Four Utah Mormon Artists as Authors

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FOUR UTAH MORMON ARTISTS AS AUTHORS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Art
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Roxie Dale Trimble
August 1982
This thesis, by Roxie Dale Trimble, is accepted in its present form by the Department of Art of the Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Alex B. Darais, Committee Chairman

Peter L. Myer, Committee Member

July 26, 1982

Typed by Sharon H. Bird
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between visual art and literature is consistent and can be traced through history. The artists William Blake, Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo, Delacroix, Rossetti, to name a few, frequently utilized other forms of expression to complement their visual art. Visual and literary arts have paralleled and reflected each other; and the relationship between artists and writers is enriched by the vast number of them "in whom the creative urge finds need of spilling over into a second or third activity."¹

I have experienced widening perspectives of visual art and literature by examining and developing understanding of the methods, experiences and goals of other artist-authors in our day. This research has proven to be very interesting and beneficial.

Statement of the Problem

There seems to be a definite relationship between a person's work as a visual artist and his literary work. The purpose of this study was to explore this relationship and try to determine characteristics of this parallelism.

Method of Research

The writer proposed to: (1) Establish criteria for the selection of the four artist-writers to be studied. The selection of those artists/writers chosen was influenced by the fact that the author is a Mormon artist/writer interested in the work of others with similar objectives and values. The works of the artists/writers chosen were available and the author had already been somewhat acquainted with it and them. (2) Interview the artist-writers with a prepared questionnaire and compile and compare responses. (3) Research other studies (if any) which have been done on these artists. (4) Draw conclusions from this study.
Justification of the Problem

The author, being an artist-writer, has benefited personally from this study. It is possible for me to pursue my own work more effectively and efficiently, having been exposed to the endeavors of other artist/authors. This work should also be of value to others who are pursuing similar objectives. The evident success and strength of the artist/writers studied may encourage and influence others to pursue more than one direction in the arts.

Delimitations of the Problem

(1) Only the four artist-writers selected will be studied and will be present or past residents of Utah.
(2) No attempt to evaluate quality of artistic or literary form will be made.
Chapter 2

PROCESSES AND INFLUENCES IN THE LITERARY AND VISUAL ARTS

It is unlikely that any art can convey the identical message of another. Each art performs its act of communication in its own superior way, but all are vehicles of self-expression. William Wyman has said that his use of poetry is intended to complement the form and to be part of the visual and tactile sensations, combining text and image. The meeting ground of the arts is in their emotive content, and they have the potential of adding other dimensions to each other.

Every known society, culture or group of mankind has created art; thus, it is safe to conclude that art is natural to the mind of man. Just as there is always some form of spoken language in a group of people, so there is always some form of art.

---


2Dyson P. Shultz, "An Artistic Marriage?," School Arts, 62 (February, 1963), 27.
people, there is always some form of visual artistic expression. Simplified, visual art is the visual language of man. Even though spoken language seems to be natural to us, it must be learned by each generation; so also must the visual language be learned, as an understanding of it is not instinctive. However, art can reach into and "touch the deep structure of the unnamable."³

To understand the arts deeply, we must begin to understand man and much of his infinite searchings.⁴ Self-identification with our environment and a personal relationship with the ideas of man in harmony or conflict with our environment is essential.⁵

All forms in life are language, and communication flows between all of them whether verbal or non-verbal; gesture is a language, mathematics is a language, plant growth, politics, business, geology—all the arts and

---

⁴Wright, p. 24.
sciences are vocabularies alive through man, even the unspeakable contributes to shape our world. Walt Whitman expresses this:

... Were you thinking that those were the words, Those upright lines, those curves, angles, dots! No, those are not the words, the substantial words are in the ground and sea, They are in the air, they are in you... The workmanship of souls is by those inaudible words of the Earth, The masters know the earth's words and use them more than audible words... To her children the words of the eloquent dumb Great Mother never fail... Say on, sayers! Sing on, singers! Delve! Mould! Pile the words of the earth! Work on, age after age, nothing is to be lost, It may have to wait long, but it will certainly come in use, When the materials are all prepared and ready, the architects shall appear.6

We endeavor to build bridges between unique fields, and enter into activities new to each of us in deepening interconnections. Our paths meet through both visual and verbal communication. The artist must sense the shape of his feeling and the force and nature of his communication; the writer creates a physical and

psychological environment with paper and ink--each may think the other to have the gift of expression as each creates shapes and images that carry reflections into our environment with a certain "feel" to it.

Even our presence gives off some utterance common to all men, and we may study to approach (thus to hear and feel and see) communications with all its resources of natural materials for human concern. Surprises occur with light and shadow, sound and silence, movement and rest. People and things and actions and ideas are their own statements, available to us for our play in creativity.

Colors, textures, and shapes; gloss and dryness, glow and shadow, weight and sound; rhythm of movement in time and space—all these things can speak to us through our materials. We care about them because we are affected by them.

In writing it makes a difference how the writer looks at things and how he handles his material. This is also true with the artist. Through feelings and observations, sensations result in movement. Touch, color, shape, and rhythm; all affect the artist and the writer. "Poets are not the only poets, and if poetry is as deep
a matter as I think it is, it is not confined to words."  

Rene Magritte (Belgian surrealist) said: "The function of painting is to make poetry visible."  

It should be apparent that there are some underlying aesthetic principles common to the various arts. These principles, being present in a work in one art, will appear in a work in other arts. Subject matter may give us the impulse to search for more meaningful parallels. Where there is a genuine stylistic unity in the works of a poet-painter, it ought to show up even in the absence of common subjects.  

At the beginning of the creative process the intuitive response of a poet is to write; whereas a painter, similarly moved, responds by painting. The only serious gesture they can make is bound up in the art they

7 Richards, pp. 33, 34.  


know best. For an individual genuinely competent in several arts, this limitation disappears. Every "stir" has the potential for expression in several very different ways. To inquire into the creative process at work in such an individual, then, is to ask not only a question such as, "Why did he write this poem?" but also, "Why did he express these things as a poem instead of as a painting?"

Art cannot be divorced from life. It is related to universal and enduring human values, and we must have a certain depth and richness of affective life. We must have experienced joy, sorrow, pain, etc.—though no set of experiences paralleling that of artists is necessary to understand works of written and visual art and their form. Horatio Greenough in reflecting upon a work of art stated:

Does all this charm me because it is divine? Surely not; but because it is humanity—humanity not ashamed


of itself; which seems to say—Imperfect as I am, show me something better! 13

Within the aesthetic emotion of the arts is the dominant element of sheer constructiveness, the delight in making, of synthesis, of composition. There is the sensuous pleasure of the material. In poetry, there is pleasure of the words and images conveyed, as well as added pleasures of metre and rhythm and rhyme, etc. These are the materials as pigments are to the painter. It is accepted by some that what a poet deals with is pictures or thoughts, and words are merely his technical means of expression. Poetry shares with other arts the illusory treatment of its material as is so easily recognizable in sculpture that "comes alive." 14

The various forms of the arts add to the world a fresh reality. It is our privilege to make new realities of our own construction, based on ordinary reality, but different as we make our own art. 15


15 Alexander, p. 21.
Chapter 3

INSIGHTS FROM SOME CURRENT UNITED STATES ARTIST/WRITERS

Following are some varied ideas from four current United States artist/writers regarding their experiences in the intermingling of the visual and literary arts.

1. Tom Lea

Tom Lea is an acclaimed United States author/illustrator, whose art (written and visual) has to do with the relationship of person to country. When questioned about his visual art, he responded that writing was nothing but a projection of his painting—that he never paints sitting down, neither writes sitting down; and that a preliminary overall design or study must precede either attempt at self-expression. His method in writing (as in the visual) is to envision the end from the beginning—to know the first line and, before going on, to know the last line. "This is a mural painter at
work. You see the whole area so that it all flows the way you need it,"1 says Mr. Lea.

I'm extremely conscious of how things look—that's my profession. I can understand the direction and flow of forms, the luminosity of the particular tone, the value of light and dark. I see those things automatically. This is a matter of eye, and a mind that is trained to read what the eye says. With writing it's a totally different thing; it's what you hear. When you're there with the stub pencil in your hand, the main thing is what does it sound like. It's not beautiful typography; it's not fine illustration . . . . It's two different worlds, that of sight and that of sound. It has to come from something very deep, and those two wells don't flow simultaneously . . . for me, . . . the illustrations made after the book is done, that's just icing on the cake. They are a projection into a slightly different dimension, and I hope they deepen the meaning. I leave an awful lot out. Maybe expressionistic—I would call it that in painting.2

2. E. E. Cummings

For more than seventy-five years the twin obsessions of E. E. Cummings were painting and writing. He constantly delved into the parallels among painting, literature and music, and endeavored to adapt into literature the principles of the other arts. Many

1Patrick Bennett, "Wells of Sight and Sound: An Interview with Tom Lea," Southwest Review, 65 (Spring, 1980), 113-125.

2Bennett, p. 15.
readers recognize something visual in his poetry, this being a response to the designs of the words and the space on the page. These designs are not representational but grew out of Cummings' concern for the relationships of the printed words to the spaces around them. It seems he not only thought and heard his poems, but he saw them as well.\(^3\)

This "visual dimension idea" may feel uneasy to us as we are usually required to respond to a poem in terms of imagery, symbolism, irony, rhythm, rhyme, and so forth; and we usually respond to graphic art in terms of color, line, mass, depth, composition, and abstraction, etc.\(^4\)

The significant element of this endeavor of Cummings is that he reached out with poetry and incorporated ideas and attitudes from painting and compelled the visual to subserve literary ends; however, the poem was more than a description of a painting.

The painting represents an image. The poem presents a sequence of images suffused with extra-visual attributes. He knew that he had two

\[^3\text{Kidder, "Twin Obsessions . . .,"}\text{, p. 342.}\]

\[^4\text{Kidder, p. 353.}\]
different media on his hands: rather than using them for the same ends, he respected their differences and employed them, even with common subjects, in different ways.\(^5\)

3. Elise Asher

Elise Asher, the "Poet of Plexiglas," has combined an abstract design, poem-making process, with the painting experience, giving the abstract language in her painting a bridge to our physical world, using word images with subjective space and linear rhythm. Collage has grown very important in her work, and she has added three-dimensional elements to her work by joining plexiglas pages on an axis where the pages fan out.\(^6\)

Sometimes she has selected a poem or combination of poems, or even composed a poem as she paints on a sheet of plexiglas until she feels its completeness. Her work is an interesting expression of an age-old infatuation with the interrelation of poetry and painting. Each which resides in its own unique category of calligraphy

\(^5\)Kidder, p. 357.

is a form of expression on the one hand and is transcendental handwriting on the other.  

4. **Maurice Sendak**

Maurice Sendak, writer and illustrator of children's books, does not think of his books as pictures. He insists that he is not seduced by the graphic potential of words and does not think in terms of pictures. He advocates picture illustrations for children, but never for adults.  

Mr. Sendak relies on his "knack" for recalling the emotional quality of childhood and being able to put down in books the feelings that children have. He feels that children take quite literally things that adults receive lightly. He feels that he is a creative artist "who gets freer and freer with each book and opens up more and more."  

---


9 Hoffman, p. 368.
Some of his ideas seem to conflict in respect to the coordination of the visual and written work of artist/authors. A different perspective might be persuaded if more pertinent questions had been possible by the author in a one-to-one interview with Mr. Sendak.

Hopefully, this paper will indicate that visual and written works can complement, strengthen, and reflect each other.
Chapter 4

FOUR UTAH MORMON ARTIST/WRITERS
AND THEIR WORKS

This chapter presents information acquired from four Utah Mormon artist/authors through personal interviews. Examples of their work were acquired from the artists by the author.

1. Dianne Dibb Forbis

Mrs. Dianne Dibb Forbis is a former resident of Taylorsville, Utah, presently residing in Idaho, mother of three, and part-time writer/artist. She derives self-satisfaction through her expressive abilities and strives to maintain her skills so she can use them at will. She is constantly pressing forward to discover more powerful and distinct ways to express herself.

Originating from a family of nine children, Mrs. Forbis found early personal satisfaction through her success in art which continued into adulthood. She became an Art and English teacher, and her literary talents came into focus.
Enjoying all diversities and aspects of creativity, Mrs. Forbis also enjoys seeing the visual aspects of her written work interpreted by other artists, and feels no need to correlate her written and visual expression. Indicating that her work (especially the written) is sometimes not easily understood, and sometimes misinterpreted, the appreciation of her unique style may depend somewhat on what others bring to it.

The poem "Handicapped Child" and the painting "Learning to Read" (Plate II) reflect Mrs. Forbis' growing relationship with her handicapped daughter, Chaleen, who is now eleven years old. Chaleen, with physical handicaps as well as learning disabilities, did not break the "reading barrier" until she was nine and one-half years old.

Dealing mainly with present positive connotations blended with the strength of traditions, Mrs. Forbis sometimes intuitively arrives at the traditional modes, but feels that development of her talents has been gained primarily outside of traditions. She appreciates their good influence and recognizes their binding force and the fact that subject matter may be more or less attractive because of past influences and beliefs.
Mrs. Forbis' unique style is often reflected through whimsy, tongue-in-cheek perusal of subjects, getting to the point in a roundabout route. Partially self-taught, she finds inspiration through gospel truths and believes that a large part of creative success is good, hard, consistent work.

Mrs. Forbis feels that she has influenced more people through her writing, that they can be moved by her poetry and understand the written word more easily. She thinks people tend to feel they must have training to interpret art correctly. The written statements are more satisfying to her, and she can say more in a shorter span of time with less materials.

She easily accepts her work and feels positive about it, feeling a deeper allegiance to writing in preference to a career in the graphic arts. With renewed daily commitment, especially in creative writing, Mrs. Forbis plans to pursue a more systematic basis for success in her creative interests.

Exposure to Mrs. Forbis may seem incomplete as a personal meeting was not possible. The interview was conducted by correspondence. Following are some selected examples of Mrs. Forbis' work.
Letter of the Law

The luscious
fruit was there.

I took so
long
polishing my fingernails,
lotioning my hands,
practicing the graceful reach,

that

dinnertime was over
before I got to eat.¹

Talking

Don't always offer wet-winged words,
tottering thoughts, newly hatched,
not even peeping your intent.

The test-flight route,
of mind-heart-mouth
can cancel out
quixotic words
and magnify
what should be heard.²

¹Sent to writer by Dianne D. Forbis, Rexburg, Idaho, 1981.
²Ibid.
Handicapped Child

Tight little bud,
I tried for me,
prying
for at least a lilt,
even slightest flowering;
then I could place you
pretitily,
quickly, unobtrusively
into a little corner
of my motherhood corsage.

You
didn't
bloom.

You've never been bright
decoration
for my style.
But how you perfume life
with love.
Are there great bouquets
in you?
I sense
and some days even know
warm lacy garden
holds its folds
deep within
your winter look. 3

3 Sent to writer by Dianne D. Forbis, Rexburg, Idaho, 1981.
PLATE I

DIANNE D. FORBIS, 1980

Source: Personal correspondence between Dianne D. Forbis and the writer, 1981.
PLATE II
LEARNING TO READ*
PLATE III

LANDSCAPE*

*Torn magazine paper collage.

Source: Personal correspondence between Dianne D. Forbis and the writer, 1981.
PLATE IV

STILL LIFE 1*

*Torn magazine paper collage.

Source: Personal correspondence between Dianne D. Forbis and the writer, 1981.
*Gouache.

Source: Personal correspondence between Dianne D. Forbis and the writer, 1981.
2. Phyllis Luch

Mrs. Phyllis Luch was reared in the East and has settled in Salt Lake City, Utah, with her husband Warren Luch (also an artist). Mrs. Luch's highest objectives are to produce high quality work through self-expression. She is often commissioned to illustrate symbolic or allegorical stories for which research is often required.

Completely self-taught, Mrs. Luch has developed a unique style from her own sense of design, order, and interpretation. Her work often deals with stories from the past relating to the present and future. She enjoys experimenting with new techniques and presenting traditional ideas and stories from the past in a new way.

Mrs. Luch plans to correlate her written and visual work in the future. She has a simplicity of style in both the written work and visual work which seems to complement and reflect an interest in domestic subjects. She enjoys browsing in literature and researching traditions to learn from them, but prefers not to repeat them; perhaps this is evident in the quality of a fresh crisp nature that can be felt in her visual statements. (See Plates VI-XII.)
She credits her husband as having had the greatest influence in her visual works as far as encouragement and stimulation in productivity. She tends to be critical or too fussy about her work in the making, but accepts it more readily in retrospect. Her works convey the happy, wholesome, or bittersweet in life, with inspiration derived from the varieties in nature. She thoroughly enjoys absorbing the literary and visual arts of all ages with an outlook to grasp different ways of looking at and doing her own work.

Mrs. Luch radiates a desire to be a strong and good influence in her realm of the world. Her success in part is attributed to "stumbling on" and maintaining courage to learn as she goes.

As a full-time artist, part-time writer, she would prefer to be less involved with commercial commissions, allowing her to initiate her own work.

Mrs. Luch feels there is something wonderful in humanity that we can create beauty, and that it is perhaps the closest thing to God in us. With her prevailing attitude that people are fantastic, it is no wonder that her work is thereby uplifting to individuals.
The following is one of her poems now put to music for song:

When I Go Walking

I often go walking in meadows of clover,
And I gather armfuls of blossoms of blue.
I gather the blossoms the whole meadow over,
Dear Mother, all flowers remind me of you.

Oh Mother I give you my love with each flower
To give forth sweet fragrance a whole lifetime through
For if I love blossoms and meadows and walking,
I learn how to love them, dear Mother, from you.4

---

PLATE VI

PHYLLIS LUCH WITH "BEEHIVE"*

*Paper sculpture.

Source: Personal interview with Phyllis Luch, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1981.
PLATE VII

PHYLLIS LUCH WITH "FAMILY CHRISTMAS"
AND "RUTH"*

Source: Personal interview with Phyllis Luch, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1981.
Source: Personal interview with Phyllis Luch, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1981.
PLATE IX

A CHILD'S STORY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON COVER

Source: Personal interview with Phyllis Luch, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1981.
PLATE X

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER*

*Pen and ink illustration for Ensign magazine.

Source: Personal interview with Phyllis Luch, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1981.
*Stitchery cover.

Source: Personal interview with Phyllis Luch, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1981.
PLATE XII

APPLIQUED SHEPHERDS*

*Cover for Liahona.

Source: Personal interview with Phyllis Luch, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1981.
3. Blaine M. Yorgason

Blaine M. Yorgason, reared in Fountain Green and Nephi, Utah, has college degrees in history and sociology, has been employed by the L.D.S. Church Seminary, and has authored a number of books. The books and paintings (sometimes used to illustrate his books) center primarily around western themes. His words describe this:

I have a great love for the American West, its vastness, its beauty and its grandeur. To me there is nothing more breath-taking than to watch the early-morning sun gild the serrated edges of a high mountain ridge, to listen to the silent whisperings and the soft moanings of wind-driven snow, and to contemplate the years and the powers that have corroded and molded into beauty the great rocks, hills, and boulders of the West.

These, in their many variations, I try to portray in my illustrations. To add zest I also include the wild characters, the birds, animals, and occasionally even the people who have made this great land their home. I find immense satisfaction in recreating these, and I am happy that others too seem to enjoy my efforts.5

Mr. Yorgason's main goal is to help people feel better about their life in a "fun" way. His literature is literal. He uses descriptive simplicity for readability. He produces experiences portraying very

5Based on personal correspondence between Blaine M. Yorgason and the writer.
real human personages wherein basic philosophies of joy and happiness are accentuated, regardless of the inevitable problems mankind must face.

It would be difficult to misinterpret or misunderstand his work. Many of his visual and written works have a Western flavor. His paintings give visual illustrations for most of his books; however, there is no intended correlation. Mr. Yorgason generally writes about the past which relates to the present and future. Many of his works in art and literature are associated with his Mormon traditions. He loves the West and his heritage therein.

His favorite mood in his written work is light humor. His stories originate through his natural ability to think in terms of pictures and to speak in terms of stories. Sometimes ideas occur in the middle of the night. Often he uses music for setting a creative mood. He loves to be on location in setting a creative stage. In the case of his book Massacre at Salt Creek, Mr. Yorgason got down on his hands and knees and crawled or walked nine miles through the rugged terrain to feel and know the hardships entailed by the heroine of the story.
Almost totally self-taught in both the visual and literary arts, Mr. Yorgason enjoys painting as it is quicker and easier for him, but writing is more a necessity to him. He feels it is an obligation in our present world to provide something fun, good, stimulating, and uplifting in the arts that helps people feel better about their lives.

Mr. Yorgason radiates an undefeatable attitude, accentuating the fact that success comes sometimes through repeated failures. He believes in steadfastly rising above each failure. His having had barriers in both the areas of creative endeavor resulted in an intense determination to triumph. In childhood he had dyslexia, presenting problems with reading due to perceptual inabilities; also, after discouragements in the visual arts, color blindness was discovered in his late teens.

In The Windwalker, the prayerful experiences of the old Indian with his Maker exemplify the poetic abilities of Mr. Yorgason, as well as the knowledge-ability he has of his subjects.
Grandfather,
though you do not feel it, the wind here
is cold,
and bound as this body which you have created is
to this scaffold,
it is unable to build a fire for warmth.
Therefore, let us end this joke,
that this old man who wishes to die
may continue his journey
to the west.
These eyes see only
darkness,
these ears are good for little except getting
cold,
these fingers ache and are no longer
nimble,
and these feet move more slowly than the season of
hunger.

Grandfather,
the weight of many winters is upon
this old back,
and it is in this man who lies before you to say,
this is a good day
to die.6

The blind old man, after being left to die
Indian-fashion, receives a temporary reprieve from death
and goes on to new impressive, adventurous learning
experiences.

6Blaine M. Yorgason, The Windwalker (Salt Lake
The snow is so
beautiful, O Great One.
How could this old man have forgotten
how beautiful
it is? See, one remembers that it turns
the meadow grass
into giant eagle feathers,
and bends the pines low
in humility
with its weight.

Out there some geese are flying past,
late on their journey.
Do you hear?
Though these old eyes
cannot see them now,
they have seen, through the
seasons,
many such, and they know,
O Great One,
that the sky is the same
color
as the underside of their wings.

Ah, Grandfather,
could anything be more beautiful,
more pure?
Do you show this beauty
to cause an old man
to wonder
how he can bear to die
and leave this lovely creation?
Dho! Of course you do!
Like the pines, this man is
bent low, in humility,
and it is a good feeling
to have.
The snow has made all things
white
and clean. Perhaps
it will do the same
for him.  

7Yorgason, The Windwalker, p. 17.
In *The Bishop’s Horse Race*, Mr. Yorgason’s immense ability to express human experiences in a fun way is exemplified:

For a while I milked while Hepsi and I stared each other in the eye. I knew then that she understood exactly what I was saying, and I knew it now. She knew exactly who was boss, and she wouldn’t--- Whap! That third slap was by far the hardest, and I was so mad that I just hauled back and sluggd her in the side, as hard as I could hit. "There! Take that, you ornery no-account good-for-nothing miserable excuse for a flea-infested bovine hay-burner! You dirty sway-backed despicable udder-slung---Owww!"

And that miserable cow retaliated by planting her monstrous splayed hoof right on top of my left foot, smashing it forty feet into the ground. "Hepsi!" I screeched, jerking and pulling on my foot, trying to get it out from under several tons of ugly beef. "Hepsi! You low-down, mean...Get off my foot! With all my weight I pushed against her leg, and finally she shifted, allowing me to pull my mangled foot loose. Really upset now, I grabbed that sore teat and pulled with all my might, determined to show her that no cow-critter could come it over a human the way she was trying to do.

Well, she kicked at me then, but I anticipated that move and leaned back, laughing at her feeble efforts. Trouble was,...

---

In his paintings this quality of respect for and enjoyment of the elements of nature is experienced.

Following are other examples of his work:

Like a blade
The serrated edge of the mountain
knifes into the autumn sky
where the sun drives its shadows
deep into its canyons
And boldly splashes a golden hue across
the still and peaceful afternoon.
Suddenly the silence is shattered by
the explosion
of gilded, thankful wings
as they beat swiftly from one field
to another
Yes, the harvest has been good
for all.

The lonely wind drifts down
out of the darkening sky
Bearing on its icy breath
The snowy remnants
of Fall's last rain
And with a quiet sighing
it hastens the muted clatter
of south bound wings,
till only it remains,
lonely singing through the winter
silence.

Early morning
when life is still and
all nature seems poised,
suspended...
Rising mists drift in easy tranquility
before a playful breeze
And tiny birds their most precious
notes explore
In the peaceful silence following
the dawn.
PLATE XIII

BLAINE AND KATHY YORGASON WITH LANDSCAPE

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Source: Personal interview with Blaine Yorgason, Orem, Utah, 1981.
PLATE XV

THE WINDWALKER II*

*Acrylic.

Source: Personal interview with Blaine Yorgason, Orem, Utah, 1981.
PLATE XVI. HE CHURNED THE MORNING WATERS OF BADGER CREEK*

*Acrylic.

Source: Personal interview with Blaine Yorgason, Orem, Utah, 1981.
PLATE XVII
THROUGH THE EARLY MORNING MIST*

*Acrylic.

Source: Personal interview with Blaine Yorgason, Orem, Utah, 1981.
PLATE XVIII. THE WIND HID THE MUTED CLATTER OF SOUTHBOUND WINGS

Source: Personal interview with Blaine Yorgason, Orem, Utah, 1981.
Source: Personal interview with Blaine Yorgason, Orem, Utah, 1981.
4. Dennis Smith

After graduating from Brigham Young University in 1960 and having attended a year of graduate school, Dennis Smith attended the Danish Royal Academy in Copenhagen in 1967. He is a native of Alpine, Utah.

Mr. Smith's verse has been published in various periodicals, and his sculpture and graphic works are included in several western collections. Now residing in Alpine, he is a full-time artist.

His long-term goals are centered on being as productive and/or expressive as possible through maintaining a constant intensity of living. He reassesses short and long-term goals through writing personal journals, and traveling to study other artists' works. Likewise, he studies books and writings of others.

Mr. Smith's sensitivity to "familiar flavors, smells, memories," and objects is reflected in his works. Gesture and spontaneity are important in his sculpture, with details not being allowed to detract. His ability to extract experiences from the past imposes greater reality to his work and seems to pull past experiences near. Some of his work seems to impose a sense of
nostalgic courtship with hovering moments of the past. An example of this seems to be expressed in the following poem:

After the Show
(Homage to J. W. Swallow)

Images in memory
take the form
of framed vignettes.
They have no corners, only melted ends where sight fades.

Bill's tray has two sodas
and is balanced on his bent-back hand
at shoulder height.
He shuffles forth,
king of a ritual,
landing the evening treat on smooth, white glass.

There is no memory beyond the door which opens to the evening street
where two pink and green neon tubes gently buzz.
Here on this side the image fades as it passes,
even as they whisper. 9

An example of this quality in his sculpture can be viewed in Plate XXI, Flying Boy. Note the figure of the boy hanging from the beam suspended in motion. Mr. Smith's sculpture, often referring to the past as time

9Personal interview with Dennis Smith, Lehi, Utah, 1981.
frozen through gesture, suggests an awareness of fleeting childhood. His poetry, keenly delivering exacting, living portrayals of a boy's growing years, shows an intense recall of past years. He believes that traditions are important, giving meaning to his life and work. He expressed that he must move within his "present reality."

Mr. Smith feels no need to correlate the visual with the written work. He feels that his visual work is often under-read but not usually misinterpreted or unaccepted.

The poems included later, "Dare," "Well, I Know Homer," and "Boy Diving Through Moss," exemplify the above mentioned qualities in his written work.

He retains much of traditional perspectives, but approaches his work with a broad-minded continuing view of the present and future, respecting past influences from early junior high school to more recent associations and explorations of works of other artist/authors. He enjoys buoyant emotions, as evidenced in his work, and finds inspiration in the work of others. He thus gains new perspectives in relation to his own work.
The mood of his work is of a positive nature, very human, sometimes whimsical, uninvolved with the conflicts of life. Mr. Smith acknowledges his limitations and accepts them along with the ever-present strivings toward refinement of his talents. Within the limitations of his commissions, he strives to broaden his goals within the context of their framework to what he feels he must achieve or attain.

Partially self-taught in both the visual and literary arts (more so in the literary), Mr. Smith feels more comfortable in sculpture. He has not spent as much time writing and has placed more emphasis on the visual arts.

Mr. Smith experiences emotional ups and downs and expects that his best and most enlightening times come into view after the "down" times. He has a healthy attitude about feeling dissatisfied with his work, but at the same time tolerating his humanness. He recommends comparing past works to present works for growth analysis.

Mr. Smith reflects a deep commitment to mankind and feels not only a responsibility but an obligation therein. His depth of character and integrity cannot
escape recognition through examination of his work, or association with his productivity through his driving intensity of living.

The following are examples of both his written and visual art:

Dare

I'll hide beside
the railroad track,
I thought.
And so I did—
as close as I could get
and not be seen
lying in the brush
beside the track.

There in the dusk
I lay,
and all the while
the light came closer,
and my senses jumped
to know that it was coming

And then the horn,
the horn
which jumbled up my eardrums, blew,
and in the screaming,
earth-erupting flash,
no further than a body length away,
the engine passed,
and all those rolling tons
shook flying by
while I lay petrified
between the shouting
clicks and clacks
to think
that it was jumping off the track
to kill the world.
Then suddenly
the trembling earth stood still---
and I could breathe again. 10

Well, I Know Homer

Well, I know Homer--
now don't think I don't---
because I have the rosy-fingered dawn
and ships of giant-trodden seas
still clinging to my atmosphere.

I promised me that I would read
the thousand pages full of little verses
clear from front to back
before I quit and took that big book back.

I read Homer well, all right.
In fact, I spent some many hours
that summer sitting in the quiet
of our creaky barn
behind the stanchion
where the hay was kept,
and made a place to lean against
and float with Homer
over python seas.

I thought I'd trick my Dad one day
when he came in to feed the stock some hay
and didn't see me reading
in the corner of the barn
behind the stanchion
where the hay was kept.

He went about his chores,
all full of noise and crunching straw,
until he came behind the stanchion,
the pitchfork in his hand
to use to throw some hay
out to the cows to chew their cud on.

---

No more than ten feet off, 
my Dad raised up the fork 
and plunged it through the crackle hay. 
He faced the other way 
and didn't see me 
crouching full of giggle 
in the barn behind him 
as he pushed the fork about.

And so I conjured up 
the best trick anybody ever did 
who sailed the pages of Ulysses, 
for to scare his pants off.

I opened up my mouth 
and let a growl come out 
as loud and full of cougar 
as a growl could ever be from me. 
That roar filled up my Dad 
so full of shock 
and instant fear, 
he swerved and raised the fork 
and almost had it flying 
through my breast 
before he saw that it was I 
that was his pitchfork's prey. 

Well, I kept reading Homer 
in the barn that summer. 
I climbed the walls of Troy 
and faced five-thousand deaths 
behind the stanchion 
where the hay was kept.

And I know Homer's men a little better, 
when they died between the pages, 
after what I did 
the day my Dad came in 
and raised that pitchfork up. 11

Boy Diving Through Moss

A boy with joy and fear inside
stood on the plank
above the pond.
He sensed the cold, dark water
underneath,
and, daring,
was aware of that
which he must do.
He dived and fell
and felt the wetted cold.
He felt the mosses part
and give his plunging body
to the depths.
And on the edge of there
he bent his back
and forced the arced re-entry up,
and, shattering the surface,
took the first moist breath of air
and felt the new pure light
about his head.

Oh, sweetest grin!
To know the leap from life
through death
and into life again.12

12Smith, p. 45.
PLATE XX

DENNIS SMITH WITH "FLYING MACHINE"

Source: Personal interview with Dennis Smith, Lehi, Utah, 1981.
PLATE XXI

FLYING BOY*

*Sculture.

Source: Personal interview with Dennis Smith, Lehi, Utah, 1981.
PLATE XXII

WILFORD'S ROCKER

*Sculpture.

Source: Personal interview with Dennis Smith, Lehi, Utah, 1981.
PLATE XXIII
RUN, ET TA KAREN KRISTINA*  

*Sculpture.

Source: Personal interview with Dennis Smith, Lehi, Utah, 1981.
PLATE XXIV

THE DERBY AND DAD'S BIG COAT*

*Two sculptures.

Source: Personal interview with Dennis Smith, Lehi, Utah, 1981.
Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

A deeply structured integral study of parallelisms between the visual and written statements of certain artists was not intended or undertaken in this paper. Of the four Utah artist/authors interviewed, all responded to questions usually referring to both areas of creativity simultaneously. This alone indicates feelings of natural parallels in both areas being present or assumed in the creative product, perhaps more than in the process.

The visual and literary works of the artist/authors parallel in many respects as have been evidenced.

Mrs. Forbis blends some traditional modes with more contemporary ideas in both her visual and written work, incorporating free verse with occasional rhyme, meter, and rhythm in the traditional sense. Her visual arts incorporate solid structural (realistic) forms with semi-abstract presentation. Her subject matter has to do with nature and people.
Mrs. Luch's art and poetry have a childlike freshness and simplicity. She has a special ability to relate to a child's world. A warm, wholesome flavor exists in both the visual and written word. She exhibits clarity and crispness in depicting nature and humanity.

Mr. Yorgason's work reflects a keen interest in the vastness and beauty of nature characterized by his technique. His written work reflects mankind in natural, common, everyday settings. Both are unpretentious and direct in nature. His poetic dialogues in *The Windwalker* provide innumerable metaphors referring to the awesome beauties of nature.

Mr. Smith's art and literature express curiosity of the real world through the senses (touch, smell, et cetera). Action through life experiences is felt in both areas. He creates a mood of transient time, perhaps a slow absorption of past experiences recalled; for example, *Boy Diving through Moss*, p. 64, and a more recent poem *After the Show (Homage to J. W. Swallow)*. This can be felt visually in *Flying Boy*. There exists a mood of wistful lingering in a moment of time.

Since current worldly opinions, criticisms, and directions in the realm of the arts seem ever-changing,
the deciding factor of eventual success of an artist rests in large measure with his inner strength and stability. The artists I interviewed exemplify that hard work and dedication, coupled with balance and constancy, eventually lead to success.

My research resulted in a greater scope of interrogation than I had originally planned. Such a broad expanse of expression in the written and visual arts presented itself, that it was with great reluctance that I had to impose limitations. Moreover, feelings of apprehension and puzzlement have emerged concerning the diversified and somewhat contradictory directions taken by so many voices in the arts.

Truly we live in an age when an artist/writer may pursue any direction without pressing opposition, and yet there seems to exist in some measure an undercurrent of insecurity and instability. Although these observations in part may seem negative, the results have been positive. There has been positive action, involvement with inquiry, and an eagerness to delve further into the vast openings of the arts.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX

LETTERS TO ARTIST/AUTHORS
June 30, 1981

Dennis Smith
11055 N. Gamble Oak Cir.
Lehi, Ut.

Dear Bro. Smith,

In case you should feel like responding to any part or parts of the questionnaire before Thursday, I'm sending the tape. Saves time I think. I realize this questionnaire is lengthy and seeks for a glimpse into Thy Soul. Please feel free to omit or pass over any parts if it is too time-consuming or personal. I will appreciate any comments.

I would love to have access to at least a half dozen examples of your work, visual and written, for inclusion in my thesis. Parallelisms between the written and visual are focal points, and I hope to be able to see the strong characteristics of each.

If you should have photos or slides of favorites, I would love to have copies made if possible for my purpose.

I look forward to Thursday afternoon. Your generosity is deeply appreciated.

Roxie Trimble
P.O. 532
Fillmore, Ut. 84631
June 30, 1981

Blaine Yorgason
545 N. 1160 E. Circle
Orem, Utah

Dear Bro. Blaine,

I am enclosing my questionnaire in case you have a moment to read or tape. Looking forward to our appointment Thursday at 10 a.m.

If you should possibly have a few photos or slides that you feel might represent your work well visually, I would love to have a half dozen examples for my thesis paper. I mean that I would purchase or guard them carefully to get copies for my purpose.

Your generosity is deeply appreciated. I know you have a demanding schedule. May the Lord bless you in all your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Roxie Trimble
P.O. 532
Fillmore, Ut. 84631
June 30, 1981

Phyllis Luch
2614 West Shire Dr.
S.L.C., Ut. 84119

Dear Phyllis,

I usually write notes on Sunday but missed last Sunday after our visit--also found it impossible to make another journey to Provo that week. Therefore, I've been unable to get your slides copied yet. I have appointments with Blaine Yorgason and Dennis Smith this week though and plan to get several of these errands completed.

I felt an immediate rapport with you, insomuch that it may be possible that you received more information about me than I did about you. It was so refreshing to be able to become acquainted with someone so very wholesome and unpretentious and yet so wonderfully talented as you. Thank you so much for your generosity.

I have sent a letter and questionnaire and tape to Diane in Rexburg. I will call her home again soon. I begin to think I can complete this and graduate in August after all, and this could not be possible without the generosity of you and others.

May the Lord bless you in all your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Roxie Trimble
P.O. 532
Fillmore, Ut. 84631

P.S. Don't forget to slip in a few examples of your written work if at all possible--and keep it up--the writing!
June 30, 1981

Dianne D. Forbis
96 Birch Avenue
Rexburg, Id. 83440

Dear Dianne,

I'm taking the liberty of mailing this questionnaire on to you. I am researching parallelisms in the visual and written work of artists-writers.

Your dear friend Phyllis Luch has been so generous and spoke so highly of you. I understand you have had some past health problems--I hope it is not imposing to request your response. I realize the questionnaire is lengthy. Please feel free to omit responding to any questions that you wish. I am enclosing a tape for your convenience in hope of eliminating excessive time.

I would love to have perhaps at least a half dozen examples of your work, visual as well as written, if at all possible to include in my thesis. I hope to graduate in August.

I have eight children and had given up completion of my M.A. a few months ago; but I have gathered strength the last six weeks after two major surgeries during the past six months. These things can discourage, can't they?

You may know my friend Vicki Machoian Gehring (husband, Brent) who also are at Ricks. Vicki was one of my missionary companions in the West Central States Mission some 16 years ago now.

So sorry I missed you when you were in Utah a short time ago. I am enclosing a check to cover any expense of
photostat copies of written work, or if you should have photos or slides, I might purchase copies of visual art. Should this be possible I certainly will guard and return them in a few weeks. I only have a few weeks to pull this together. I already have ground work well under way from last year though.

I will call again tonight. Your husband was gracious. Thank you for your indulgence.

Sincerely,

Roxie Trimble
P.O. 532
Fillmore, Ut. 84631
FOUR UTAH MORMON ARTISTS AS AUTHORS

Roxie D. Trimble

Department of Art

M.S. Degree, April 1982

ABSTRACT

In researching the literary and visual art forms of four Utah Mormon artists/authors, considerable evidence supports the prognosis that natural parallels do exist between the written and visual works of artists/authors. Recent as well as past historical data also confirms this hypothesis.

To implement research personal interviews and written questionnaires were submitted. The resultant data compiled supports the prognosis that this parallelism does exist.

COMMITTEE APPROVAL:  
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