

enterprises. He concludes with a hint of pride that "Utah's people no longer have to work in an economy in which its major enterprises are owned and operated from outside the state" (459).

Capping, for now (but certainly not concluding), a distinguished professional career of teaching and writing Utah history, *Utah, the Right Place* should be an essential addition to the library of anyone concerned with the Beehive State. Mormons will find Alexander's approach to their history both thorough and refreshing. It will be especially appreciated in light of some modern efforts to diminish, if not eliminate, any discussion of religion in history classes. As Alexander himself observes (taking a cue from one of his early mentors), "studying Utah history without talking about the Mormons would be like discussing the discovery of America without mentioning Columbus" (9). At the same time, Mormon history itself is not the focus of the book. The Mormon majority and their contributions are well served, but so, too, are the contributions of others. Alexander has succeeded in creating a well-integrated, well-balanced history of a state that, in his view, is still "the right place" for all.

—J. B. Allen, book review editor

Great and Peculiar Beauty: A Utah Reader, edited by Thomas Lyon and Terry Tempest Williams (Gibbs Smith, 1995)

Here is a welcome buffet of Utah literature spread out in celebration

of the centennial of Utah's hard-won statehood. Editors Thomas Lyon, of Utah State University, and Terry Tempest Williams, of the University of Utah, serve up nearly 150 personal and imaginative writings and poems by more than 130 Utah writers in a big, splendid anthology destined to be a literary landmark in the cultural history of Utah.

Eschewing familiar and well-worn organizing metaphors, the editors have gathered their selections under a fresh and utile organizing principle that transforms Utah's five topographically distinct terrains, each of which possesses an inherent "great and peculiar beauty" (ii), into five "literary provinces": "The Great Basin," "Urban Terrace," "Mountains," "Colorado Plateau," and "Dixie" (1). Introducing each section in brief, lyrical essays centered in the natural history of the province, the editors present a judicious selection of some familiar but mostly less accessible or virtually unknown works of poetry, fiction, history, personal narratives, interviews (with earlier inhabitants), and accounts of present-day life in the five provinces. All of this gathers to a satisfying cultural, historical, and literary feast.

Lyon and Williams have measured each selection against four criteria: every reading "should illuminate its region; it should have literary value; it should suggest ideas or dimensions of feeling that transcend time; and it should tell a story" (2). Their unstated fifth criterion is, of course, that every reading reflect the editors' own world views as professing naturalists, writers, scholars, and sympathetic

cultural commentators who are at a personal, religious, and academic remove from Utah's mainstream LDS majority. This distancing, together with the topographical overlay, enables a fresh look at the breadth of Utah's scenic and human landscape, 1776–1996. Such distancing, however, also affects the spirit of this collection, and some readers will find the book goes awry in failing to capture the dynamic spiritual and religious power of the Mormon faith, a shortfall which can be explained more by editorial predilection and selectivity than by the fact that barely half of the book's selections were written by Latter-day Saints, in a state where Mormons still comprise more than 72 percent of the population.

While the editors bemoan the unfortunate necessity of omitting drama, science fiction, children's or young adult literature from the collection—some of which are among Utah's strongest genres—other unacknowledged and unexplained editorial omissions further alter the tone and lessen the representative nature of the book. Missing are LDS hymns, poetic touchstones of Mormon theology and Utah history; LDS sermons, represented here only by Orson Hyde, not Brigham Young, Orson Pratt, or others to be found in the *Journal of Discourses* (arguably the most important collection of Utah literature); or LDS journals, too sparsely represented (although Mary Goble Pay is there), with their invaluable glimpses into applied Mormonism. Beyond many appreciated inclusions in the book

are equally important exclusions of contemporary Utah writers whose presence would help balance the offering and brighten the mosaic: Samuel Woolley Taylor, Hugh Nibley, Eileen Gibbons Kump, Marilyn Miller Brown, Louise Plummer, anthologized poets Arthur Henry King and John Sterling Harris, Gerald N. Lund (Utah's all-time, best-selling author), and Utah's best-known, prize-winning author, Orson Scott Card. There are other oversights as well: sundry typos; misspellings of at least a half-dozen authors' names; an introduction which repeatedly refers the reader to a nonexistent "Volume 2," apparently reflecting an earlier, abandoned format; and a clutch of quirky, inconsistent, and imbalanced endnotes.

In lamenting such omissions and errors, however, let me not be guilty of my own distortive skewings. In fact, *Great and Peculiar Beauty: A Utah Reader* is a cultural landmark in the 150-year history of Utah arts and letters, a literary hymning of the "great and peculiar beauty" of this good place and its good people.

—Richard H. Cracroft

Searching for God in America,
by Hugh Hewitt (Word Publishing,
1996)

Through interviews, writings, hymns, and brief histories of individuals who have shaped Americans' religious lives, this book showcases many "spiritualities" from such figures as Jonathan Edwards, Joseph Smith Jr., Samuel