

idea for the lectures was well received, and Obert C. and Grace Tanner agreed to provide financial support for the annual lecture, thus the title.

This volume is a collection of the first twenty-one Tanner Lectures, bringing difficult-to-find papers into one volume. The lectures are organized into three broad categories: first, Beginnings; second, Establishing Zion; and third, Mormonism Considered from Different Perspectives. The three divisions are prefaced with essays by Richard Bushman, Thomas Alexander, and Jan Shipps, respectively. The introductory essays provide a discussion of the general topic and summaries and critiques of each lecture. Each lecture brings a different perspective, a different lens to the Mormon past. Reading the essays in order, Shipps points out, reveals not only the findings of the studies but also something of “the history of the doing of Mormon history across twenty years” (270).

—Josh E. Probert

*The Marrow of Human Experience: Essays on Folklore*, by William A. Wilson and edited by Jill Terry Rudy (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2006)

William A. (Bert) Wilson, professor emeritus from Brigham Young University, has become the preeminent scholar of Mormon folklore since publishing his first article on Mormon cultural traditions in 1969. This book, which is a collection of his major articles on folklore, is divided into three sections: the first explains why folklore takes seriously a wide range of artistic expression, the second explores the role folklore plays in nationalism, and the third details the dynamics of Mormon folklore and family history. Ably edited by Jill Terry Rudy, associate professor of English at BYU, the book not

only presents Wilson’s work, but it also situates that work in the field of folklore. Rudy has solicited from Wilson’s colleagues introductions that describe how the ideas in each article have influenced other scholars. The authors of these introductions include some of the most prominent folklore scholars in the nation and illustrate the wide-ranging effects of Wilson’s thought.

Even for those familiar with Wilson’s work, the collection of essays will provide new insights. The previously published articles come from various published sources that are helpfully brought together under one cover. Additionally, the collection includes three never-before-published essays.

For readers not familiar with Wilson’s work, the third group of essays will be especially interesting. Readers looking for detailed examples and insightful analysis of the lore about the Three Nephites and J. Golden Kimball will be rewarded. However, Wilson’s focus on Mormon folklore is fuller, and readers of his collection will also learn about Mormon folklore that is more common and more central: the initiation rituals of missionaries; stories about miracles doing temple work; jokes about a priest, a rabbi, and a Mormon bishop; family history narratives; and so on. In dealing with these everyday aspects of cultural Mormonism, Wilson sheds light on “those things that Mormons feel most deeply” (235).

This volume of essays represents the best scholarship of a respected student of Mormon culture and narrative and will both entertain and enlighten those interested in Mormonism as it is lived. Additionally, what arises out of the volume is an articulate and vividly illustrated argument for the humanities—broadly defined to include the artistic expressions of all individuals.

—David A. Allred