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Richard Bushman

Claremont Graduate University

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The Colonization of the Mormon Mind

Richard Lyman Bushman

The title of my talk doesn't shed much light on my topic. This past week, when I told people about the talk, the title mystified them. What can be meant by the colonization of the Mormon mind? The phrase is both inscrutable and ominous. Has the Mormon mind been colonized? Are we under the control of an imperial power without knowing about it?

Because of the obscurity of the title, I want to explain what the talk is about. It has two parts, an autobiographical section and a historical section, which are interrelated. I am going to talk about myself in the autobiographical part to illustrate a point I develop more generally in the historical section.

Let me give you the conclusions now:

1. My historical point is that Mormonism was colonized in the late nineteenth century, in the first instance by the U.S. government and the American merchants, and then subsequently by cultural agents. The fact of colonization is well known to students of Mormon history. After the 1850s, the U.S. government wrested the government of the State of Deseret from the Mormons. The government even dispatched an army to take control from Brigham Young.

Not long after, newly arrived American merchants took over Utah's lines of trade, establishing transportation companies, banks, newspapers, and stores. Especially after the railroad's arrival in 1869, the colonization of the economy went forward at a rapid pace. Brigham Young resisted this commercial invasion, but

with only partial success. The outsiders' determination to control trade was not to be thwarted.

To these well-known facts about the Utah government and the economy, I wish to add a cultural dimension. I believe the Mormon mind was colonized along with its government and economy. Emissaries from eastern cultural centers constructed a Mormonism that made the Church and the Mormon people intelligible to the larger American culture and, by so doing, taught us how we should understand ourselves.

These outsiders duplicated a process outlined by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism*, a volume which inspired this essay. Said argues at great length that the Orientalism of travelers, journalists, and scholars, created over two centuries from the late eighteenth century on, was an aspect of Europe's imperialist expansion into the Far and Middle East. The cultural imperialists created an imagined Orient that Europeans could comprehend, though it was not the actual Orient of the Asians and Middle Easterners themselves—at least not at first.

Gradually the colonized people, especially the intellectuals and middle class, came to think of themselves as the imperialists did, using terms learned from Europe to think about themselves. We thus speak of the colonization of their minds as well as their society.

My historical argument looks for parallels in the cultural creation of Mormonism by eastern journalists, travelers, and scholars who likewise invaded and took over the thinking of

Mormons about themselves.

2. The autobiographical section, which comes first in the paper, tries to show how colonization affected an individual Mormon—what happens to a person caught between the polarities of the Local (in this case Mormonism) and the Metropolitan (the imperial centers in the eastern United States). I want to show how these tensions enter into the thinking of Mormons at a very deep level. In fact in my case, it is the central strain in my psychological architecture.

To narrow the focus, I talk mostly about the way I write, which I call my literary voice. By voice I mean more than the content of the writing. I refer to the way I present myself to readers—something Mormons might call the spirit of my writing—the basic relationship I set up with an audience.

The problem of voice, as you might imagine, forces itself to the front in my current project, a biography of Joseph Smith. Writing on that subject, no author can forget he or she writes for two cultures. On the one hand as a believer, I want to present the Joseph Smith we know and love; on the other hand, I have to write for the educated general public. I want Joseph to be intelligible and attractive to people who read the *New York Times Book Review*. What voice will reach both audiences? In solving this conundrum, I confront my colonized Mormon mind.

I

Whenever I think about voice, my mind goes back to an experience at Brown University where I was a post-doctoral fellow in history and psychology from 1963 to 1965 in between teaching stints at Brigham Young. The Brown program called for the interdisciplinary fellows to teach a familiar course for one semester in the first year and a year-long course in the second year, combining the home discipline (in my case,

history) and a new discipline (which I decided should be psychology).

While working on these projects, in the first semester of my first year, I was asked to give a lecture on Mormonism in William McLoughlin's American Social and Cultural History course. To my surprise, preparing the lecture perplexed me. While the subject did not present a problem, voice did. I was uncertain about how to present myself—as an academic or as a Mormon. Presumably the two identities were compatible, but I ran into a problem. What pronoun should I use to refer to the Mormons? Should it be “we”, or should it be “they”? Was I a young faculty member and scholar looking on objectively from the outside, or was I a Mormon talking about my people? Was I willing to put myself fully on the side of a religion which I knew the students would think fabulous, if not ridiculous?

In retrospect, I can see that the decision I finally made went back to my upbringing in Portland, Oregon, where my family moved from Salt Lake when I was four. In fact, I think my basic outlook on the Church stems from being brought up in the Mormon diaspora rather than in the heartland. In Portland in the thirties, Mormons were a tiny minority at best. During World War II when our family had no car, we took four different buses to get from our home in Park Rose to the Colonial Heights meeting house in another section of the city. After a while, a little branch was organized in Monteville where we met in an Odd Fellows' hall which had to be swept clean of cigarette butts on Sunday mornings before sacrament meeting. Perhaps a dozen Latter-day Saints attended my high school of 1200 students. We were not even large enough to be called a minority religion. We were a tiny flock, a mere scattering, a speck in a large lump. In Portland, membership in the Church required one to accept the position of a marginal person in the larger society.

The effect on me, I now think, was profound. I never had a sense of Mormonism as a dominant force in society—as one might do in a Mormon farm village or in Salt Lake City. I never thought of the Church as a power in society. However important to me, Mormonism was too feeble to control anything that mattered in the world. I never thought about criticizing the Church or resisting its force. It was not strong enough to oppose. I had to deal with Mormonism's insignificance, not its power. I became accustomed to prizing a belief that the rest of the world ignored. The inner life of my prayers, the community of the Saints, the rich doctrinal creations of Mormon belief meant nothing to everyone else and everything to me. I grew up knowing instinctively that my pearl of great price was invisible to the world.

All this was tested at Harvard where I arrived in the fall of 1949 as a freshman, age eighteen. Although Harvard was another world from Portland, my position relative to the society about me did not change; a Mormon was still marginal. The difference was the beauty and power of cultural life in Cambridge. I loved everything about Harvard—its learning, its clarity, its student society. I was more fully myself there than I had ever been in my life. This was a culture I longed to consume—unlike high school culture in Portland where I was never at home. In a sense I have remained in the orbit of Cambridge culture to this very day. It is what I live and breathe minute by minute in my university life. I still dress pretty much as I learned to dress at Harvard in the fifties—chino pants, blazers, tweeds, button-down shirts, and ties. I have been feuding with Harvard in recent years, but I have never abandoned the intellectual culture of which it is the preeminent American bastion.

So how was I to react when my sophomore tutor in history and science, the noted historian I. B. Cohen, coyly mentioned that some people

thought Mormonism was garbage. I knew he was sending me a message; should I listen? Or what about logical positivism, then at its high point in undergraduate culture? I got the impression that the smartest people in the world denied the validity of any fact that could not be sensed and measured. Where did the Mormon God fit into Bertrand Russell's universe? For the first time I felt under assault philosophically. Not that much was said against Mormonism, except for Cohen's dig, but the whole category of religion was thrown into question. To stay in tune with Harvard's culture, I would have to give up on faith. Was I to acknowledge the cultural inferiority of my Mormonism and yield to what was obviously, by Harvard's lights, the overwhelming superiority of Western art, science, and philosophy? How could I, when my inner life was still ruled by my faith, when I had banded with a small circle of fervent LDS undergraduates, and when together we delighted in the effulgence of Mormon doctrine—a rich, thriving, humane world compared to the austere indifference of Bertrand Russell's universe?

The terms of this question were new at Harvard, but not its structure. In Portland, I had been long accustomed to a marginal position. It was no surprise to learn that Mormonism was considered feeble and dim. All my life I had held on to my faith against indifference. I learned early on to believe that, where faith was concerned, the whole world might be wrong and only the infinitesimal collection of Mormons right. When the test came, it was not hard for me to conclude that everyone at Harvard might think Mormonism was garbage and that only I and my compatriots in the Church knew the truth.

Both Portland and Harvard were stocked away in my mind when I had to choose between an academic and a Mormon identity at Brown. The decision was actually not very hard. In the lecture for McLoughlin's course I spoke of "we"

the Mormons, even though I risked embarrassment and secret ridicule. In the showdown, Mormonism prevailed over Harvard. The Mormons were my people; and after a lifetime of living as one of them, I was not going to abandon them now in favor of scholarly objectivity.

The choice, of course, was not as clear as I have made it appear. In the lecture on Mormons, I did not give up the academic. I was lecturing in an Ivy League college and spoke a language that McLoughlin and the Brown students understood. I did not sound like a missionary bearing testimony. I made the judgments a scholar would be expected to render about Mormon motivation and the conflicts with American society. I used sociological terms and set the Mormons against their American background. I was, in short, a Mormon talking about his faith in the language of the university. I may have positioned myself outside of academic culture in using a “we” with reference to Mormons, but I did all in my power to marshal academic language for the lecture. I was, in short, an insider outsider. I was talking about my strange beliefs in the language I had learned at Harvard.

All of these experiences lie behind the voice I use when writing about Joseph Smith. A cool and intellectual tone advertises my familiarity with the conventions of scholarly writing. I display a kind of modest sophistication. I detach myself a little from my subject and employ a knowing tone. I am one of you, I seem to be telling educated readers. I was immensely complimented by a critical review from a non-Mormon reader of my Joseph Smith manuscript. The person wrote the publisher that you read along through this volume and suddenly realize “this guy believes all this stuff.” That is exactly the reaction I want from non-Mormons: surprise and confusion. I wish to astonish them when I reveal myself as a believer.

II

All of this may help explain why, even before I read Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, I had substituted *Mormonism* in the title, knowing just enough about the argument to see a possible fit. To begin with, I identified with Said, though I don’t know him personally. He grew up in Palestine and Egypt, not the most resonant cultures in Jewish New York. I felt a kinship because I thought of him as occupying a marginal position in Occidental society while making its culture his own, just as I stood at the edge of the Harvard culture that I loved.

His book argues that western writing on the Orient—which for his purposes he confines to the region between India and Egypt—went hand in hand with the European commercial and political take-over of the region. What purported to be scientific scholarship and objective reporting was actually an effort to absorb the Orient into Western systems of thought, at the same time that Middle Eastern nations were being assimilated into Western governing systems and Western commerce. The Orient of Western novels, travel books, and scholarly treatises was an invention to make those countries intelligible while they were being colonized by the West.

Could it be that Mormonism had been colonized too and that, consequently, we face the same problems of speaking for ourselves as subaltern cultures in the East do? Those thoughts came to mind when I first learned about Said’s book.

Said is not saying there was a conspiracy between imperial political powers and the scholarly institutions which produced the Orient. *Orientalism* is nothing so overt as a calculated scheme. He only claims that writing is always tinged with the writer’s political position. European writers could not help but think of themselves as superior to the peoples they found in India or Palestine. The powerful apparatus of

imperial governments, the relentless commercial forces, the prolific productive mechanisms of the European economy, and the elaborate civilization of the West made it nearly impossible for visitors from England or France not to think of themselves as encountering cultural inferiors in Cairo and Damascus. Sympathy, kindness, tolerance, and “objectivity” were not enough to overcome the inbred consciousness of being higher or more advanced than the native peoples they met. What made Orientalism hegemonic was this ineradicable consciousness of European superiority. It gave the visitors from the West an unearned cultural authority over their subjects; Western scholars simply knew better than anyone they studied.

I have called Orientalism an invention, a word Said himself does not use. He would insist that the image of the Orient evoked in the outpouring of books and images was not an “airy European fantasy” made from nothing. Scholars, novelists, and painters did not concoct lies or create myths. They created a history of the Orient as all histories are created, by selecting what is deemed to be typical out of the mass of experience and fact. Their cultural position authorized the Orientalists to decide what part was to represent the whole—without consulting the natives. So they came up with a complex array of Oriental ideas: Oriental despotism, splendor, cruelty, sensuality. They domesticated Eastern sects, philosophies, and wisdom for local European use, the way Chinese restaurants in the United States devise Chinese dishes for American consumption. Flaubert’s brief encounter with an Egyptian courtesan produced a widely influential model of the Oriental women, as he understood her. She never spoke for herself—for her emotions or her history. His authority allowed him to speak for her. The resulting imagined Orient was as much a sign of the “authorities”’ power as it was of truth. It was not pure fabrication, but it was, as Said says, “an

accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness” (6). It was as much a reflection of Western culture as it was of the society it purported to represent. It showed the Orient as Westerners wanted to see it rather than as people from the East saw themselves.

Said’s analysis made all the more sense to me because I was reading Ronald Walker’s *Wayward Saints* about the Godbeite movement at the same time that I was thinking of the parallels between Mormonism and Orientalism. The Godbeites were a small group of merchant-intellectuals who were attracted to spiritualism and who, for ten or fifteen years after 1868, tried to reform Mormonism by bringing it more into line with national culture. They seemed to me to be a perfect example of the interlocking imperialist effort to control the culture, trade, and government of an inferior people. The striking fact about the Godbeite movement was the convergence of cultural and commercial influences in the same individuals, a rarity in the formation of Orientalism.

William Godbe and E. L. T. Harrison, leaders of the religious movement, were merchants as well as intellectuals; and their plans to bring Mormonism into harmony with more “advanced” Eastern, liberal culture coincided with their desire to integrate Utah into the national economy. They resisted Brigham Young’s efforts to maintain the Church’s economic autonomy as vigorously as they urged modifications of Mormon theology and religious practice. They believed that the modernization of theology went hand in hand with the coming of the railroad; both were unstoppable forces. The Godbeites seem to confirm Said’s conception of an integrated imperialism that tried to take over the economy and government while processing native culture for consumption in the imperial metropole.

The Godbeites concocted a strange oil-and-water mixture of spiritualism and liberal religion

that today seems incongruous, the one superstitious and retrograde, the other forward-looking and reasoned. But the two were more compatible in Godbe's and Harrison's time than they are today. The men encountered spiritualism in the fall of 1868 on a buying trip to New York during a season of turmoil in their spiritual lives. They were losing patience with Brigham Young's restraints on Utah merchants and growing ever more restive under his leadership. Seeking for guidance and resolution, they probably visited a medium in New York City, though they gave no details themselves. Godbe did say they were seeking light and had the "lifelong desire of our souls for tangible, conclusive evidence of a future life" fulfilled (Walker 114).

That desire for "tangible, conclusive evidence" through direct experience with the spirits of the dead made spiritualism attractive to many searching souls in this period. Robert Owen, a professed atheist and socialist, turned to spiritualism for the same reason: it provided concrete proof of an after life. The spiritualists themselves thought their religion was scientific in the sense of being based on evidence. To its adherents, spiritualism was the opposite of superstition. It was rational and modern and compatible with advanced ideas.

Returning to Utah from New York, Godbe and Harrison brought with them enlightened religious ideas to offer to Mormons mired in superstition. The teachings of their otherworldly visitors in New York City, they said, were "to remove superstition and ignorance, and teach us the laws governing the science of revelation" (Walker 119). Besides hearing from biblical prophets and Joseph Smith, the two men were taught by Alexander Humboldt, the German naturalist, who instructed them in the science that would carry mankind beyond evolutionary theory. The authenticity of the Bible and Book of Mormon were put in question; and the Doctrine and Covenants, they said, was not to be

fully trusted. Joseph Smith excelled as a spiritual medium; Brigham Young was an inferior prophet who had to be superceded to clear the way for the coming of the "noblest civilization the world had ever seen" (Walker 120). As Ronald Walker sums up the message Godbe and Harrison brought back from New York City, the "new gospel" centered on "eighteenth and nineteenth-century concepts of reasonableness (reason), naturalness (natural law), and human fulfillment (humanism)" (125). In short, the Godbeites' messengers promulgated a spiritualist version of nineteenth-century liberal Protestantism, including a minimization of scripture and an emphasis on reason.

The *Utah Magazine* in which the Godbeites presented their message soon after the return of Godbe and Harrison in late 1868 combined the multiple messages the two men had received in New York: spiritualism, reason, advanced civilization, and skepticism about Mormon revelations and the Church's leadership. Mingled with the religious message in the magazine were essays in favor of fashion and in opposition to Brigham Young's isolationist policies. The magazine made itself an outpost for the nation's commercial forces and an emissary for liberal religious ideas. The hall they erected in Salt Lake City in which they entertained lecturers until 1884 was called the Liberal Institute. The Godbeite aim was to pull down the walls that separated Zion from the nation and to work for integration in virtually every aspect of society, politics, and culture. As Walker says in summing up the mature movement, the Godbeites "styled themselves as apostles of mid-nineteenth-century progress. They were rational, progressive, scientific, and modern" (Walker 179).

Godbe and Harrison were Mormons, not outside scholars and travelers like Said's Orientalists. They worked for reform from within Mormonism, unlike the carpetbag governors and the army of occupation sent from the East to

take command of the territory. Plenty of visitors like Richard Burton did come from the outside to observe the Mormons and report their findings. These journalists, travelers, and political officials made a small industry out of the Mormons. But much of the colonization of Mormonism was accomplished by insiders like Godbe and Harrison who came under the sway of Eastern cultural authority and tried to reform Mormonism from within. What links the two is a set of standard ideas about Mormonism, comparable to ideas of Oriental sensuality, cruelty, and despotism. In fact, Teryl Givens has argued in a penetrating analysis that the outsiders' fabrication of Mormonism borrowed some of its most telling ideas from Orientalism: the sensuality of the Mormon harem, for example, or the Mormon prophet-despot. This last was the strongest link between the Godbeites and the outside colonizers; Brigham Young, the tyrant who exercised excessive religious and political power, loomed over the depictions of both insiders and outsiders.

Out of this governing image came other stereotypical figures such as the simple Mormon in the thrall of superstition, the murderous Danite band, captured wives, and corrupt, hypocritical leaders. These figures did not lack foundation in fact; they were no more outright lies than Oriental ideas were. They were, nonetheless, a production of the imperial authority which empowered the colonizers. Just as Flaubert created the Oriental woman from one Egyptian prostitute, the colonizers composed their Mormonism from the facts which they deemed to be representative. It did not matter that they told only a fraction of the story. Their cultural authority enabled them to make their selections stand for the whole. Mormons were never permitted to speak on their own behalf. It was assumed that observers with a metropolitan perspective could tell the truth about Mormonism better than the Mormons themselves. Collu-

sion between insiders like the Godbeites and visitors from the East added to the persuasiveness of the Mormonism they jointly created. Even today, outside writers rely on enlightened insider informants to help them get a line on Mormonism.

The recruitment of colonizing agents among the Mormons was inevitable, given the immense power of the larger American society compared to the tiny band of Mormon settlers lodged in the mountains on the western fringes of American settlement. Only if the United States had not taken an interest in the Rocky Mountain region could the Mormons have remained isolated. But with political and commercial forces taking over the Great Basin, cultural influences of all kinds first seeped and then poured into Utah, especially after the completion of the railroad. The Saints' effort to create a distinct Zion society and culture was bound to suffer interference from the centers of American power in the East.

Merchants were the most natural agents of imperial culture given their necessary commerce with the outside world. They benefitted personally from the assimilation of Mormons into American values and tastes. There had to be some homogenization before Mormons would want the merchandise flowing westward from American mills and factories. Personal interest made the merchants sympathetic to the ideas, outlook, and respect for metropolitan civilization that came with the goods.

In succeeding years, others took the place of Godbe, Harrison, and the first generation of colonizing merchants. Academics like Ralph and W. H. Chamberlin, an entomologist and mathematician/geologist respectively, had their own form of commerce with the dominant culture—through books rather than merchandise. Both brothers found the force of scientific culture impossible to resist. They valiantly strove to reconcile their backward and unscientific

religion with their sense of the irresistible power of scientific reasoning. Tragically for them, they could not bridge the gulf. Eventually W. H. Chamberlin had to leave Brigham Young Academy when he came under pressure from suspicious Church authorities.

Looking at the broad picture of a powerful national culture in the East looming over a small, backward religious society in the West, we can see that episodes like the Chamberlin controversy were only to be expected. In fact, the polarization of Mormon society is an instance of a phenomenon common in modern history. Drohr Wahrman, the English historian, has described a similar process in eighteenth-century Britain, where the force of London culture broke in upon provincial cities and divided the elites into cosmopolitans and provincials. Wahrman argues that the split was a fundamental divide that accounts for political strains in English society better than social class or political ideology. The English example suggests that the colonization of Utah may have been one instance of a process that went on in Europe as well as in European colonies around the world. Wherever its influence reached, the metropolitan polarizes a colony or province internally as well as assaulting it from the outside. Some within the native society will throw in their lot with imperial authority; others will try to mediate between the provinces and the capital, wanting the benefits of both; still others will resist.

III

While probably beneficial in the long run, the colonization of Mormon society has not been a happy experience for the people involved. The colonizing agents who ally themselves with imperial culture lead frustrating lives of quiet or noisy desperation. They bemoan the blindness of the benighted Mormon population for failing to recognize the superior wisdom or

taste of the greater culture. They put an ironic distance between themselves and the Mormon Church when they address the larger world, wanting to be sure no one outside will mistakenly think they believe all that stuff. They mount campaigns to set the Church right or to educate the population. In private among themselves, they share bemusement at the backwardness of the poor credulous Mormons; but they cry while they laugh, because many love the Mormons and are unable to escape the ties that bind. They become downhearted when their campaigns of enlightenment get nowhere.

The provincials for their part feel endangered by the invasion of imperial culture. They recognize its immense authority and fear its capacity to seduce believers. Sensing the scorn of the imperial culture, the Mormons struggle for respectability despite their beliefs. They rationalize their doctrines to make them acceptable to the superior culture, contorting their views to make them fit. Like all defensive provincials, they boast of their greatness in the "eyes of the world" at one moment, and repudiate its corruption at the next.

This is the way I size up the colonization of Mormonism over the past century and a half, but remember I am saying all this within the framework of my own autobiography. While I believe in the truth of the analysis, I know that like all histories it is but one reading of the Mormon past and relies on the selection of representative examples, just as Said's Orientalists did.

There are other ways of thinking about Gentile culture that configure the relationship with the outside world quite differently. Some Mormons think the scientific and liberal assessment of Mormonism is only hard-headed realism which their fellow Mormons must confront, whatever the consequences, as in the classic formulation of faith versus reason. These people think Mormons hide their head in the sand

when they resist the criticisms of the greater culture. Other Mormons prefer to think of high culture as embodying beauty and truth that should be absorbed in the spirit of the thirteenth article of faith, rather than as an alien outlook that distorts and undermines Mormonism. Scholarly types may think that the introduction of American economic and intellectual forces into Utah is simply the result of impersonal historical forces, and not the imposition of imperial power at all. Casting Mormon relations with the broader American and European culture as a form of imperialism gives an paranoid twist to events. I can see the merits of these positions, and at times assume them myself. But reading our history as colonization reminds us of the power element in eastern and western relations. We should not forget that Mormonism remains a small minority facing a massive cultural force that inevitably exercises its immense power to get its way.

I hold to the colonization theory despite flaws that I can see myself. For example, I know that the word "colonization" is pejorative. In 1999, no one wants to be on the side of imperial power, the cause of the devils in the modern reading of history. Yet that is what I have done to all those good souls who think of themselves as enlightened and reasonable, standing for good taste against bad, promoting liberal and progressive policies, moderating Mormon authoritarianism, and defending freedom and individuality. I demean these well-meaning people when I label them imperialists.

Perhaps in recompense I can moderate one untoward implication of colonization theory. Said's concept of Orientalism implies the existence of an authentic Palestinian or Egyptian voice that speaks for itself rather than being spoken for. These muffled voices, Said seems to be saying, should be heard. If Flaubert was wrong about Oriental women, let those women tell their own stories. Clear away the under-

brush, and let the people of the indigenous cultures step forward. If Godbe and Harrison misread Mormonism, we should let the Mormons speak for themselves.

But where are the authentic Mormon voices? Who speaks for our culture, then or now? The old *Relief Society Magazine*, *Exponent II*, addresses in General Conference, testimony meetings, Sunday School manuals, personal prayers, private journals, transcripts of disciplinary councils, Primary teachers, Primary children? Where can we hear true Mormon voices?

I think this is a question worth pursuing, if only to turn literary attention to sources we may dismiss as too trivial or merely official or narrowly particular. But that being said, we must be realistic about the hunt for the true native voice. We will never identify an authentic Mormon voice—if by authentic we mean a voice without taint of imperial culture. I think it is safe to say that none exists.

The language of the broader American culture has percolated into every form of Mormon speech. FARMS, the academic institution most dedicated to defense of the faith, rests its case on Enlightenment rationality. FARMS aims to turn back the invaders using their own weapons, a tribute to the power of modern scientific rationalism in the minds of these stalwart soldiers of the faith. Everywhere we turn, we hear deep-dyed Mormons formulating their faith in an awareness of the broader culture. No one is more influenced by the great culture than myself. My strategy, as I said at the outset, is to speak for Mormonism in the language of Harvard. Like everyone else I have been colonized.

It is impossible—and probably unnecessary—to be liberated completely from our imperial past. Mormons are forbidden to cloister themselves, and how can we keep in touch with the world except by using its language? But if liberation is beyond our reach, I think we can attain a degree of post-colonial sophistication.

Consciousness of colonization may grant us a little freedom from its influence. If we cannot destroy the authority of imperial culture, we can name it and examine it. We need not be naive about the mechanics of power. Said said that he hoped "to illustrate the formidable structure of cultural domination and, specifically for formerly colonized peoples, [show] the dangers and temptations of employing this structure upon themselves or upon others" (25). Similarly, I hope we will not be cowed by the structures of cultural domination, and will voice our Mormonism more freely, more imaginatively, and more faithfully.

RICHARD LYMAN BUSHMAN, Gouverneur

Morris Professor of History at Columbia University, is the author of *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984) and a forthcoming biography of Joseph Smith. He delivered this lecture at a special fund-raising lecture sponsored by the Association of Mormon Letters 8 October 1999 at Westminster College.

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