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Folk Elements in the Formation of the Mormon Personality

AUSTIN E. FIFE

Sir Hilary and Tenzig felt a unique sense of achievement when they reached the 29,000 foot height of Mount Everest. Yet at the same time they must have sensed the smallness, the frailty of man in the face of the immensity of the earth and the cosmos spread out before them.

My own feelings were not dissimilar when as a student at Utah State University I climbed Mount Logan. As I arrived on the summit at daybreak I looked back upon the valley from which I had emerged to behold it shrouded in darkness. To the east the sun was rising beyond the ranges of Wyoming like a great beacon inviting me to pilot my course toward lands of the rising sun. I was not then aware that the darkness over Cache Valley came largely from the unilluminated recesses of my own soul, and that the beacon of that sun derived its inviting brightness from the humanistic tradition of Europe. Like a faithful pilot, for a quarter century since then I have plotted my course by this beacon, until at last I have circumnavigated the globe to make a landing once more in the valley whence I came. The flight has been filled with hazards and rewards and I am not sure if my presence here is to be compared with the welcome of a prophet in his own land or to the return of the Prodigal Son.

Typically an audience expects a folklorist to entertain it with quaint proverbs, to sing for it the songs that grandma used to sing, or to tell stories about Brer Rabbit and the fox. That he should speak about the structure of a culture or the formation of personality seems presumptuous. However, the realm of folklore is somewhat more vast than is ordinarily presumed, and, when pursued with diligence, it can throw light upon many areas of culture ignored by other disciplines.

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Folklore is a science which is too much neglected—the science of the commonplace. After all, it is what there is most of in our lives. It is taken so much for granted that we fail to see its deeper implications. The folklorist takes the view that what is most important is not truth itself so much as man's view of truth, not fact but myth. I hope that you will keep this definition of myth in your minds throughout this lecture. The word has been used in so many ways and to mean so many things that serious misunderstandings might arise if you fail to recall the particular meaning which we give to it: *myth is man's view of reality.*

Myth, then, and not fact, is the area that interests the folklorist: man's view of the cosmos, man's comprehension of the nature of life, of death, of life hereafter, and of life before birth. The folklorist insists that what is important is not so much the historic or scientific fact as the use that man makes of the historic or scientific fact in the here and now. Nor does the folklorist assume that fact and myth are perforce in conflict with each other. The word "lore" in *folklore* means both knowledge and belief, and these are not mutually exclusive.

As for the "folk" of *folklore,* a definition is somewhat harder. We would not, however, leave you with the traditional view that society is to be divided into two categories—the folk and the non-folk, the simple and the learned, the aristocrat and the plebeian. A folklorist must take the more democratic view that human beings are equal, not only before the law, but in intrinsic worth. Moreover, the folklorist recognizes that people are essentially "folk" in most of their behavior and "non-folk" in a little of their behavior. I myself try to behave in the realms of folklore and French literature as "non-folk." I am, or strive to be, a specialist who seeks to know the knowable and to expound it with the maximum possible correspondence between the fact and my view of the fact. In these fields I might be called a scientist. But just get me talking about sports or automobiles or glaciers or zoology, and I am as "folk" as they come. My pulse is quickened by the appearance of a snake, be it poisonous or not, because in the "folk" tradition I was trained to react that way. Had I been reared in the snake cult of the Cumberland Gap I might take the most deadly reptiles and

wrap them caressingly about my neck. The behavior of all of us is to a very large degree determined by the selection of myth that we have made via the channels of the folk.

This selectivity brings us to a definition of personality which is basic to the subject-matter of this lecture. Each of us is born as an organism whose genetic structure establishes certain characteristics, certain potentials, and certain limitations. But the essence of the *person* which this organism eventually becomes is formed gradually via experience. The terms "heredity" and "environment" have traditionally been used to express this dual source of the personality. However, the importance of "heredity" may well have been exaggerated, and the term "environment" is inadequate because it suggests a static set of conditions rather than a complex of living, changing experiences which spring from a common source but which form a particular unity for each individual. The common mass whence these experiences spring is the myth system of a particular culture—the views of reality that are held in common. Personality, in this context, is little more than one individual's selection of myth. This personality is not a rigid unchanging thing, but an evolving complex until the sad moment when the individual has so solidified his myths that nothing can be added to them or substracted from them: *rigor mortis* not yet, but *rigor personalitatis,* which is an even sadder state: from it Henri Bergeson, in his essay *Laughter* derives the essence of the comic.

Folklore is a science of the commonplace: the folklorist strives to assemble, classify, and understand man's commonplace views of reality, just as a botanist assembles, classifies, and understands plants. The songs learned and sung outside of school, the church, the concert hall, and commercialized mass-media; the rhymes, proverbs, sayings, comparisons, similies, and metaphors not learned from professors or school books; the gestures, signs, and symbols not taught by the dramatics coach or art teacher; the anecdotes, yarns, and stories that school anthologies and MIA manuals do not print; the houses, derricks, gates, fences, quilts, and rugs that are not designed and made by skilled craftsmen in drafting rooms and factories, or by specialists in the mechanical engineering and home economics

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departments of state colleges; the rhymes, jingles and finger-play that we use to entertain children—from a selection of these each man forms to a very large extent his view of reality and works out his relationship with the cosmos. The folklorist finds them quite as important as the subject matter of any traditional scientific or humanistic discipline.

The folklorist, of course, recognizes the importance of the work being done by other scientists. Theirs is the task of ever seeking to make man's myths correspond to reality as nearly as possible, for when our myth systems get out of step with reality there is confusion in the ranks—chaos in the culture and frustration in the personality. There is similar chaos when scientists wish to impose views of reality which seem to destroy cherished myths. All of folklore is not error, nor is all myth falsehood. Man is a believing animal. He must form a view of reality for himself. The scientists cannot form it for him, although they must keep trying to communicate to man their findings. In our daily lives we must each face situations and solve problems nearly all of which are too complex or require too immediate a solution for the scientific method to be of much use. This being true, there is only one recourse: to make an act of faith, depend upon an intuitive decision, follow the impulse that springs from the totality of one's accumulated myths.

We have reached a point where we might venture to make some basic distinctions between the cultural roles played by the folklorist, the scientist, and the humanist. Please note, however, that if we segregate them it is only for the sake of definition. If a scholar is worth his salt there is a bit of all three within him, whichever he prefers to be called. The scientist should not be a destroyer of myth but one who purifies it by trying to make it correspond to reality as nearly as he can. He must let man believe, but he must give man knowledge by which he may construct beliefs that are dependable.

The humanist is a myth maker. His job is to take the commonplace on the one hand and the scientific on the other and join the two in holy wedlock. The humanist must be sensitive to the flexible elements of myth so that he can find ways of accommodating the new to the old, not the old to the new. Remember, myth has seniority over science: seniority via age

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and seniority via plurality of acceptance. We cannot hope to build man in the image of the scientist, but we may build scientists in the image of man.

The folklorist assembles, classifies, and interprets myth. And since myth is an evolving, changing thing, just as is personality, his job is never finished. He must keep offering the scientist the data of myth for his rites of purification. For the humanist he must keep redefining the essence of contemporary myth systems so that *he* may lead chastened bride and groom into a new union. Thus has man ever sought to establish his *rapport* with the cosmos, and in this manner alone can he hope to maintain it.

I come to folklore via the Mormon myth system and the humanistic tradition of France. For twenty years I have been re-examining the components of my Mormon culture so that I might thereby gain a better view of myself. And for nearly thirty years I have steeped myself in the language, literature, and culture of France because I felt that it was central to the stream of Western Civilization of which both American and Mormon culture are a part. I wrote a doctoral dissertation on mediaeval Christian folklore, and have taught French language and literature for nearly twenty years. During that time I have spent many long and short vacations with Mrs. Fife in many Mormon and western towns, talking with the folk about the commonplace elements of their culture. In hundreds of interviews we have gathered their songs and stories, listened to their pioneer reminiscenses, and recorded their sayings, beliefs, proverbs, and jokes. We have photographed their houses, barns, gates, fences, and hay derricks. We have made kodachrome slides of their lovely quilts and rugs, and gathered their homespun medical and cosmetic recipes. We have trod the ditchbanks to interview farmers about the planting of crops, the killing of hogs, or fights over water. We have visited new mothers in hospitals to ask them about their views on courtship, marriage, pregnancy, and the rearing of children. Each little tidbit has been like a crumb from the table of some other discipline, yet of the crumbs we think that we have made a loaf.

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In Franklin, Idaho, my informant looked me over inquiringly and said: "You know, you look just like a man I almost married." "Who?" I asked. "Hendricks Stocks," she said. And I replied: "Well, that's understandable. Hendricks is my first cousin!" In Ogden I went to interview Zeke Johnson, long-time superintendent of the Bridges and Arches National Monuments. "I am Doctor Fife, representing the Library of Congress, and I am here to . . ." Zeke interrupted: "Fife, eh! Any relation to Jeanette Fife?" "Why, yes," said I. "Jeanette Fife was my grandfather's sister." Zeke put his arm around my shoulder: "Well, son," said he, "Jeanette Fife was my father's third plural wife!" Thus the bonds of kinsmen were established between us, and I gained entree into another storehouse filled with treasures of Mormon lore. The pleasures derived from the interviews themselves have been so great that our time would have been well spent even if we had taken no notes nor published any of the results of our findings.

I have given a rather extensive background about the materials and methods of folklore, and our particular commitment to it; the logical next question should concern the application we have made thereof in the study of the folklore of our own culture. What have we found to be the components of the Mormon myth system as we have observed them, not in Mormon theology or in the organized activities of the church, but among the Mormon people? At the very outset we should remind you that the Mormon folk tradition is part and parcel of Anglo-American folk tradition, despite the peculiarities which it has inherited from Mormon theology and from the unique Mormon sociological experience. I have at times felt that not only is the Mormon folk culture uniquely American but excessively so, that in some areas we actually exaggerate American qualities. With nearly all Americans we share a common European heritage and voluntary migration into a wilderness by individuals and family groups who were searching for an improved way of life in a new and hostile land.

> The lands that boast of so much light
> We know they're all as dark as night
> Where poor men toil and want for bread
> And rich men's dogs are better fed.

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The lands that boast of liberty
You ne'er again would wish to see
When you from England make a start
To cross the plains in your handcart.

These lines from a ballad of the Handcart Pioneers express an almost universal view of immigrants to the New World which is basic to the formation of the American personality: a clean break with the fatherland, a mystical faith in the discovery of the land of promise. The same things recur in hundreds of songs, tales, and anecdotes of almost every linguistic and racial group that colonized our land. Together they constitute an almost militant and idealized ethnocentrism which sets our culture apart from the rest of mankind: tragically apart in this tiny world of the era of fission! Little wonder that isolationist feelings have made us shun European entanglements, exalt our materialistic achievements as if God spoke no language except Yankee American. High tariffs, resistance to foreign aid, and a whole schema of isolationist political behavior are but a few of the manifestations of this "chip on the shoulder" attitude toward the lands that gave us our birth.

Activism is another element of the American myth system that is maximized among the Mormons. Lower middle class Europeans have seldom had the feeling that they could do much about their humble lot in Europe. That is why many of them immigrated here. And, by jove, when they got here they were going to change their lot! Futility is simply not American. If you don't like what you have, what you are, and where you are, you can do something about it and you should. "God helps those who help themselves." "Never say die." "Where there's a will there's a way." "Put your shoulder to the wheel." These ideas expressed in many of the forms of folk tradition are universal in America. The group that set out to colonize Blanding, Bluff, and Monticello beyond the ominous chasms of the Colorado had to build a kind of ramp down the side of a steep incline. The job detained them for several weeks but they did it and amazed the local Indians who knew that the Colorado simply couldn't be crossed at that point. And while they were

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building their ramp they rallied their confidence by singing:

Did you ever hear tell of the spider
Who tried up the wall for to climb?
If not just take this as a guider,
It may come in handy in time.

Nine times he tried hard to ascend it,
And every time took a fall,
But he kept right on climbing, light-hearted,
And at last reached the top of the wall.

Do you think it's by sitting and sighing
You'll ever obtain all you want?
It's cowards who stand around crying
And foolishly saying, "I can't."

It's only by plodding and working
And laboring up the steep hill
With faith in your heart never shrinking
And saying, "I can and I will."

If you want to see how far the myth system of a culture can differ from this maximization of the principle of activism, you should re-read "The Thousand and One Nights." Here all is fate: fame and fortune, pleasures and sorrows, are made by a whim of Allah, and human beings are moved by him like so many pawns on the chess-board of the earth.

I suppose that all pioneering groups have been preoccupied first of all with the solution of immediate economic problems. The sustenance of life certainly has a high priority among the cultural values of any people whatsoever. It becomes almost overpowering when hunger, poverty, and the hostility of an unknown land conspire to threaten life itself. Hence it would be surprising indeed if a practical materialism had not dominated the growing years of our American culture. The Mormon pioneering experience intensified this hazard, although rather well organized group techniques for alleviating the material needs of the people gave them somewhat more security than was felt by other pioneers of the great American desert.

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All western pioneers knew hardship, hunger, want. Such an imprint was made on the pioneer imagination concerning the value of material things that we, the second and third generations, in our easy luxury, still project the obsessions of our ancestors, nourish the illusion that the more wealth we accumulate the better off we are, even when our possessions have actually become a burden. There are correctives for this rampant materialism in other-worldly aspects of the theology of Mormonism and in delicacies of the folk imagination, but these correctives have not gone far enough as yet in bringing us around to a frame of mind where we can use our material wealth in the best interests of the good life.

One has but to examine the amazing mass of Mormon tales and anecdotes about the rewards that are in store for those who keep the faith to note that in almost every instance the rewards involved are of a material rather than of a spiritual or aesthetic nature. We cite the following story as an example.

> A large group of Mormon Boy Scouts was seated Indian fashion around a camp fire. The light of the flames gave occasional glimpses of faces that were expectant and eager. The famous San Juan guide and storyteller, Zeke Johnson, was telling them a faith-promoting story. Zeke's tall figure, unbent after seventy years of wrangling and prospecting, cast its shadow across the boys to the outer edge of the circle.
>
> "Once upon a time, back in '49, there was two young fellers from Missouri name of Black and Temple that come through Salt Lake on their way to Californie gild diggin's. They'd made an agreement that if either one of them left the other while on the way to the gold fields, the other would take possession of the whole outfit for his journey.
>
> "When they'd stopped at Salt Lake to replenish their supplies, they saw the church folks gathering at the old Bowery. And the one name of Black decides to go over and listen to the Mormon meeting. He was so impressed by the sermon delivered by Orson Pratt that he decides right there and then to join up with the Mormons. So next morning he goes and takes his personal things off the wagon and tells his buddy he's going to stay in Salt Lake. Of course his friend protested but Black wouldn't give in and so he had to go on to Californie alone.

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"Well, you know when I was down there at Blanding, I was both the mayor and the bishop. And I conducted two funerals down there that I want to tell you about. The first was a funeral for Brother Black—the very same one that come out to Salt Lake and stayed back in '49. He had over a hundred descendants, and never in my life have I been to such a beautiful funeral where there was more love and veneration showed to the deceased.

"It wasn't more than a week before an old man, a beggar, come to town with a horse and a pack mule. And he died there and 'cause there wasn't no folks that cared about him, being the mayor I had to take care of him. Well, I finds out his name is Temple—the very same Temple that come through God's counrty back in '49 and kept right on going till he got to Californie. He didn't have a cent, or a friend, or a relative. A bunch of us chipped in and got him some burying clothes and I conducted his funeral and it wasn't attended by a single person that had ever known him before."

A concomitant to the American and Mormon preoccupation with material wealth is what one fine scholar has called the "health, education, and recreation complex," which makes its indelible mark on all of the forms of community activity in our Mormon culture. Mormon commitments to health, education, recreation, and welfare programs of substantial proportions and of amazing complexity are so ever present that the young Mormon may make commitments to leadership in scores of these activities and enjoy opportunities to develop skills in group dynamics which exceed those of any other cultural group in America. This activity may have one negative result, since they may thus be deprived of opportunities for the contemplative life. They read less, think less, and feel less than might be possible if their social commitments were not so great. The French philosopher Pascal once said that the misfortunes of man derive from his inability to remain alone in a room. The prestige of books is not as high among us as it ought to be, nor are we as aggressive as we should be about seeking out and incorporating among us great ideas that emerge in cultures not our own. We are activists, but as yet to a large extent in social and materialistic ways. The time may well have come when we should seek ways of channeling our activism into realms of intellectuality

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and aesthetics which could be rewarding beyond our hopes.

Somewhat more is to be said about the commitment of our culture to education. Via official pronouncement of the leaders of the church almost since its inception it has been inculcated that man cannot be saved in ignorance. Both at Kirtland and at Nauvoo truly startling experiments were made in education by the church, especially when they are viewed in the frontier environment that presents so few examples of worthy educational programs. Moreover, today it appears that a startlingly large percentage of young Mormons pursue educational programs beyond high school. There is a reason for this beyond the emphasis of the theology upon knowledge: Mormons believe in large families, and a predominantly agricultural economy cannot provide employment for a population that has increased at the rate at which the Mormon population has increased. Hence Utah's chief export has been young Mormons. They fill the crafts and professions of America. Let me use a personal example which I think may be typical. My grandparents on either side reared more than a dozen children each. When men of my father's generation came to maturity there was still farm land to be wrested from the wilderness so that most of the first generation of Utah-born Mormons was reabsorbed by the land. But the 160 acres which my father tilled would have had to be carved into sixteen-acre parcels in order to hold his ten offspring on the soil. One stuck to farming in the same region; two remained in farming but had to seek land on the confines of Mormondom, and the other seven entered professions or skilled employment at far-flung points in America. To them, education was an economic necessity: thank heaven there was a commitment to it in the theology of the church!

It is to be noted, however, that the Mormon commitment to education takes two rather well defined directions: one toward an understanding of the Mormon cosmology which is developed in such great detail that little room is left for varying points of view; the other, towards professional competence, with a rather specific goal of permitting a young Mormon to earn a living. Neither of these goals constitutes a concept of liberal education as it has existed for a long time in the institu-

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tions of higher learning of Western Europe and the United States. What is called a liberal education is directed neither towards a specific professional competence nor toward the understanding of the cosmology of a single cultural group. Rather, its goal has been to liberate the mind of man by exposing it to all of the great lines of thought and aspiration which have played a guiding role in the civilizations of man at all times and in all places.

Now it is a near universal experience of young people when they are in the pursuit of higher learning, particularly in graduate school, to feel a degree of intellectual restlessness. The myths which their parents and their communities have used to instill respect for family, civic, and religious disciplines seem for a time to be at loggerheads with the realities encountered by young adults in their intellectual, social, and economic life. Great spiritual and intellectual crises are bound to occur, with varying degrees of neurotic reaction. Insofar as I can see, this crisis is particularly severe among young Mormons. Some examine the new systems of thought which confront them in an adult intellectual world and end by rejecting them wholly in favor of the totality of elements which forms their traditional way of life. A second group becomes resentful of the rigid and demanding idealisms which have been inculcated in their youth, and go through life like men without a country, since all too often a stable new system of values does not come to replace that which has been cast aside. There is still another group which liberalizes their traditional Mormon views of reality to encompass therein some of the great systems of thought and belief which have been common in the current of Western civilization since the dawn of the Hebraic and Helenic eras. This group is not nearly large enough. If there has been vitality in the Mormon views of reality, it certainly has been in the capacity it has had for accommodating itself to ever-changing realities. This process is best continued where there is a group among the young leadership eager to see human values in the far-flung corners of the earth and to bring them into the spiritual and intellectual spheres of our own inheritance.

All of this may well have been complicated by the fact

that rarely have clear distinctions been made among us between intuitive knowledge and knowledge acquired via sensory perceptions, or between abstract and concrete terms. It should be apparent that when one says on the one hand: "There is water in the upper ditch," and on the other: "Jesus Christ is our Savior," there is a difference in the nature of the evidence and hence in the kind of knowledge possessed. In the first case, one knows because one's eyes have seen, one's hand has felt, one's tongue has tasted, and one's ear has heard: the senses have perceived and the mind has recorded and interpreted their perception. In the second instance, intuitional forces have been at work, be they conceived simply as a subconscious synthesis of experience or as a flow of energy from God to man via the intermediary of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, in the second statement, "Jesus Christ is our Savior," an abstract term has crept in, since, although there is little quibbling to be done about the nature of water, or of the upper ditch, it is somewhat more complex to decide what is meant when one has used the term "Savior." All of us here might acecpt the statement, yet even within the frame of reference of our common Mormon heritage I am sure we would not agree on what the assertion means. Whenever abstract terms are treated as realities there is danger of embarassing pitfalls for the mind.

Now, when the young Mormon scientist gets involved in graduate studies he must learn that, when behaving as a scientist, he must reject all knowledge which does not come to him via sensory perception. He must behave *as if* there were no other ways of acquiring scientific truth. If he is insistent upon carrying this scientific method into the realm of religion, then he may be in great danger of losing his faith. It is, however, an absurd error on his part to attempt to apply the scientific method in all of the realms of life. Even in the simple matter of buying a new car or in choosing its color this scientific method is of relatively little value. It is at most a critical device to apply to a problem which must ultimately be solved by man's oldest intellectual technique, an intuitive decision.

Having made this cavalier pronouncement upon the fallacies which some young scientists commit, I feel constrained to come to a more sensitive point, namely that an equally dangerous

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step may well be taken by the young Mormon who decides in his maturity to live uniquely via the intuitions which he feels come to him from the promptings of the Spirit. Nowhere in Mormon theology is there evidence that the Saints should settle all of their problems, make all of their decisions, via this intuitive process. Emphasis upon knowledge, which presupposes to a large degree the scientific frame of mind, is constant in our tradition, so that it sometimes almost seems that the intuitive process was intended for sacred and complex realms alone, and that rationality should always serve as a watchdog over the lambs of intuition. Not a few young Mormons use intuition as a device to retreat from knowledge.

We could dwell upon accounts of excessive dependence upon intuition at tedious length, citing cases of promptings of the Spirit, answer to prayer, healings, rewards and punishments, which in their totality would seem embarrassing even to the most faithful among us. I feel constrained to dwell upon one example for a moment. Repeated accounts appear of the missionary who has suddenly found himself eloquent in a foreign tongue, and thus capable of expounding the gospel with remarkable persuasiveness, or of confounding civil authorities of other governments, or the learned spokesmen of other sects. This belief, I am afraid, has all too often had the effect of making missionaries actually lazy about the very difficult but rewarding task of learning the languages which they so urgently need, and not a few of them return to Zion somewhat less than eloquent, and with very superficial views about the culture of the people who have been their hosts. This causes me to ponder what I think is a serious problem in Utah's educational program. With our missionary system, our commitment to genealogical research, and the large proportion of our young people that enters graduate schools, we have a greater need for foreign language skills than any other cultural group in our land. Yet the programs to meet this need, either public or otherwise, are among the most inadequate. We wonder if here a misapplication of the concept of intuitive knowledge has not deprived us of another worthy Christian virtue: application to hard intellectual labor.

Another lively American and Mormon trait is the cult of

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the family. Among us it takes on unique characteristics in that the family is believed to be an eternal and indestructible unity based upon a patriarchal system encompassing one's ancestors and one's posterity. A great percentage of the total productive energy of our culture is committed to the work of constructing these patriarchal pyramids. The commitment of our elders to this task, I feel sure, furnishes a sense of usefulness in the culture which old people do not find anywhere else in America. It is alarming, nevertheless, that in a country where the family cult has been pushed the farthest, divorce and family instability are increasing at an alarming rate.

The possibility suggests itself that to solve our complex and growing problems of broken families and juvenile delinquency we need to direct our energies somewhat more than we have toward the self-fulfillment of the individuals who must inevitably constitute the groups. No matter how devoted we are to family solidarity, there is an equally high ideal in devotion to the self-fulfillment of each human being as an independent intellectual identity. If the individual gains a notion of his integrity as an individual in a culture, then he is most apt to fulfill his family, his religious, and his civic obligations.

I am more hopeful than I once was about the plight of the young intellectual in our culture and about the ultimate success of liberal movements among us. The effect of my folklore studies has been to increase my respect for our folk heritage. The lore of Mormonia forms as satisfactory a base for flights into humanism and science as have the folk cultures of most peoples. The roosts on which Aristotle or Pascal or St. Thomas spread their wings were no more sturdy: we need not feel that our feet have been glued.

A couple of weeks ago I climbed Mount Logan again. It was early evening and slanting rays of sunlight filled Cache Valley with light and warmth. I saw the west fields where I had spent many hours fishing. Later the piping of the red-wing blackbirds, the scent of marsh gas, and the sloshing of muddy water in my shoes would be like good companions to accompany me on my journeys in Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle,* Buffon's *Natural History,* Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, and Thoreau's *Walden*—Cache Valley had given me tools to under-

stand man in his relationship to the biological world. I saw the Fourth Ward meeting house where the grave responsibilities of manhood were inculcated via ritual, preachment, and precept. If at times they seemed almost too heavy for me to bear, I have, I think, learned to take my social role seriously. In that meeting house I was heralded away to France where a whole new culture would be unfolded to me—a culture so rich and human that I would come to feel like Thomas Jefferson who had said a century and a quarter earlier: "*Tout le monde a deux pays; le sien et puis la France.*" "Everyone has two fatherlands, his own and after that France."

And finally I saw Utah State University, where I went through my first rites of myth purification. The process was as painful as a surgical operation but I survived and recovered. Nor was the essence of my Mormon view of reality destroyed in the process. I remain an activist, have faith in the rewards that are in store for those who strive. I am materialist enough to be grateful for the modest wealth my culture has bestowed upon me. There have also been rewards of a less tangible and more enduring nature in the realms of intellectuality and aesthetics which my particular kind of activism has caused me to uncover. I may still be ethnocentric in the way in which I treasure my heritage, but I have strived to develop loyalties which transcend it, encompassing my country and the world in which I live. In the narrow realm of folklore and French civilization I may even have become a scientist, seeking to make my views about these subjects correspond with reality as much as possible and accepting evidence which comes from the senses that I have. But I still solve most of my problems by an act of faith and with spontaneous conformity to my myths. I keep my muscles busy as well as my mind, believing that the health of the two is inseparable: the mind, however, comes first. I am committed to the cult of the family, but I keep some realms of my being which are preeminently personal.

I have likened the purification of my myths at Utah State University to a surgical operation. It was a complicated case and the patient was hardy but stubborn. It lasted three years. Beloved professors took turns wielding the knife, and I am

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grateful to have had opportunity this summer to thank them for the expertness of their surgery.

In my young manhood I looked down upon Cache Valley to see it shrouded in darkness. A few weeks ago I looked down upon it to perceive light. The old proverb says that gold is where you find it. This also seems to be true of darkness and of light.