

The Association for Mormon Letters

1346 South 18th East
Salt Lake City, Utah
84108

Vol. 8, No. 1

Newsletter

March 1984

EIGHTH ANNUAL UTAH SYMPOSIUM

The 1984 Utah symposium of the Association was held Saturday, January 21, 1984, in the Marriott Library Auditorium on the campus of the University of Utah. Linda King Newell arranged the program, and Lavina Fielding Anderson was in charge of local arrangements.

The morning session, chaired by Eugene England, focused on "The Literature of Immigration" from several different angles. Margaret Rampton Munk presented excerpts from her fictionalized biography of a great-grandmother who immigrated to Utah from the Italian Piedmont. William Mulder described how he became interested in Mormon immigration from Scandinavia and examined the immigrant humor. Frederick S. Buchanan performed and discussed some delightful Scottish-Mormon poems and songs.

The luncheon session included election of new officers and presentation of the 1983 AML prizes (detailed elsewhere in this Newsletter) and culminated in the presidential address by Candadai Seshachari, who spoke feelingly of the need for artistic freedom of expression in the Mormon community.

The afternoon session, chaired by Richard H. Cracroft, examined the work of Mormon women writers. It opened with a discussion by Cherry and Barnard Silver, with readings by their daughter Madelyn, of the poetry of Madelyn Cannon Stewart. Neila Seshachari then presented a paper entitled, "Confrontation vs. Tradition: The Lives of Trapped Women in Maurine Whipple's The Giant Joshua." After a brief break, Linda Wilcox gave a paper on contemporary writing on motherhood by Mormon women. Gloria Cronin's paper, read by Karen Lynn, explored some themes of contemporary Mormon folklore through an examination of two female folk performers. The session concluded with a wide-ranging commentary by Annette Sorensen Rogers.

As is customary, the symposium concluded with an informal evening session, held at the home of Marcia and Clifton Jolley. Here Maggie Smith reminisced about her years as "Margaret Masters" on the radio, and Fred Buchanan performed Scottish music.

Current plans call for the 1985 symposium to be held again in Salt Lake City in late January. Proposals for papers should be sent to Candadai Seshachari, 4763 Monroe Blvd., Ogden, Utah 84403.

1984 EAST COAST SYMPOSIUM

The East Coast symposium this year will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, on May 19th. Claudia Harris is in charge of local arrangements, and further information can be obtained by writing her at 234 E. Parkwood Road, Decatur, Georgia 30030. Because we were so late in firming up plans for this symposium, people wishing to propose papers should get in touch at once with Linda King Newell, 1218 Harvard Avenue, Salt Lake City, Utah 84105. Telephone (801) 582-2831.

OTHER 1984 SYMPOSIA

The West Coast symposium will be held in the San Francisco Bay area at a yet to be determined date, probably in September. Larry Y. Wilson, 325 Marks Road, Danville, California 94526, has agreed to serve as local arrangements chairman. The program chairman has not yet been selected, but proposals may be sent to the AML president, Edward A. Geary, 1302 Coventry Lane, Provo, Utah 84604.

A conjoint session will be held again at the annual meetings of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association, to be held in El Paso, Texas, October 18-20. This session is under the chairmanship of John S. Tanner.

KETER FOUNDATION

The Keter Foundation was recently established as a non-profit, charitable foundation incorporated under the laws of California. Its purpose is to promote the publication of serious work by faithful Latter-day Saint writers and thinkers by underwriting the publication of this work and, where applicable and possible, by funding some of the research behind it. Usually the foundation will consider underwriting such research or publication only if funding is not available from established publishers--either private or university presses--or from grant giving institutions.

Other than that the work be serious and responsible and that it be done by faithful Latter-day Saints, the foundation has no particular criteria which work must meet. It has, for example, no area of specialty; it is willing to sponsor research and publication in any area. If a book of poems comes to its attention which merits publication and if that book is too much of a risk for regular publishers, the Keter Foundation could underwrite its publication. The same is true of worthwhile sociological, psychological, historical, philosophical, or other studies. Because of their relative scarcity in LDS scholarly work, the foundation has a particular interest in the publication of careful, thoughtful, informative translations of and commentaries on the scriptures, both ancient and modern, but not to the exclusion of other kinds of research and writing. Those interested in learning more should write to the Keter Foundation at P.O. Box 1312, Provo, Utah 84603, or phone (801) 375-6997.

1983 AML PRIZES

The prize committee is given the assignment to survey the Mormon literary works published each year and select those worthy of special commendation. This year's committee was made up of Richard H. Cracroft, chairman, Cherry B. Silver, and Larry Y. Wilson. In order to bring the awards up to date, the committee surveyed publications for 1982 as well as 1983, and made the following awards:

1982-83 LDS Novel Prize: Douglas H. Thayer, for his novel Summer Fire. "In this important work Thayer traces the confrontation of Owen, an unusually devout sixteen-year-old Mormon boy, with a usually hostile spiritual environment, and achieves, enroute to Owen's humanizing, a refreshing human universality and reaffirmation of life and the necessity of 'opposition in all things'--all without lapsing into the didacticism which has so often plagued Mormon fiction. We commend Mr. Thayer, not only for his careful craftsmanship, the expectation for which he established in his collection of short stories, Under the Cottonwoods, but also for his imaginative and creative examination of Mormon themes which consistently strike universal chords."

1982-83 Short Story Prize: Levi S. Peterson, for his collection of short stories, The Canyons of Grace. "Peterson demonstrates in these six stories an artistic versatility ranging from the profoundly symbolic to the delightfully comic. Peterson sets his stories in a moral Mormon universe in which his characters often struggle with their Mormon vision, cope sensitively with their guilt, and seek for redemption. With this brilliant collection, Peterson has raised the Mormon short story to a new level of artistic excellence and sophistication."

1982-83 Drama Prize: Thomas F. Rogers, for his collection of plays, God's Fools: Plays of the Mitigated Conscience. "All of these plays center on two fundamental themes: 'the consequences of unrighteous dominion and our concomitant need for what the Romans called "filial piety."' Rogers's characters confront the necessity of making strong moral choices which, when made, will forever after alter relationships with individuals and institutions. Posing difficult questions and challenges, Rogers unshrinkingly probes the consequences of standing for Truth in a world of ambiguities. In offering these plays, Rogers's contribution to Mormon letters is inestimable, and he joins therewith a small group of distinguished LDS playwrights in offering to thoughtful Latter-day Saints moral dramas which resound more with the echoes of Gethsemane and Carthage Jail than those of Added Upon and the Ward Road Show tradition. In this volume, Rogers has stirred Mormon drama to a giant leap forward."

1982-83 Poetry Prize: Clinton F. Larson, for his collection of ten poems entitled "A Romaunt of the Rose: A Tapestry of Poems," written for the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Conference and published in BYU Studies. "In this remarkable sequence of outstanding poems, Larson displays poetic versatility and power in portraying deeply Christian faith in a variety of styles. Throughout this tapestry, Larson carefully weaves the Rose of Christ in styles ranging from Dante and Spenser

to Herrick and Milton; he captures their styles brilliantly, yet adds his own touches, shaped by profound faith in the Word and the Word made flesh. These ten poems, brilliantly conceived and executed, are but the more recent publications in Larson's ever-growing corpus of fine poems which assure his position as the premier Mormon poet."

1982-83 Prize for Literary Scholarship: G. Eugene England, for his article "The Dawning of a Brighter Day: Mormon Literature after 150 Years," first delivered as a Charles Redd Lecture and subsequently published in BYU Studies and in After 150 Years: The Latter-day Saints in Sesquicentennial Perspective, ed. Thomas G. Alexander and Jessie L. Embry. "Speaking as one having authority and not one of the scribes, England outlines, in this landmark article, the significant accomplishments of Mormon literature through three distinctive periods and suggests, if not a credo, then a near-credo for writers--and readers--of Mormon literature; and his attached bibliography has become a point of departure for all who would be knowledgeable in Mormon letters. England's article is a milestone in Mormon literary scholarship and yet another milestone in his career of major contributions to Mormon literature, a career which has thus far led him from founding and editing Dialogue to the writing of numerous articles, to a significant book about Brigham Young, to the presidency of the Association for Mormon Letters and his profession as a teacher of Mormon letters at Brigham Young University. In this article, as in so many of his works, England again reminds us why his name has become synonymous with Mormon literature."

1982-83 Young Poet Prize: Holly Ann Welker, for her poems "Feet," "Patterns," "On My Father's 50th Birthday," and "The Birthday Present," published in The New Era. "In these poems this gifted young poet writes of simple but significant human experiences in a controlled style which is vibrant with color and humor and joy. We commend her for these auspicious beginnings and, echoing the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson to Walt Whitman, we greet her at the beginning of a bright and promising literary career."

Special Award for Mormon Humor: First award to Calvin Grondahl, for his three volumes of cartoons, Freeway to Perfection, Faith Promoting Rumors, and Sunday's Foyer. "Expressively drawn, wonderfully incisive, and always witty, Grondahl's cartoons graphically surpass Mark Twain's criteria for humor: they do not "professedly teach," nor do they "professedly preach," but in their inimitable way they teach and preach, as must all good humor, and thus are instructive to Latter-day Saints and non-Mormons alike about Mormon culture and society. Mr. Grondahl points a gentle, sympathetic, but probing finger at individual and institutional Mormon foibles, conceits, fancies, flaws, and sacred cows, and thus illuminates the gap between magnificent LDS aspirations and often-bumbling Mormon realities. In his work, which is a remarkable contribution to Mormon Americana, Grondahl performs a great service for his people. Gently chiding and kidding, he instructs and delights, and thereby awakens among all of us a restorative and therapeutic laughter."

Special Award for Mormon Humor: Second award to Clifton Holt Jolley,

for his article "Selling the Chevrolet: A Moral Exercise," published in Dialogue. "Jolley's well-written, lighthearted, yet serious sequel to Eugene England's earlier article "Blessing the Chevrolet" demonstrates the power of humorous writing in reinforcing and promoting the Mormon world view. Positing a purposeful, God-centered universe, Jolley, whose delightful column in the Deseret News has gathered a large and appreciative audience, plays in this article on the incongruity between skepticism and faith--and refreshingly allows skepticism to take it on the chin from an unassuming but confident (and surprised) faith."

Special Award for Short Story Anthology to Levi S. Peterson, editor of Greening Wheat: Fifteen Mormon Short Stories. "This collection goes far toward proving Peterson's thesis that 'good stories are appearing among the Mormons, greening like wheat in a Utah spring.' Centering in what Peterson has called 'the possibility of wrong behavior,' these stories variously examine the tension between Sainthood as fact and Sainthood as aspiration, between belief and doubt, and between expected blessings and the traumas of reality. Peterson has performed an important service for Mormon letters by collecting 'an abundant sampling of [Mormon] experience--comedy and tragedy, ecstasy and disillusionment, restraint and sensuality, heroism and failure, romance and defiance.' The Association for Mormon Letters commends Levi S. Peterson for making these hitherto generally inaccessible stories available to a larger LDS and non-LDS audience."

Special Award for Popular Mormon Fiction to Jack Weyland. "Weyland's gift for lively narrative, his ability to touch the lives and hearts of young readers, and his skill at subordinating a good moral to good prose and an exciting story have long delighted young and old readers of The New Era. And such novels as Charly, Sam, The Reunion, and Pepper Tide, as well as a collection of short stories, have kept young people reading his work, which has thus supplanted or at least supplemented the Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, sci fi, and even television. Jack Weyland has blessed a generation with good stories well told, set in a real world peopled with the good and not-so-good but fathered by and centered in a caring God. Many of our young people are cutting their literary teeth on Weyland--and we should all be grateful."

Special Achievement Award for Sustained Excellence to the editors of Exponent II, on the tenth anniversary of the founding of the journal. "In an era in which Latter-day Saint women have been seeking to redefine their relationships with their church, Exponent II has blessed a generation of Mormon women with the opportunity to read and write, from within a framework of faith and the desire to believe, for and about the Latter-day Saint woman. Though the journal has opened its pages to a variety of excellent expression from across the whole gamut of faith, its editors have deftly reminded its readers, through selection and encouragement, of the necessity of sustained commitment to self-improvement centered in gospel principles fostered by the Restoration. Exponent II has thus remained an exponent not only of women, and particularly Mormon women, but of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We commend the several editors and their associates not only for keeping the torch lit, but for keeping it brightly fueled and well-passed over a significant decade which has meant so much to the growth of women within the

Church and thus to the moral and spiritual refinement of the Church itself."

Special Commendation for Sustained Excellence in the Mormon Sermon to Elder Neal A. Maxwell. "Elder Maxwell, of the Quorum of the Twelve, is endowed with an exceptional ability to translate personal inspiration and revelation into sermons which in turn evoke such inspiration and revelation in the lives of his listeners. Perhaps it is not the duty of laymen to differentiate publically among the clearly inspired sermons of the General Authorities or others, but it cannot be considered as speaking ill of the Lord's anointed to applaud and commend the sustained sensitivity and inspired excellence of Elder Maxwell's addresses to the Saints through his career as the Church Commissioner of Education, as a General Authority, and as an Apostle. His sermons, always carefully crafted, soar from their grounding in the Standard Works on images and cadences which reach out and move the whole range of Latter-day Saints as he teaches them concepts often taught but ne'er so well expressed."

LIST OF WORKS NOMINATED FOR PRIZES

Poetry:

Dale Bjork, "That Man Might Be," Dialogue, 15:1 (Spring 1982), 162-163.

Elizabeth Clark, "Re-born," Ensign, March 1983, p. 62.

Marden J. Clark, "Christmas Voices, Poems," BYU Studies, 22:4 (Fall 1982), 483-485.

Joyce Ellen Davis, "Embroideries," Dialogue, 16:3 (Autumn 1983), 46-47.

Patricia E. Gunter, "Judah: A Poem," BYU Studies, 22:1 (Winter 1982), 106-107.

Randall L. Hall, "My Body All in Stars," BYU Studies, 23:1 (Winter 1983), 40.

_____, "Repapering the Kitchen," Dialogue, 16:2 (Summer 1983), 100.

Allie Howe, "Resurrection," BYU Studies, 22:2 (Spring 1982), 212-213.

Virginia Maughn Kammeyer, "Harvest," Ensign, May 1983, p. 62.

Marik Messiaen, "Moroni," Horizon and AML Newsletter.

Vernice Wineera Pere, "Where You Live with an Ocean," Ensign, June 1983, p. 43.

Karl Sandberg, "The Rabbit Drive," Dialogue, 15:1 (Spring 1982), 164-68.

Short Story:

Alison Booth, "Aunt Teo," Sunstone, May/June 1982, pp. 56-59.

Ann Edwards-Cannon, "The Quilt," Dialogue, 15:1 (Spring 1982), 169-77.

Michael Fillerup, "The Renovation of Marsha Fletcher," Dialogue, 16:2 (Summer 1983), 79-99.

Lynn Larson, "Bawdy and Soul," Sunstone, March/April 1982, pp. 25-28.

Joseph Peterson, "The Genealogy of Della P. Paulsen," Sunstone, January/February 1982, pp. 7-13.

Karen Rosenbaum, "After the Flood . . . Me," Sunstone, July/August 1983, 7-10.

Literary Criticism:

Marden J. Clark, "Paradox and Tragedy in Mormonism," AML Proceedings, 1979-82, pp. 45-54.

_____, "Toward a More Perfect Order," AML Proceedings, 1979-82, pp. 80-90.

Richard H. Cracroft, "'Seeking the Good, the Pure, the Elevating': A Short History of Mormon Literature," Ensign, June and July 1983.

Eugene England, "Joseph Smith and the Tragic Quest," AML Proceedings, 1979-82, pp. 55-69.

Edward Hart, "The Transformations of Love," BYU Studies, 22:4 (Fall 1982), 447-.

Steven P. Sondrup, "The Possibility of Mormon Tragedy," AML Proceedings, 1979-82, pp. 72-79.

Stephen L. Tanner, "We Are All Enlisted: War as Metaphor," Sunstone, July/August 1982, pp. 26-31.

Ronald L. Walker, "The Challenge and Craft of Mormon Biography," BYU Studies, 22:2 (Spring 1982), 179-92.

William A. Wilson, "The Folklore of Mormon Missionaries," Sunstone, January/February 1982, pp. 32-40.

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June 1984

Newsletter

EAST COAST SYMPOSIUM

The 1984 East Coast Symposium of the Association was held on Saturday, May 19, 1984, in White Hall on the campus of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Linda King Newell arranged the program, and Claudia Harris was in charge of local arrangements.

The first morning session began with a welcome by Linda King Newell, after which Mitchell Harris introduced papers by Richard Dilworth Rust on "Imagery in the Book of Mormon" and by Phillip Snyder on "Autobiographical Experience in Joseph Smith's History." After a short break, Lenette Foster introduced Linda King Newell, who shared some of the experiences she has had while doing research on the life of Emma Smith.

The luncheon session, conducted by Linda King Newell, featured a talk by Afton Day entitled "A Funny Thing Happened to Me on the Way to the Publisher."

The afternoon session, chaired by Claudia Harris, centered on contemporary LDS literature. Donald R. Marshall discussed symbolism in the short stories in Greening Wheat. Eugene England discussed "The Red-Tail Hawk," by Douglas Thayer. Chet Harris read a paper written by Steven P. Sondrup and entitled "'Road to Damascus' and the Language of Grace."

The symposium concluded with an informal evening session, held at the home of Chet and Claudia Harris. Here Don Marshall shared some insights on the conception and development of his novel Zinnie Stokes. Zinnie Stokes, and Eugene England read from his essays.

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1984 WEST COAST SYMPOSIUM

The 1984 West Coast Symposium will be held in the San Francisco area on Saturday, October 13th. Larry Y. Wilson is serving as general chairman and will be specifically in charge of local arrangements. Questions and suggestions should be addressed to him at 325 Marks Road, Danville, CA 94526. Bonnie Bobet is the program chairman. Proposals for sessions and papers should be sent to her at 2726 Dwight

Way, No. 9, Berkeley, CA 94704, as soon as possible but no later than September 1st. Details concerning time, location, and registration will be forthcoming.

1985 UTAH SYMPOSIUM

Although a number of papers have already been proposed for the January Symposium to be held in Salt Lake City, several more can still be accommodated. Papers should be sent to the program chairman, Prof. Candadai Seshachari, 4763 Monroe Blvd., Ogden, UT 84403, by September 15th.

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LITERATURE AND BELIEF

The 1983 volume of Literature and Belief, published by the Brigham Young University Center for the Study of Christian Values in Literature, is now available and will be of interest to many AML members. As with previous issues, the 1983 edition of the journal is a collection of scholarly interpretive articles, personal essays, lectures, and poetry. One of the lead articles is a discussion by Robert B. Heilman, Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Washington and traveling lecturer for Phi Beta Kappa, which traces how Christian concepts of heaven, eternal life, the soul, and reason have been secularized from the Renaissance on. Another lead article is "Alternative Worlds," by the well known Welsh poet Leslie Norris, a personal commentary on how he developed his powers of observation and poetic insight. Norris also comments on several of his own poems, which are reproduced in the text, and there is an interview with Norris by Bruce Jorgensen.

The titles of the articles in the issue are descriptive of a wide variety of interests in literature and belief: Bruce L. Edwards, "Toward a Rhetoric of Fantasy Criticism: C. S. Lewis's Readings of Macdonald and Morris"; Joyce Q. Erickson, "Portrait of the (Bad) Artist as Monster: On Moral Fiction as a Gloss on Grendel"; Marilyn Arnold, "Doctorow's Hard Times: A Sermon on the Failure of Faith"; Gloria L. Cronin, "Faith and Futurity: The Case for Survival in Mr. Sammler's Planet"; and Eugene England, "Hawthorne and the Virtue of Sin." In addition, "Playing at Church," the winning personal essay in the Christian Values Writing Contest, appears in this issue. It is the delightful account of a young woman growing up as the daughter of a rural New England minister whose congregation had "divisions." The volume is rounded off with poetry and with reviews of three books: a biography of G. K. Chesterton, Malamud's God's Grace, and Hawkins's The Language of Grace.

Postpaid copies are \$4 in the USA and \$6 elsewhere and may be obtained by writing Literature and Belief, Jesse Knight Humanities Building, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

REVIEWS

Greening Wheat: Fifteen Mormon Short Stories. Edited by Levi S. Peterson. Midvale, Utah: Orion Books, 1983. Reviewed by Lavina Fielding Anderson.

At the AML annual meeting in Salt Lake City, Levi S. Peterson walked away with an award for editing this collection of short stories in addition to an award for his own book of short stories, Canyons of Grace. Greening Wheat joins the works of Douglas Thayer, Thomas Rogers, Bela Petsco, and (forthcoming) Marden Clark on the list of books published recently by Orion Press, an imprint of Signature Books, a company that has made its reputation with such scholarly contributions as the Wilford Woodruff journals. This side venture into fiction, however, means that Orion has easily captured the market for better-quality and longer fiction left vacant by Deseret Book, Bookcraft, and Randall Books, who are concentrating on building up an addicted clientele for short popular fiction, romances, historical novels, and light-hearted juveniles. Up to this point, authors in this vaguely defined class of "better" have usually had to publish their own works. In fact, Under the Cottonwoods (Thayer), God's Fools (Rogers), and Nothing Very Important (Petsco) were initially self-published before being issued by Orion.

The fifteen stories in Greening Wheat include works by Bruce W. Jorgensen, Kevin Cassity, Wayne Carver, Linda Sillitoe, Karen Rosenbaum, R. A. Christmas, Kent A. Farnsworth, Levi Peterson, Eileen Gibbons Kump, Donald R. Marshall, Joseph Peterson, Dennis Clark, Sibyl Johnston, David L. Wright, and Lynn Larson. Three of the stories were initially printed in Sunstone (with a fourth being reprinted there from Century II), with the Ensign, Dialogue, and Century II seeing the initial printings of two more apiece. None of the authors is still in the "promising student" stage, the basis for an earlier successful anthology, and several of them have made serious professional commitments to writing.

In short, the existence of this volume is an important event in the history of Mormon publishing (for those who are keeping track of such things), and the quality of the stories makes them important for themselves. "These stories," says Peterson in his introduction, "make a new sweep over the old battleground in the human mind between faith and doubt, myth and science, revelation and reason."

One of the most conspicuous characteristics of the volume as a whole, I found, was the stories' engaging quality, a kind of tough optimism that solves problems or decides to live with them but moves on. Most of the stories are free from the melodramatic tension found in many stories by young writers (or reflecting the problems of young persons) who face a problem and can't see any real or artistic solution except to beat their heads against it. Cherry and Keith, in Karen Rosenbaum's "Low Tide," may realize that they no longer have any kind

of meaningful faith, but the story is not an exercise in terror or desolation (or relief), even though those elements are there. There is only one missionary-confronts-death story. The second missionary story, Peterson's "The Gift," has a disillusioned and sophisticated European for its protagonist, not the luminously-believing-and-riding-for-a-fall elder. Bruce Jorgensen's "Song for One Still Voice" is as radiant and grace-drenched a story as I have ever read. The examination of the complexities of religious beliefs multiplied and divided by marital sharing (Jorgensen, Carver, Rosenbaum, Christmas, and Clark all deal with married people as protagonists) is itself an indication of broadening themes, while the other stories deal with initiation, sexual experience, and other experiences that test youthful commitments.

I have my favorites among them--Sillitoe's "Four Walls and an Empty Door" and Dennis Clark's "Answer to Prayer"--but any reader who picks up the volume will find the delights of making a personal list.

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Dialogues with Myself: Personal Essays on Mormon Experience. By Eugene England. Midvale, Utah: Orion Books, 1984. 205 pp. Reviewed by Steven P. Sondrup.

The word dialogue is associated no more appropriately with anyone than with Eugene England. Nearly twenty years ago, he stepped into public view as one of the founding editors of Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, in which he attempted to enter into wide-ranging discussions as a means of discovering life's possibilities, of proving all things, of holding fast that which is good. Since that time, dialogue in a variety of contexts and with people of many different backgrounds and philosophical persuasions has continued with an intensity and charity that characterizes a genuine commitment to the proposition that God not only expects us to prove all things but also to help others hold fast to that which is good and endure in spite of seemingly overwhelming paradoxes.

It is, though, not so much these dialogues with others--important though they are--that are the principal concern here, but rather those private and deeply personal conversations that are an integral part of making sense out of experience in general and more especially out of those events that seem to defy understanding. These are, thus, personal essays in the fundamental sense of that expression: they are inward attempts--always tentative and suggestive, never doctrinaire or dogmatic--to discover meaning, sense, truth, and self. They explore, examine, and propose, and, at the same time, reveal the workings of mind as it endeavours to come to grips with the world and the strivings of a spirit as it seeks holiness. They are at times disarmingly candid, open, and honest but do not become cloying because they invariably emerge from lived experience rather than speculation or argumentation.

The epigraph for the volume--"By proving contraries, truth is made manifest"--taken from Joseph Smith well sets the tone and defines the mode for much of the discussion that follows. The "Author's Preface" succinctly explains the significance of the quotation. "Part of the Prophet Joseph's moral and spiritual heroism is focused for me in his growing insight . . . that tragic paradox lies at the heart of things and that life and salvation, truth and progress, come only through anxiously, bravely grappling with those paradoxes, both in action and in thought." In one way or another, each of the essays that follows deals with the challenge of living with paradoxes--or even apparent contradictions--that simply will not admit of facile explanation but which require some kind of spiritual accomodation. They are above all devotional meditations on questions of ultimate import.

The essays in this volume are not new. They have all previously appeared in various Mormon publications and in some cases are already justifiably well known and cherished parts of the growing Mormon literary tradition--"Blessing the Chevrolet," for example--but it is particularly worthwhile having them collected and readily accessible. Themes and ideas raised in one essay are expanded, developed, or presented in a new light in later essays in such a way that the overall impact is one of many voices polyphonically joining in a chorus which, though complex, is still dominated by an overarching organizational principle. Although one may have other views at any given point, Dialogues with Myself is certainly provocative reading but also more: it echoes the spirit of Isaiah's invitation, "Come now, and let us reason together."

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NOTICE TO AML MEMBERS

Please check your address label on this issue of the Newsletter. If your name is preceded by an asterisk, then according to our records you have not yet paid your 1984 dues. If our records are in error, please let us know. If not, please send your annual dues of \$10 as soon as possible. The Mormon Letters Annual, which is now being prepared for publication, will be sent only to paid-up members.

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