That my love is part of the ingredients of the food that I am sharing with my children. And that was, that has been really surprising to me. It's not something that I've ever been or felt spiritually connected to. Though, I will say this, I have been, I've associated cooking with creativity, that's why I love it so much.⁶⁶

Again, we can see how women are making meaningful their lives through exploring their creativity as a means of connecting themselves with a divine heritage.

A final, and perhaps more traditional expression of women's creative power in which women encounter the Divine Mother is pregnancy, childbirth, and childrearing. Callan O. explained,

There have been some special spiritual moments in my mothering journey that I just feel like . . . I feel very connected to Her. And like the birth of my children, for instance. Those moments when it's just like . . . [connection cut out] of course She's part of that process, these are Her children, too. [I asked her to repeat what she had said when the connection cut out.] I was just saying the birth of our children, I think you're really connected to the veil. So close to it. Because you're literally bringing a spirit child down from heaven, giving them a body, and now they're on earth. And I think, of course She would be involved in those moments. She would

⁶⁵ Rachel O., interviewed by the author, October 25, 2018.

⁶⁶ Sarah N., interviewed by the author, September 28, 2018.

have to be. They are Her children, too. There's no way as a mother that I would not be involved in that kind of process. I think those moments drive that home.⁶⁷

Callan O. felt that when giving birth she is interacting directly with Heavenly Mother as the newborn is passed from its heavenly to its earthly mother. The process of birth thus connects women, mortal and immortal, in the perpetuation of life.

Folklorist Christine Blythe came to such a conclusion in her thesis "Vernacular Theology, Home Birth, and the Mormon Tradition." One of her informants, Kayte Brown (a doula) explained that "When I am at a birth I pray for the presence of my Heavenly Mother, because that is her realm of responsibility—over her daughters as they bring their children into physical existence."⁶⁸ As Blythe points out, such beliefs carve out space for Heavenly Mother's authority and provides flesh to her identity. Rachel Hunt Steenblik, another participant in Blythe's research, echoed Kayte's words.

A midwife friend told me that she doesn't even think of praying to Heavenly Father when she is helping women in that sphere. She feels so strongly that it is Heavenly Mother's domain. I did pray to Heavenly Father, but for Heavenly Mother to be with me and to support and sustain me. I do believe it is a sphere She is especially over. . .⁶⁹

Drawing on their belief in Heavenly Mother's creative powers, Steenblik and her midwife friend attribute responsibility for the divine duties of answering prayers and watching over childbirth to Her. Thus, they attribute to Heavenly Mother power and authority that have not officially been declared to belong to Her.

Where official Latter-day Saint doctrine has not provided room for roles and responsibilities of Heavenly Mother, Latter-day Saint women—

⁶⁷ Callan O., interviewed by the author, October 27, 2018.

⁶⁸ Christine Blythe, "Vernacular Theology, Home Birth and the Mormon Tradition," Master's thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland (2018), 110, <https://research.library.mun.ca/13350/1/thesis.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Christine Blythe, "Vernacular Theology, Home Birth and the Mormon Tradition," Master's thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland (2018), 114, <https://research.library.mun.ca/13350/1/thesis.pdf>.

in informal and creative ways—have. Through various forms of creativity, they have set aside space for women to discuss their vernacular theology and created community to support each other in their desires to talk and learn about Heavenly Mother.

In the weeks following my interviews, several women reached out to me to express their craving to know more about Heavenly Mother and their desire to creatively display their personal beliefs through art, writing, and music. There is a thriving tradition of seeking and creating related to Heavenly Mother among some Latter-day Saint women, a tradition which I predict will continue to grow in the coming years.

In fact, many women felt that despite their lack of access to the priesthood or ecclesiastical position, that it was women's responsibility to bring more knowledge of Heavenly Mother to light. As Lorraine M. explained, "I believe that She is somebody who, you know, one day we'll learn more about Her. That's just what I believe. . . You know, just that I think the women of the church today are very much part of how we eventually will continue to learn more about Her."⁷⁰ Lorraine believes that the "women of the church" are essential to the process of learning more about Heavenly Mother. Sarah N. felt similarly.

I also believe that it is the women's responsibility to bring it forth. And so, in my mind, the men have to be willing to make room for the women to have, not even to have it [because] they have it, to be recognized as having the authority to bring forth the doctrine and power of Heavenly Mother.⁷¹

Both Sarah and Lorraine's beliefs are consistent with how belief in Heavenly Mother was transmitted even in the earliest period of the church.

For example, both Wilford Woodruff and Joseph F. Smith, two previous presidents of the Church, recognized a woman, Eliza R. Snow, as receiving revelation or inspiration about Heavenly Mother—a belief she incorporated into the hymn "Oh My Father," which is one of the earliest mentions of Heavenly Mother in LDS history. It is currently published in the official hymn book of the church (Wilcox 5).⁷² Speaking of "Oh My

⁷⁰ Lorraine M., interviewed by the author, October 23, 2018.

⁷¹ Sarah N., interviewed by the author, September 28, 2018.

⁷² Linda Wilcox, "The Mormon Concept of a Mother in Heaven," in *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism*, ed. Maxine Hanks (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 5.

Father” in an 1893 General Conference, Wilford Woodruff said, “That hymn is a revelation, though it was given unto us by a woman—Sister Snow. There are a great many sisters who have the spirit of revelation. There is no reason why they should not be as inspired as men.”⁷³ Until recently, Snow’s hymn “Oh My Father” was one of the only sources on Heavenly Mother known by a major population of the church. Because of its centrality to LDS doctrine, I find it fascinating that it was transmitted by a woman; furthermore, that women, then and now, have drawn on poetry and other creative forms for authority where they otherwise have little institutional authority.

In a recent *Exponent II* Magazine book review, Emily Updegraff made a similar observation about poetry. She writes,

I think I do not overstate things when I say the recently published work of Latter-day Saint poets in *Dove Song* and in *Mother’s Milk* are portals to revelation on Heavenly Mother. And given the cooled lava mentioned above, poetry may not be just a possible portal, but one of the very few ways to access Her at all. I’d go so far as to say if we’re going to learn anything new about our Mother in Heaven, we will learn it from our poets.⁷⁴

Like the women I interviewed, Updegraff recognizes that there are few officially approved ways to seek and to learn about Heavenly Mother. She identifies poetry as a portal to seek and learn about Heavenly Mother without needing official Church approval. Through poetry and other means, Latter-day Saint women are actively developing theology about Heavenly Mother outside the constraints of the official religion.

Although there is relatively little official Church doctrine about Heavenly Mother, the folklore about Her is plentiful and diverse. Carrying on the traditions of their religious fore-mothers, the women I interviewed express this folklore in the rituals of their daily devotions, the physical forms of their artwork, and the words they use to describe more abstract forms of creation like childbirth. Drawing on their belief that they have

⁷³ Wilford Woodruff, “The Power of Faith,” in *Collected Discourses Delivered by President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, comp. Brian H. Stuy (Burbank, CA: Brian H. Stuy Publishers, 1989), 3:410-11.

⁷⁴ Emily Updegraff, “Book Review - *Dove Song* and *Mother’s Milk*,” *Exponent II* 38, no. 2 (2018), 36.

inherited gifts of creativity from Heavenly Mother, Latter-day Saint women claim authority to develop vernacular theology centered on Her. They create deeply personal theology around themselves and their experiences as women while expanding the limits of the Divine. I suspect that as this doctrine is developed further, it will be by women within a growing community of creative works. The responses of the women I interviewed introduce many additional possibilities for research and suggest that this is a relatively untapped, although important, topic within Latter-day Saint culture.

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Appendix

Table 1.

The table below contains demographic data collected during the interviews, with minimal editing to standardize white and Caucasian, The Church of Jesus Christ to LDS, etc.

	Birthplace	Current Location	Age	Ethnicity	Religion	Duration of Church membership
1	California	Arizona	44	Caucasian	LDS	lifetime member
2	Idaho	Utah	42	Caucasian	LDS	[no data]
3	Wisconsin	Utah	23	Caucasian	LDS	lifetime member
4	California	Utah	47	Caucasian	LDS	lifetime member
5	Utah	Utah	31	Caucasian	LDS	lifetime member
6	Stockholm, Sweden	Texas	35	Caucasian	Mormon/post-Mormon	lifetime member
7	Texas	Colorado	35	Caucasian	LDS	convert of almost a year
8	Utah	Utah	24	Caucasian	LDS	lifetime member
9	Utah	Utah	28	Caucasian	LDS	lifetime member
10	Utah	California	41	Caucasian/European ancestry	Mormon Feminist	lifetime member
11	Colorado	Arizona	39	Caucasian	LDS	convert
12	Utah	Arizona	42	Caucasian	LDS	lifetime member
13	California	Michigan	37	Caucasian	LDS	member for 29 years, since age 8
14	Utah	California	29	Caucasian	LDS	lifetime member
15	Utah	South Carolina	55	Caucasian	LDS	lifetime member
16	Florida	North Carolina	28	Caucasian	LDS	lifetime member
17	Lakinghays, England	Texas	35	Chicana	LDS	lifetime member
18	Arizona	Vermont	24	Caucasian	LDS	since age 7 or 8
19	Idaho	Florida	39	Caucasian	LDS	lifetime member
20	Idaho	Massachusetts	30	Caucasian	LDS	lifetime member
21	Utah	Australia	38	American-Islander	LDS	lifetime member
22	Utah	California	21	Caucasian	LDS	started attending at age 5
23	[did not provide information]	California	21	Caucasian	LDS	lifetime member
24	Nevada	United Kingdom	28	Caucasian	LDS	lifetime member
25	Utah	Arizona	36	Caucasian	LDS	convert in 1994
26	Brazil	Washington	25	Mixed race - Latino, Spanish, White and Middle Eastern	Christian/LDS	lifetime member

Colby Townsend {colby.townsend@hsc.utah.edu} is currently applying to PhD programs in early American literature and religion. He completed an MA in History at Utah State University under the direction of Dr. Philip Barlow. He previously received two HBA degrees at the University of Utah in 2016, one in comparative Literary and Culture Studies with an emphasis in religion and culture, and the other in Religious Studies—of the latter, his thesis was awarded the Marriott Library Honors Thesis Award and is being revised for publication, *Eden in the Book of Mormon: Appropriation and Retelling of Genesis 2-4* (Kofford, forthcoming).

Colby Townsend†

Returning to the Sources:
Integrating Textual Criticism in the Study of
Early Mormon Texts and History

As historians engage with literary texts, they should ask a few important questions. What is the text that I am using in my research? What is the manuscript tradition from which the manuscript or text evolved? How does that evolution inform the specific period I am studying? Did it evolve orally or in written form? And are there variations that have been handed down through time and through tradition that may provide greater context or clarity to my research? Implicit in these questions is an interest in authenticity and accuracy. As literary texts evolve and are shared over time, there are multiple factors that may lead a text away from its earliest forms, such as when a narrative is orally transmitted over multiple generations and then recorded in writing or when a manuscript is repeatedly copied by hand and errors are introduced into the text. The attempt to ascertain the earliest forms of a text is known as textual criticism. This branch of scholarship started in earnest at the beginning of the European Renaissance from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, and led to the European Enlightenment of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹ In this article I will argue that scholars of Mormon history have not yet taken advantage of the historical insights that textual

† This is where you can put the author's attributions.

¹ The scholars of the early Renaissance were called "humanists," and their work was the beginning of the modern study of the humanities. See Jerry H. Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ: New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 7.

criticism has to offer, as a means of persuading the academic community to embrace this important methodology.

However, in order to portray the importance of textual criticism in the humanities I will first briefly discuss the history of textual criticism. Humanism of the Renaissance is best exemplified in the work of Desiderius Erasmus and his contemporaries, particularly Erasmus's first attempts at creating a critical text of the New Testament.² The work performed by some of his contemporaries who edited the Complutensian Polyglot played a major role shaping the academic study of ancient literature.³ The Polyglot included the full text of the Christian Bible in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Aramaic, but unlike in Erasmus's work the Polyglot editors were not as open to seeing error in the transmission history of the Bible.⁴ This had a particular bearing on the study of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament once European scholars approached the Bible using the same methods they had with classical literature. The Christian Bible had to be understood as a collection of books that had been shaped by human production and as a result was susceptible to errors, akin to any other text produced in antiquity. Scribes were sometimes careless when they made a new copy of a manuscript. Sometimes they revised a text to fit their theological perspective. They also might write the wrong word because they misheard the dictation of the manuscript.⁵

Whatever the exact reasons for error in the textual history, humanist scholars of the Renaissance continued adding to their records all of the textual variants they could find between the manuscripts of the Bible available to them. Rather than being like

² Desiderius Erasmus, *Novum Instrumentum omne* (Basel: Johann Froben, 1516). This work is better known by the name Erasmus gave it in the second edition, *Novum Testamentum*, which it kept in all editions after the second.

³ See Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 70–111.

⁴ Nicholas Hardy, *Criticism and Confession: The Bible in the Seventeenth Century Republic of Letters* (Oxford–Warburg Studies; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 250.

⁵ See Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (Updated and with a New Afterword; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 33; and Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 38–39. Sometimes a reader would dictate to a group of scribes in a room and scribal errors were introduced into manuscript copies because scribes heard the wrong word. This is an error that was made in creating some of Mormonism's sacred texts as well.

their scholastic predecessors, humanist scholars focused on establishing the history of the text and explaining the historical and theological difficulties they found in its textual history. That is, rather than allowing theological questions to drive their research.⁶ These scholars cared deeply about philology, the study of how words and language change over time and how the earliest audiences understood the lexemes. Establishing the best readings among the textual variants and understanding what the words would have meant in their earliest contexts were essential to ensuring accurate translations of the text into Latin.

Initially, the purpose of the textual criticism of the New Testament was meant to focus on revising and editing the Latin Vulgate, the official Bible of the Catholic Church since Jerome's translation at the end of the fourth century CE. While the Complutensian Polyglot's Latin text did not vary from the Vulgate, Erasmus's Greek New Testament did, and this discrepancy drew heavy criticism to the first two editions of his text.⁷ This careful examination of texts became the legacy of the humanists and influenced the works of Enlightenment scholars like Baruch Spinoza,⁸ Thomas Hobbes,⁹ and Isaac La Peyrère of the seventeenth century were influenced by this approach,¹⁰ and their work became a motivation for future scholars to pursue the same. As the approach was embraced more broadly, scholars expanded their interests to examining the author's intent and historical setting. Following in step with the humanists, scholars

⁶ Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 8.

⁷ Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 152.

⁸ Benedictus de Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Hamburg: Henricum Künrath, 1670); and Benedict de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, ed. Jonathan Israel (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill* (London: Andrew Crooke, 1651); and Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Revised Student Edition, ed. Richard Tuck; Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁰ Isaac La Peyrère, *Præ-Adamitæ sive Exercitatio super Versibus duodecimo, decimotertio, & decimoquarto, capitis quinit Epistolæ D. Pauli ad Romanos* (Amsterdam: Louis & Daniel Elzevier, 1655).

began to debate the text's authority based on their understanding of how the text had changed over time.¹¹

The scholarship of the humanists and early biblical critics, and the centuries of foundational work establishing the differences between Biblical manuscripts culminated to create the foundation of the field of biblical studies.¹² The same goes for the study of the Classics. As mentioned above, the same methods used by humanists to critique the Bible were first pioneered in the field of Classical Studies and, for the most part, by the same scholars.

Textual criticism has been a significant part of the humanities for centuries. It is tied to the focus in the fields of history and literary studies to the creation of documentary editions of important papers projects. Documentary editing has directed several major projects in early American history such as the *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, published by Princeton University Press (now in its forty-third volume), the *Papers of Alexander Hamilton* by Columbia University Press (completed at twenty-seven volumes), and the *Joseph Smith Papers Project* by the Church Historian's Press (now in its eighteenth volume). Textual criticism incorporates both the data culled together from documentary editing (i.e. the transcriptions of documents that you find in these papers series) and the question of how the same text has changed in shape, form, structure, or wording as manuscripts have been shared and recreated or copied overtime. This tends to include books of scripture, important novels or stories, and historical narratives, rather than more mundane documents like ledgers, diaries, or minute books.¹³

To summarize I will briefly describe how documentary editing leads to textual criticism, and then how these are used in source and historical criticism. First, scholars find individual manuscripts and then create critical transcriptions. We can look to the Joseph Smith Papers Project as an example. Scholars working on the project transcribe and contextualize manuscripts connected to Joseph Smith,

¹¹ See J. Samuel Preus, *Spinoza and the Irrelevance of Biblical Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹² Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 138.

¹³ Unless, of course, there were multiple scribes keeping minutes at the same meeting or multiple copies made of these documents over decades or centuries, then textual criticism would become more important for the academic study of these documents.

TOWNSEND: RETURNING TO THE SOURCES

Jr. Once the project is complete, outside researchers will have access to these crucial manuscripts and the critical transcriptions and will then be able to compile their variants. This will offer clarity to how certain ideas and practices may have evolved.

Source criticism takes into consideration both the data brought together from making scholarly transcriptions of individual manuscripts and the textual criticism of the manuscript tradition. It also takes seriously the surrounding literary world of the text. No text is created in a vacuum and therefore all texts engage with both the language and ideas of the period and geographical location in which they were written. Paying attention to how the text borrows language, ideas, motifs, and images from its surrounding culture helps scholars to understand its words better and at the same time provide important information about when and where it was written. The attempt to bring this latter set of data together is called historical criticism. Most of the time scholars of Mormon history have not produced studies that focus on these questions, but most of the books and articles written on Mormon history engage with them in one way or another since almost every aspect of Mormonism is closely tied to its canonical texts.

Within Mormon Studies, broadly speaking, there has been a surge over the past fifteen years in making available professional editions of historical texts within Mormonism by documentary editors. Editions of transcribed journals,¹⁴ personal letters or correspondence,¹⁵ and other materials have steadily come through the presses. But I would like to focus my attention not on documentary editing, as important as it is to my overall, but instead focus on textual criticism. Mormon textual history is a history like those of the early Founders of the American republic, mentioned previously, in that they also consist of diaries, letters, minute books, histories, account books, etc. Mormon textual history also includes literature like the Bible that must not be

¹⁴ See especially the Diary Series published by Signature Books and the Journals Series in the Joseph Smith Papers Project.

¹⁵ See Reid L. Neilson, ed., *In the Whirlpool: The Pre-Manifesto Letters of President Wilford Woodruff to the William Atkin Family, 1885-1890* (Norman: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 2011); and Matthew J. Grow and Ronald W. Walker, eds., *The Prophet and the Reformer: The Letters of Brigham Young & Thomas L. Kane* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

ignored, texts that were created by Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, Joseph F. Smith, and others that became scripture to the movement.¹⁶ This aspect of Mormonism's textual history requires special attention and I am not convinced that historians of early Mormonism have yet come close to adequately addressing the issue. I believe that many historians are completely unaware that there are major gaps in this scholarship.

The Current State of Textual Criticism in Mormon Studies

I will highlight these problems by first summarizing the current state of textual criticism as applied to Mormonism's religious texts which, like the biblical texts, is inherently literary. To begin with, the Book of Mormon has received special treatment over the last thirty years, especially since the preliminary publication, but very limited print run, in the early 1980s of a three-volume critical text produced by Robert F. Smith with the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies.¹⁷ Royal Skousen took over the project in 1988 where Smith left off and since then has produced thirteen printed volumes, not including his Yale edition of the text,¹⁸ with several more coming soon. The earliest manuscript of the Book of Mormon, the original manuscript (O), besides images of only a few pages, has been off-limits to scholars outside of Royal Skousen's project during the length of his study. The same was true with the printer's manuscript (P) until it was published in the *Joseph Smith Papers* in 2015.¹⁹

Unfortunately, this treatment of the text of the Book of Mormon is more akin to the major issues that faced the field of Dead Sea Scrolls

¹⁶ This is not to mention all of the additions to the Community of Christ's edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, the sister group of the LDS church previously known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Established by Joseph Smith's son Joseph Smith, III, in 1860, the Community of Christ has twenty-seven more sections in their *Doctrine and Covenants* than the LDS version.

¹⁷ Robert F. Smith, ed., *Book of Mormon Critical Text: A Tool for Scholarly Reference* (Second edition, 3 vols.; Provo: F.A.R.M.S., 1984).

¹⁸ Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

¹⁹ Royal Skousen and Robin Scott Jensen, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations, Volume 3: Parts 1 and 2* (2 vols.; Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2015).

scholarship after their discovery in the late 1940s and the organization of a private team led by Roland de Vaux tasked with editing the manuscripts from the early 1950s to the end of their careers.²⁰ This limited access to the manuscripts led to the buildup of controversy in the early 1990s and the call for broader availability of the manuscripts for a much larger group of scholars. Royal Skousen has done for the Book of Mormon what de Vaux and his team did for many of the manuscripts found in the caves of the Dead Sea, but the broader field of Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship understood the problems inherent in allowing only a small group access to the manuscripts. There was no one outside of de Vaux's circle allowed to double, triple, and quadruple check the text for error and verify or dispute de Vaux's or his colleagues' readings. Providing greater access to the manuscripts, which began in the 1990s and are now fully accessible today, has revolutionized the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The field has exponentially grown in the number of scholars who specialize in the Scrolls and early Judaism, as well as the number of annual publications that deal with Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship.

Admittedly, working with damaged ancient fragments of Hebrew text in Aramaic script is much more difficult than working with the English cursive hand of Oliver Cowdery and other scribes of the nineteenth century, but there are plenty of places in early American texts where scholars disagree on the rendering of a letter or a word, especially in a manuscript that has deteriorated over time.²¹ The main problem is that up to 2015 only Skousen and a very small handful of scholars close to him were able to analyze P and make judgments about the wording of the text. Prior to that, from 2001–2015, almost everyone who wanted to study P had to do it through Skousen's

²⁰ Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity* (Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 11; and James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 193.

²¹ For a helpful overview of Skousen's work that explains the texts of the *Book of Mormon*, Skousen's critical work, Cowdery and the unidentified scribe, see Grant Hardy, "Textual Criticism and the Book of Mormon," in Mark Ashurst-McGee, Robin Scott Jensen, and Sharalyn D. Howcroft, eds., *Foundational Texts of Mormonism: Examining Major Early Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 37–73.

transcription,²² and prior to 2001 scholars either had to get access to the manuscript itself or find an archive that housed an almost impossible to read microfilm version.

Recognizing the need for scholars and laypersons alike to get back to the sources of Mormon history, the Joseph Smith Papers Project has been working for well over a decade to make all of the papers of Joseph Smith available in either electronic form on their website or in printed format. The Papers project made high quality full color images of P available in the Revelations and Translations series, and the project plans to release O in the same series in 2021.²³ It will only be once both P and O are available to all scholars that an actual sub-field of text-critical studies on the Book of Mormon can really begin to grow underneath the field of Mormon Studies, but that will be reliant on scholars of early Mormon history examining Skousen's transcription of both O and P to see if they agree with the readings he has provided. This is a crucial part of having a healthy and lively field, and it would be unfortunate if scholars of early Mormonism did not take advantage of this level of access. The textual criticism of the Book of Mormon is crucial to more than just literary studies of Mormon texts. It informs the historical development of early Mormonism and can help ensure that historians do not make any unnecessary errors when making scholarly claims about early Mormon history.

Unfortunately, Skousen's Yale edition of the Book of Mormon does not constitute a text-critical edition of the book. Traditional published critical texts include scholarly introductions to the rules the editor(s) have followed in comparing manuscripts and creating their critical texts, lists of the manuscripts they consulted, the body of the critical text, and a text-critical apparatus in footnotes throughout the volume.²⁴ The apparatus is crucial and marks where the manuscripts

²² Royal Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Entire Text in Two Parts* (Provo: The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies and Brigham Young University, 2001).

²³ Robin Jensen, editor of the Joseph Smith Papers volume, correspondence with the author, November 25, 2019.

²⁴ This is found in the text-critical editions of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, for example. See K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997); and Eberhard and Erwin Nestle and Barbara and Kurt Aland, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th edition; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993).

that were consulted vary in wording; they also provide brief information about the substance of the variant and which manuscripts or manuscript families have a given reading.

Skousen's Yale edition itself does not constitute a traditional critical text but rather only includes the text Skousen has created through analysis of the manuscripts and printed editions. The volume excludes the essential text-critical apparatus, the need for which is not replaced by the appendix at the back of the book suggesting changes the LDS Church should make to future printings of their version of the Book of Mormon. A text-critical apparatus allows those engaging with the text to see the major variants between textual families on the same page as the text and make decisions about what textual variants to follow.²⁵

As important as the Yale edition is it still does not provide the field of Mormon studies with a complete, traditional critical text of the Book of Mormon. Skousen's six-volume series analyzing the textual variants is crucial, and can act as a very large text-critical apparatus to a certain extent, but the analysis in those volumes goes beyond what is necessary for a text-critical apparatus to explaining why Skousen decided to follow one variant over others or emend the text a certain way. At the moment if a scholar or translator wants to utilize a critical text of the Book of Mormon, they have to bring together both Skousen's Yale edition and the six-volumes during their study. However, combined they still do not make a single volume critical text, and the majority of scholars are still dependent solely on Skousen's reading of O and potentially P. The public now has access to P in the Joseph Smith Papers Project, however, it is highly unlikely that scholars are examining the images of P themselves or comparing Skousen's transcription on the right hand side of the page with the images of the manuscript on the left hand. It is time for scholars to

²⁵ The recent publication by Signature Books of John S. Dinger, ed., *Significant Textual Changes in the Book of Mormon: The First Printed Edition Compared to the Manuscripts and to the Subsequent Major LDS English Printed Editions* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2013), does not count as a critical text, either. While it utilizes text from the 1830 *Book of Mormon* and numerous textual variants in the footnotes, it does not have the modern chapter and verse numbering system, making it difficult to navigate. The editor was also not able to examine the full manuscripts of O or P in order to create the text, but relied on Skousen's work, especially his six-volume *Analysis of Textual Variants* for his comparison of the 1830 text to O and P.

return to the primary sources and make sure that more scholarly eyes are on the manuscripts than before.

The critical text project is also regrettably incomplete because of Skousen's decision to ignore certain early textual witnesses of the Book of Mormon, including Abner Cole's early printing and publication of parts of the Book of Mormon in his newspaper *The Reflector*. Robin Scott Jensen has recently done important preliminary work on this issue in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*,²⁶ but Jensen's main focus was on situating the date of the publication of the 1830 *Book of Mormon* and not on the text Cole published in his paper. Skousen also ignores some potential fragments of O, particularly a small group of fragments that the LDS church purchased in the 1980s from the University of Chicago.²⁷ Along with Abner Cole's excerpts of the Book of Mormon in *The Reflector*, those fragments are not found in Skousen's volume on O, and are likely not included in his estimation that 28% of the original text is still extant.²⁸

More scholars of early Mormon history need to explore firsthand the textual witnesses of the Book of Mormon. Relying on one scholar's rendering of the Book of Mormon manuscript, without further check or debate, is a disservice to the field of Mormon studies. If the field of Mormon studies is going to have a serious presence in the academy, then its scholars must have ready access to the historical development and textual history of the texts of the field.

This shift in focus can also invite further work in preparing academic commentaries on the entire text of the Book of Mormon. Currently, Brant Gardner's six-volume commentary is the most up to date on the Book of Mormon, but it too suffers from several major

²⁶ Robin Scott Jensen, "Abner Cole and *The Reflector*: Another Clue to the Timing of the 1830 Book of Mormon Printing," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 24 (2015): 238-247.

²⁷ According to the finding aid provided by the Church History Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints's, these fragments are part of the original draft of Alma 3:5-4:2 and Alma 4:20-5:23 of the *Book of Mormon*. See <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/record?id=cad69254-d053-4bd8-89a7-04ad4941f63c&compId=390513c3-6d59-4b56-9010-cd89208d6f6d&view=browse> (Last accessed November 13, 2019).

²⁸ Royal Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typological Facsimile of the Extant Text* (Provo: The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 2001), 18.

problems, not least the fact that it is inconsistent in several respects and glosses over important aspects of the text that are internally problematic.²⁹ It was also produced prior to the availability of the important documents now available in the Joseph Smith Papers Project. If further work is going to be done to advance our understanding of the text and reception of the Book of Mormon, then Mormon studies needs to incorporate a model where textual criticism is valued within the field and produce a single-volume critical edition of the text.

While the state of the textual criticism of the Book of Mormon could use improvement, it has enjoyed the fruits of Royal Skousen's labor. Very little has been done in comparison for the rest of Mormonism's sacred texts. Many people involved directly and indirectly in Mormon studies might assume that the individual dictated revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants have a substantial amount of work done on them but unfortunately there is a major need for improvement here as well. When discussing textual criticism and the sections of the Doctrine and Covenants many people tend to think of Robert J. Woodford's 1974 three-volume doctoral dissertation, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants."³⁰ While this is an important source to include in any study of the individual sections, Woodford's sources were rather limited compared to the manuscripts Mormon historians have access to today. With the publication of the earliest versions of these texts in the Revelations and Translations series of the *Joseph Smith Papers*,³¹ as well as the original manuscripts for a few individual texts,³² scholars can now take advantage of a

²⁹ Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical & Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon* (6 vols.; Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007). I addressed some of these inconsistencies in my recent essay, Colby Townsend, "'Behold, Other Scriptures I Would that Ye Should Write': Malachi in the Book of Mormon," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (Summer 2018): 103–137.

³⁰ Robert J. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants, Volumes I-III" (PhD Dissertation; Provo: Brigham Young University, 1974).

³¹ Robin Scott Jensen, et al, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations, Volume 1: Manuscript Revelation Books* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009).

³² For example, see <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-may-1829-a-dc-11-in-handwriting-of-hyrum-smith/1> (Last accessed November 13, 2019).

much broader perspective and better understand the development of this important textual tradition. Woodford's earlier study did most of the legwork of comparing the 1833 *Book of Commandments*, 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*, and the ensuing editions of the *LDS Doctrine and Covenants* up to 1921. Woodford's work needs to be updated with comparisons of all of the documents that have been edited and made available by the Joseph Smith Papers Project team and collected into a more accessible and easier to read format than Woodford's previous study.

Some may assume that the LDS Pearl of Great Price, an important part of the LDS canonical works, have received thorough treatment, but this assumption only applies to the Book of Abraham—thanks to the work of Brian M. Hauglid;³³ although, further work can and should be done on the text of the Book of Abraham as well. As thorough and important as Hauglid's work is scholars need to further compare the variants between the manuscripts and printed editions of the Book of Abraham. Hauglid's book provides a model forward.

Even more work is needed on the text-critical history of the manuscripts of Smith's revision of Genesis 1–6. Robert J. Matthews is known for a lifetime of work on Smith's revision of the Bible,³⁴ which culminated in the extended work of Scott Faulring, and the late addition of Kent P. Jackson as a co-editor to the project,³⁵ in preparing and editing a documentary edition of the original manuscripts.³⁶ Soon

³³ Brian M. Hauglid, *A Textual History of the Book of Abraham: Manuscripts and Editions* (Studies in the Book of Abraham Series, issue 5; Provo: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship and Brigham Young University, 2010). See also the most recent volume in the Joseph Smith Papers Project, Robin Scott Jensen and Brian M. Hauglid, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations, Volume 4: Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2018).

³⁴ See especially Robert J. Matthews, "A Study of the Text of the Inspired Revision of the Bible" (PhD Dissertation; Provo: Brigham Young University, 1968); and Robert J. Matthews, *"A Plainer Translation": Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, a History and Commentary* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1975).

³⁵ Kent P. Jackson letter to Scott Faulring, October 4, 1999, Scott H. Faulring Papers, Box 46, Folder 4, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

³⁶ Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo: Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University, 2004). The manuscripts included in this volume

after that volume was in print Jackson published a shorter book on the history of the Bible revision project, the relationship between the manuscripts, and the way that Smith might have published the Book of Moses text if he had not been killed in 1844.³⁷ Jackson and Faulring also published a transcription of the almost forgotten manuscript, Old Testament 3 (OT3), in *Mormon Historical Studies* in 2004.³⁸ Since then publications on the text of the Book of Moses have been few.³⁹

These volumes and published documents provide important clues to understanding the textual criticism of the Book of Moses, but they are limited to examining a very small number of manuscripts and therefore fail to include all manuscripts. These documents have a bearing on several key readings in Smith's revision of Genesis 1–6. There are points where the transcriptions include significant errors as well. For example, in their essay in *Mormon Historical Studies* Jackson and Faulring accidentally omitted an entire line in the published edition of OT3 on page 133 of the relevant issue.⁴⁰ The line was silently added in the CD-ROM edition of OT3. However, it is possible that the transcribers made similar mistakes when they worked on the other manuscripts of Smith's revision of the Bible that have not yet come to light.

Like previous copyists that have transmitted the text of the Book of Moses, Jackson and Faulring have made errors in their transcription. This implies that caution should be used when utilizing

appear in the following order: Old Testament 1, New Testament 1, New Testament 2, and Old Testament 2.

³⁷ Kent P. Jackson, *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (Provo: Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University, 2005).

³⁸ Kent P. Jackson and Scott H. Faulring, "Old Testament Manuscript 3: An Early Transcript of the Book of Moses," *Mormon Historical Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall, 2004): 113-144.

³⁹ Thomas A. Wayment published two volumes on Joseph Smith's revision of the Bible. See Thomas A. Wayment, *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament: A Side-By-Side Comparison with the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004); and Thomas A. Wayment, *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the Old Testament* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009).

⁴⁰ The editors, Kent P. Jackson and Scott H. Faulring, left out the line, "Enos prophesied also & seth lived after he begot Enos 807 years & begot man[y]." This line should have been included between the last two lines on the page. As it currently stands the text reads, "& taught Enos in the ways of God wherefore Sons & daughters & the Children of me were numerous..."

the printed and electronic transcripts of the manuscripts of Smith's Bible revision, and new publications should improve upon the significant previous work of these scholars. A group of scholars within Mormon studies should, just like in related fields, always be comparing the current critical or documentary editions of texts with the manuscripts to ensure the accuracy and quality of the transcripts of the texts that lie at the heart of their field. In the future I hope that scholars will have more reliable sources for the study of the Book of Moses, that they will be less expensive and easier to use in order to help move scholarship on this important text forward.

To be clear, the text-critical work done up to this point in the study of Mormon history has been significant. The work by scholars like Royal Skousen, Brian Hauglid, Robert Matthews, Scott Faulring, Robert Woodford, and others has contributed enormously to a growing field's better understanding of its foundational texts. Thousands of hours have been contributed to locating and preserving manuscripts, transcribing all of the relevant documents, exploring the historical contexts in which the manuscripts were created, and comparing different copies of the same text to help establish the best version of it possible and to clarify its meaning.

If I were to compare the textual criticism of the sacred texts of Mormonism to biblical studies, however, I would argue that the field is comparable to Erasmus and his contemporaries as situated in the mid-sixteenth century. Erasmus worked with far fewer manuscripts of the New Testament than scholars have available today. And yet, it is astounding to see all of the textual issues of the New Testament that he was grappling with in sophisticated ways so early on. Erasmus's work, and the work of his contemporaries like Lorenzo Valla, foreshadowed the methods and tools used by modern scholarship. Skousen's publications are similar to Erasmus's text-critical work, even if he does not incorporate historical-critical observations to even the limited degree that Erasmus had some hundred years previous.

The Importance of Textual Criticism to Historical Interpretation

To reinforce my argument I will provide examples of where textual criticism could have helped historians of Mormonism to avoid some of the mistakes that they have made in their publications, which

I hope will deter errors in the future. These mistakes are largely predicated by a lack of access to primary source materials and up to date secondary resources. If textual criticism had been more of a central concern in Mormon studies in the wake of Robert Woodford's dissertation, or some of the early work done by Robert Matthews, it is possible that these mistakes never would have happened. The examples provide tangible evidence of the impact that the publication of critical texts of the literature of Mormonism can make on the field.

Michael Homer's 2014 book *Joseph's Temples* is a clear example. The book analyzes the relationship between Freemasonry and Mormonism in the religion's early history.⁴¹ Near the end, Homer claims that there were several phrases in the text of the Book of Moses in the 1878 *Pearl of Great Price*--"Cain was called Master Mahan," "the master of this great secret," that Lamech "entered into a covenant with Satan, after the manner of Cain, wherein he became Master Mahan," and that "the seed of Cain were black and had not place among them"--that were not in the earlier 1851 printing.⁴² Of the four phrases noted by Homer the first two are from the same verse in the current LDS numbering system, Moses 5:31. The verse about Lamech is found later in Moses 5:49. Homer was correct in identifying these three phrases as not being found in the 1851 printing of the *Pearl of Great Price*, since the sources that the editor, Franklin Richards, used in creating the book did not include that section of the text.⁴³ The issue is more about the last phrase, which is specifically tied to Homer's claim.

The phrase "the seed of Cain were black and had not place among them" was in the 1851 edition on page 5, corresponding to Moses 7:22 in the modern LDS numbering system, so Homer's claim is historically inaccurate. According to Homer, after the publication of the 1878 edition of the *Pearl of Great Price* the leaders of the LDS church "shrouded the Mormon exclusionary policy" pertaining to people of African descent and the Mormon priesthood "with this new scriptural

⁴¹ Michael Homer, *Joseph's Temples: The Dynamic Relationship Between Freemasonry and Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2014).

⁴² Homer, *Joseph's Temples*, 381.

⁴³ The 1851 *Pearl of Great Price* included text from the Book of Moses in the following order: Moses 6:43-7:69; 1:1-4:7, 9, 11-19, 22-25; 5:1-16, 19-23, 32-40; and 8:13-30.

authority.”⁴⁴ Besides this error in representing the textual history of the Book of Moses, Homer did not specify who exactly he claimed was using the *Pearl of Great Price* this way post-1878. This serves as a cautionary tale to scholars of Mormon history who make strong claims about the textual record of Mormon history without going back to the manuscripts or printed editions themselves. No reprints or digital copies of the 1851 *Pearl of Great Price* inform the reader that the text of the Book of Moses starts at Moses 6:43, not Moses 1:1.

Homer’s mistake was due to the broader issue of a lack of text-critical resources. It is apparent in footnote 82 on page 381 of *Joseph’s Temples* that Homer was only looking at pages 11, 12 and 19 of the 1851 *Pearl of Great Price*, not at page 5 where this phrase is found. He would probably not have known that the structure of the 1851 edition begins toward the end of the book, not at Moses 1:1, and therefore did not have the resources at hand to save him from this mistake. Critical editions of the hand written and printed versions of the Book of Moses, from the earliest manuscripts in 1830 until the beginning of the twentieth century when apostle James Talmage’s 1902 edition stabilized the text, would provide exactly the kind of resource to stop these kinds of mistakes from happening.

More recently, Thomas Wayment has published an important essay in a new volume of collected essays on the history of Mormonism’s texts.⁴⁵ His essay is written in two parts, the first of which argues that Moses 1 was written on a now lost manuscript before it was copied onto OT1.⁴⁶ The second part argues that Smith Christianized the Old Testament in his revision of the Bible. The second part of the essay is well supported by the evidence of Smith’s harmonizational methods, but the evidence in part one is not as persuasive, due partially to a misreading of the earliest manuscript of Smith’s revision of Genesis 1–6, OT1.

On page 84 of his essay Wayment argues that the scribe, Oliver Cowdery, made a visual copying error when copying Moses 1 from the

⁴⁴ Homer, *Joseph’s Temples*, 381.

⁴⁵ Mark Ashurst-McGee, Robin Scott Jensen, and Sharalyn D. Howcroft, eds., *Foundational Texts of Mormonism: Examining Major Early Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

⁴⁶ Thomas A. Wayment, “Intertextuality and the Purpose of Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible,” in Ashurst-McGee, Jensen, Howcroft, eds., *Foundational Texts of Mormonism*, 74–100.

original manuscript to OT1.⁴⁷ According to Wayment Cowdery mistakenly saw “them” on the original manuscript, wrote that word on OT1 and then realized it was wrong and crossed it out and penned the correct “thee” next to it on the same line. The problem is the manuscript clearly reads “theee,” not “them.” Wayment notes the accurate transcription from Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews in footnote 21 on the same page. In OT1 on the line above what Wayment transcribes as “~~them~~” and over three words to the left you find an example of the scribe’s handwriting for “them.” After the “e” the handwriting arcs vertically to the right to make the first upward hook of the “m,” and the letter has three rounded upward hooks altogether. The example of the error is not similar to the uncontested example of “them” at all. After the initial “e” in the error Wayment describes there are only two upward hooks, not three. Unlike the curved and unconnected hook, these two upward hooks are looped to the left exactly like two cursive letter e’s. The reading that Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews offered was correct, the scribe wrote “~~theee~~ them.”

Some of the other textual examples that Wayment provides in support of his argument are similarly problematic, making it difficult to accept the idea that Moses 1 was originally dictated on a separate manuscript page from OT1. The main issue, though, is that the argument was based on an inaccurate reading of the manuscript. In this case, unlike Homer’s error, Wayment had access to recent transcriptions of OT1 and high-resolution images of it as well.

I will highlight a few more examples that have been noted previously and others that have to my knowledge not been discussed previously. The focus in the secondary literature has rarely been on the significance of the contribution of textual criticism to these crucial historical observations. I hope to shift attention to the centrality of text-critical data for historically sound observations on the writing of early Mormon history.

Aaron’s Divining Sprout

⁴⁷ According to Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, Cowdery was the scribe for all of Moses 1 on OT1. See Faulring, Jackson, Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo: Deseret Book and Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University, 2004), 63.

In their 1916 commentary on the LDS Doctrine and Covenants, Hyrum Smith and Janne Sjodahl briefly described “the gift of Aaron” in Doctrine and Covenants 8:6. Aaron worked as a catalyst and a spokesman for Moses, so this role was given to Oliver Cowdery in helping Smith to produce the Book of Mormon.⁴⁸ Smith and Sjodahl came to this explanation by only reading the edition of the text they had available to them in the contemporary printing of the LDS scriptural canon. Just over six decades after this publication Robert Woodford, a PhD student at Brigham Young University, and Lyndon Cook, a professor in Religious Education at the same school, would both note the variant between the then earliest extant text of Doctrine and Covenants 8, the 1833 *Book of Commandments*, and the canonized text as they knew it. In the 1833 text the verse said that in helping Smith with the Book of Mormon Cowdery had “the gift of working with the rod,” and in later editions the wording was changed to “the gift of Aaron.”⁴⁹ Neither of these scholars noted, however, that the text was changed to this reading in the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*, as H. Michael Marquardt would in 1999.⁵⁰

In a 2008 publication Steven Harper, dependent on Mark Ashurst-McGee, noted the gift was in Cowdery’s ability to use a divining rod.⁵¹ The publication of the earliest extant version of Doctrine and Covenants 8 supports this position by showing further the fact that Cowdery and Smith viewed divining rods as being tied to Aaron’s rod and that this was removed from the text in later editions. In Revelation Manuscript Book 1, the text originally said, “the gift of working with the sprout.” Sidney Rigdon edited the manuscript for the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants* and crossed out “sprout” and

⁴⁸ Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *The Doctrine and Covenants Containing the Revelations Given to Joseph Smith, Jr., the Prophet, with an Introduction and Historical and Exegetical Notes* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News Press, 1923), 72–73.

⁴⁹ See Woodford, “The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants, Volumes I–III,” I: 185–191; and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith: A Historical and Biographical Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 16.

⁵⁰ H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Texts & Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 36–37.

⁵¹ Steven C. Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants: A Guided Tour through Modern Revelation* (Sale Lake City: Desret Book, 2008), 42–43.

inserted “rod,”⁵² thus distancing the text from the magic worldview inherent in a divining sprout and connecting it more explicitly to the world of the Bible.⁵³ Without the original version and revisions of Doctrine and Covenants 8 in Revelation Book 1 and the *Book of Commandments* historians would be unaware of the text’s original context and the historical implications for understanding the earliest conceptions of revelation in Mormonism.

The Weeping God^{^Enoch} of Mormonism

Eugene England and Terryl and Fiona Givens have popularized the description of a weeping God as found in in Moses 7:28.⁵⁴ This seemingly straightforward theological notion has a far more complicated textual history, however. In the earliest manuscript of Smith’s revision of Genesis 1–6, OT1, the text of Moses 7:28 reads: “and it came to pass that the g God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people and he wept and Enock bore record of it saying how is it the heavens weep and shed fourth her tears as the rain upon the mountains.”⁵⁵ It appears that sometime after this text was copied onto OT2 Smith realized that there were some difficulties in making sense of this verse. In particular, the use of the masculine pronoun for both God and Enoch, as well as the fact that God is made synonymous with the female divine heavens in the sentence, “the g God of heaven looked...and he wept...how is it the heavens weep and shed fourth her tears.”

In order to avoid confusion Smith edited the verse in OT2 to read: “And it came to pass that ~~the God of Heaven~~^{^Enock} looked upon the residue of the people & wept. And ~~Enoch bore~~^{^he beheld and ^lo the heavens wept also, ^record of it saying how is it the heavens weep & shed forth}

⁵² Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books* (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian’s Press, 2009), 17.

⁵³ Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic Worldview*, 36–39.

⁵⁴ Eugene England, “The Weeping God of Mormonism,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (Spring 2002): 63–80; and Terryl Givens and Fiona Givens, *The God Who Weeps: How Mormonism Makes Sense of Life* (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain, 2012).

⁵⁵ Old Testament 1, page 16. See <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/old-testament-revision-1/18> (Last accessed November 13, 2019).

<h{er/eir} tears as the rain upon the Mountains.”⁵⁶ These are significant revisions in OT2. Enoch replaces God as the one who weeps and the feminine heavens lose their pronoun for a neutral pronoun “their.” This alteration changes the meaning of the text. It shifts the action of weeping from God to Enoch in the first part of the verse and removes the gendered pronoun that previously defined the heavens. As historian Kent Jackson has noted, these changes represent the text as Joseph Smith edited, revised, and left it but were never adopted into the canon.⁵⁷ So why did the revisions Smith made to the text not become a part of the received text within Mormonism?

The answer is in a series of historical accidents. The first occurred within the reception history of Smith’s Bible revision manuscripts in the RLDS church, now the Community of Christ. Scholars now identify three major early manuscripts in the textual history of the Book of Moses: OT1, OT2, and OT3. These are named for their place in the chronology of the manuscript tradition. OT1 was the original manuscript, and OT2 and OT3 were both copied from OT1 early in 1831. OT2 became the working manuscript of the project, and OT3 became John Whitmer’s, an early Mormon leader, personal copy. Over thirty years later the manuscript history was not so well understood. OT3 was assumed to be the earliest manuscript, so in the published edition of *The Holy Scriptures* from 1867 onwards the text of this passage, Gen. 7:35, was based on OT3 and read almost the same as OT1 without the revisions found in OT2.⁵⁸ The feminine pronoun was likewise changed to “their” for that publication and because of this has been a part of the Utah-based LDS Church’s textual history since the late nineteenth century.

As far as I have been able to tell, when Franklin Richards, Orson Pratt, and their committee revised and republished the *Pearl of Great*

⁵⁶ Old Testament 2, page 21. See <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/old-testament-revision-2/26> (Last accessed November 13, 2019). All references to OT1 and OT2 hereafter will be to the images on the Joseph Smith Papers website.

⁵⁷ Kent P. Jackson, *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2005), 143–144, 166.

⁵⁸ *The Holy Scriptures, Translated and Corrected by the Spirit of Revelation, by Joseph Smith, Jr., the Seer* (Plano: Joseph Smith, I. L. Rogers, E. Robinson, Publishing Committee, 1867), 23.

Price in 1878 they lifted the text for the Book of Moses from the RLDS *Holy Scriptures*, and when the book was canonized in 1880 the new canonical text did not include the changes that Smith made in OT2. It was not until the work of Robert J. Matthews and Richard P. Howard in the last half of the twentieth century that the manuscripts would be understood in their proper order again and scholarly attention could refocus on the final revisions that Smith made to his text. Unfortunately, up to today historians and theologians of Mormonism have largely ignored these changes. The weeping Enoch of Mormonism will forever live on in the manuscript of OT2 and it will be up to historians of Mormonism to take notice of him.⁵⁹

Joseph Smith Supplies Biblical Language, “&c”

In the earliest extant copy of Doctrine and Covenants 4, found in chapter 3 of the 1833 *Book of Commandments*, Smith incorporated numerous biblical phrases in a revelation directed at his father.⁶⁰ Because Smith used the placeholder “&c.” at the end of an informal quotation of 2 Pet. 1:5–7 it is apparent that he was the active agent providing the biblical language for the composition of the new revelation.⁶¹ The inclusion of “&c.” worked only as a placeholder in the earliest text until it was removed and a more complete quotation of 2 Pet. 1:5–7 was added in the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*.⁶² This is supported by Oliver Cowdery’s editor’s marks in his personal copy of the 1833 *Book of Commandments*, where the paragraph with “&c.” is

⁵⁹ Terryl Givens fails to appreciate the details of this issue in Terryl Givens, *The Pearl of Greatest Price: Mormonism’s Most Controversial Scripture* (with Brian M. Hauglid; New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 49.

⁶⁰ The earliest extant textual witness for Doctrine and Covenants 4 is only partially preserved. See Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books*, 11.

⁶¹ Robin Scott Jensen, Richard E. Turley, Jr., Riley M. Lorimer, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations* (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian’s Press, 2011), 21.

⁶² Jensen, Turley, and Lorimer, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations*, 468.

crossed out in pencil and “see” is written below the paragraph, denoting a correction, not a deletion, was needed.⁶³

At the time of dictation Smith could not bring to memory the full list of virtues in 2 Pet. 1:5–7. It seems that he attempted to list these virtues and could only recall some of them, particularly “temperance, patience, humility, diligence, &c.” While most of these are found in 2 Pet. 1:5–6 they are out of order and humility is not found in the source text. Rather than fix the informal quotation at the moment of dictation Smith dictated “&c.” and moved on. He provided the biblical language in Doctrine and Covenants 4 as he composed and dictated the revelation for his father. This piece of the text-critical history of the Doctrine and Covenants has important implications for how scholars today might approach the concept of revelation in early Mormonism.

Mahijah/Mahujah or Mahujah/Mahujah?

The final example I will share is a case study in how textual criticism complicates Mormon exegetical history and invites historians to return to the sources and further analyze what we know about Mormon history. In this case I examine how the late Brigham Young University professor Hugh Nibley, one of Mormonism’s most popular scholars, mistook two names and, through a lack of rigorous transcriptions methods, presented an error in the textual history of early Jewish and early Mormon texts.

In the final installment of his “A Strange Thing in the Land” series on the connections between the Book of Moses and ancient traditions about Enoch, Nibley argued that there was an undeniable connection between the names Mahijah and Mahujah in the Book of Moses and Mahawai found in the Aramaic *Book of Giants* in the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁶⁴ This has been slightly popularized through an account of one of Nibley’s students, Gordon Thomasson, who was studying at Cornell University in the late 1970s and spoke with Matthew Black, one of the

⁶³ Jensen, Turley, and Lorimer, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations*, 601.

⁶⁴ Hugh Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet* (The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 2; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1986), 277–281.

major scholars on Enoch at the time,⁶⁵ about Nibley's work on Mahijah and Mahujah. The idea that this example is an objective piece of data that argues for the antiquity of the Book of Moses becomes complicated as the sources are more closely analyzed.⁶⁶

First, the names in the two traditions are not the same, contra Nibley's argument. The tri-literal roots for both names are in fact different, making the two different names altogether. The biblical tradition that the Book of Moses is dependent on, as Nibley notes, in Gen. 4:18 has two spellings for the same name, minus the theophoric element present in the names -el: מַחֻי ("Mahujah") and מַחִי ("Mahijah"). It is likely that Mahujah is the misspelling, caused by the similarity between a vav (ו) and a yod (י).⁶⁷ In the 4QEnGiants fragments we do not find this name but a different one: מַחֻי ("Mahawai").⁶⁸ The fact that there is a letter difference between a he (ה) and a chet (ח) moves us from one etymological study and meaning of the name to another name entirely. Mahijah/Mahujah, which are the same name, come from the root מַחַה, "destroyed" or "smitten" one,⁶⁹ and Mahawai from the *Book of Giants* comes from the root הִיָּה, "to be," "to happen," "to occur," or "to come to pass."⁷⁰ These are two completely separate names that are easily confused when

⁶⁵ A transcription of his account is found in Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and Ryan Dahle, "Could Joseph Smith Have Drawn on Ancient Manuscripts When He Translated the Story of Enoch?: Recent Updates on a Persistent Question," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* Vol. 33 (2019): 318–319.

Bradshaw and Dahle provide an inaccurate link that goes to the wrong video on YouTube in endnote 74 on page 354. The correct address is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acL7ktQTZ2E> (Last accessed November 14, 2019).

⁶⁶ Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet*, 277.

⁶⁷ Ronald S. Hendel, *The Text of Genesis I–II: Textual Studies and Critical Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 48.

⁶⁸ J. T. Milik, ed., *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1976), 305.

⁶⁹ See Hendel, *The Text of Genesis I–II*, 47; and Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, Study Edition, Volume 1: א – ט* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 567–568.

⁷⁰ Koehler and Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, Study Edition, Volume 1*: 243, א – ט. This is a different word than חַי, "to be alive," "preserve," etc., which is related to Mahijah/Mahujah. Koehler and Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, Study Edition, Volume 1*: 309, א – ט.

transliterated into English from the Hebrew.⁷¹ Nibley relied too heavily on his English transcription of both names—MHWY—and failed to recognize that the H represents two distinct letters.

Besides the difficulties and confusion of the two names Nibley faced when transliterating the text, there is also the question about creating a reliable transcription of this passage in OT1. The passage in question, corresponding to Moses 6:40, is found on page 13 of OT1 and is in the hand of Emma Smith.⁷² At first reading the text looks like it clearly reads “Mahijah,” but a closer look reveals some difficulty in coming to a definitive conclusion. The i in Mahijah is irregular once you compare it to other examples in Emma’s hand, particularly in the way that there are two points of hesitation in the writing where the smooth flow is broken by hook-like movements, almost the same as when creating the top of an i. It is possible that the i is actually a u, and Emma mistakenly added the dot over the i as she wrote to keep up with Smith’s dictation. A closer examination of OT1 highlights how Emma made mistakes in punctuation while scribing for the manuscript. There are not many examples of Emma’s handwriting outside of OT1, but there are enough in this manuscript to make a set of observations.

One of the first letters to analyze is Emma’s j. There are only four examples of j in her writing on OT1, and two of them begin with a smooth curve up to the top of the j. The other two, of which “Mahijah” is one, start with a smooth curve, hook once, and then curve again up to the top of the j. This irregular example is only made more difficult by the fact that the extant examples are 50/50, highlighting how the possibility of that first hook on the j in “Mahijah” is not going to help in deciding whether or not the vowel is an i or a u.

Emma’s u’s are far more numerous and consistent. When Emma wrote the letter u her form was the same as her writing two i’s consecutively, although the second part of the letter was often weak and not written as high as the first. On page 12 Emma wrote “mouth,” and the second upward stroke is cut short in order to hook back down and begin the base of the t. On the same page she wrote “mouths,” and

⁷¹ I thank Ryan Thomas for assisting me with several questions related to this section.

⁷² Emma was the scribe for most of pages 12–14 on OT1. Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible*, 63.

the second part of the u was so low that the letter had to be fixed with an extra dark line, making it clear that the letter was a u and not an i. In all of the examples of Emma's i's except the one found in "Mahijah" the final curve of the downward stroke from the i to the new letter is smooth with no hesitation or stopping. The i in "Mahijah" is the only example that documents a deviation from her typical penmanship.

And finally, Emma made punctuation mistakes in OT1. It is apparent when closely reading the manuscript that Emma was hurrying. In some examples she shares the cross of a t between two words, suggesting that she had to quickly write both words before she could provide the punctuation. In one irregular example on page 12 Emma crossed the l in "councils," so a far too literal transcription would read "councits." Clearly, she meant "councils," but this suggests that Emma's writing for this manuscript was prone to error. The punctuation she added for the i in Mahijah could have been hastily added as a mistake as she added the dot for the j, and a weak u would have looked like an i next to a j that needed its dot.

It is also possible that the name in Emma's hand should be read Mahujah since the place name is Mahujah on page 15 in OT1, but this is complicated by the fact that it is in John Whitmer's hand. As is common in the Book of Mormon, places were often named after significant men.⁷³ It is likely that the place Mahujah was named after the person in the previous chapter and that person should be read as Mahujah rather than Mahijah. Especially since the generations of Enoch were the first men to inhabit creation.

In any case, the idea that if Smith intended the two separate names Mahijah and Mahujah that he would need to be dependent on an ancient manuscript or source is also unlikely. In his commentary on the Bible Adam Clarke, whose commentary was known to Smith while he worked on his revision of the Bible,⁷⁴ created a table he called "Same Names Differing in the Hebrew," and the first examples he

⁷³ There are dozens of examples of this practices throughout the Book of Mormon, but Alma 8:7 provides the clearest statement about it.

⁷⁴ Thomas A. Wayment and Haley Wilson Lemmon, "A Recently Recovered Source: The Use of Adam Clark's Bible Commentary in Joseph Smith's Bible Translation," in Michael Hubbard MacKay, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Brian M. Hauglid, eds., *Producing Ancient Scripture: Joseph Smith's Translation Projects in the Development of Mormon Christianity* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, forthcoming).

shared were from Gen. 4:18: “Mehujael” and “Mehijael.”⁷⁵ It was possible, contrary to recent opinion, that Smith and his contemporaries were aware of the spelling difference of the name found in Genesis 4.⁷⁶ English speaking Americans living in New York during the early national period had access to important scholarship such as Clark’s, which requires that scholars consider the broader literary texts available at the time and their relationship to the Mormon canon.

Conclusion

Scholars of the Classics, biblical texts, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and early American history, to name only a few, have understood the importance of first establishing the texts of the field. This has been a mainstay of the humanities since the beginning of the Renaissance. While in Mormon studies much has been done in monographs, dissertations, and other forms to move the text-critical study of early Mormonism’s texts forward, there remains a major gap in the field. One does not need to study early Mormonism of the 1830s to understand how providing text-critical resources can strengthen the field.

While one might erroneously assume that Homer did not need these resources on the scriptural text and their variants for his history on the relationship of Mormonism and Freemasonry—it being predominantly positioned in the late nineteenth century—the fact is that Mormons in the 1870s and 1880s were affected by the transmission and printing of the Book of Moses in early Mormon periodicals and the *Pearl of Great Price* during the 1830s and 1850s. Other scholarly projects might focus on a period later in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and still be affected by the earlier transmission history or by the unique textual versions that they used in their day.

⁷⁵ Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments* (New York: Published by N. Bangs and J. Emory, 1825), 151.

⁷⁶ Bradshaw and Dahle, “Could Joseph Smith Have Drawn on Ancient Manuscripts When He Translated the Story of Enoch?: Recent Updates on a Persistent Question,” 315–317.

TOWNSEND: RETURNING TO THE SOURCES

Whatever the exact era in Mormon history that a scholar is researching, textual criticism will provide crucial resources to the field that have been previously absent, overlooked, or simply crucial to future studies on any given period in Mormon history. In order to adequately understand the subjects of their research, scholars cannot turn to the current canonized editions of Mormonism's texts to accurately understand how the subjects of their study engaged with the Mormon canon. Not all the transcriptions that have been published are equally reliable either, although they are an important beginning to the project of making Mormonism's earliest texts available for research. The field of Mormon studies needs to understand how crucial these kinds of reference materials are to the establishment of an actual field of Mormon studies. After this, scholars need to produce these materials. Without textual criticism historians of Mormonism will continue to make mistakes in their publications. This can lead to the awkward realization for scholars of Mormon history that, to take one significant example, in the *Book of Moses* Smith's final revisions to OT1 in OT2 changed the "weeping God of Mormonism" to Enoch weeping with the feminine—and then neutered—heavens.

It is exactly these kinds of textual notes that need to be more readily available and used in the ongoing discourses in Mormon studies. The Joseph Smith Papers Project has revolutionized the study of early Mormonism, and these kinds of observations will continue to be drawn from the religion's earliest manuscripts. It is now up to those scholars involved in the study of early Mormon history to ensure that textual criticism becomes a central focus in the social, theological, political, or cultural study of Mormon history. It is time for scholars of Mormon history to return to the sources.

Book Reviews



Madsen, Carol Cornwall. *Emmeline B. Wells: An Intimate History*. The University of Utah Press, 2017. 548 pp. ISBN 9781607815235.

As the title might suggest, the biographical account of Mormon writer and feminist Emmeline B. Wells, as written and compiled by Carol Cornwall Madsen, is indeed intimate. Madsen, a professor and historian, has dedicated her life's research to American women's history, particularly that of women within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). Madsen herself is a fifth-generation Latter-day Saint and thus holds intimate ties to the Church, its doctrine, and its history both in the sacred and scholarly realm. Madsen's praise for Emmeline B. Wells appears in the introduction of her book. Madsen commends Wells as a "faithful member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (xiii), and further applauds her role as a "woman triumphant...[whose] long life could be seen as a triumph against the reverses that might have felled her along the way" (xiv).

Despite personal or religious convictions, however, Madsen appropriately maintains a fairly unbiased perspective throughout the course of the book. It is readily apparent throughout the narrative that Madsen's ultimate objective is to construct a thorough, accurate, and detailed account of the life of Emmeline B. Wells, and her work undoubtedly accomplishes just that. The primary sources used in

constructing this narrative come from Wells' personal diaries, but Madsen also draws on other important sources, including documents from the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint (LDS) History.

Chapter One begins with a broad sketch of Wells' life, what Madsen refers to as an "undulating path of joy and sorrow, exultation and disappointment, triumph and tragedy," that she felt wholly "etched the contours of her life" (3). Madsen includes everything from Wells' life including family history, personal attributes, childhood trauma—losing her father at age four—to addressing Wells' general contributions as a writer, editor, teacher, and mother.

In Chapter Two, Madsen contextualizes Wells' life within the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and nineteenth-century U.S. history. This trajectory continues throughout the rest of the tome, in which Madsen recounts Wells' multiple marriages, divorces, and experiences as a sister-wife and as a mother. Madsen also discusses Wells as a woman "fashioned by more than education," who also—unsurprisingly—took in religion as "an equal partner in molding the woman she was to be" (24). Madsen carries the reader through Wells' religiously driven journey from her initial conversion and baptism into the LDS church to her role as a prominent member of the LDS women's Relief Society.

In later chapters, from the passing of the Morrill Act in 1862 on, the narrative

shifts into more political matters as Madsen explores the woman suffrage movement and its subsequent role in Wells' involvement as both a feminist and an "emerging journalist" (126).

As Madsen aptly put it, through the course of her career, Wells became "truly inundated with work" (134). Over the years, Wells moved around frequently, from Utah to Washington to New York to England, coming into contact with six LDS presidents and six U.S. presidents. During this time, Wells wrote for the *Woman's Exponent*, a periodical produced by women of the LDS Church, focusing predominantly on polygamy, the suffragist movement, and the experiences of LDS women. She was also elected as the chair of the Salt Lake County Board of Lady Managers, assumed the role of general secretary of the Relief Society, became involved in multiple literary clubs, and continued to involve herself in the political sphere, both on a local and international scale. All this she did while producing her own book of poetry.

Wells lived to see the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1919, which granted U.S. women the right to vote, and died at the age of ninety-three just two years later. She remained involved within the Church and her local community up until her death in April of 1921. While Wells experienced a plethora of failures and tragedies involving multiple familial deaths within her lifetime, Madsen notes that, "No other Mormon woman of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries quite achieved the notoriety, high regard, respect, and genuine love of such a wide range of admirers as did Emmeline Wells" (497).

It is worth noting that Madsen's chosen audience in reading this narrative is relatively unclear. Due to an extensive use of footnotes paired with an immense amount of detail and dense contextual information, one might assume that Madsen intended for

this work to be studied primarily by scholars. On the other hand, the prose are straightforward and the clarification provided by the footnotes makes this work accessible to a much broader audience.

Emmeline B. Wells: An Intimate History is by no means a quick read. Comprised of thirty-seven chapters and paired with a consistent, interwoven narrative of the geographic and historical contexts surrounding Wells' personal affairs, this book seemingly omits nothing. If you are looking to understand every personal, political, and religious element of Emmeline B. Wells' life, from infancy until death, you've come to the right place. If, however, you simply want a brief, comprehensive overview of Wells and her contributions, you may want to look elsewhere.

Mira Davis
Utah State University

Stapley, Jonathan. *The Power of Godliness: Mormon Liturgy and Cosmology*. Oxford University Press, 2018. 187 pp. ISBN 0190844434.

Jonathan Stapley's *The Power of Godliness* is an impeccably researched and well written book aimed at exploring the history, evolution, and purpose of Mormon liturgical practice. Though Stapley's analysis is sophisticated, it is accessible. The book lends itself to a broad audience, from the academic to the lay observer.

Though the book is relatively short in length, his research is extensive. Stapley undertakes the difficult task of succinctly examining the theological and historical shifts in LDS liturgy—showing the variation of Mormon practice and belief over a relatively short existence. As Stapley

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explains, “This book argues that a fundamental force in the development and interpretation of Mormon liturgy and cosmology has been the religion’s conception of priesthood.” (2) The book does a particularly good job at examining what role race and gender have played in that conception from the decades-long priesthood ban on African American men to the practice and disavowal of polygamy—two rather complex issues that he addresses rather concisely for the brevity of the volume.

Stapley’s discussion of Joseph Smith’s development of Mormon cosmology and priesthood is extraordinary. Though many have written on the subject, Stapley seems to bring new light to the matter. Stapley extends his purview beyond well-examined topics to offer new insight, such as in his discussion on baby blessings. While few have deemed baby blessings noteworthy of examination, Stapley shows how “this ritual is an incredibly useful tool for understanding the construction of a Mormon fatherhood that is now completely entangled with the Mormon ecclesiastical priesthood.” (3) The chapter dedicated to baby blessing is perhaps my favorite.

Many readers will be drawn to the book for its discussion on women and the priesthood. Stapley examines how women have been active participants in LDS liturgy through healing rituals that were once prevalent among women. He examines how such practice, and therefore women’s authority, declined as LDS liturgy became routinized by the hierarchy of the church.

The book appears to be primarily directed at an academic audience. However, because of its accessibility and emphasis on rather controversial themes, I imagine it finding a home among lay member of the LDS church, and others lay individuals interested in the Mormon tradition. I think that readers will find that Stapley has greatly

enriched the discussion by providing further historical context.

In his concluding paragraph, Stapley writes, “I make an effort to understand the brushstrokes of church leaders and members through time as they have contributed to the living system of Mormonism. It is my intention to complicate the facile or presentist reading, the proof-text, and the analytically lazy, whether academic or parochial.” If this is indeed the goal of the book, I would argue that Stapley has accomplished it.

Kyle Friant
Utah State University

Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. *A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women’s Rights in Early Mormonism, 1835-1870*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017. 484 pp. ISBN 9780307594907

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich is a Pulitzer Prize winning historian and Harvard professor of early American and women’s history. Dr. Ulrich’s acclaimed *A Midwife’s Tale* took the mundane of Martha Ballard’s diary and spun out a compelling historical narrative providing ordinary early American women a voice. *A House Full of Females* carves itself out of the well-worn area of research that is plural marriage in Mormonism by using the voices of early Latter-day Saint women to tell the rise of their authority. Ulrich utilizes a variety of sources from diaries, letters, poetry albums and minutes from fourteen women and five men. There are physical objects such as paintings, quilts, and samplers that are also used as valuable source material included. Ulrich also enriches the monograph with Black and white pictures, as well as a few full color images. Ulrich describes her work as “a kind of quilt, an attempt to find an

underlying unity in a collection of fragments” (xx). Ulrich particularly focuses on women who, while joining the religion at different times, were all social, religious, or community leaders with clout. However, as we see throughout the monograph, much of that clout was first established by their relationship to well established men within the community and church. Ulrich’s writing style lend itself well to a general audience.

The overarching question this book attempts to answer is how Latter-day Saint women were able to support the seemingly antithetical views of female suffrage and plural marriage. Ulrich argues against previous explanations of defense of property and religion by stating “If an Eastern newspaper dropped a match that ignited a woman’s rights movement in Utah in 1870, the fuel for that blaze had been accumulating for years” (xxii). *A House Full of Females* argues that women in the church were complicated; and that their shared past of religious passion, yearning for millennial justice, experience of being hounded and driven from place to place, and their political frustrations led these women to hold such a paradoxical view on women’s suffrage and plural marriage (xiv).

A House Full of Females has fifteen chapters and for brevity’s sake can be broken down into three themes; chapters 1-5 cover early Latter-day Saints up to expulsion from Nauvoo, chapters 6-10 examine Latter-day Saint pioneer and early mission experiences, and chapters 11-15 looks at how Latter-day Saints established themselves in the American West.

The first five chapters of this tome relate to early church members and ends with their exodus out of Nauvoo. In the first chapter, Ulrich introduces the reader to the book’s primary source, Wilford Woodruff and more specifically, his diaries. As an early convert and eventual leader of the Church; Woodruff’s expansive diaries

provided Ulrich the framework and timeline for her book. The chapter also discusses the founding and migration of the early church, and the relationship between Latter-day Saint belief and diary keeping. Chapter two examines the move to and subsequent conflict they experienced in Missouri. It also explores the hardships that women faced at home, while their husbands traveled abroad to preach the gospel. Ulrich wrote, “if a woman wrote her missionary husband that she Lacked food or flannel...she risked sounding like Sariah, in the Book of Mormon, a “murmuring” wife...if, on the other hand, she remained resolute in the faith, she disappeared like the “tender wives” in another famous passage from the Book of Mormon” (32). The third chapter delves into Nauvoo era of the church with the creation and of the Relief Society, a women’s organization, and the beginnings of plural marriage. Chapter four examines the different opportunities that plural marriage offered women, which ranged from economic, societal, and religious privilege, and personal safety. The fifth chapter focuses on women’s experiences with the introduction of temple ritual and discusses the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

The second theme of this book focuses on Latter-day Saint pioneer and early mission experiences. Chapter six examines the importance of trail diaries and how they were mostly kept by women. It also analyzes the complex relationships that plural marriage had created amongst women in the Church. The following chapter continues the journey westward to Winter Quarters, Nebraska. This chapter examines gender and the complex relationships between the sexes. Ulrich explains that “their experiences at Winter Quarters helped shape their accounts of earlier periods in their lives...helped them find meaning in the here and now” (163). Chapter eight explores the church’s move to Utah and the roles that

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women in settling western territory. Women were not only healers and proto botanists; their curiosity led them to interact with various Native American tribes. Chapter nine is looks at the experiences of women missionaries and the conflict that arose between plural wives, specifically between the legal wife and the subsequent plural wives. This chapter explores women's interactions with one another and their respective duties in the church and home. For example, "women should care for one another rather than calling in doctors" (219). This section ends with a chapter on newly sent missionaries abroad; uniquely called to defend plural marriage to the world alongside proselytizing. A discussion on how church members felt about sex and its relationship to plural marriage is discussed in this chapter.

The last theme of this tome is about Latter-day Saints establishing themselves in the American West. Chapter eleven continues the discussion on sex and marriage and divorce in relation to polygamy. Ulrich dispels a commonly dispelled myth about plural marriage regarding children by stating that while "polygamy increases the number of children per father, it actually decreases the number per mother" (271). The next chapter concerns Native Americans and Latter-day Saint women with the founding of an Indian Relief Society. The motivation behind the creation of this relief society being that it was a means to take care of the Indigenous poor. Chapter thirteen follows Caroline Crosby's wandering across the American West into California and eventually into Southern Utah. In her accounts, the readers are introduced to early Latter-day Saint

attitudes towards African Americans and Asian Indians. The chapter after focuses on relief societies and their growth and centrality in Utah communities. This chapter also mentions the roles that women played as gardeners and gatherers. The end of this chapter analyzes the Mountain Meadows Massacre through a female lens. The concluding chapter of this book focuses on the role of the relief society and the Indignation movement. It examines how early relief societies functioned "in some respects an epiphenomenon, a manifestation of a deeper and more pervasive female culture that existed with and without formal structure" (362).

I have one critique for this exhaustive monograph on Latter-day Saint women. My criticism is that 1889 could have been a stronger end point than 1870. Utah became a state in 1896 and women were again enfranchised. Ulrich does not clarify ending the book at 1870 and instead concludes saying "ten of the women who launched the indignation meeting in 1870...lived to see Utah become a state" (386). Ultimately, however, Ulrich's work provides Latter-day Saint women's history with a foundational tome that expounds the beginning of the empowerment of Latter-day Saint women and brings to light countless unheard women.

Clint Jessop
Utah State University

Editor's Interview with Philip Barlow

Philip Barlow, retired Arrington Chair of Mormon History and Culture at Utah State University and current Associate Director and Research Fellow of the Neal A. Maxwell for Religious Scholarship, discusses his career and his thoughts on the field of Mormon Studies.

Why did you decide to specialize in Mormon Studies? When did you first become interested in LDS culture and history?

I was raised contentedly in a Latter-day Saint family and have retained a participant's natural interest in the movement. Because I was under the impression that I understood this religion when I left home to study religion academically, however, I intended to study everything *except* my own tradition. I was two years into my studies when I realized that my own tradition presented an extraordinary case study, with extraordinarily rich sources, for understanding how religion works—how it forms and adapts and thrives or fails. I also concluded that the church and the wider Restoration movement offered important clues for understanding American culture and diasporic religious movements. So I decided to write a dissertation on a Mormon topic.

What was it like being hired as the first Mormon Studies Chair? What was the most rewarding aspect of the position? What challenges did you face in establishing the program?

USU's appointment of the first such professorship was also intrinsic to the University launching the first degree-awarding religious studies program in this part of the country, so it was exciting to help conceive and shape that.

Religious studies as an academic discipline was born in the 1960s. A major reason that this field did not take hold in Utah until the 21st century was because many people, including portions of the legislature which appoints the state board of regents, were leery that such studies would mean the subtle fostering or denigrating of religion and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in particular. One of the challenges and one of the pleasures came in eroding such fears. The ultimate point of a liberal arts education is not mere job training but the exploration of what it means to be human beings in our universe—and nothing exceeds religion as an object of study for how humans form worldviews, value systems, and meaning. Yet the fears of such study came from several angles and were real. I remember receiving a long diatribe by surface mail from someone, once news went out about my appointment, before I had even moved to Utah. This person, who took a dim view of the church, went on for several pages about how unfortunate it was that I was uprooting my career in Indiana to come teach about a church

that was soon to collapse. Another time, the nation's Senate Majority Leader called me up to forcefully express his displeasure at something I had been quoted as saying in the *Washington Post*.

How do you think Mormon Studies has changed since you were first hired? And how would you like to see Mormon Studies expand its focus in the coming years?

One important development is the sheer fact that the field is maturing as a respected sub-field with a diversifying range of participants, an increasing number of whom are not themselves church members. Another is that historical approaches, while still predominant, are more and more being complemented by other fields—theology, philosophy, anthropology, political science, and others, including sociology, which has long run second to history in scope and impact. There will come a time in the not distant future, I suspect, that a professorship will be established designed for a field outside of history. A third major development is the rising attention to Mormonism internationally. It has been nearly a quarter-century since more church members resided outside than inside the United States—and this fact is affecting the character of the American church as well. Scholarly minds and organizations are turning their attention to global realms. This, and more attention to the 20th and 21st centuries, is inevitable and to the good.

What challenges do you think Dr. Patrick Mason will face in his transition to Utah State University?

Dr. Mason is gifted, experienced, and judicious. He will of course have to navigate the advantages and challenges of teaching and writing about a topic that is very personal to a majority of citizens in the state: church members and their sometimes critical observers. But I have not the slightest reservation about his abilities, his marvelous colleagues, and the foundation laid by the Religious Studies Program, the History Department, and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, all of them exceptionally well led these days.

Will you talk a little bit about your retirement from Utah State University's Leonard Arrington Chair of Mormon History and Culture and how life has changed since you've joined the faculty at Brigham Young University's Neal A. Maxwell Institute of Religious Scholarship?

It was not easy to leave beautiful Cache Valley and Utah State and the position there. I will remain life-long friends with a number of colleagues and many others who studied with me and also taught me things. I take delight in how the Program at USU is thriving. I left for the Maxwell Institute at BYU because I was ready for a season of my life to focus on writing and certain theological, rather than strictly religious studies, projects. At BYU I research and write as a religious believer rather than strictly as an observer. I

compare the distinction to the difference between writing biography versus autobiography. I find both angles of vision important.

I know we are eager to know more about what you are working on. What can we expect from Philip Barlow in the next few years?

Just now I am, along with Spencer Fluhman, serving as general series editor for a unique 12-volume set called *The Book of Mormon: Brief Theological Introductions*, which will begin to appear in January. Its an exciting series written by remarkable authors, designed to make the Book of Mormon more alive and accessible to thoughtful non-specialists.

After that I will return to a project I've contemplated for many years—a prose prequel to Milton's *Paradise Lost* dealing with the primordial notion of war in heaven. Conjuring Milton can seem pretentious, but my more modest venture attempts to put aspects of Joseph Smith's thought into conversation with Milton, Dostoevski, and other thinkers preoccupied by suffering, notions of good and evil, freedom, and what comprises sanity. This project will yield a series of scholarly essays as well as an experimental, mythical novel.

What advice would you give to young academics who are interested in Mormon Studies?

It is moving and exciting to sense the talent, ambition, thoughtfulness, and hopes of students with interest in this field. They are capable of giving me good advice too. But in response to the question, here are three observations.

Remember that “she who knows only one language knows none.” One has no way to understand English deeply, much less to understand language as such, if one doesn't know at least one other language. Similarly, in order to know the field of Mormon Studies well, we need to understand other things—other worlds, other disciplines—and bring that training and experience to bear when studying the Mormon world, including the formal Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its history. Take *all* of your classes seriously; you never know what angles of vision it may give you in your future work.

If you have a passion for this field, and if professional feedback suggests you have exceptional aptitude for it, then you may want to plunge in. But remember that the study of religion, and of this religion in particular, is worthwhile for its own sake. It can help us better understand the maps of reality that people carry about in their heads, maps that frame their perceived options for behavior. So this study can offer you a kind of superpower: to understand human beings better than you would without the experience. Such study may or may not lead to professional work in the future—that is a highly competitive world and is not for everyone. There are not enough professional positions even for some highly gifted and accomplished scholars. But the study itself can

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change your life, no matter what profession you end up in. When I went off to seek a master's degree in the study of religion, I did so with eyes mostly open. I decided to do it even if no professional doors opened and I ended up returning home two years later to go into business with my brothers. There are *lots* of ways to thrive intellectually and through which to make the world a better place apart from the professoriate.

If you proceed to graduate study, appreciate but do not be overawed by brilliance in your colleagues and teachers. The form of intelligence that lends itself to genuine scholarly accomplishment is rare and wondrous in the general population. It is not so rare in the academy. Great learning is a treasure if pursued with humility and the intent to lift others rather than to strut about as an intellectual peacock. A love of knowledge is wrongly disdained by those who sneer at the epithet "intellectuals." But intellectual accomplishment is not adequate compensation for lack of wisdom and character and (in my view) loss of God. Moreover, the correlation between brilliance and goodness, or between brilliance and mental and spiritual health, is not obvious to me. Remember that intelligence comes in many forms. Some may dazzle in one or two arenas—take delight in this and learn from them. But you too will be able to develop your own way of contributing.

Editor's Interview with Patrick Q. Mason

Patrick Q. Mason, former Howard W. Hunter Chair in Mormon Studies and current Leonard J. Arrington Chair of Mormon History and Culture at Utah State University, discusses his career and his thoughts on the field of Mormon Studies.

How did you become involved in Mormon Studies? When did you first become interested in Latter Day Saint history and culture?

In some ways it was quite natural, and in other ways totally accidental. I grew up (and remain) Mormon, so that of course is a factor. I knew from the moment I enrolled at Brigham Young University that I wanted to be a history professor. Along the way I took a course called "Mormonism and the American Experience" from David Whittaker, the long-time curator of Mormon Americana in BYU Special Collections. (I later went on study abroad with David and worked for him, so he was an important early mentor for me.) That was the first time I had ever studied Mormon history in an academic vein, and it was there that I learned about things like Joseph Smith and seerstones, the Mountain Meadows Massacre, and the race-based priesthood ban.

Over time I basically figured out that I wanted to study American religious history, so that took me to the University of Notre Dame for graduate school. My focus early on was on African American religious history, and by the time I took my qualifying exams I was interested in race, religion, and violence in 19th- and 20th-c. America. For my dissertation, I wanted to understand how the Ku Klux Klan went from being basically just anti-black in the 1860s to being anti-black, anti-Jewish, and anti-Catholic in the 1920s. So I decided to research violence against religious minorities in the postbellum South. I threw Mormons into my proposal almost as an afterthought, thinking there wasn't much of a story there. I had written a seminar paper here and there on Mormonism, but my interests were always much broader than that, and I had heard the same caution that so many others have, that specializing in Mormonism was going to be a bad idea for my career prospects.

Well, funny things can happen when you go into the archives. In the course of my research I discovered that there were more episodes of violence against Latter-day Saints in the late 19th-c. South than against Jews and Catholics combined. (Obviously, the violence against African Americans was of an entirely different magnitude.) So anti-Mormonism became a prominent part of my dissertation, and when it came time to publish my dissertation, I decided to focus on what I considered to be my best and most

original research. That became my first book, *The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Postbellum South*, published in 2011 by Oxford University Press.

It just so happened that right when my book was being published, the Howard W. Hunter Chair in Mormon Studies at Claremont Graduate University opened up. (Richard Bushman was the inaugural Hunter Chair in 2008, but he always intended to stay for only three years.) So I threw my hat in the ring. I had held a tenure-track position before then, and was currently working back at Notre Dame helping to launch a major research initiative, but I figured I was too junior to be seriously considered. But I benefited from a series of unlikely developments and good luck, and got the offer. It was really at that moment that I became a full-time Mormon Studies scholar – before that, my career could have gone in any number of other directions.

You have spent the last eight years at Claremont University as the Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies. What was that like? What was the most rewarding element of the position? Can you talk about any challenges you faced during your tenure?

It was an incredible eight years, and I'll always be grateful for my colleagues, students, and community supporters at CGU.

All of a sudden, as a still relatively junior scholar, I was the holder of one of two endowed professorships in this still-emergent field of Mormon Studies. (The University of Virginia soon thereafter added a third chair, the Richard Bushman Chair.) Then in 2012, some guy named Romney ran for president, and became the Republican nominee. There had been talk about the "Mormon moment" since the Salt Lake Olympics, and *The Book of Mormon* musical had just taken Broadway by storm. But Romney changed everything—for the LDS Church, for Mormon studies (at least temporarily), and for me. For the simple fact that I had "Mormon" in my job title without being an LDS Church employee, I had reporters calling me literally from around the world looking for more information about Romney's religion. Mormon Studies was immediately and powerfully relevant.

I've been fortunate to continue to work with the media ever since, any time there is a story about Mormons or Mormonism that hits the news. It's something that I absolutely did not anticipate when I went to graduate school, but which has been an extremely gratifying part of my career. I believe strongly that we shouldn't keep our knowledge locked up in the ivory tower, but find ways to connect with broader publics. We have to learn to translate our work for general audiences, and in 3-5 minutes. (I'm still pretty bad at giving soundbites, but I've learned to give good summaries!) I've developed a habit of never saying no when a reporter calls. I'll often tell them that I don't have any particular expertise on a particular subject and point them to a colleague who knows more about it, but I'll never brush them off.

Of course, I really enjoyed working with my graduate students at CGU. It's so intellectually stimulating to teach a graduate seminar and have a lively discussion for three hours, and still have more to talk about when time is up. Advising doctoral students is a lot of work – I don't think anyone quite realizes that until they've done it – but the upside is that you learn a lot along the way from these incredibly bright people who are doing truly original, innovative work.

One of my tasks as the Hunter Chair was fundraising. Although the chair itself was fully endowed, we were always raising money to support student fellowships and programming. I learned that I enjoyed fundraising more than I expected to. Not the asking-people-for-their-money part, which has never been comfortable for me, but getting to know so many smart and interesting people. Academics can be a little cloistered, and talk mostly to themselves, but some of my best conversations—and friendships—have been with people in all kinds of professions (frankly, a lot of them were lawyers) who happened to be interested in the kinds of things I'm interested in. Again, there is a translational quality to this work—nobody outside the academy is interested in historiography. (Literally, nobody.) So I had to think about what it was about my work, and the developments in my field, that would be relevant and compelling to the broader educated public. I can nerd out with other PhDs as well as the next scholar, but I'm also just as happy having a really smart conversation with people who look at Mormon history and theology through a non-academic lens.

The biggest challenge I faced at CGU was the always-daunting question of funding for students. (That's why I spent so much time and energy on fundraising.) CGU is an expensive tuition-driven private school, and while I really believe in the quality of educational experience and training we delivered to our students, it was a real financial burden for most of them to enroll there. Combine that with a perpetually lackluster academic job market, and I had more than a little anxiety about just what exactly it means to train graduate students in Mormon studies. I was comforted somewhat by what the great scholar (and close friend) Armand Mauss told me, that nobody has to go to graduate school, and these students are adults who choose to be there. That's true, and it helps, and I understand what it's like to feel compelled to go into academia despite having other options. But it's not easy to welcome students into an apprenticeship when you can't guarantee what their future will look like. That's one reason we started talking a lot about career diversity in my last few years at CGU.

I know that Utah State University is thrilled to welcome you as the Leonard J. Arrington Chair of Mormon Culture and History. How do you think that your experience at Claremont will shape your tenure at Utah State University? How are the programs similar/different?

I'm thrilled to be here too. Although Claremont was very good to me, during my last three years there I was serving as Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities. I learned a

lot in that position, had a lot of good experiences (and some not so good ones), and came to appreciate the hard work and difficult decisions that make up university administration. But when it came right down to it, at this stage in my career—I'm only 43—I'm still more interested in being a teacher and scholar than an administrator. Coming to Utah State has given me that opportunity to fully reclaim my academic aspirations.

The great thing about having already had a similar position for several years is that I was able to slide right into my job here at USU and immediately feel comfortable. The Arrington Chair is housed in the Religious Studies program, which is itself situated within the History Department. Given my intellectual training and the kind of work I do, that setup is ideal for me. The transition has been quite smooth, facilitated by welcoming colleagues and highly capable administrators. I've been doing a lot of writing, am back in the undergraduate classroom (which I really did miss), have some exciting new initiatives to pursue, and of course have been working on fundraising and donor relations.

The biggest difference here at USU, besides being back in a History Department, is that I'm teaching undergraduates and don't have doctoral students. I still have MA students, and I've really enjoyed starting to work with them. But in addition to teaching in my main areas of Mormon studies and American religion, I'm also teaching courses in History of Christianity and Religion, Violence, and Peace, both of which are new for me (especially at the undergraduate level). I tend to get bored doing the same thing over and over again, so it's enjoyable to have some new experiences and explore new areas.

Do you have plans for how you would like to develop the program?

I have two great full-time colleagues in Religious Studies – Ravi Gupta, who is a scholar of Hinduism, and Dominic Sur, a scholar of Buddhism. We're hiring right now in Jewish Studies, and have a number of terrific colleagues who teach courses in other areas within the curriculum. We're committed to building one of the leading Religious Studies programs in the intermountain West. Part of that will come through our teaching, which we are all committed to excellence in, as well as our scholarship. But one of the reasons I came to Utah State is because I believe in its mission as a land grant university. My colleagues had already started to build an outward-facing program before I arrived, for instance by hosting a major conference on religion and climate change called "God and Smog." We want to follow up on those kinds of initiatives, especially because we have responsibility not just for our students in Logan but for our entire statewide campus system.

In terms of Mormon studies, I'm in the early stages of reaching out to donors who can support projects including both research and public history components that we can involve students in. My colleague Rebecca Andersen and I are committed to teaching "Mormonism and the American Religious Experience" every semester in order to fulfill the substantial student demand for the course (USU's student population is majority

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LDS). The Book of Mormon Studies Association has been holding their annual conference at USU for the past few years, and we hope to host them indefinitely, since it's a great fit for both of us. I'll also continue to host public lectures and conferences on a periodic basis.

Finally, I'm working with some colleagues on trying to build a peace studies initiative here at USU. I earned an MA in International Peace Studies while at Notre Dame, and have been writing about peace and violence for many years now. I'm hopeful something will come to fruition there.

I imagine Claremont, California stays relatively warm. Any plans for how you'll survive a winter in Logan?

Let's just say we had to invest in a whole new wardrobe for the family when we moved. But my wife and I survived several winters in South Bend, Indiana, and I'm pretty sure (fingers crossed) Logan can't be as nasty as the upper Midwest. And Cache Valley is gorgeous, so that helps.

Can you talk a little bit about any upcoming projects or publications?

I'm currently finishing a co-authored book called *Proclaim Peace*, which articulates a Latter-day Saint theology of peace and nonviolence. This has been a longstanding project with my friend and co-author David Pulsipher, professor of history at Brigham Young University-Idaho. We're excited to be (hopefully) nearing the end, partly just to be done with it, but also because it's a really meaningful project to both of us and we hope it has some impact especially within the LDS community.

After that, my next major book project will focus on Ezra Taft Benson as a lens on twentieth-century Mormon and American culture. Benson, who served as Secretary of Agriculture in the Eisenhower administration and eventually became president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is a fascinating figure. He lived almost the entire century (1899-1994), and was a major figure in both American conservatism and Mormonism. The book won't be a traditional biography, but will follow his life more or less chronologically in order to examine major themes where Mormonism and American life intersect throughout the twentieth century, from politics to gender, economics to hermeneutics. I've already done a fair bit of research, and will turn my full attention to the project beginning in early 2020.

How would you like to see the field of Mormon Studies develop over the next several years?

It's an exciting time for the field. I see a number of trends, all of which are positive. First, the field is becoming truly interdisciplinary. The historians have dominated until

now, and we're not going away. But the Mormon Social Studies Association is becoming more active (featuring the work of sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and others), the Book of Mormon Studies Association is already thriving, the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology is being revived, the Latter-day Saint Theology Seminar is doing pathbreaking work, and so forth. I think the areas to watch in the next few years will be scripture studies and theology. Whereas Mormon historians dominated the past half century, and changed our understanding of the tradition, I'm putting my bet on the theologians and scripture scholars to be at the forefront of intellectual exploration in the next few decades.

Second, the field is engaging more with theoretical literatures in religious studies, gender studies, critical race studies, postcolonial studies, and cultural studies. We can't abandon the incredible archival richness that has always been one of the field's strengths, but if we can add close attention to the sources with innovative theoretical framings, we'll continue to see a lot of really interesting scholarship.

The third development, which is absolutely crucial, is that Mormon studies is finally wrapping its head around global Mormonism. It's not easy, because of languages, resources, access to sources, and so forth. But everyone in the field recognizes that it's outside America where most of the growth and dynamism in Mormonism has been in recent decades, but it's also what we know the least about. I started a global Mormon studies initiative at CGU that my successor Matt Bowman is continuing, and there is an active and growing global Mormon studies group that keeps in touch via e-mail, social media, and now conferences. The Mormon History Association is paying more attention to global Mormonism than ever before. What has been slower to develop is the community of scholars who live outside the United States and Europe. What everyone is mindful of is not replicating colonial structures in which white people from the North Atlantic just go and pilfer black and brown people's stories. The disparity of academic and financial resources won't go away anytime soon, so we just need to be proactive about creating opportunities for scholars from the global South to make their distinctive contributions to the field.

What advice would you give to young academics who are interested in Mormon Studies?

There's never been a better time to be in Mormon studies. It is a growth field, and is steadily gaining in respect and reputation. That said, we have to be realistic. There are still only three jobs in the world with "Mormon studies" in the job description. Graduate students absolutely cannot *just* focus on Mormonism, at least not if they want a job in the secular academy. They have to develop expertise in other areas that are recognizable to their academic peers who don't give a fig about Mormonism for its own sake. We're past the point where it's career suicide to write a dissertation primarily dealing with Mormonism. But as my colleague Kathleen Flake always says, the key is to show how Mormon studies can help answer other people's questions. It can't just be inside

baseball. Mormonism works extremely well as a laboratory to study all kinds of things that are of broad interest and relevance, but students (and senior scholars) have to dedicate themselves to the serious and rigorous study of those other fields so that they know what those themes, questions, theories, and debates are.

I certainly want to encourage students who feel a passion for this area and want to follow that passion. But they need to go in with both eyes open, and become just as interested in their courses and readings that have nothing to do with Mormonism as they are about Mormon studies. I'm a big believer in intellectual serendipity – oftentimes the thing that will make the biggest difference in the quality of your research will come from something that has nothing to do with your research. So graduate students need to read widely, attend lectures in other fields and disciplines, and not always ask the question “what does this have to do with Mormonism?” It's a big world out there, and while Mormonism is every bit as worthy of study as any other topic, the best interpreters of the tradition have been people who have paid their dues learning about that big world.

Mormon Women and Art

Some of the earliest artistic depictions of Latter-day saint women appear in mid to late 19th century satirical illustrations. Mormon women were commonly portrayed as oppressed by their male counterparts and pawns in Brigham Young's sexual and political exploits. As argued by scholars Davis Bitton and Gary L. Bunker in *The Mormon Graphic Image, 1834-1914*, early anti-Mormon cartoons regularly featured women as battered, destitute, subservient, uncivilized, uneducated, homely, and lascivious.¹ In 1872, these women sought to respond to popular stereotyping by publishing *The Woman's Exponent*—the first periodical written and published by Mormon women. A concluding essay described their agenda:

They [Mormon women] have been grossly misrepresented through the press, by active enemies who permit no opportunity to pass of maligning and slandering them; and with but limited opportunity of appealing to the intelligence and candor of their fellow countrymen and countrywomen in reply. Who are so well able to speak for the women of Utah as the women of Utah themselves? "It is better to represent ourselves than to be misrepresented by others!" For these reasons, and that women may help each other by the diffusion of knowledge and information possessed by many and suitable to all, the publication of WOMAN'S EXPONENT, a journal owned by, controlled by and edited by Utah ladies, has been commenced.²

The paper would highlight Mormon women's theological, political, and domestic interests. It would also feature their accomplishments. Regularly included were biographies about and columns written by women doctors, nurses, midwives, writers, poets, teachers, activists, philanthropists, and religious and political leaders. While in the *Woman's Exponent*, such

¹ Bunker, Gary L. and Bitton, Davis. *The Mormon Graphic Image, 1834-1914: Cartoons, Caricatures, and Illustration*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah press, 1983: 123-136.

² "Women's Exponent. A Utah Ladies' Journal," *Woman's Exponent* (Salt lake City, Utah), June 1, 1872, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 8

representations of women were conjured in word rather than image, the late 19th and early 20th century also brought with it the church's first prominent women artists. Among them were Alice Merrill Horne, who was influential in passing the art bill of 1899 and Mary Teasdel, Rose W. Hartwell, Harriet R. Harwood, and Myra L. Sawyer who were the first Utah women to attend art school in Paris. Their work, though diverse in style, medium, and subject, offered the world a new image of Mormon women as educated and refined.³ Among their work, paintings such as Teasdel's *Mother and Child* and Rose Hartwell's *Nursery Corner* also challenged popular caricatures of Mormon women as overwhelmed by their polygamous offspring and therefore incapable of executing their motherly duties by depicting the more intimate moments shared between mother and child—an infant nestled into her mother's chest, a baby being rocked to sleep in her cradle. Through their words and their work, the sisters of the church made tremendous strides for the Latter-day Saint people, through offering a new image of Mormon women.

Following in their stead, and perhaps one of the most notable Mormon female artists of 20th century, was Minerva Teichert who received numerous accolades throughout her career. She was the first woman to paint on the walls of an LDS temple. Teichert's emphasis on women, specifically women of the Bible and nineteenth-century pioneer women, likewise brought visibility to women through highlighting their central role in Christ's church, ancient and restored.

Over the past decade, similar efforts have been made to highlight the lives of Latter-day Saint women. Men, too, have played a role in giving room to women's experiences. In my opinion, Brain Kershisnik, whose work highlights the everyday, as well as the more intimate and supernatural experiences of Mormon women, is an artist that deserves special attention. But the initiative to create such art has been more expressly led, and not surprisingly, by women within and tied to the LDS Church. For example, Caitlin Connolly, whose artwork has, over the past several years, garnered increasing attention, explained that she is "driven by a curiosity of femininity... [and] explores the visual and conceptual contradictions of softness and strength in a variety of mediums and

³ Heather Belnap Jensen, "Pioneers in Paris: Mormon Women Artists, circa 1880-1920 (paper presented at the annual Church History Symposium, Salt Lake City, Utah, March 4, 2016.

themes.”⁴ Other examples include, the Girls Who Choose God children’s illustration series, the website seekingheavenlymother.com which explores the feminine divine through multiple mediums, including art, the book *Illuminating Ladies: A Coloring Book of Mormon Women*, and this to name only a popular few. It is an endemic movement that has richly enhanced Mormon women’s visibility and provided texture and variety to popular perceptions of Mormon women—in and outside of their religion. While Latter-day Saint art has great cultural significance for understanding Mormon culture, it has garnered less attention from scholars in Mormon Studies. This online exhibit includes the work of four Mormon artists, a term that I use to encompass artists who either self-define as Mormon or use Mormonism as a central subject in their work. Collectively, this exhibit explores the contours of women’s experience in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. From the book of Mormon to the church’s polygamous past to the more intimate and contemporary expression of faith, these four artists creatively offer voice to the historically peripheral and traditionally misunderstood women of Mormonism.

Christine Elyse Blythe
Chief Editor
Utah State University

⁴ Connolly, Caitlyn. “About.” [Caitlyn Connolly.com/about-the-artist](http://CaitlynConnolly.com/about-the-artist) (accessed December 15, 2019).

Kelly McAfee is a resource and 2nd grade general studies teacher in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. She lives in Kirtland where she volunteers at the Kirtland Temple giving tours. In her free time, she enjoys studying Mormon history and creating art. In 2008, she discovered that she was a descendant of Fanny Alger who is believed to be Joseph Smith's first plural wife. As she began to read the literature on plural marriage, McAfee recalled "my heart was pierced with sadness. To ease my pain and to honor these amazing women of polygamy, I began painting a portrait of each one as I read her story."



Emma Comforts Hyrum, acrylic paint on canvas



Fanny Alger, watercolor pencil on paper

MORMON WOMEN AND ART



Eliza and Emily Partridge, acrylic on recycled doll. Handmade costumes.



Emma Smith, acrylic on recycled doll. Handmade costume.

Leslie Peterson who discovered her passion for painting in 2011 is best known for her award winning portraits entitled “The Forgotten Wives of Joseph Smith.” Peterson refers to her work as a celebration of Latter-day Saint’s renewed interest in the lives and stories of early Mormon women.



Helen Mar Kimball, acrylic paint on canvas



Sister in Zion, watercolor on paper

Beth Jane Smailes Taylor is an artist and mother of three boys. She studied art at Brigham young University and in Folrence Italy where she gained her appreciation for classic and folk art. She is involved in many community art events where she loves to connect with her local art community. Taylor explained that she “loves to incorporate Mormon women as well as her Mormon roots into her paintings because it inspires her and others to celebrate their religion in their own creative way.”



I see my mother kneeling

I See My Mother Kneeling, watercolor on paper



A Beautiful Mind, watercolor on paper

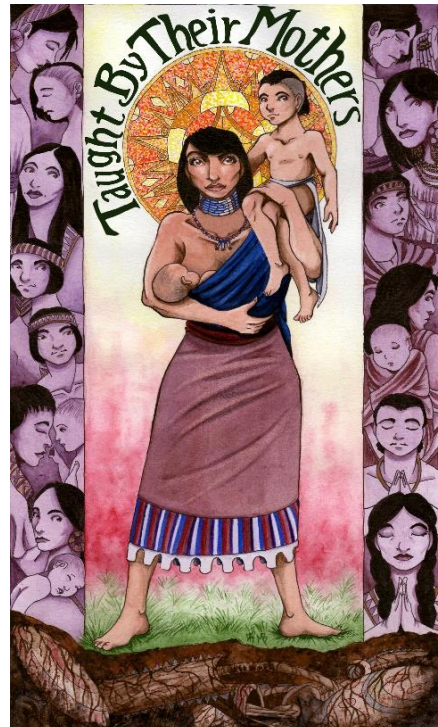


Everywoman, watercolor on paper

Michelle Burk is a lifelong midwesterner and mother of three with a bachelors degree in illustration from Brigham Young University, Idaho. Burk described her Woman of Faith Series, from which her submissions are torn, as a “personal passion project” and explained that the women she has depicted “faced incredible trials of faith in their lives and stood up at times where it seemed like the whole world was against them.” Burk is also the author and illustrator of two published novels entitled *Pearl Tail* and *Split Tail*. She is also the illustrator on the newly installed series “the Mer-Prince Adventures” by J. B. Spector.



Emma Hale Smith, watercolor, gouache ink and digital



Mothers, watercolor, gouache ink, and digital



Emma Hale Smith, gouache ink on paper



Mothers, gouache ink on paper