

THE WORK AND THE GLORY:
HISTORICAL FICTION AND CULTURAL NARRATIVE IN THE
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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and the Graduate Certificate in Holocaust Studies

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ABSTRACT

In October 1838, Governor Lilburn Boggs of Missouri sanctioned the extermination of the “Mormon” settlers who had been pouring into the state beginning in 1831. His infamous “Extermination Order” quickly put an end to the Mormon War and successfully expelled all Mormons from Missouri. Although the Mormon War became a mere footnote in Missouri history, the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints have, for over a century, used these stories not only to create a deeper connection to their past but also to inform their collective identity as “modern-day pioneers.” This thesis explores the ways in which author Gerald N. Lund uses the novel series *The Work and the Glory* to disseminate knowledge of the Mormon War to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In applying a theoretical framework of cultural narrative and collective identity to this case study, this thesis brings Lund’s historical fiction into a larger academic conversation about how authors use historical fiction to represent mass atrocities. This project shows that, although historical fiction is a palatable way to present uncomfortable topics to broader audiences, historical novelists are in danger of creating generalized histories that downplay

the multi-faceted nature of historical figures as well as romanticize and distort tragic, real-life events. More importantly, this thesis shows how the author understands and makes sense of genocide through historical fiction. It suggests that scholars of comparative genocide should use more unfamiliar events such as the Mormon War to help better understand the ways in which contemporaries use past atrocities to inform their worldview. It also suggests that the community of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints should broaden their understanding of the Mormon War beyond their worldview that Mormon history is somehow separate from the larger narrative of American History.

APPROVAL PAGE

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Introduction

Precursors to the “Mormon War” began in 1831. As members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints started settling in Jackson County, Missouri, in large numbers,¹ the “old” Missouri Settlers became wary. Rumors spread of the strange “deluded fanatics” and that these Mormons were abolitionists who intended to preach not only to slaves but to Native Americans as well.² Years of misunderstanding and intolerance from both the old Missouri settlers and the new Mormon migrants led to conflicts which culminated in the Mormon War.

Although the violent events in Missouri are among the most infamous in Mormon history, the Saints had been victims of ostracization and persecution before ever arriving in Missouri. Around 1818, 12-year-old Joseph Smith Jr. began to feel great anxiety and confusion over his spiritual well-being.³ As Smith recorded in his publicized history:

My mind at times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided against the Baptists and Methodists... On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others.⁴

¹ Although there are other churches that refer to themselves as LDS or “Mormons,” this study focuses on The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. I use “the Church” as a shortened version of the official title when referring to contemporary members and institutions. I use the term “Mormons” or “Saints” when referring to the members of the Church in the 1830s.

² W. Paul Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 20-22; Diane Mutti-Burke, “A Contested Promised Land: Mormons, Slaveholders, and the Disputed Vision for the Settlement of Western Missouri,” *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 36 no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2016): 13-15; Richard L Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York City, NY: Vintage Books, 2005), 98.

³ Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 35.

⁴ “History, 1838-1856, Volume A-1 [23 December 1805- 30 August 1834],” p. 2, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, accessed March 3, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/2>.

Smith's anxiety over his eternal welfare and the "tumult" of religious preaching in his youth reflected the religious fervor that gripped the United States from 1820 to 1840. Historians Paul Johnson and Sean Wilentz characterized the country as being swept up in "intense religious excitement and sectarian invention, the culmination of which historians have called the Second Great Awakening." Smaller revivalist groups broke from traditional, mainstream American Protestantism and reported stories of spiritual and supernatural experiences that many deemed heretical. "Young women conversed with the dead; male and female perfectionists wielded the spiritual powers of the Apostles; farmers and factory hands spoke directly to God."⁵ By the Spring of 1820, when Joseph Smith claimed to have seen God the Father and Jesus Christ within a grove of trees near his family home in Palmyra, New York, many fervent seekers of religion did not find Smith's account to be far-fetched.⁶

Smith's vision in the "Sacred Grove" was the first of many supernatural visitations that he recorded throughout his life. In the fall of 1823, Smith claimed that an angel called Moroni appeared to him and told him of a book written on gold plates that gave an account of the former ancient inhabitants of the American continent.⁷ In 1827, Smith claimed to have retrieved those gold plates and began translating them with the help of a select few

⁵ Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in 19th Century America* (Oxford University Press, 1994), 6.

⁶ Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 39-40; Grant Underwood, "Mormonism, Millenarianism, and Missouri" In *The Missouri Mormon Experience*, edited by Thomas M. Spencer (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2010), 50-51.

⁷ Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 44.

followers.⁸ On June 11, 1829, he obtained the copyright to the *Book of Mormon* and published it in March 1830.⁹

On April 6, 1830, the Church was officially constituted, and Smith began to preach about gathering God's elect people in a "New Jerusalem" to prepare for the Savior's Second Coming. By September, Smith reported that God had commanded a select number of men to begin missionary work among the American Indians. As historian Richard Bushman described, "the New Jerusalem, the revelation said, was to be situated 'on the borders by the Lamanites,' which they all knew was the western edge of Missouri." While Smith commissioned a group of men to scout the area of Jackson County, Missouri, for possible land purchase, he instructed the rest of the Saints to gather in Ohio and wait until God instructed them to move to this New Jerusalem.¹⁰

Although Smith's history as the prophetic leader of the Church caused a sensation within the newspapers and surrounding communities, Mormonism was not so different from other religions at that time. Bushman explained that Smith was not the first of his day to speak of establishing Zion or New Jerusalem. "Beginning with the Puritans, religious idealists in America had formed communities large and small called New Jerusalem." Bushman argued that Smith's teachings and practices coincided with other millenarian religions at that time as Mormons "watched for signs of the times in the skies and noted news

⁸ Ibid., 70.

⁹ Ibid., 80, 88.

¹⁰ Ibid., 122.

reports of earthquakes and fires, but never named the moment when the world was to end.”¹¹ Many millenarians believed that American society was rife with sin, with slavery being among the foulest of the day. The rumors of Smith’s plans not only to preach to the American Indians west of Missouri but also to support the abolitionist cause led many people in Jackson County to be wary of the growing number of Mormons buying up land in the area. Other reports started trickling in to Jackson County from dissenters of the Church in Ohio that the prophet was nothing more than a religious dictator.¹²

Non-Mormons continued to grow hostile towards the Saints in Ohio, causing more members of the Church to flood into Missouri. By August 1833, citizens of Jackson County demanded that the Saints remove themselves from the County and resettle in two northern counties “reserved” specifically for the Mormons, Ray and Caldwell Counties.¹³ Eventually, the number of Saints coming into Missouri made it impossible for them to remain within the two designated areas. Saints began settling in Far West, Hawn’s Mill, and Adam-on-di-Ahman. By 1837, the population of Far West had grown to nearly 1,500 Saints.¹⁴ This situation angered many native Missourians, causing growing anxiety among the Saints. Some felt resentment and indignation towards their Missouri agitators as well as the state

¹¹ Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 165-166; Thomas M. Spencer, “Persecution in the Most Odious Sense of the Word,” In *The Missouri Mormon Experience*, edited by Thomas M. Spencer (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2010), 2.

¹² Brent Rogers, ““Armed men are coming from the state of Missouri:” Federalism, Interstate Affairs, and Joseph Smith’s Final Attempt to Secure Federal Intervention in Nauvoo,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 109, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 153-154; Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 178-180; Mutti-Burke, “A Contested Promised Land,” 14, 20, 24.

¹³ Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 222-224.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 338.

government. The Saints' resentment was most evident when, on July 4, 1838, Sidney Rigdon, a prominent member of the Church, offered an Independence Day celebration speech which declared that the Saints would no longer take the abuses of those who opposed them. Rigdon declared,

That mob that comes on us to disturb us; it shall be between us and them a war of extermination... We will never be the aggressors, we will infringe on the right of no people; but shall stand for our own until death.¹⁵

The Mormon press printed Rigdon's talk and circulated it around Missouri. Rigdon's aggressive words incensed the Missourians who felt this speech represented a direct threat on their land and families. Both the Mormon people and the Missourians were primed for action, making the violent events of the following month almost inevitable.

Most historians agree that the "War" began on August 6, 1838, with the election in Gallatin. There, a group of non-Mormon Missourians refused to let Mormon men vote. The confrontation turned into a brawl, leaving many injured but no fatalities. This brawl, along with frequent acts of violence from vigilante groups on both sides, caused the Governor to activate the state militia. In turn, Joseph Smith activated the Mormon militia.¹⁶

After hearing rumors that a "mob" was holding a group of Mormon men hostage, David W. Patten lead a group of Mormon men to the Crooked River on October 25, 1838. The Mormons engaged in a skirmish with a single company of the Missouri Militia, which resulted in three Mormon and one militia fatality.¹⁷ Historians argue that, after the Battle of

¹⁵ Sidney Rigdon, "Oration delivered by Mr. S. Rigdon, on the 4th of July, 1838 at Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri," Accessed March 2, 2019, <https://archive.org/details/orationdelivered01rigd>.

¹⁶ Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (University of Missouri Press, 1990), 55-65. Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 356-358.

¹⁷ LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War*, 131-142.

Crooked River, Governor Lilburn Boggs, a well-known enemy of the Saints, felt he had enough cause to take official action against the Mormons. On October 27, 1838, Boggs issued Missouri Executive Order Number 44. Infamously known to contemporary Saints as the “Extermination Order,” Boggs instructed:

I have received by... one of my aids information of the most appalling character, which entirely changes the face of things, and places the Mormons in the attitude of an open and avowed defiance of the laws, and of having made war upon the people of this state. Your orders are, therefore, to hasten your operation with all possible speed. The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the state if necessary for the public peace—their outrages are beyond all description. If you can increase your force, you are authorized to do so to any extent you may consider necessary.¹⁸

A few days after Boggs’s order, on October 30, an unauthorized militia of about 200 men lead by Colonel Thomas Jennings attacked the small settlement of Hawn’s Mill. Out of the thirty or forty families living in the settlement, the militia killed 17 men and severely wounded 15, including women and children. This event became known as the Hawn’s Mill Massacre.¹⁹ Most historians agree that it was highly unlikely that Jennings’s militia had received wind of the Extermination Order before the attack.

After Joseph Smith received news of the massacre at Hawn’s Mill, he realized that Mormon numbers and supplies at Far West and other outlying settlements were insufficient to withstand any more assaults. On November 1, 1838, Smith surrendered to Major General

¹⁸ MO Executive Order No. 44, Missouri State Archive, <https://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/mormon.asp>, Accessed November 28, 2017.

¹⁹Alma R. Blair, “Hawn’s Mill Massacre,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), Accessed December 15, 2018, <https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/EoM/id/3746>

Alexander L Baugh, "Jacob Hawn and the Hawn's Mill Massacre: Missouri Millwright and Oregon Pioneer," *Mormon Historical Studies* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 12-15.

Samuel D. Lucas of the State Militia. Lucas's terms were devastating for the Mormon people. First, he required that Joseph Smith and other leaders of the church stand trial for crimes against the state. Second, he demanded that the Mormon men forfeit all firearms and sign all their property over to the state as reparations for damages to Missourian property. Finally, he ordered all Mormons to leave the state before the Spring or they would be killed.²⁰ In keeping with the terms of the surrender, the Mormon men gathered at the town-square and forfeited their weapons. After all weapons were collected, a small body of the militia held the Mormon men captive in town while a larger body went into the settlement to "check" for hidden weapons. The militia men then ransacked Far West. They killed livestock, looted homes, tore apart buildings, beat men, and molested women.²¹

While the Saints in Far West evacuated north to Illinois, Major General Lucas tried Joseph Smith and his compatriots by court martial. He ordered General Alexander Doniphan to shoot the prisoners the following morning. Doniphan refused and told Lucas that to execute Smith would be an act of "cold-blooded murder." Lucas turned the Mormon leaders over to a civil court of inquiry in Richmond, Missouri, on charges of treason, murder, arson, burglary, robbery, larceny, and perjury. After court proceedings, Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, Alexander McRae, and Caleb Baldwin were released. These six leaders were transported to Liberty Jail in Liberty, Missouri, and remained there for five months from December 1, 1838, until April 6, 1839. While in Liberty, the Mormon

²⁰ LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War*, 168-172.

²¹ B.H. Roberts, *The Missouri Persecutions* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1965), 243-245; Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 367.

leaders suffered exposure to the elements as well as ill-treatment from their captors. While being transported to another location, Smith and his companions escaped, which marked the end of the Mormon War. They eventually rejoined the rest of the Saints in Nauvoo, Illinois.²²

Theory

Today, the events surrounding the Missouri-Mormon conflict continue to play a defining role in the historical narrative and cultural heritage of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The struggle and persecution of the early Saints is told and re-told in sermons, songs, and various visual mediums, creating a type of “collective memory” among the Church’s community. Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs advanced his concept of collective memory in 1950 to describe a group’s shared knowledge of the past. He believed that lived experiences are not only the experiences of the individual but also those of the social group to which they belong. After people pass away, their lived experiences carry on within social groups as “shared” or “borrowed” memories by younger generations. By borrowing memories, individuals find a way to immerse themselves in events that happened before their time while also making connections to the present using their own life experiences.²³

Philosopher Jeffrey Barash explained that, “for Halbwachs, the temporal context of collective memory is not limited to the immediate present, for it encompasses a past that existed prior to the birth of remembering individuals.”²⁴ Because the stories of the early Saints are shared

²² Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 362-374; LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War*, 240-245.

²³ Halbwachs advanced his theory of “collective memory” in his 1950 publication *La mémoire collective*.

²⁴ Jeffrey Andrew Barash, *Collective Memory and the Historical Past* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 33. For more on collective memory, see Maurice Halbwachs *On Collective Memory* (University of Chicago Press, 1992), Jan Assmann *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies* (Stanford UP, 2005).

specifically within the Church's cultural circle, contemporary members help to create a collective memory that is shared and reinforced within their group. Whereas social memory includes the sharing of collective knowledge of the past amongst a diverse group of people, cultural memory is specific to a narrower group of people whose worldview and frame of reference are consistent.

Sociologist Jan Assmann agreed with Halbwachs's theories but argued that objectivized culture — the use of material and immaterial expressions that connect the individual to the social group — plays a large part in creating and sustaining group identity, as it uses cultural memory to create a shared image of the past. He explained:

Humans must find a means by which to maintain their nature consistently through generations. The solution to this problem is offered by cultural memory, a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behavior and experience in the interactive framework of a society... Every individual memory constitutes itself in communication with others. These "others," however, are not just any set of people, rather they are groups who conceive their unity and peculiarity through a common image of their past.²⁵

By drawing parallels between borrowed memories and objectivized culture, Assmann shows how cultural memory is dependent upon the day-to-day verbal and physical expressions of the past. Cultural memory reinforces the individual's identity through constant contact with the day-to-day expressions of their culture. Like Halbwachs, Assmann concluded that cultural memory "always relates its knowledge to an actual and contemporary situation."²⁶ Cultural memory is the ability of a group to apply historical events and narratives to

²⁵ Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (Spring-Summer, 1995): 126-127.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 130.

contemporary everyday life. In doing so, group culture and identity is informed by the ways in which the past is applied to the present.

Jeffrey Barash similarly theorized that the transmission of multiple “in the flesh” accounts across generations creates a web of experiences that are gradually modified in a way that corresponds to contemporary understanding. Barash acknowledged Benedict Anderson’s theory of “imagined communities” to help explain the ways in which people try to create cohesion between the past and present. He contended:

As a means of accounting for collective identity and group cohesion on a vast scale, insofar as it is rooted in reminiscence of a shared collective past, this recourse to the term *imagination* permits us to avoid the dilemma that the concept of “collective memory” would seem to introduce.²⁷

Barash noted that, once there are no persons left who experienced the event in-the-flesh, the experience becomes part of a historical past that cannot be retrieved as such. It instead becomes necessary for humans to imagine the past through what evidence or materials are left behind. This imagination, Barash argued, is the aim of many historical novels: to achieve, through fictive storytelling, “a living connection, a line of continuity of present experience with a historical past that had long since disappeared.”²⁸

The cultural memory and identity of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is largely dependent upon the shared memories of the pioneers as well as the immaterial and material expressions of their experiences. Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf, who serves as one of the Twelve Apostles within the Church’s leadership organization, stated in 2012:

²⁷ Barash, *Collective Memory*, 44.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

Pioneers of an earlier era provide a heritage of faith, courage, and sacrifice for all of us... There are many modern pioneers who continue the legacy by spreading the gospel throughout the world. In a Church that has more than 14 million members from various backgrounds and origins, pioneer heritage is both a gift from the past and a unifying force for the future.²⁹

Today the Church's membership stands at over 16 million with over 30,000 established congregations around the world.³⁰ Despite the growing diversity within the Church and the vast number of different cultural heritages among members, the Church still encourages members everywhere to look at the early Saints and their pioneer history in nineteenth-century America as prime examples of faith. The stories of the early Saints have become an integral part of the Church's historical narrative and have helped to establish a shared cultural identity. Church leaders encourage members from around the world to apply the pioneer legacy to their own contemporary lives. In doing so, members of the Church commonly refer to themselves as "modern-day pioneers."³¹

This thesis focuses on the stories of the early Saints in Missouri as told through the genre of historical fiction. Just as Andrew Barash argued that the role of historical novels is to create a connection between the past and present, this thesis shows how historical fiction reflects not only how members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints interpret

²⁹ Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "We all share pioneer legacy," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/we-all-share-pioneer-legacy?lang=eng>. At the time Uchtdorf gave his talk, worldwide church membership was a little over 14 million.

³⁰ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, "2017 Statistical Report for 2018 April Conference," accessed October 1, 2018). <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/2017-statistical-report-april-2018-general-conference>.

³¹ For more official Church publications on the topic of "modern-day pioneers" see Dallin H. Oaks "Modern Pioneers" (October 1989); Janet Hales Beckham, "Modern Pioneers" (April 1997); M. Russel Ballard "You have nothing to fear from the journey" (April 1997); Earl C. Tingey "Prophets—Pioneer and Modern Day" (April 2007); and Aaron L. West, "Your Pioneer Journey—for Real, Not Pretend" (July 2017). <https://www.lds.org/general-conference>.

their history but also how they use interpretations of past events to direct their present and future lives. To explore this topic, this thesis will focus on Gerald N. Lund's *Thy Gold to Refine*, which is the fourth volume in his nine-volume series *The Work and the Glory*. Lund is a well-known author within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. To this day, he has published 28 pieces of Church fiction and non-fiction.³² By 2003, *The Work and the Glory* series had sold nearly three million copies for Bookcraft, now merged with Deseret Book, the Church's most prominent publishing house. It is currently the all-time best seller in Mormon fiction and has won multiple awards, including best LDS novel of the year by the Association for Mormon Letters in 1991 and 1993. In 1994, *Thy Gold to Refine* won both the Frankie and John K. Orton Award for LDS literature and the LDS Independent Booksellers' Book of the Year Award; it also received an award from the Association for Mormon Letters.³³ Ideally suited for the purpose of this study, Lund's *Thy Gold to Refine* specifically covers the events from immediately before to after the Mormon War. While there are several other Mormon-associated historical novels which cover this same time period, Lund's is the only one that provides a lengthy list of academic sources. Lund's close affiliation to the Church makes this book particularly relevant as a reflection of the Church's larger cultural narrative.

³²Gerald N. Lund Biography, <https://www.geraldnlund.com/about> (accessed September 28, 2018).

³³ Richard Cracroft, "Telling the Restoration Story: Gerald N. Lund's The Work and the Glory Saga," *Journal of Mormon History* 29 no. 1 (Spring 2003): 233.

Historiography

This paper frames the topic of historic narrative and cultural identity in terms of three different historiographies: the causes of the “Mormon War” in 1838, the role of historic narrative and fiction in supporting the Church’s collective memory and cultural identity, and the function of memory and storytelling in post-genocide societies. These three historiographical topics will help to embed Lund’s narrative into a larger academic conversation regarding the place of historical fiction in disseminating the popular historical narratives which inform cultural identity.

For over a century after the Saints reached the Rocky Mountains, it seemed as though scholars of Missouri history paid little to no attention to the events of the “Mormon War.” Up until the mid-twentieth century, most scholars who studied the Missouri-Mormon conflict were members of the Church. They wrote pro-Mormon analyses that at times read as hagiographies and placed religious tension as the root cause of the persecution and expulsion. In 1987, Stephen C. LeSueur’s *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* was the first piece of scholarship to bring the Mormon War out of obscurity and present it to a larger academic audience. He offered a fresh look at the conflict, concluding that both sides used vigilantism and extralegal measures, which contributed to the escalation in violence. LeSueur framed his analysis of the Mormon War within a larger context of the Jacksonian-era tradition of extralegal violence in American culture. Using a comparative framework, he offered new insights into the retaliatory actions of the Mormon Danites, a vigilante group organized during the early years of Mormon persecution. LeSueur acknowledged that religious prejudice created fissures within the social and cultural foundations. He concluded that

mistrust exacerbated fears of violent actions from either side and was the primary reason for rising hostilities between the two groups.

Yet LeSueur's focus on vigilantism and militaristic actions from both Mormons and early Missouri settlers left much unexplained as to why the settlers hated their Mormon neighbors so much. Historian Kenneth Winn argued similarly that Missourians' use of extralegal means to expel Mormons from the state created a "psychological framework, a language, and a behavior to deal with those whom they opposed."³⁴ Historian Thomas M. Spencer too found a culture of violence among both the Mormon and Missouri populations. He argued that "Missourians of the 1830s viewed extralegal violence as a normal part of life... It was viewed as a right of the populace to perpetrate violence against those they saw as transgressors or threats to public order or communal values."³⁵ Spencer applied this justified-violence mindset to both Mormons and Missourians who viewed violence as a "proper regulatory response."³⁶

Like LeSueur, Spencer contended that both sides took aggressive actions "that served to escalate tension during the fall of 1838."³⁷ Unlike LeSueur, however, Winn and Spencer provided insight as to why the Missourians feared Mormon settlement. Winn argued that,

³⁴ Kenneth H. Winn, "The Missouri Context of Antebellum Mormonism and Its Legacy of Violence" in *The Missouri Mormon Experience*, ed. Thomas M. Spencer (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2010), 24.

³⁵ Thomas M. Spencer, "Was This Really Missouri Civilization?: The Hawn's Mill Massacre in Missouri and Mormon History," in *The Missouri Mormon Experience*, ed. Thomas M. Spencer (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2010), 110.

³⁶ Spencer, "Was This Missouri Civilization," 102.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

while religious differences undeniably caused tension among the two groups, economic and political differences created a culture of paranoia and fear among non-Mormon Missourians that they would become the minority. Spencer admitted that Missourians feared how much land the Mormons bought and occupied. Not only were Mormons buying up potential properties, the large number of Mormon settlers pouring into the territory could potentially shift the political majority away from the old, non-Mormon settlers. Both historians acknowledged that non-Mormon Missouri settlers feared that a Mormon majority would affect their ability to own slaves, but argued that the issue of slavery was one of many differences rather than the root cause of the rising hostility.³⁸ Their analyses insisted that the rising anti-Mormon sentiments could not be wholly contributed to a single factor, rather a combination of cultural, political, economic, and religious differences.

In contrast, historian Diane Mutti-Burke has argued that “Missourians’ extreme and violent reaction to their new Mormon neighbors reflects the reality that the newcomers’ vision for the place in many ways contradicted that of the earliest American settlers... White Missourians already believed they were under siege and the Mormon newcomers exacerbated these pre-existing fears.”³⁹ Joseph Smith preached to the Saints that God instructed him to gather the Church in Missouri. Missouri was to be a haven for the Saints: their “Zion” where all men and women could worship freely and prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus

³⁸ Spencer, “Was This Missouri Civilization,” 110-113; Winn, “Missouri Context of Antebellum Mormonism,” 20-22.

³⁹ Diane Mutti-Burke, “A Contested Promised Land: Mormons, Slaveholders, and the Disputed Vision for the Settlement of Western Missouri,” *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 36 no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2016): 15.

Christ.⁴⁰ “All” men and women in this case included slaves. Mutti-Burke argued that, before the Mormons began to settle in Missouri in large numbers, early Missouri settlers, the majority of whom originated from south-eastern, slave-holding states, were already anxious over recent national events such as Native American conflicts, slave insurrections, and northern abolitionists. Although many of these non-Mormon settlers were poor yeomen farmers who owned a smaller number of slaves compared to their elite plantation counterparts, their primary goals were similar: they wanted economic independence and mastery over their properties, both environmental and human.

Most of the Mormon settlers originated from north-eastern states. Mutti-Burke argued that Missourians’ “greatest fears stemmed from concerns that the Mormons, who they presumed to be abolitionists, would negatively influence the slave population and incite local Indians to violence.” Similarly, LeSueur, Winn, and Spencer recognized that the threat of slavery was an issue which fueled the Old-settler’s animosity towards the Mormons. However, their arguments depart from Mutti-Burke’s as they regarded the issue of slavery as having the same amount of weight as religious, political, and economical issues. Mutti-Burke convincingly demonstrated that economic, religious, and political concerns were mere spokes which anchored themselves to the central issue of slavery. The growing presence of the Mormons threatened the institution of slavery on which so many non-Mormon settlers depended.⁴¹

⁴⁰ For scriptures directly related to Joseph Smith’s revelations about Missouri as the gathering place for the Saints, see Doctrine and Covenants sections 52, 54, 57, 59, 63, 69, 114.

⁴¹ Mutti-Burke, “A Contested Promised Land,” 29.

Of course, the ways in which historians tell and retell the events of the Mormon War depend on the evidence they find and the ways they interpret it. Similarly, authors of historical fiction use their knowledge and takes on the past to drive their narratives forward. Unlike historic scholarship, however, historical fiction is not subjected to peer review or academic standards. It does not require footnotes or a justification of their methods. Moreover, while historic scholarship is often intended for a narrow audience of academics, historic fiction is meant for a broad audience which includes non-academic history enthusiasts. Many people are drawn to historical novels due to the way authors disseminate knowledge of past events and people in an entertaining and palatable way. A 2015 survey which listed the leading book genres in the United States showed that historical novels were only second to the category of crime, mystery, and thriller books.⁴²

Although historical novels do not undergo the same amount of academic scrutiny as pieces of scholarship, it does not mean that the historical novelist is without restraints to their artistic license. Many authors of historical fiction use great discretion when choosing which events to include and how to present historical actors. Their discretion consequently influences the way readers perceive the historic events depicted in the story. Literary scholar Richard H. Cracroft argued that authors of historical fiction walk a precarious line between presenting history in a realistic way while also creating fictional characters to which readers can relate. He explained, “in retelling history, the historical novelist is of necessity bounded and limited by historical fact, a condition that wields a historical tyranny.” At the same time,

⁴² Statista, “Leading book genres in the U.S. 2015,” modified January 2019, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/201404/types-of-books-that-american-adults-read>.

authors “create fictional characters with whom the reader may identify, characters who... enhance and refocus familiar historical events by seeing them through the imagined points of view of anonymous, ordinary, and unknown participants.”⁴³ For Cracroft, the job of a novelist is two-fold: do not stray from the path of realistic history and create characters whose thoughts and feelings are framed in a way that allows contemporary readers to identify with them.

The contradictory pressures of historical fiction thus create certain challenges for the author. As Cracroft explained, the constraints of historical tyranny and the need for relatable characters creates three main faults in historical novels. The first problem is caused when authors sweep broadly through history at the cost of shallow and uncomplicated characters, who then become representatives of a stereotype instead of dynamic individuals. The second is the problem of historicism. Critics legitimately question the confused purpose of an author’s attempts, on the one hand, “to retrieve and replicate the external realities of an age, while, on the other hand, presume to imagine fictively the consciousness and inner life of the ancients.” It is the fine line historical novelists walk who wish to accurately describe the past while needing to cater to contemporary readers.

The third problem lies in the fusion of historical facts and imaginary invention. Because contemporary readers may not always be able to tell when the facts end and fiction begins, readers are imbued with “corrupt historical knowledge.”⁴⁴ In this regard, historian

⁴³ Richard H. Cracroft, “Telling the Restoration Story: Gerald N. Lund’s *The Work and the Glory Saga*,” *Journal of Mormon History* 29 no. 1 (Spring 2003): 243-244.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 246-247.

Christopher Browning drew attention to the emotional and psychological difficulty facing authors when they try to humanize the characteristics of perpetrators. Although his scholarship focused on perpetrators of mass shooting during the Holocaust, his methodology is applicable to any study which seeks to analyze the action of perpetrators. Browning proposed that a “possible objection to this kind of study concerns the degree of empathy for the perpetrators that is inherent in trying to understand them... This recognition does indeed mean an attempt to empathize.” He explained that, as the reader, we feel uncomfortable putting ourselves in a position to empathize with the perpetrator. It makes us feel as though we are forfeiting our moral high-ground and implicating ourselves by trying to understand their crimes. Yet Browning insisted that empathy is crucial to studying the past. He warned, “Not trying to understand the perpetrators in human terms would make impossible... any history of Holocaust perpetrators that sought to go beyond one-dimensional caricature.”⁴⁵

In spite of these criticisms, religious scholar and literary critic Terryl Givens contended that, when a book is labeled as historical fiction, reader and critic alike are forewarned that the contents therein should be taken with a grain of salt. He stated that, “when fiction presumes to claim the authority of history... [and] pairs sensational speculation with historical subjects, the boundaries again seem to blur.”⁴⁶ In his scholarship, Givens looked beyond the criticisms and critiques of Mormon depictions and instead focused on what those depictions tell readers about how people viewed members of the Church at the

⁴⁵ Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1992), xix-xx.

⁴⁶ Terryl L. Givens, *Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 171.

time the literature was written. Givens argued that fiction, and especially popular fiction, helps readers to “register not just the presence of conflict and contention, but the psychological and ideological causes and consequences of those tensions among [a] populace”⁴⁷ Historical fiction plays a similar role as it is reflective of a group’s collective understanding towards a historical event. Givens claimed that “literary labels are more important for what they tell us about the authority the words carry, than what form those words take.”⁴⁸ According to Givens, authors of historic Church fiction breathe authority into their works not by what they say but rather how they present their material. For instance, some authors of historical fiction include chapter endnotes which provide readers with citations that will direct them to an archive or other credible source from which they received their historical “facts” creating an air of legitimacy. As Givens demonstrated, the retelling of history, especially in popular fiction, is at the mercy of the author’s artistic discretion. While readers may take comfort in the sense of academic legitimacy the endnotes provide, unless readers go into those sources and read them in their entirety, readers are unaware of what information may be omitted or taken out of context for the author’s own narrative purposes.

What makes Lund’s *Work and the Glory* series so successful is how his Mormon audience already understands its connection to the pioneer saga before even reading the book. Since the Saints entered the Rocky Mountains in 1847, members of the Church have retold their stories in order to solidify and celebrate their pioneer heritage. Members of the Church see themselves in close connection to the ancient Israelites and other ancient peoples

⁴⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 172.

found in the *Book of Mormon*. Many of Joseph Smith's revelations and personal accounts of Church members contain implicitly or explicitly Jewish tropes such as fleeing persecution, wandering in the wilderness, and entering the Promised Land. To be sure, they did not, and still do not, consider such themes to be exclusively Jewish. As Bushman explained, the *Book of Mormon* contends that Gentile Christianity had apostatized and that "the rehabilitation of the world was to begin with literal Israel and expand from there... God calls upon modern Christians to assist in this work of restoration—and to become Israel themselves."⁴⁹ When the Saints called themselves God's chosen people, it was because they understood themselves to be aligned with but supplementing Israel. This belief continues today as members believe that, by being baptized, they enter into a covenant with God and become part of God's chosen people. More to the point, the Mormon Church teaches that they become a more perfected people as they endure trials, tribulations, and persecutions.

The "Israelite" point of reference enables us to analyze the ways in which the Church understands and memorializes its history in relation to other cultures and societies which have also been the victims of mass trauma. The Church encourages its members not only to tell the story of the early Saints but also to recreate and reimagine the Mormon War and the Saint's expulsion through performative events such as parades, celebrations, and pageants. Some Holocaust scholars argue that the Holocaust should not be fictionalized out of respect for the dead and fear of sensationalism, yet Mormons have a long tradition of narrativizing these historical events. When placed next to the literature on the Church's historic traditions,

⁴⁹ Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 103.

a comparative analysis grounded in the large literature on Holocaust and genocide studies can help us to trace the roles of popular historical narrative in informing cultural identity.

Historian Eric Eliason speculated that any mass, forced migration has the potential to “galvanize generations if its drudgery is valorized, its most dramatic moments highlighted, and its embarrassing episodes forgotten.”⁵⁰ The telling and re-telling of the Saints’ persecution and forced migration across generations has created a historic narrative among the Church that has valorized the early Saints while also allowing the more embarrassing moments of history to slip into obscurity. Eliason examined how contemporary members of the Church continue to use the pioneer saga to reframe the experiences of their ancestors within a greater American historical drama while also establishing a cultural history tied to the ancient Israelites.⁵¹ By reframing their past within a greater American narrative, members of the Church have fit their history into America’s romanticized westward expansion story. These dual associations legitimize their claim not only to the American experience and culture of the time but also to being God’s people. Eliason concluded that the pioneer concept is still being innovatively reworked and shows continued contemporary vitality in the cultural identity of the Church.⁵²

Historian Steve Olsen identified similar elements of how members of the Church celebrate their cultural identity through the commemoration of the pioneer saga. While

⁵⁰ Eric A. Eliason, “Pioneers and Recapitulation in Mormon Popular Historical Expression” in *Usable Pasts: Traditions and Group Expressions in North America*, ed. Tad Tuleja (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1997), 175.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 205.

Eliason gave a more sweeping analysis of the multiple ways Church members celebrate and disseminate knowledge of their pioneer heritage, Olsen narrowed his focus by examining the history and significance of Pioneer Day. First celebrated on July 24, 1849 and still celebrated today, Pioneer Day marked the anniversary of the Saints' entrance into the Salt Lake Valley and "served to memorialize and solidify the Saints' freedoms, fundamental values, social roles, and heritage."⁵³ Similar to Eliason's findings, Olsen concluded that the purpose of Pioneer Day was to "express core elements of Mormon identity and sense of mission... for preserving and expressing their ideology...[for] solidifying their society and the roles of its members, and maintaining awareness of their history."⁵⁴ By telling and re-telling the events of the Saints' journey to the Rocky Mountains, the Church creates a cultural memory which informs core elements of their identity as Modern-Day Pioneers.

While Pioneer Day and pageants are still two prominent forms of contemporary celebration, one of the most pervasive acts of memorialization is the "Pioneer Trek," in which the majority of congregations in the United States participate every four years. Trek is essentially a three to four-day reenactment which seeks to replicate what it was like for pioneers to pull a handcart across the plains. It is a chance for youth ages 14 to 18 to put themselves in the shoes of their pioneer predecessors as they are required to travel a certain distance each day. The Church's official website states that the purpose of Trek is for youth

⁵³ Steven L. Olsen, "Celebrating Cultural Identity: Pioneer Day in Nineteenth-Century Mormonism," *Brigham Young University Studies* 36 no. 1 (1996-97): 159.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 174.

to “experience firsthand the faith and determination of the pioneers.”⁵⁵ Youth are directed to “dress appropriately” meaning that girls are to wear ankle-length skirts while boys are to wear trousers and long-sleeved, buttoned up shirts.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints uses these performative reenactments to both memorialize and celebrate what they view to be a triumph over their persecutors. While there are cemeteries, films, and artwork which capture the more solemn and reflective aspects of the Saints’ persecution, for the most part the Church uses the lives and experiences of the Saints to set an example of overcoming trials and tribulations at the hands of those who opposed God’s work and people. It is then permissible within the Church’s culture to narrativize the instances of violence and persecution the Saints experienced as it helps the Church establish and perpetuate a specific historic narrative and collective identity. In doing so they believe they are both honoring the lives of those who suffered as well as creating a closer connection to the past.

Holocaust fiction and Holocaust memorials similarly function as mediums through which stories from the past can be told and transformed into collective memory. Artists and scholars use the testimonies and experiences of those who experienced life within the ghettos and/or camps in order to disseminate knowledge of those atrocities to contemporary audiences. Sociologist Janet Jacobs focused on the ways in which some Holocaust memorials create gendered representations of women, which take away from the accuracy of their experiences in the ghettos and camps. She gathered her data primarily from museum

⁵⁵ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Pioneer Treks,” last modified 2019, accessed March 3, 2019, <https://www.lds.org/youth/activities/stake-and-multistake-activities/camps-and-youth-conferences/treks?lang=eng>.

photographs, sculptural art, and material artifacts. She found that “women’s memory is constructed primarily through two visual frames: women as mothers, and women as embodied subjects of Nazi atrocities.” Jacobs argued that recalling women’s experiences through gendered texts becomes problematic as it serves to “reify traditional representations of women as either suffering mothers and/or sexual possessions of the perpetrators.”⁵⁶

Consider first the theme of victimized maternity. She observed that “the suffering of mothers, their death and the death of their children... act as a powerful reminder of a type of human evil that the Holocaust has come to represent in the collective imagination.”⁵⁷ These images are meant to illicit an emotional connection with the victims and thus induce a poignant response from the viewer as “the prevalence of maternal imagery... functions as a narrative of gendered violence that, in its universalizing symbolism, creates an especially strong emotive context through which to view and remember the history of Nazi crimes against humanity.”⁵⁸ When audiences read or view the death or suffering of women and children, they tend to react with a much stronger emotional response. This response suggests a type of hierarchy which ranks violence from bad to worse. When audiences see memorials that depict a suffering woman and child, the audience assumes the role of the moral judge who insists: “*this* violence went too far.” Maternal imagery creates an especially poignant aversion to Nazi crimes not for the violence in and of itself, but for the fact that the Nazis committed violence against women and children.

⁵⁶ Janet Jacobs, “Gender and Collective Memory,” in *Memorializing the Holocaust: Gender, Genocide and Collective Memory* (London: IB Tauris, 2010), 31.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

The second theme functions similarly as images of women are used to embody Nazi brutality. Jacobs explained that although Nazis systematically starved both men and women to death, it is primarily the female body which is photographically presented in museum installations. She continued,

The medical photographs on display at Auschwitz reveal a fascination with the racialized and dehumanized human subject whose body has become the visual text for recording and remembrance of Nazi sadism and brutality.⁵⁹

Women's bodies therefore become the center of Nazi atrocities. While it is the intent of museums to expose the extent of Nazi crimes, by using women's bodies as embodiments of Nazi brutality, patrons no longer see individuals but physical representations of mass atrocities. Jacobs recognized that this strategy for memorialization can potentially lock women into traditional gendered roles by disregarding the historical complexity of women's experiences and thus creating a problematic collective memory. She explained that "the suffering of mothers [and their children]... act as a powerful reminder of a type of human evil... Repetitive images of victimized women and children... continue to reproduce this gendered memory in the memorialization of mass trauma."⁶⁰ Unfortunately, Jacobs does not resolve the question of how to find the balance between exploitation and memorialization of people's suffering.

While Jacobs analyzed the medium of art and its role in representing gendered groups in Holocaust collective memory, Ananda Breed examined the role of performance and memory in post-genocide Rwanda in her work *Performing the Nation*. Breed explored the

⁵⁹ Ibid., 38-39.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 33, 36.

ways in which the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), the ruling government body post-genocide, used oral history and performance to create a new, nationally unified Rwanda identity referred to as “Rwandanicity.”⁶¹ Breed approached two main topics: the function of collective memory in creating a new national identity after a mass atrocity and the use of theatre to establish justice and promote reconciliation.⁶² Like Durkheim and Assmann, Breed underscores the importance of performance and historic narrative in supporting and perpetuating collective memory and cultural identity. Breed used various case studies in post-Rwanda society between 2004 and 2012 in order to analyze government-initiated programs such as *gacaca* courts and *ingando* prisons. These programs drew upon dialogue from genocide survivors to show how the performance of justice and reconciliation staged the new Rwandanicity.⁶³

Breed argued that elements such as performance, stage, narrative, characters, and so on are applied in the day-to-day performativity of groups and individuals who are trying to assume a unified, cultural identity.⁶⁴ She used *ingando* solidarity camps as a prime example of politicized theatre used to ensure “mass indoctrination of government-sanctioned history.”⁶⁵ The RPF required perpetrators of the violence to attend *ingando* camps to “study government programs, Rwandan history, and unity and reconciliation.” *Ingando* was a “re-

⁶¹ Ananda Breed, *Performing the Nation: Genocide, Justice, and Reconciliation* (Calcutta, IN: Seagull Books, 2014).

⁶² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

writing history program” which used a single dominant narrative that harkened back to pre-colonial hegemony to create a new national identity. The RPF expected out-mates to disseminate learned information to those within the scope of their community to further inculcate the message.⁶⁶ As Breed convincingly demonstrated, the RPF believed that a shared, unique history would eventually bring national reconciliation. Her use of performance and shared historical narrative enabled readers to see the important role collective identity played post-genocide. The RPF needed to create a sense of national unity, an “us versus them” narrative, by disseminating knowledge of a unified Rwanda pre-British colonialism. Unlike art, sculptures, and other physical monuments, the oral dissemination of history and the performance of history actively involves the participants.

Scholars of Holocaust literature such as Lawrence Langer and Geoffrey Short explored both the positive uses of Holocaust literature as well as the risks it posed in distorting and obscuring the more complex historical aspects. Langer asserted that “the fact and the fiction constantly war with each other for higher priority.”⁶⁷ Short similarly argued that, while Holocaust fiction is potentially valuable for bringing history to life, “the benefits of historical literature cannot be guaranteed. Some books... can obscure, distort, and deny the truth as easily as they can shed light on it.”⁶⁸ While Langer and Short analyzed Holocaust literature as it pertained to its reliability and function in the classroom, literary critic Linda

⁶⁶ Ibid., 56.

⁶⁷ Lawrence L. Langer, “Fictional Facts and Factual Fictions: History in Holocaust Literature,” In *Reflections of the Holocaust in Art and Literature*, edited by L. Randolph Brahm (New York: Columbia UP, 1990), 118.

⁶⁸ Geoffrey Short, “Learning through Literature: Historical Fiction, Autobiography, and the Holocaust,” *Children’s Literature in Education* 28 no. 4 (1997):188.

Raphael concentrated on the reasons why people write Holocaust literature. In her article “Representing the Holocaust in Literature,” Raphael skillfully chose a handful of excerpts from diaries, memoirs, and fictions.⁶⁹ As she analyzed each excerpt, she considered the morally dubious position readers found themselves in when reading either analytic history, first-hand accounts, or fiction. She explained that “we consider ourselves to be on different moral ground when we imagine fictional characters, even when we find them depicted with historical accuracy.”⁷⁰ Raphael explored the nature of social memory in literature focusing on diaries and memoirs. She explained that diaries “record the *movement* of history rather than a later analysis of history... [They] exclude revision and second thoughts or afterthoughts and thus generally come as close as representation can to performing the events they cite rather than to describing them.”⁷¹ Thus, diaries of varying literary quality and information help to create a social memory for those who read them.

Memoirs, by contrast, are written after the fact. Raphael noted that they do not tell the experiences of the moment but nevertheless “go a long way toward creating a social memory of those things for which there was no context at the time of their occurrence.” In this way, memoirs have more in common with fiction than most people think because memoirs do not necessarily communicate a view that is more “authentic” or reliable.⁷² Just as authors of literature pick and choose which information they include in their narratives, “what is

⁶⁹ Linda S. Raphael, “Representing the Holocaust in Literature: Diaries, Memoirs, ‘Fateless’, and Other Fiction,” *Colloquia Germanica* 36 no. ¾ (Spring 2003): 225.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 226.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 228.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 231.

missing from a memoir may have been left out by the writer intentionally or inadvertently, or because the historical information was not available and perhaps never will be because the relevant historical facts cannot be found.”⁷³ Raphael successfully argued that, despite the reservations of Langer and Short, the lines between literature and memoir are blurred but equally important in creating social memory.

Methodology

This thesis frames collective memory and cultural identity as social constructions that are created not only through the oral and written histories but through performative expressions as well. Ananda Breed correctly postulated that while the dissemination of history through oral and written accounts is important, the performativity of cultural identity solidifies shared images of the past in a way that immerses the whole person and physical space around them. Breed’s argument is particularly relevant to the case of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as thousands of its members annually perform in parades and reenact treks across open plains for days at a time in order to share, strengthen, and solidify their cultural ties to the early Saints. Historical fiction and other works of contemporary literature also play a large role in creating and maintaining cultural identity. Church historical fiction should not be dismissed as inadequate resources which disseminate false histories as Langer and Short claimed. Like Terryl Givens and Linda Raphael, this thesis is not so much concerned with the historical accuracy of historical fiction. Rather, it investigates how church historical fiction reflects the views and understandings of many

⁷³ Ibid., 232.

members of the Church when it comes not only to the historical events and figures involved in the Mormon War.

Gerald N. Lund's *The Work and the Glory* series is a prime lens through which to study Mormon understandings of the early history of the Saints. Lund's series follows the fictional Steed family from their first encounter with the young, charismatic Joseph Smith in 1827 Palmyra, New York, to their arrival to the Great Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Although *The Work and the Glory* series covers 20 years of Church history, *Thy Gold to Refine* covers only nine months from July 1838 to March 1839. Lund places the Steed family in the thick of the most crucial and historic events in the Church's history such as the Battle of Crooked River, Governor Boggs's issuing of the "Mormon Extermination Order," and the Hawn's Mill Massacre. By the end of the volume, the Steed family, along with the other Saints, have fled the state of Missouri at gun-point and resettled in Nauvoo, Illinois.

Like scholars and historical novelists alike, Lund combed through his sources and carefully chose which historic events and characters to highlight in order to drive the narrative forward. Lund provided readers with notes at the end of each chapter to show readers the sources for his information, to insert extra background information, and to give his series a level of historic legitimacy. Therefore, *The Work and the Glory* is classified as historical fiction and not creative non-fiction. While the Steeds and other fictional characters interact with non-fictional characters and are based off true events, the interactions are fabrications which are meant to help bring the reader closer to historical characters as well as to drive the narrative forward.

Methodologically, I will look for areas where Lund has imposed generalizations, applied gendered frames of reference to the Saints' experiences, and structured characters' dialogue to fit into a larger, religious framework. Arguably, how Lund understands and frames the Saints' persecution is reflective of the author's understanding of the Church's larger cultural heritage of being a covenanted people lead from persecution towards a "promised" land. This analysis will show that Lund's work not only supports a popular historical narrative of early Church history, but it also provides contemporary readers with a way to connect with the early Saints and create a shared cultural identity as modern-day pioneers.

Point of View and the Reader's Moral High Ground

Lund's *The Work and the Glory* series was first and foremost the story of the early history Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. While he used fictional characters to help drive the narrative, those characters were not meant to take away from the unfolding of the larger history of the Church and its early members. The fictional characters in Lund's series were "bystanders": characters who observed the historical events unfolding around them.

Literary critic Richard Cracroft explained,

The bystanding characters are written into the story, not to draw attention to themselves, but to keep the reader's eyes single to the novelist's real story and fixed on those grand gestures and dramatic acts which will affect the fate of the tribe... [The novel requires] the bystanding characters' relative and psychologically unacceptable simplicity to advance the demands and hold the focus on the unfolding epic.⁷⁴

Lund's narrative was driven more by the larger historical events and less by the actual characters in the story. The main purpose of the Steed family was to bring readers into close

⁷⁴ Cracroft, "Telling the Restoration Story," 245.

contact with non-fictional characters and to ensure that the author could introduce as many places and events into the narrative as possible. The Steed family was large, consisting of five children born to Benjamin and Mary Ann Steed, who were in their fifties during the fourth volume. Three of their eldest children had small families, the second youngest daughter was newly married, and the youngest son was barely eighteen. Because of the characters' large range in age and development, Lund could place more characters in different situations which, allowed them to be near or directly involved with the main historical events. To make a contemporary cultural comparison, the Steeds were the "Forrest Gump" family of the Church's early history.

While Lund's use of bystanding characters helped to engage the reader in more historical events, it was problematic in its representation of the early Saints. Throughout the series, the Steed family remained intact and unfettered by the internal dissension of other Church members. All instances of dissension were either observed by the Steed family or were told to members of the family by an actual, well-known historical character such as the Smith family or other high-profile Church members. Lund used the close association between the Steeds and historic figures for two purposes. First, by telling early Church events through well-known and well-documented historical figures, he added legitimacy to the story. He included endnotes at the end of each chapter, which directed his readers to the sources he used to research the person or event. For example, after the end of chapter seventeen, which described in great detail the events of the Hawn's Mill Massacre, Lund stated in his chapter notes: "While the purpose of the novel require that the author place his fictional characters in the midst of the terrible events at Hawn's Mill and provide some detail not given in original

accounts, every effort has been made to depict the tragedy as it actually happened.” He then directed his readers to a list of sources he used to tell the story.⁷⁵ Because Lund provided his readers with scholarly sources, readers were more apt to believe in his version of the story rather than word-of-mouth anecdotes that they may have heard in church or from their peers. Second, by putting the Steed family near many well-known, faithful historical figures, the reader could view episodes of dissension without feeling as though their own faith was being questioned or implicated. As Linda Raphael argued about Holocaust fiction, “we consider ourselves to be on different moral ground when we imagine fictional characters, even when we find them depicted with historical accuracy.”⁷⁶ Almost all of Lund’s main characters were faithful members of the Church, however, Lund created a false faith-dichotomy within the Saints. He stripped the early Saints of humanistic, multi-faceted traits and created one-dimensional characters that fit into one of two camps: unwavering-Saint or fallen-Saint. The Steed family were unwavering in their faith with little to no variation among them. They often expressed sadness or shock when they heard stories of those who left the Church or were excommunicated. By contrast, Lund included well-known accounts of historical men who held high offices in the Church and whose disagreements with leadership or otherwise

⁷⁵ Gerald Lund, *The Work and the Glory: Thy Gold to Refine*, (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1993), 297-298. Lund uses the following sources in chapter seventeen: Jeanine Fry Ricketts, comp. and ed., *By their Fruits: A History and Genealogy of the Fry family of Wiltshire, England, and Their Descendants, Including the Allied Lines of Harwood, Ramsden, Toomer, Thruston, Bosen, and Maddox* (Salt Lake City: Privately published, n.d.); Joseph Smith, B.H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932-51); B.H. Roberts, *The Missouri Persecutions* (1900; reprint, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965); and Clark V. Johnson, ed., *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833-1838 Missouri Conflict* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992).

⁷⁶ Raphael, “Representing the Holocaust in Literature,” 227.

led them to denounce their membership. Unfortunately, Lund did not include any middle ground, thus creating a false representation of early Church life and its members.

Lund's use of multiple characters in different stages of life enabled him to tell early Church history through different frames of reference. One of the most important in the fourth volume was Joshua Steed, the eldest of the Steed children. From the beginning of the series, Joshua's skepticism of Joseph Smith and his hatred of the Mormons grew, until he estranged himself from his family and eventually moved to the wild frontier of western Missouri. When the Saints began to flood into Jackson County, Joshua took the lead in helping with the Saints' expulsion. Joshua's hatred for the Mormons reached its apex when he forced his wife and infant child from Jackson County after she converted to Mormonism. Joshua then allowed his comrades to whip his younger brother Nathan mercilessly. Burdened with shame and remorse for his actions, Joshua remained distant from his family who now resided in Far West. At the age of thirty-one, he secured his own freighting company, became a commissioned officer in the Missouri Militia, and established himself as a wealthy and well-respected figure in Jackson County among the anti-Mormon Missouri settlers. It was not until volume three, when Joshua took a new wife, Caroline Mendenhall, that he began to soften and face the demons of his past. By the end of volume three, Joshua reunited with his family and, having seen the miraculous change in their son and brother, the Steed family welcomed their prodigal son back into their lives.

Joshua's role in Lund's narrative was more crucial in *Thy Gold to Refine* than in any other volume of the series. He was one of the few exceptions in the series that did not fit into one of the two polarized categories of fallen Saint or unwavering Saint. As such he was able

to provide readers with one of the few “non-Mormon” points of view. Joshua’s perspective allowed the reader to feel as though they were receiving a well-rounded report of early Church history that sought to understand both sides of the story. Joshua never became a member of the Church and, as a commissioned officer, Joshua was subject to following Governor Boggs’s military orders. Lund used Joshua to bring readers within close proximity of historical figures such as Governor Lilburn Boggs, Major General Samuel Lucas, Samuel Bogart, Thomas Jennings, and David Atchison. All these men were key figures in one or more of the major attacks against the Saints.

Because of his ambiguous position, Joshua served as a moral barometer that readers could use to assess the actions of different non-Mormon characters in the story. While Lund included many violent anti-Mormons, he also included a few accounts of non-Mormons who were sympathetic to the Saints’ plight. As a man who was once a violent, anti-Mormon, Joshua’s transformation and new-found tolerance for the Saints placed him on a moral high-ground when compared to his more violent comrades. For example, Joshua encountered a group of men who just left Hawn’s Mill after the Massacre. The men were part of the First Brigade’s Third Division of the Missouri Militia. Lund provided the following description from Joshua’s perspective:

As they approached, Joshua suddenly felt his stomach drop. The men were carrying the spoils of war ...
“Captain Joshua Steed,” Joshua called to the man who was obviously in charge ...
The man was grinning broadly. “Nehemiah Comstock and my boys from Livingston County.” He leaned across his saddle, extending his hand.
Joshua started to reach out to take it, then recoiled in shock. The hand had dark red smears all across the palm ...
He looked at Joshua and cackled fiendishly ... “We been killing Mormons.”⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Lund, *Thy Gold to Refine*, 305-306.

Joshua's physical reactions were some of the first manifestations of his change-of-heart towards the Saints and the extreme measures of violence many Missourians used against them. Considering Joshua used intimidation and force to drive Mormon families out of Jackson County a few years prior, his reaction to Comstock and his men bore witness for the reader that Joshua had removed himself from the extreme violence of the Missouri government and vigilantes. Joshua's reactions stood in stark contrast with Comstock who "cackled fiendishly" and "triumphantly" when he announced their recent killing spree.

After his encounter with Comstock, Joshua went to Hawn's Mill to see if his ex-wife, Jessica, was safe. Finding her in a state of shock and with a bullet wound through the hand, he grabbed her and took her to the main camp where he pleaded with Lieutenant Carter to allow Joshua to take her to Far West to join up with the rest of the Saints. When Carter refused to grant his request,

[Joshua] turned to look at his men. "Is that what we stand for out here?" Heads dropped or turned away. He saw two or three heads shake quickly back and forth. These men hated Mormons, but they weren't the lunatic types that rode with Neil Gilliam or Nehemiah Comstock. They had not come out to slaughter women and children.⁷⁸

Joshua's exchange with Lt. Carter and his men showed readers varying levels of morality among the perpetrators. Lund used Joshua's emotional and physical actions to set a moral standard for the Missourians in the series. Through Joshua, the reader was able to place the Missourians within two separate moral camps: those who were the "lunatic type" and those who hated Mormons but drew the line at slaughtering women and children. Lund validated

⁷⁸ Ibid. Lund, 323.

the moral standard first with Joshua's exchange with Comstock and then with Joshua's plea to the other Militiamen. Lund's description of the militia, who hung their heads in shame upon seeing the wounded Jessica in a state of shock, also served to humanize the Missourians. The shame and remorse displayed by Carter's militia demonstrated to the readers a complexity of human nature. It allowed the reader to feel a small amount of sympathy for the men despite their involvement in the persecution and expulsion of the Saints.

Unfortunately, Lund only attempted to humanize the non-violent militia men. When depicting the vehement anti-Mormons such as Nehemiah Comstock and his men, Lund used very brief descriptions and typically characterized them as un-educated, vulgar, and drunk or drinking.⁷⁹ Lund used Joshua's character to further condemn the actions of violent, anti-Mormon men. Joshua's past violent actions against the Saints gave him a level of authority and moral high ground. He was the only character in the series that could empathize with the anti-Mormon attackers, and he looked upon them with disgust and disdain. Therefore, if Joshua could do so, readers were encouraged to sympathize with Joshua and support his perspective. Because no other perspective of the non-Mormon Missourians was explored in great depth, however, Lund created a second false dichotomy of non-violent Mormons and violent Missourians.

Lund's choice to use the Steed family as bystanding characters was very deliberate and served to bring greater focus to the major historical events of the Church. Unfortunately, Lund's use of bystanders came at the cost of creating one-dimensional characters as well as a

⁷⁹ Lund, *Thy Gold to Refine*, 91-93, 190-193, 296, 349-355, 403-405, 441-444, 493-495.

false dichotomy of faith. Lund used one-dimensional characters to enable readers to be a part of the more complicated moments of dissension with the Church without letting readers feel as though they were being morally implicated or that their own faith was being questioned. Lund also provided readers with Joshua's perspective to create a sense of balance in perspectives. Rather than provide readers with the non-Mormon perspective, Joshua's character became a means by which readers could condemn the actions of militia men and then validate those judgements. Lund's false dichotomies stripped historical actors of their multi-faceted human nature and instead compartmentalized them into historical stereotypes.

Age and Gender

Lund's broad strokes through the events surrounding the Mormon War highlighted the political and military aspects of the conflict. His focus consequently marginalized the experiences of women and children who were not directly involved in many of the confrontations but took responsibility for the more "backstage" activities during the Mormon War. Their tasks, although important for survival and quality of life during a time of emotional, mental, and physical turbulence, became second to those tasks performed by men. In her oral history of Nazi genocide in Belorussia, historian Anika Walke contended that "the silence of life-saving activities suggests that military agency—men's work—is more valuable than other activities."⁸⁰ Although Lund included a few, well-known accounts of Mormon

⁸⁰ Anika Walke, *Pioneers and Partisans: An Oral History of Nazi Genocide in Belorussia* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015): 20.

women's experiences, he did not give these women much depth or dimension. Instead, he characterized the women in terms of their enduring faith and suffering.

Lund's representation of women in *The Work and the Glory* was reflective of the Church's cultural understanding of the domestic sphere at the time the series was written. In 1995, the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus-Christ of Latter-day Saints released a document entitled "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."⁸¹ This short statement was introduced first in a general women's meeting of the Church by Gordon B. Hinckley, the President of the Church, and then to all members during the Church's semi-annual, world-wide General Conference broadcast.⁸² "The Family" defined the Church's official position on topics including familial and gender roles, marriage, and human sexuality.

Although Lund published the first four books before the First Presidency released "The Family," Church members were already familiar with the Church's positions on topics of gender and sexuality. In the October 2017 General Conference broadcast, Dallin H. Oaks, member of the First Presidency of the Church, stated that, at the time "The Family" was released, "it was a surprise to some who thought the doctrinal truths about marriage and the family were well understood without restatement."⁸³ For many, the release of the

⁸¹ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," September 23, 1995, accessed March 4, 2019, <https://www.lds.org/topics/family-proclamation?lang=eng&old=true>. The "First Presidency" refers to the top leadership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with the President acting as the leader and God's mouth-piece and the first and second counselors making up the rest of the First Presidency.

⁸³ Dallin H. Oaks, "The Plan and the Proclamation," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2012, Accessed March 7, 2019, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2017/10/the-plan-and-the-proclamation?lang=eng&country=br>.

proclamation was almost redundant and unnecessary. The way that Lund applied gender roles reflected the larger domestic culture within the Church in the 1990s.

Lund did not ignore the hardships faced by Mormon women. He included a few beautiful, first-hand accounts of women who performed miraculous feats of courage and strength such as Agnes Smith, sister-in-law to the Prophet, who was driven from her home at gunpoint by vigilantes. Lund also included Amanda Smith's experiences during the Hawn's Mill Massacre as well as her account of healing her son's hip that was blown off by a bullet during the attack. Lastly, he included the famous historical account of Emma Smith crossing the frozen Mississippi River into Illinois with her four children, two of which she carried.⁸⁴ While these women showed great strength and courage in their actions, their stories are similar, as they all filled life-preserving, maternal roles while their husbands were either fighting, in hiding, or imprisoned. Lund took special care to highlight their stories in his novel, however he characterized these women in terms of their faith and suffering as well as their maternal roles as caretakers and nurturers within the family. Although strong and inspiring, these women were one-dimensional characters, who experienced only minor emotional growth and development. They became the "repetitive images of victimized women and children" that historian Janet Jacobs concluded were fixed within gendered memory as they were only memorialized as such.⁸⁵

During the expulsion of the Saints, loss of life due to violence, hunger, or exposure to the elements was common. Young boys and girls took upon themselves new responsibilities

⁸⁴ Lund, *Thy Gold to Refine*, 207-209; 311-315; 349-355; 544-547.

⁸⁵ Jacobs, "Gender and Collective Memory," 36.

to replace ailing or dead family members. Girls grew into the static roles of domestic laborer and nurturer while boys grew into their roles as providers and protectors. As a result, boys' coming of age narratives were more dramatic than girls. Lund created different coming-of-age narratives for three fictional characters: Matthew Steed, Peter Ingalls, Will Steed. Their ages ranged from eighteen years old to ten years old. Lund used their experiences to highlight the extreme difficulties some youth faced in having to bear extra responsibilities while facing extreme persecution.

Matthew Steed and Peter Ingalls were the more well-known characters in Lund's novel. Matthew was the youngest of the Steed children, being eighteen years old in *Thy Gold to Refine*. His coming-of-age experience took place during the Battle of Crooked River. On October 25, 1838, Joseph Smith received word in Far West that a group of about thirty Missourians from Jackson county had been harassing outlying settlements and had taken three Mormon prisoners. Benjamin, Nathan, and Matthew were gathered in the town square to hear Smith call for seventy-five volunteers to follow Colonel Hinkle and disperse the mob in order to rescue the prisoners. Although both Benjamin and Nathan were sick with the thought of a violent confrontation, Matthew "was hungry for action and was almost dancing now in anticipation."⁸⁶ Despite Benjamin's emotional protests in letting his youngest son join the conflict, he turned to Nathan and reluctantly acquiesced. "He's a man now, Nathan."⁸⁷

For Matthew, his involvement in the rescue of his church brethren was also an opportunity for him to join the rest of the men in defending their faith and their loved ones.

⁸⁶ Lund, *Thy Gold to Refine*, 227.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 229-230.

Although he was eighteen, he felt a need to prove himself by following his fellow Saints in the defense of their home. At the onset of the battle, Matthew became somber as the gravity of the situation began to set in. His mouth was as “dry as a dirt road in August.” He was also “aware of the painful thudding inside his chest and of the fact that, even though the stock of the rifle barrel was cold in his hands, his palms were sweating.” Only moments after the battle commenced, he felt a tugging and pulling at his arm.

He swung around and found himself looking into the stricken face of Patrick O’Banion. The young man’s eyes were wide with shock. His face was twisted grotesquely. His mouth was working, but no sound came out. He stumbled a little, falling against Matthew ...

There was a soft moan, and Matthew stared in stupefied horror as O’Banion’s knees slowly collapsed and he slid to the ground, his hand dragging downward against Matthew’s leg.⁸⁸

In witnessing the death of O’Banion through Matthews eyes, Lund was able to use two common tropes found in war literature: the loss of innocence and the loss of young life. Lund used Matthew’s experience to convey the horrors of war through the eyes of an innocent, young adult. Matthew’s initial enthusiasm for action highlighted his naivety and ignorance of the situation at hand. Authors of war literature will often introduce a young, naïve soldier who is hungry for action. The young man is quickly brought to terms when he witnesses the blood and carnage unfolding around him. In this way, Lund placed Matthew’s experience in a larger, war-time traditional narrative. The death of Matthew’s friend, Patrick O’Banion, who was only two years older than Matthew, represented the loss of young, innocent life that never had the chance to live out its potential.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 233-234.

After coming out of his stupor, Matthew followed the charge and engaged one Missourian at close range. Having already discharged his gun, Matthew struggled to avoid the repeated attack of the man's sword. After Nathan stepped in and knocked the Missourian out cold, both Matthew and Nathan looked up to witness the apostle David Patten and Captain Rich chase the larger body of Missourians across the river. During the pursuit, David Patten was shot at close range and fell from his horse.

The two Steed brothers and Captain Rich all reached David Patten at about the same moment. Patten was still on his knees, hands clutching at his bowels ... Blood was pouring out from between his fingertips. For a long horrible moment, Matthew stared, not able to take his eyes away from the sight of the fingers digging at the stomach, trying to stop the pain, trying to stop the life from gushing out. And then something inside Matthew broke. He turned, hand over his mouth, and stumbled away, barely reaching the nearest bush before he started to wretch.⁸⁹

At the sight of David Patten's fatal wound, Matthew became emotionally and mentally overwhelmed until he became physically sick. Lund used Matthew's age and naivety to his advantage in this moment. In viewing the events from Matthew's perspective, the audience felt a large amount of sympathy. It is one thing to experience war and loss of life through a seasoned soldier such as Colonel Hinkle or even an older character such as Matthew's brother, Nathan. In this way, Lund instrumentalized Matthew's age and circumstances to allow the reader to share in Matthew's process of realization. In the process, readers acquired a deeper sense of sympathy for the victims because they were seeing the events through Matthew's eyes.

The second coming-of-age story was told through Peter Ingalls, who was fourteen years old. He and his older brother Derek, who was seven years older, stumbled across

⁸⁹ Ibid., 237-238.

missionaries while living in Preston, England. Orphaned, extremely poor, and working in a textile factory, Derek and Peter decided to join the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio. The Steed family took them in and treated them as their foster children. When the Saints moved to Missouri, Derek and Peter purchased a small piece of land in Adam-Ondi-Ahman, one of the outlying settlements north of Far West.

While looking for a horse that escaped from its corral, Peter discovered one of his neighbors tied to a small cottonwood tree. The man's boots were gone, and his back was a mass of "lacerated flesh." As Peter tried to free his neighbor, the two perpetrators discovered Peter. When one of the men asked Peter if he was a Mormon, Peter's mind reflected on a scripture from the Apostle Paul.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" ...

Peter looked straight into the bloodshot eyes. "No, sir, I am not a Mormon ... There is no such thing as a Mormon. That's merely a nickname people give us. But if you're asking me if I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, then the answer is yes. I am that, and proud of it."

The man stepped back. For just a flickering moment, there was admiration in his eyes; then they turned ugly.⁹⁰

In this instance, Peter was in a possible life or death situation. If he admitted he was a "Mormon," he would suffer the same fate as his neighbor. Yet, as the dialogue showed, he felt an ethical obligation to not deny his faith. This exchange served multiple purposes for Lund's audience. First, it was a faith-inspiring incident because Peter was willing to face severe pain, and possibly death, for his beliefs. Peter and Derek risked everything when they joined the Church and moved to America. Peter's willingness to risk everything once again was a trope for all the Saints who, faced with similar situations, chose to endure persecution

⁹⁰ Ibid., 263-264, 267.

rather than deny their faith. Lund used the Apostle Paul's scripture to tie Peter's experience into a larger narrative of Christian martyrs. Second, this scene was meant to be a coming-of-age experience for Peter. He corrected his violent captor by distinguishing himself as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints instead of a "Mormon." It is possible that Lund added this dialogue to distinguish, for non-Mormon readers, between the inspired name that Joseph Smith received from God and the derisive nickname given to Church members by critics during the early years of the Church. The Missourian's moment of admiration for Peter's declaration of faith was a moment of respect passed from man to boy. By briefly showing respect to Peter, the Missourian treated Peter as an equal and validated his display of adult masculinity. Luckily for Peter, his older brother Derek and his brother-in-law, Nathan, found him before Peter suffered any physical harm.

Peter's second coming-of-age moment happened at Far West. General Lucas ordered all the men there to gather at the town's square to surrender their weapons. Before leaving, Benjamin Steed handed Peter a pistol. He instructed Peter to hide it in a place where the soldiers would not find it but also where Peter could easily get to it in an emergency. After trying to reassure his wife, Mary Ann, Benjamin turned back to Peter.

"I don't want to do this, Peter. But you're the safest bet. The women are too..." He couldn't finish that thought. *The women are too vulnerable.* He took a quick breath. "The women need to hide with the children and keep them quiet. If the mob comes, they'll be looking for grown men. They shouldn't bother a boy."⁹¹

Even though there were four adult women present, Benjamin gave fourteen-year-old Peter the gun. Although Benjamin did not say it out loud, he believed that the women were too

⁹¹ Ibid., 338.

vulnerable to properly handle the firearm. Benjamin acknowledged Peter's young age and vulnerability, yet Benjamin's actions in arming the boy suggested to both Peter and the audience that it was Peter's opportunity to prove his ability to perform in a protective, manly capacity. In this case, Peter's manhood was contingent upon his ability to protect the Steed women from harm in the absence of the husbands. By characterizing the women as "too vulnerable" to protect themselves and too easy of a target for the militia men to ignore, Lund not only set up a hierarchy of gendered roles but also characterized women in a constant state of dependence and vulnerability. For Peter to perform his role as protector, he had to watch over those who were incapable of protecting themselves.

After the Mormon men surrendered their firearms, General Lucas ordered a few of his men to detain the Mormons in the town square at gunpoint. Lucas ordered the rest of his men to go into the town and search all the homes for any remaining weapons.⁹² During the raid of Far West, three militia men barged into the Steed cabin. After they discovered the root cellar underneath a large rug, the men forced the four Steed women out and left the children in the cellar. As the men advanced towards the women, Peter grabbed the pistol from a concealed hiding spot and shot at one of the men, hitting him in the left shoulder. Another militia man knocked Peter down with the butt of his pistol and held him at gun point. During this time, Joshua appeared in the doorway to prevent the men from harming the women. He shot one man dead and drove the others out at gun point.⁹³

⁹² Historians argue that, although Lucas did not give permission for the men to loot the settlement, it was generally understood by the soldiers that they could loot and harass the occupants of the town with impunity.

⁹³ Lund, *Thy Gold to Refine*, 353-355.

Finally permitted to leave the town square, Benjamin and Derek found the women and children huddled together in their cabin. After the women explained what had transpired, Benjamin examined Peter's injuries.

"You were a man today, Peter. You..." He couldn't make his voice say it. He just shut his eyes against the burning in the them and clung to his foster son. "Thank you," he finally whispered. "Thank you, dear Peter."⁹⁴

As the patriarch of the house, Benjamin's declaration that Peter was "a man" that day, in a sense, inducted Peter to the revered office of manhood. In Benjamin's eyes, by successfully protecting the women, Peter acted as a man. By contrast, Lund noted the feelings of shame and guilt felt by Matthew and Nathan who were absent during the fall of Far West. Governor Boggs ordered that all Mormon men involved in the Battle of Crooked River were to report to General Lucas and be taken to stand trial for their crimes. Understanding the implications of the order, many men, including Nathan and Matthew, fled to Iowa territory to avoid incarceration and possible death. However, racked with concern for his family and guilt for leaving them along, Nathan and Matthew return to Far West arriving a few days after all the looting and violence. Nathan's experiences mirror historian Janet Jacob's argument that, in memory, the absence of men can suggest an "inability to protect the maternal victim" and can call into question the masculinity of the victims' husbands, fathers, and brothers.⁹⁵ Nathan expressed shame and guilt for not being by his wife's side especially after learning about the incident with the militia men in the cabin. His feelings were linked to his understanding that, as the husband and father, he was responsible for the protection of his family.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 360.

⁹⁵ Janet Jacobs, "Gender and Collective Memory," 36.

Insofar as Lund relied on traditional gender roles to tell the early history of the Saints, Lund used the experiences of Matthew and Peter to show the unique circumstances that adolescent boys faced during the Mormon War. Matthew's masculine rite of passage centered around his participation in battle. Peter's masculine rite of passage centered around his ability to stand firm in his faith and protect women and children who Benjamin described as being incapable of protecting themselves. Lund also drew and supported boundaries within the readers' minds for what was and was not acceptable violence. By using the image of victimized women and children Lund enabled the reader to draw a line which exacerbated the injustice of the Saints' persecution.

“Refiner’s Fire”: Using an Eschatological Framework

One of Lund's greatest strengths throughout the series was his ability to frame the experiences of his fictional characters within a larger eschatological framework that was familiar to his Mormon constituency. It is not only that Lund told the story of the early Saints but also the story of the “Restoration.” Members of the Church believe that, through the power of Jesus Christ, Joseph Smith restored the original structure, order, and spiritual authority to the earth that was present at the time Jesus Christ was alive. For members of the Church, the early stories of the Saints were not merely histories of a people, but the history of God's church. Therefore, Lund not only told the history of the early Church, but he also used his characters to communicate a shared belief among members that the Saints' suffering was part of God's higher plan. Richard Cracroft asserted that Lund's purpose was “to reify, recall, and revivify the events of the restoration of the gospel for a believing but beleaguered

constituency remote in time and thinking for those ‘marvelous-work-and-a-wonder’ events clustered at the beginning of the Restoration.”⁹⁶ Cracroft attributed Lund’s success in his ability to present miraculous events which made up the foundation of the Church’s beliefs. Lund supported the Church’s Restoration narrative through his characters’ frequent references to “God’s higher plan” or experiencing a “refiner’s fire.” The title of the fourth volume – *Thy Gold to Refine* – referred directly to the Saints’ belief that the persecution and expulsion suffered by the saints was God’s way of separating the weak from faith from the strong in faith. By framing the Saints’ experiences within this larger eschatological framework, Lund reinforced a shared cultural belief among contemporary members of the Church that the experiences of the Saints served a higher purpose within God’s eternal plan for His covenant people.

Consider this example. Just after the Battle of Crooked River, Governor Boggs issued his infamous Extermination Order. To help place these events in a larger, religious narrative, Lund provided the reader with an exchange between Benjamin Steed and Joseph Smith. Benjamin, frustrated and confused, asked Joseph Smith if the Saints’ suffering at the hands of the Missourians, were somehow God’s punishment. Joseph replied,

“I’d like to remind you of something the Lord said... ‘For unto whom much is given ... *much is required*’” ...
“[Ben], we are the Lord’s covenant people. The Missourians are not. We have made solemn covenants that we will live his law and serve him ... He has a right to require more of us ... and he does.”⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Cracroft, “Telling the Restoration Story,” 248.

⁹⁷ Lund, *Thy Gold to Refine*, 253, Author’s italics.

Joseph's council to Benjamin not only set the Saints apart as a covenanted people but also explained that, because of their covenants with God, they were required to not only follow God's laws but also endure greater hardship in doing so. Lund's use of Joseph Smith's words and revelations found in the *Doctrine and Covenants* did two things for his constituency.⁹⁸ First, by using published teachings directly from Joseph Smith, Lund gave Benjamin's and Joseph's exchange historical probability and therefore legitimacy. Second, instead of just disseminating historical information about the Restoration to the reader, Lund also provided doctrinal background. Lund reinforced not only a historical narrative but an eschatological narrative as well. Lund's constituents understood and related to this conversation because they believed that, as modern-day pioneers, much is required of them as God's covenant people. Lund's narrative enforced the shared cultural memory of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. By expressing the events of the Mormon War, he influenced the ways in which readers "remembered" the events. These shared memories supported the worldview of many contemporary members that the Mormon War was a direct result of God's will for His people.

Joseph reassured Benjamin that God was not punishing the Saints. Benjamin asked Joseph why, then, were the Saints being persecuted. Joseph, again, answered Benjamin by quoting a revelation he had received from the Lord in 1833 when contention started to rise between the Saints and the old settlers in Missouri.

⁹⁸ "The Doctrine and Covenants is a book of scripture containing revelations from the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith and to a few other latter-day prophets. It is unique in scripture because it is not a translation of ancient documents. The Doctrine and Covenants is one of four books of scripture used in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the other three are the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Pearl of Great Price)." <https://www.lds.org/topics/doctrine-and-covenants?lang=eng>

“Let your hearts take comfort, for all things work together for the good of them that walk uprightly, and to the sanctification of the church.” ...

“Think about that, Ben. *All things*, it says, work for our good if we live right. Could he possibly mean persecution and hardship? Does ‘all things’ include the burning of homes and the driving of our women and children out in the midst of winter? ... I think when the Lord says ‘all things,’ he means all things. And he also said that those things work for the sanctification of the Church.”⁹⁹

Joseph explained to Benjamin that God strengthened his people through trials and tribulations. Just as contemporary members of the Church believe that the ancient Israelites wandered the desert for forty years because they were not ready to enter the Promised Land, they also believed that the Saints experienced a similar refining process that separated the weak of faith from the strong of faith. In this sense, Lund brought the Restoration into a larger narrative that spoke to his constituents in both a historical and contemporary way: historical as it pertained to the events of the Restoration, and contemporary, as members of the Church are encouraged to see their own trials as a refining fire designed to strengthen them for the future. Joseph then spoke specifically about the members of the Church.

Joseph smiled sadly. “And then the Lord said, and I think this is the key: ‘I will raise up to myself a pure people, who will serve me in righteousness’ ... Where are the members of the Twelve who betrayed us in Kirtland? And where are Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer and Martin Harris? Where have they all gone, Ben?”¹⁰⁰

This part of the conversation reaffirmed Lund’s habit of creating false dichotomies between the faithful-Saint and the fallen-Saint. Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris were among some of the original men who helped Joseph Smith translate and publish *The Book of Mormon*. They were also the three witnesses who published their names within the introduction of the Book of Mormon to testify that they not only saw an angel of God but

⁹⁹ Lund, *Thy Gold to Refine*, 254, author’s italics.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 256.

also saw the ancient plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. The events surrounding their excommunication from the Church is still commonly known among contemporary members. Lund uses their specific examples of dissention to express a familiar theme to his contemporary audience: everyone is in danger of losing faith if they do not follow the council of God and His prophet.

After giving Benjamin a moment to ponder the experiences of Martin Harris and the others, Benjamin answered,

“They left us because they weren’t strong enough ... to remain faithful when they lost all their money in the Kirtland Safety Society. Strong enough to ignore the ridicule and rejection and mockery of others.” ...
“[Ben], we have to establish the kingdom of God on the earth so that the kingdom of heaven may come. That takes men and women who have iron faith and steel in their commitment to the Lord.”¹⁰¹

Benjamin created a distinction between the faithful Saint and the fallen Saint which Joseph validated by insisting that men and women must have “iron faith and steel in their commitment” to God. Here again we see how Lund created a stark dichotomy between the Saints. This time, however, Lund took it a step further as he made a distinction between those willing to be martyrs for God and those unwilling. While there are many examples of Christian martyrs throughout time, Joseph’s explanation to Benjamin suggested that, if you are not strong enough to withstand the persecution, you are not faithful enough. Such a steep qualification makes it very easy for the reader to pass judgement upon the early Saints who may have faltered or struggled to maintain their faith while suffering extreme persecution. In this case, Lund’s stark dichotomy left very little room for historic empathy.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Lund often used conversations to express principles and doctrines of the Church. In the process, Lund both informed and supported a cultural belief among contemporary members that they were a covenant people whose trials and tribulations were part of God's greater plan. Lund's series created a way for contemporary members to learn about the Restoration while also applying the experiences of the Saints to their own lives as modern-day pioneers.

Conclusion

Since Lund's publication of the *Work and the Glory* series, there have only been a handful of historical fictions which focus on the events surrounding the Mormon War.¹⁰² In contrast, none of these later novels include lists of sources or evidence of research. The authors do not use bystander characters but rather use the historical events of the Church as a backdrop, while the personal dramas of the Saints drive the narrative forward. Despite these differences, this landmark example of Mormon Literature continues to support the Church's cultural narrative and collective identity.

Mormon Literature presents at least three challenges. First, Mormon Literature appeals to most members of the Church. Literary scholar Michael Austin criticized the current conception of Mormon Literature. He contended that it is far too narrow to be useful to scholars outside of the Church's culture because it is limited to "books written by

¹⁰² Russell Jones, *Traitors & Tyrants* (HNKS Publishing 2005); Marcie Robinson and Kerri Gallacher, *A Banner is Unfurled, Volume 4: Abide with Me Hardcover* (Salt Lake City, UT: Covenant Communications 2010); Elaine Stenson, *The way to the Shining City: a story of the early Mormons in Missouri and Nauvoo, Illinois* (Indiana: Authorhouse, 2011).

Mormons for Mormons dealing with Mormon themes.”¹⁰³ Yet, that is what makes it precisely appealing to members of the Church. Second, is the fact that authors narrate the Church’s history as separate from American history. Here again, Austin criticized that Mormons “represent a cultural entity whose traditions, heritage, and experience deserve to be considered a vital part of the American Mosaic.”¹⁰⁴ As members of the Church tell the story of the Mormon War strictly through the Church’s religious worldview, they divorce the history of the Church from a larger history of prejudice and persecution within the United States. Finally, as leaders of the Church continue to encourage their members to see themselves as modern-day pioneers, they are in danger of subsuming all members under a single image of “Latter-day Saint.” Consequently, trying to unite a transnational religious organization under a single image can take away from the unique cultures and identities within the Church’s demographic. Although leaders of the Church encourage their members to unite as “disciples of Jesus Christ,” placing so much emphasis on the early pioneers suggests to members all around the world that, to be a “Latter-day Saint,” one must emulate the American pioneers of the mid-nineteenth century. This emphasis reduces the possible scope of what it means to be a member of the Church in the 21st century. Because of the restrictive narrative, Mormon Literature hinders the abilities of members to engage with people outside of their own group. This is contradictory to the Church’s missionary efforts.

Conversely, the challenge of Mormon Literature also provides opportunities for scholars. Scholars can utilize Mormon Literature to better understand how Church members

¹⁰³ Michael Austin, “The Function of Mormon Literary Criticism at the Present Time,” *Dialogue* 28 no. 4 (Winter 1994): 131.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

use and understand their history for contemporary purposes. Other authors have written novels of historical fiction that approach historical topics from the same cultural worldview as Lund. Ron Carter's nine-volume *Prelude to Glory* series traces the events leading up to and following the Revolutionary War, and Dean Hughes's five-volume series *Children of the Promise* follows the lives of an ordinary Latter-day Saint family through the events of World War Two. Both series are well researched and, because the authors write specifically for Latter-day Saints, they reflect how members of the Church understand their place in history.

Thus far, the Mormon War has not garnered much attention from comparative genocide studies. Yet, genocide is not defined by the scale of the atrocities but rather the intent. The title "Mormon War" suggests a state of armed conflict between the Mormons and Missourians, where casualties, loss of property, and other consequences seemed unfortunate but inevitable. The term "Extermination Order" suggests something much darker, as many people often associate "extermination" with the Holocaust and Hitler's efforts to exterminate the Jews. Although Gov. Boggs's explicit instructions to exterminate the Mormons reflected genocidal rhetoric, the Missourians' patterns of violence against the Saints for the express purpose of expulsion and land appropriation falls more appropriately under the label of ethnic cleansing.¹⁰⁵ The reasons why Missourians singled out the Mormons is also comparable to other cases of ethnic cleansing or genocide. Church membership among the

¹⁰⁵ Benjamin Lieberman, "'Ethnic Cleansing' versus Genocide?" in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* ed. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 42-60. Lieberman differentiated between ethnic cleansing and genocide by explaining that "ethnic cleansing seeks the forced removal of an undesired group or groups where genocide pursues the group's 'destruction.' Ethnic cleansing and genocide therefore fall along a spectrum of violence against groups. The two are distinct where ethnic cleansing does not lead to destruction of groups, but extreme forms of ethnic cleansing overlap with genocide when the means employed to carry out ethnic cleansing lead to genocide."

Saints was comprised of White Protestants, however the majority of American society saw them as a racial “other,” furthering the Saints’ separate status within American society as a distinct ethnic group.¹⁰⁶ Although the expulsion of the Saints was small when compared to more well-known tragedies, the events surrounding the Mormon War clearly share comparable themes in terms of the motives and dynamics of persecution.

When analyzing the challenges and opportunities of Mormon Literature, the latter outweighs the former. Comparative analysis also reveals what is unique about the Mormon experience. The Church’s culture of memorialization of their persecution through pageantry, reenactments, and other forms of narrativization is different from the culture of remembrance practiced within Jewish, Rwandan, and other communities who have suffered mass atrocities. Because the Church’s culture of memorialization is different, the Church’s practices deserve to be studied further. For the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, history is a triumphant narrative rather than a story of suffering. As such, it offers a very different approach to memorializing genocide.

This thesis does not imply that there is only one way to remember the past. Rather, it suggests to historians the dangers of not including the unpleasant details. For most of its history, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have not been forthcoming about the more embarrassing or politically suspect aspects of their history. It is only within the past couple of years that the official historians of the Church have attempted

¹⁰⁶ Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color*, 3. Reeve argued, “Outsiders suggested that Mormons were physically different and racially more similar to marginalized groups than they were to white people... Mormons were conflated with nearly every other ‘problem’ group in the nineteenth century... a way to color them less white by association. In telling the Mormon racial story, one ultimately tells the American racial story, a chronicle fraught with cautionary tales regarding whiteness, religious freedom, and racial genesis.”

to be more transparent. In 2018, they published *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*. This book is the first of what will be a four-volume series. The preface of the book states:

Even more than previous histories, *Saints* presents the lives and stories of ordinary men and women in the Church ... *Saints* is not scripture, but like scriptures, each volume contains divine truth and stories of imperfect people trying to become saints through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Their stories—like the stories of all Saints, past and present—remind readers how merciful the Lord has been to His people as they have joined together around the globe to further God’s work.¹⁰⁷

Compared to *The work and the Glory*, this preface indicates a more accurate appraisal of the early Saints that does not distinguish between faithful and fallen Saints. Now the task for members and Church historians alike is to not become dismissive or apologetic about their complex history. While Church members firmly believe that God directs and guides the organization of the Church today, it should not stop scholars from understanding how events, practices, policies, and past issues reflect the ways in which members of the Church understand and share their cultural worldview. The Church does not exist within a vacuum; it exists within the cultural and societal environment in which the members practice their religion. An honest reflection of cultural similarities and differences that unite millions of Church members across the globe will bring a greater understanding of the ways in which people understand their shared past as well as inform their identity and world view today.

¹⁰⁷ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the latter days: Volume 1, The standard of truth, 1815-1846* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2018), xvii.

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