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REVIEW ESSAY

# OVERWORKED STEREOTYPES OR ACCURATE HISTORICAL IMAGES: THE IMAGES OF POLYGAMY IN THE GIANT JOSHUA



Review essay by Jessie L. Embry

WHAT IS THE relationship between history and literature, especially where they seem to overlap in historical novels? David Cowart in his study *History and the Contemporary Novel* argued, "Every culture expresses itself more definitively through its artists than through its historians. . . . Mark Twain and Walt Whitman capture the American spirit better than does Francis Parkman. . . . Artists provide the myths by which any cultural body defines itself, the myths that historians mistakenly seek to unravel. Thus history makes its greatest contribution when it supplies the creative artist with raw material."<sup>1</sup> He cautioned novelists, though, to avoid producing "a distant mirror of their own fantasy lives" and thus "achieve historical actuality less often than they think."<sup>2</sup> Morroe Berger's *Real and Imagined Worlds: The Novel and Social Science* concluded that since frequently novels follow the events of the past, "readers . . . accept the novelist's conclusion . . . as applying to social life outside as well as inside the story." He added, however, that "there do exist historical and social science studies . . . with which to test the insights found in novels."<sup>3</sup>

One way to analyze novels is to see how closely the characters match the popular images, the stereotypes, of the historical time period. According to Walter Lippman's classic 1922 study, "The subtlest and most pervasive of all influences are those which create and maintain the repertory of stereotypes. We are told about the world before we see it. We

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imagine most things before we experience them. And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception."<sup>4</sup> This type of education requires a careful study of "when our ideas started, where they started, how they came to us, why we accept them." That information "enables us to know what novel, play, picture, phrase, planted one conception in this mind, another in this mind."<sup>5</sup>

Some Mormon fiction has been especially full of stereotypes. As Neal Lambert explained, "The popular notion about what a Mormon is has not lent itself to great literature. Polygamy, secret rites, blood atonement, priestly orders—all such have made the Mormon slip easily into a stereotype for slick fiction and gross comedy."<sup>6</sup>

This paper will examine the stereotypes in one Mormon novel, Maurine Whipple's *The Giant Joshua*. Are her images of polygamy overworked stereotypes or accurate historical images? First, it will discuss Whipple's view of history and then look at how various reviewers have reacted to her historical information. After a brief description of the characters, it will point out some of the popular stereotypes of polygamy which Whipple reinforced in her book. Hopefully this exercise will provide the education Lippman talked about and avoid the temptations "of the casual mind . . . to pick out or stumble upon a sample which supports or defies its prejudice, and then to make it the representative of a whole class."<sup>7</sup> For as Gordon W. Allport explained in his study of prejudice, "We can distinguish between a valid generalization and a stereotype only if we have solid data concerning the existence of . . . true group differences."<sup>8</sup>

In a review of Amelia Bean's *The Fancher Train* (1958), Maurine Whipple explained Bean had "unusual" narrative skills but added, "I do hope her next book is all fiction. For while as a story [it] is entertaining, as history it comes near to being cause for libel."<sup>9</sup> Historical information was very important to Whipple. In a letter to the actor John Ford she explained, "I thank the gods daily for a man who refuses to bow to the stereotypes but has the courage and genius to suck the real right juice out of this West I love."<sup>10</sup> Avoiding stereotypes and giving what she felt was accurate history was especially essential to her in writing *Giant Joshua*. As she explained in an interview published in *Dialogue*, "I looked up every word, every historical reference. . . . It seemed to me that if I created an era, I had to be true to it. So I had to look up costumes and clothes, even the dialect they used."<sup>11</sup> Within this historical framework, she wanted to tell the story as accurately as possible, but she wanted to avoid "paint[ing her ancestors] with too white a brush."<sup>12</sup> Ferris Greenslet, Whipple's editor with the publishing company, also recognized the importance of accurate historical information: "It is going to be important to get the chronological historical background of the story copper-fastened, both because . . . the hen-minded readers would object if it isn't and because solid foundation of the sort makes for better architecture in the super structure."<sup>13</sup>

Despite Whipple's and her publisher's attempts to avoid historical error, Nels Anderson, a sociologist and historian who had lived in St. George, pointed out some errors that might offend Church leaders, "brethren who have the facts." In a letter to Juanita Brooks, he said that Patrick E. Connor, a U.S. army officer who came to Utah during the Civil War, was referred to as both O'Connor and Conner throughout the book. St. George was referred to by the name too early, school children recited the Washington state capital, Olympia, in 1862, long before Washington became a state, and "stew bum" and "chewing the fat" were modern terms that would not have been used at the time.<sup>14</sup>

These minor errors escaped most readers, including the "brethren." Most of the contemporary and more recent reviews applauded Whipple's novel for its use of history; only Apostle John A. Widtsoe was not pleased with her portrayal of polygamy.<sup>15</sup> While he felt that the novel described the "high spiritual motives" for polygamy "with some degree of fairness," he felt that "the example selected, a life defeated because of polygamy, leaves a bitter, angry distaste for the system" which

Widtsoe felt was "unfair" since, he argued, "there were fewer unhappy marriages under 'Mormon' polygamy than under monogamy."<sup>16</sup> Edward Geary, however, questioned whether Widtsoe could give information on the success of polygamy, but then argued, "The validity of a work of fiction does not depend on its adherence to a statistically accurate representation of reality but on its conveying a genuine sense of human possibilities."<sup>17</sup>

While, of course, Geary is right and fiction does not have to be "statistically accurate," some readers have accepted *The Giant Joshua* as an example of the "typical" Mormon polygamous family. With reviewers such as Bruce Jorgensen and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, these readers have felt that "few other Mormon novels match its historical scope and solidity" and called it "an excellent place to begin in developing an understanding of pioneer life."<sup>18</sup> While the MacIntyre family are "complicated people" who "live in their own element,"<sup>19</sup> they also have many of the stereotypes about Mormon polygamy that both Mormons and non-Mormons have come to cherish.

A BRIEF summary of the MacIntyre family reveals some of these stereotypes. The MacIntyres raised Clorinda, the voice of the novel. She affectionally referred to them as Uncle Abijah and Aunt 'Sheba after her father passed away. When Clory developed a relationship with a gentile from the Johnston Army and when the MacIntyres were asked to move to St. George, Brigham Young suggested that Abijah marry his 17-year-old foster daughter. Young and full of excitement, Clory brought life to everyone including the first wife, 'Sheba, who hated to admit "there was something like bells in Clory's voice, a lovely warmth and roundness, a smoothness—like fresh-churned butter after you've worked it awhile with your hands."<sup>20</sup> 'Sheba was a domineering first wife who occasionally showed compassion for the other wives but, as Willie explained to Clory, "wore the pants in the family."<sup>21</sup> Willie, the second wife, was a "duty" wife, someone who was in the home as a immigrant when Brigham Young asked Abijah to marry a plural wife. Homely and without much personality, her virtues were far below the surface. As Clory explained, it was only "when pity or love kindled the hidden depths in her eyes [that] her face was gently beautiful."<sup>22</sup> Abijah was the Mormon patriarch who was trying to follow the Pro-

phet, advance in the Church, and keep his families in order.

But that was only a hard public shell. "Clory had come to believe he really was the most tender-hearted of men underneath—like a coconut a missionary had brought back once from the Sandwich Islands, tough and hairy outside and needing a lot of opening up before one could get at the sweet good core."<sup>23</sup> Yet she also felt that "bullied by his first wife, Abijah in turn bullied his younger wives and found in that his greatest reward for polygamy."<sup>24</sup>

An obvious question, based on Widtsoe's review and Whipple's novel is how successful was polygamy. Kimball Young, a sociologist who wrote *Isn't One Wife Enough?*, attempted a statistical measure. Based on his study of 175 families, representing plural marriages performed during the Utah settlement period, he found nearly 53 percent were "highly successful" or "reasonably successful," one-fourth were "moderately successful with some conflict but on the whole fair adjustment," and 23 percent had "considerable conflict" and "severe conflict."<sup>25</sup> While all of the problems Whipple presents in her book did occur in some polygamous families, many studies show that polygamy was "surprisingly successful."<sup>26</sup> In her book *This is the Place*, Whipple agreed. Based on her study of her own polygamous grandparents and other St. George residents, she concluded: "In spite of gentile opinion, plural marriages were often happy." With a "patriarch" father, plural families had "achieved such dignity and contentment, such a sense of family solidarity" that the children considered themselves all part of one family.<sup>27</sup> Despite this observation of polygamy, that was not the image she portrayed in *The Giant Joshua*. From Brigham Young and Erastus Snow to Abijah, men had favorite wives and there was a great deal of jealousy. Only Clory's childhood friend and a first wife, Pal Wright, even approached a "happy" experience. And Pal explained to Clory polygamy "was hard. There's no denying that."<sup>28</sup>

While "unequal matches, jealousy, favorites, irresponsibility . . . were not unknown,"<sup>29</sup> neither did they happen all the time as some might expect. In fact, while polygamy played an important role in relationships, it often increased problems rather than being the initial concern. In discussing men who married sisters, Kimball Young found, and my study agreed, "personality divergence, economic problems and sense of differential treatment by the husband"<sup>30</sup> were more important than simply being married to

the same man. Of course, in all polygamous families there were moments of jealousies just as in the MacIntyre family. There were also cases where one wife dominated and another wife was very submissive (similar to the relationship between Bathsheba and Willie). There were cases, of course, where one wife (sometimes the first wife such as Bathsheba) was very jealous of a younger, more attractive wife (such as Clory). However, there were fewer cases of jealousy than one might expect and because of their religious motivation and desire to make the marriages work, many troubling experiences were overlooked or suppressed.<sup>31</sup>

Determining the "success" of polygamy is probably the most difficult stereotype to find "solid data" to substantiate. Other areas are less subjective. For example, how many plural wives did Mormons usually have? During nearly all of the novel, Abijah had three wives (although he marries a fourth at the end of the book). One 1983 novel even stated, "Three was the number most Mormon men had if they were polygamists."<sup>32</sup> But my study, covering marriages performed between 1880 and 1904, shows that three, or even more as some might think, was not the typical number of wives. About 60 percent of the men married only one plural wife. Approximately 20 percent had the magical three wives, and only 20 percent had more than three.<sup>33</sup>

A common image was also that most plural wives were immigrants. Sociologist Nels Anderson found that only two of seventy-one polygamous husbands and fifteen of 150 polygamous wives in Washington County in 1880 were born in Utah. Other studies do not support that conclusion. D. Gene Pace, who studied the wives of 835 bishops between 1847 and 1900, found that it was the polygamous husbands who were more likely to be immigrants than the wives. My study found approximately half of the husbands and first and second wives were born in Utah or Idaho and over 70 percent were born in the United States; approximately two-thirds of the third and fourth wives were American born and over one-half were from the Mormon Corridor of Utah and Idaho. This matched studies of Mormons in general during the same time period. Dean May's demographic portrait of Cache Valley showed that from 1860 to 1880 about two-thirds of the population was U.S. born.<sup>34</sup> Although these studies represent different time periods, the figures suggest that at no time during the Utah polygamous period were most plural wives immigrants.

Willie also fits another stereotype that Mormon plural wives were older women who were very homely and polygamy might have been their only chance to marry. Anderson said that the immigrants were "older women, many of them ranging between 25 and 35 years of age. . . . Polygamy was a boon for them."<sup>35</sup> Mark Twain wrote in *Roughing It* that he was ready to "achieve a great reform" against polygamy "until I saw the Mormon women. Then I was touched. My heart was wiser than my head. It warmed toward these poor, ungainly, and pathetically 'homely' creatures." He believed "The man that marries one of them has done an act of Christian charity . . . and the man who marries sixty of them has done a deed of open-handed generosity."<sup>36</sup> Determining what plural wives looked like is too subjective, but it is much easier to examine if plural wives were "older women." According to my study, men chose plural wives who were approximately the age of his first wife at the time of their marriage even though he was ten to thirty years older. For example, a husband was usually between twenty-one and twenty-five when he married his first wife, and she was between fifteen and twenty. The man was between twenty-six and thirty-five when he married a second wife, and she was between fifteen and twenty-five years old, usually closer to 19.<sup>37</sup> Plural wives were usually not older like Willie or young teenagers like Clory.

The popular contemporary view and sometimes reported historical understanding has been that no man would be interested in marrying more than one wife except to increase his sexual opportunities. Therefore, nearly all novels about polygamy have a young wife that the older man is chasing or has just married. Because of Victorian America's views of marriage and sexual relationships, I don't know that those reactions to polygamy were ever recorded. While the descriptions of a plural husband's lustful desires for his new young wife probably led to an increased readership of the novel, there are no historical records to justify them. James Hulett, Kimball Young's research assistant, found out how unwilling plural husbands, wives, and children were to discuss sex. The standard reply he received was that intimate relationships were only used for procreation.<sup>38</sup>

Whipple describes fairly accurately the living arrangements in Mormon polygamous families. Except just after a plural marriage or in times of economic stress, wives lived in separate homes usually in the same community. Frequently the houses were on

adjoining lots, and there was a well-beaten path between the two homes. The husband alternated nights or weeks with his wives. Except just after Abijah consummated the marriage with Clory (when he spent nearly all of his nights with her, causing town gossip), he alternated between the homes. Early in the book it was on a nightly basis; later he visited each wife for a week. However, Whipple implies that the only reason Clory had her own home was because she insisted on it; Abijah would have preferred all the wives living in the same home.<sup>39</sup>

With separate homes and a regular visiting schedule, plural wives usually were "queens" of their own castles. Economic resources as well as affections were divided; attempts were usually made so that they would be equal. There were times of loneliness for each wife when the husband was gone to another home or especially when husbands were on missions. A study of monogamous families during the same time period shows that those wives had many of the same concerns. Monogamous husbands were often off on their jobs; they were also called to serve missions where they were separated from their wives and children.<sup>40</sup> Whipple seemed to blame all of these feelings of loneliness on polygamy without recognizing them as part of the Victorian lifestyle.

Some historians have argued that Victorian ideals actually discouraged close relationships between husbands and wives. According to Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, a feminist historian, during the nineteenth-century "rigid gender-role[s] . . . within the family and within society as a whole" led "to the emotional segregation of women and men."<sup>41</sup> Whipple recognized some of the closeness during the nineteenth century between women. Clory, for instance, frequently confided her feelings to Pal Wright.<sup>42</sup> Women also met together to quilt, gossip, and celebrate.<sup>43</sup> Yet Whipple's women were not always part of the nineteenth century model; they demanded close relationships with their husbands. Pal and David Wright had a very close relationship so that Clory could complain, "David Wright's a different kind of man than Abijah MacIntyre."<sup>44</sup> After Abijah returned from his mission, Clory felt "a great delight at having him home. One got tired of the constant society of women. Female society grew to be insipid, like sleazy silk, only man-goods had 'body' and pith when you whanged it. Three years was a long time to be separated from one's man. . . . She could even understand how a polygamist wife with an absent husband might be tempted to run off with a too-persuasive gentile."<sup>45</sup>

WHAT do these and other stereotypes add to *The Giant Joshua*? Are they useful or do they dominate the story? Since Whipple was a descendant of polygamous families, it is possible that she was simply telling a family story which included the "kernel of truth," the one example where the stereotypes fit.<sup>46</sup> Whipple's grandmother, Comelia Agatha, was the third wife of John Daniel Thompson McAllister. However, Comelia was twenty-three rather than a teenager when she married; John was forty. She was born in Philadelphia and her mother stayed there. Unlike Clory, her father did not die crossing the plains; he came to Utah and married four more wives. John's second wife, Angeline Sophronia Goforth, was not an immigrant; she was born in Illinois and was seventeen when she married John; he was thirty. (She was the teenage bride rather than the third wife.) McAllister served as president of the St. George and the Manti Temples. He had a total of nine wives, seven by 1880, thirteen years before he moved to Manti. Therefore, while Whipple used elements of her grandparents' stories in *The Giant Joshua*, it is not completely their history.<sup>47</sup>

Another possibility is that the stereotypes say more about Whipple and her time period than they do about nineteenth-century Mormon polygamy. Maurine Whipple was part of what Edward Geary refers to as the "lost generation" of Mormon novelists "of the 1940s" whose writings "have their roots in the author's effort to come to terms with his or her Mormon heritage."<sup>48</sup> *The Giant Joshua* might be Whipple's attempts to understand polygamy. According to Eugene England, "The novel declines when the author's resentment takes over and she focuses self-indulgently on the horrors of polygamy."<sup>49</sup> Whipple's own comments reflect this uneasiness. In *This is the Place*, Whipple called polygamy "a stern doctrine, never an easy flowering sensuality."<sup>50</sup> In the *Dialogue* interview, she talked about the "resentment" of "my father's generation," "the sons and daughters of polygamy."<sup>51</sup> I interviewed the children of polygamy and did not find this same resentment. Whipple's descriptions might be partially the second generation of polygamous children struggling not only to understand the principle of plural marriage but also to determine the role of Mormonism in their lives, or they might simply be her personal struggle with polygamy and Mormonism.

Whipple's stereotypes of polygamy are common in other Mormon literature of the 1940s. Virginia Sorensen's first novel, *A Little Lower than the Angels*, published one year after

Whipple's *The Giant Joshua*, included a number of stereotypes.<sup>53</sup> Mercy Baker, Simon's first wife, was not totally converted to Mormonism but stayed with the other Saints because her husband believed. A very strong woman at first, she was weakened by childbirth and was unable to take care of her children and home. After explaining his situation to Joseph Smith, Simon was encouraged to take an older English immigrant, Charlot Leavitt, as a housekeeper. Joseph suggested that in time Simon might want to marry her as plural wife. However, as Simon and Charlot were crossing the Mississippi from Nauvoo back to Simon's home in Iowa, Charlot convinced him that they should be married immediately since it would not be proper for her to live in the house with Simon without being married to him. Like Freeborn, Abijah's oldest son, Simon and Mercy's son Jarvie did not approve of the relationship. Unlike Free, who was in love with Clory, Jarvie could not understand why it was all right for his father to have sexual relations with a woman other than his mother when the previous housekeeper had been dismissed because of the advances she made to Jarvis. Mercy, who knew about plural marriage from her friendship with Eliza R. Snow, figured out that Simon had married Charlot, and while she could not do without Charlot's help, she resented it.

These stereotypes have appeared in Mormon fiction since the first anti-polygamous novels. Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt found four novels written between 1855 and 1856 "particularly important because they set the pattern, so far as theme and characteristics are concerned for most of the anti-Mormon novels and stories that followed." Arrington and Haupt point out, however, that the novelists relied on "contemporary images or stereotypes in describing Mormons."<sup>53</sup> These same characteristics, strong women who accept Mormonism because their husbands do, weak men who fall to the authority of Church leaders, and jealous wives in a Turkish harem, to name a few, can also be found in Whipple and Sorensen and other novels written during the same time period.

But, as Edward Geary explained, most of the characteristics have more to do with the "lost generation" authors' attempts to deal with their views of Mormonism. According to Geary, "The protagonist [in the novels] is nearly always a character 'in the middle': something of an individual caught between his or her instinct for freedom and the demands of loyalty and obedience."<sup>54</sup> Just as Mercy and Clory died with the tension

unresolved, Whipple "want[ed] in a way to become a wholehearted member of the community yet long[ed] to escape to find some mode of life less filled with hardships, more rewarding culturally and aesthetically."<sup>55</sup> Unlike Mercy and Clory, though, Whipple, like the children in some of the novels, attempts to leave the community "for a life both creative and individualistic."<sup>56</sup> Whipple never really left St. George and continued to be "caught" between her desire for freedom and love of her culture. Sorensen, on the other hand, was able to leave and come to an understanding of her relationship to Mormonism. As she explained, "As a writer and as a person, I can honestly say that I am not particularly interested in Mormons. It is by a series of accidents of birth that I must fill out the blank of myself with such words as 'white' and 'female' and 'American' and 'Mormon'. Each of these has its own complex of meanings by now, and its own perpetuity, no matter how much I might choose to alter my climate and my clothes and my beliefs and my loyalties. The more passionately I might rebel against any one of them, the more deeply it would, in actuality, be affecting me. It seems to me that most mere rebellion is a young thing, apt to be exhausting and unproductive. When it can at last be calmed down into analysis and understanding art becomes possible."<sup>57</sup> Because of that attitude, Sorensen's later novels which deal with polygamy in Utah avoid many of these cardboard people and show Mormons as unique individuals with common concerns dealing with polygamy but varying reactions. Whipple, however, continued to rebel against the Mormon society and was never really able to "calm down." That might partially explain her inability to complete another novel.

But not only novelists reported the stereotypes. As I have already mentioned, Nels Anderson's *Deseret Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah*, also published in 1942, contains many of the same stereotypes about polygamy as the fiction. Anderson first came to St. George in 1908 when he was on his way to work on the Panama Canal but "a freight train crew stranded me in the most uninviting of places, and after one thing and another, I came to a ranch among the Mormons, was made genuinely welcome, and felt at home." As a result of his stay, he joined the Mormon church in 1909, attended the Dixie Academy and Brigham Young University, and eventually studied sociology at the University of Chicago. In 1934 he returned to southern Utah with a grant from Columbia University

to study the Mormons, and *Deseret Saints* was the result of that study.<sup>58</sup> While part of his study (the number of immigrants) was based on research, others of his views (the age and homeliness of plural wives) were probably based more on impressions.

Another possible reason for Whipple's stereotypes is that she wanted to deal with the emotionalism which had haunted her about life in a polygamous families. While the formal story has been Widtsoe's "polygamous families were as successful as monogamous families," Whipple, being a descendant of the principle, felt scars that she believed were caused by polygamy. She explained in an interview, "You see, the thing about polygamy is that the spirit that prompted it didn't die out. Men went on thinking that they should do this. It sort of bred a feeling that they—at least among the Mormons in Utah—that women were lower than men; they were chattel. Well, I had been brought up on these early stories, and especially from talking to the old people, I knew that their dreams, their realities, their goals, were a lot different than the things that had come about." She felt that the Church needed to "get rid of its authoritarian attitude. It had its place in the early days, but it doesn't now. You can't say to people, 'Do this because I tell you to do it.' You can't do that anymore. This generation just isn't going to accept it."<sup>59</sup> Her novel was one of the first attempts to deal with what might be called the darker side of plural marriage and some of the unspoken negative emotions of women. According to Linda Sillitoe, these feelings were very apparent as late as the 1980s when she and Allen Roberts researched the Mark Hofmann forgeries and still haunted many of their interviewees.<sup>60</sup>

Whipple also strongly believed that the Church had left its original goals. Rather than striving for brotherhood, the leaders were only interested in material concerns. She believed that *The Giant Joshua* and the two books of the trilogy which were to follow would trace the "Idea" which supported the Mormon pioneers and which seemed to have been lost by the Mormon leaders. In correspondence with everyone from fans to editors, she explained her concerns about the direction the Mormon church was going. "The question seems to be: Is the idea of brotherly love so naive and impractical that it must be sacrificed if Success is to be achieved? I do not believe that such a postulation is inevitable despite events, despite Church snobishness."<sup>61</sup> She felt that many Latter-day Saints opposed the materialism of the Church leaders and "there is a gulf between the

Mormon people and their leaders.<sup>62</sup> But just as a "pendulum" had swung toward "success," she felt that it would swing back to the Mormon "Idea" of brotherhood. "I also believe (in fact, I know—as many humble people have insisted so long) that my books will help bring about their consummation; will help readjust and clarify Mormon thinking, will help reestablish this Idea."<sup>63</sup>

FINALLY, although the stereotypes have probably been around for years, it is possible that Whipple's characters were very much her own, and have become the images of polygamy because the novel has been read so widely. It becomes the age-old question of which came first—the chicken or the egg. As I have lectured on polygamy throughout Utah, people have frequently asked me if I have read *The Giant Joshua* and then told me how well they felt it portrayed polygamy. Many of the views that we have of polygamy might come from readers searching for images and then translating them into historical fact. As one reader wrote to Whipple, "Like most grandchildren of the Pioneers, I've been raised on tales of . . . the early days in St. George, but it wasn't until I read your book that I fully appreciated the hardships those good people faced and the faith that must have been theirs."<sup>64</sup> A special temptation for some descendants of polygamous families has been to assume that their family was "typical," and if a novel such as *The Giant Joshua* supported that claim, it only strengthened their conclusions. One reader wrote to Whipple, "Strangely, in THE GIANT JOSHUA you have written the life story of my antecedents. Or it may be that there was not so much difference in all of them. My own grandfather was married to both a 'Sheba and a Clory; my other grandfather was married to a Willie."<sup>65</sup> From polygamous descendants to other Mormons struggling to understand polygamy, a doctrine so foreign to their understanding of marriage, to other readers with a curiosity about Mormons, *The Giant Joshua* seemed to answer all of their questions and appear to be historically accurate.

Which brings us back to the original question. What is the relationship between history and literature? While they are two separate disciplines, using very different methods, there are procedures to understand history as literature and literature as history. The study of literature and history can help us see that at times "it is useful to see our pioneer grandmother in multiple"<sup>66</sup> so that we can understand the similarities of experiences. At the

same time it is important to remember that "different people, at different times and places, perceive the world differently";<sup>67</sup> there is virtue to understanding the uniqueness of individuals and, for readers especially, to avoid transferring novels' characters from "a genuine sense of human possibilities" into "accurate representation[s] of realit[ies]." ☐

## NOTES

1. David Cowart, *History and the Contemporary Novel* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 25-26.
2. Cowart, 31-32.
3. Morroe Berger, *Real and Imagined Worlds: The Novel and Social Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 161.
4. Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961 ed.), 89-90.
5. Lippman, 90-91.
6. Neal Lambert, "Saints, Sinners, and Scribes: A Look at the Mormons in Fiction," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 36(Winter 1968): 64.
7. Lippman, 151.
8. Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958), 188.
9. Maurine Whipple, "Review of *The Fancher Train* by Amelia Bean," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 27(October 1959):416-417.
10. Maurine Whipple to John Ford, February 16, 1949, Maurine Whipple Papers (uncatalogued), Manuscript Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. (Hereinafter cited as Whipple Papers.) The collection is in the process of being catalogued and was used by permission of Dennis Rowley.
11. "Maurine Whipple's Story of *The Giant Joshua*," as told to Maryruth Bracy and Linda Lambert, *Dialogue* 6(Autumn-Winter 1971): 59.
12. Maurine Whipple, *The Giant Joshua* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1941), preface.
13. Ferris Greenslet to Maurine Whipple, February 1, 1938, Maurine Whipple Papers.
14. Nels Anderson to Juanita Brooks, February 25, 1941, Juanita Brooks Collection, Box 1, Folder 5, Utah State Historical Society Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.
15. These are some examples of the literary criticism. According to Bruce Jorgensen, "Flawed by soft pockets of anachronistic sentiment, *Joshua* poises unsteadily between popular genre of history-as-fiction . . . like *Gone with the Wind*, and the more . . . serious genre" like Willa Cather (Jorgensen, 7). William A. (Bert) Wilson felt, "As a philosophical treatment of Mormon doctrine, . . . the novel fails. But as a rendition of the Mormon experience, or at least part of it, it succeeds. Those of us who have read the novel have probably learned very little of Mormon philosophy. But we have had the pleasure of rubbing shoulders with real people, struggling with real problems, in a real world" (William Wilson, "Folklore in *The Giant Joshua*," *Proceedings of the Symposia of the Association for Mormon Letters*, 1978-79:63). Edward A. Geary explained, "*The Giant Joshua* despite its faults . . . is a powerful and moving novel which is accessible to both Mormons and non-Mormons" (Edward A. Geary, "The Poetics of Provincialism: Mormon Regional Fiction," *Dialogue* 11(Summer 1978):22).
16. The reviews, however, praised the historical information. In a contemporary review, Ray B. West, Jr., in *Saturday Review of Literature* said, "The author has followed historical fact with admirable accuracy" (Ray B. West, Jr., "Mormon Story," *Saturday Review of Literature* 23[January 4, 1941]:5). Bruce Jorgensen felt, "Certainly few other Mormon novels match its historical scope and solidity" (Jorgensen, 7). Cracroft told Whipple, "The brilliant blend of artisty, Mormon folkways, Mormon history, and the humanity of its characters makes this a memorable book" (Cracroft). Only John A. Widstoe in *The Improvement Era* questioned *Joshua's* historical accuracy and Edward Geary questioned whether he had any support for his argument (John A. Widstoe, "On the Book Rack," *The Improvement Era* 44[February 1941]:93; Geary, 22).
17. John A. Widstoe, "On the Book Rack," *Improvement Era* 44(February 1941): 93.
18. Edward A. Geary, "The Poetics of Provincialism: Mormon Regional Fiction," *Dialogue* 11(Summer 1978):22.

18. Bruce Jorgensen, "Retrospection: *Giant Joshua*," *SUNSTONE* 3(September-October 1978): 7; Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "Fictional Sisters," *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah*, Claudia L. Bushman, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Emmeline Press Limited, 1976), 254.
19. Jorgensen, 7.
20. Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 4.
21. Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 27.
22. Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 6.
23. Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 121-122.
24. Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 295.
25. Kimball Young, *Isn't One Wife Enough?* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1954), 56-57.
26. Stephanie Smith Goodson, "Plural Wives," *Mormon Sisters*, 105.
27. Maurine Whipple, *This is the Place: Utah* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), 138-139.
28. Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 550.
29. Geary, 22.
30. Jessie L. Embry, *Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 142.
31. Embry, 142-146.
32. Kathryn Smoot Caldwell, *The Principle* (SLC: Randall Books, 1983), 18.
33. Embry, 34.
34. Embry, 32.
35. Nels Anderson, *Deseret Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 400.
36. Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (Avon, Conn: The Heritage Press, 1972), 75.
37. Embry, 34-36.
38. Photocopies of the notes James Hulett took during his interviews are available in the Kimball Young Collection, Manuscript Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. In several interviews he asked about sexual behavior and this was the common response.
39. Embry, 73-82; Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 118-119.
40. Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 134-136.
41. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective*, Michael Gordon, ed. (New York: St. Martin Press, 1978), 339.
42. There are numerous examples when Clory tells her feelings about polygamy to Pal. Three examples are Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 71-73, 548-550, 612-613.
43. Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 360, 420, 424.
44. Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 550.
45. Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 463-464.
46. Stan L. Albrecht, Bruce A. Chadwick, and Cardell K. Jacobson, *Social Psychology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1987), 252.
47. The information about Whipple's family is from family group sheets submitted as part of a four-generation program of the LDS Church. Copies of the group sheets can be found in the Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.
48. Edward A. Geary, "Mormondom's Lost Generation: The Novelists of the 1940s," *BYU Studies* 18(Fall 1977): 92.
49. England, 19-20.
50. Whipple, *This is the Place*, 138.
51. Virginia Sorensen, *A Little Lower than the Angels* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942).
52. Virginia Sorensen, *A Little Lower than the Angels* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942).
53. Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt, "Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth Century American Literature," *Western Humanities Review* 22(Summer 1968):244-248.
54. Geary, "Mormondom's Lost Generation," 93.
55. Geary, 94.
56. Geary, 94.
57. Virginia Sorensen, "Is it True—The Novelist and his Materials," *Western Humanities Review* 7(1953): 291.
58. Anderson, preface.
59. "Maurine Whipple's Story," 60-61.
60. Linda Sillitoe, conversation with Jessie Embry.
61. Maurine Whipple to John Crowe Ransom, The Kenyon Review, November 6, 1957, Maurine Whipple Papers.
62. Whipple, *This is the Place: Utah*, 166.
63. Whipple to Ransom, 6 November 1957.
64. Maud F. Reiser to Maurine Whipple, 12 March 1941, Maurine Whipple Papers.
65. Mrs. Isabel Moyle to Maurine Whipple, 1 June 1942, Maurine Whipple Papers.
66. Ulrich, 242.
67. Arthur G. Miller, *In the Eye of the Beholder* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), 7.