

ANNE PERRY--Next Tues., April 13

Dear Colleagues and Students:

Tuesday, April 13, Anne Perry, author of eleven mystery novels set in Vitorian England, will be on campus to discuss her internationally recognized fiction and her perspective as a Mormon writer, to read from her recent work, and to sign books.

1. 9:30 - 10:45 A. M. 2015 JKHB. A discussion, in Eugene England's Mormon literature class, of her fiction and life as a Mormon writer living in England. All welcome; plenty of room.

2. 11:00 - 11:50 A. M. BYU bookstore. Booksigning.

INVITE FRIENDS, STUDENTS, AND COLLEAGUES--AND COME YOURSELF!

Some comments on Anne Perry:

"Ms. Perry once again demonstrates her true and lively passion. Her finely drawn characters couldn't be more comfortable within the customs and sensibilities of their historical period."

The New York Times Book Review

"Anne Perry is my choica for today's best mystery writer of Victoriana."

St. Lous Post-Dispatch

"Perry skillfully evokes the atmosphere of nineteenth-century London and its sharp social contrasts." Publishers Weekly

"Perry uses her well-mannered prose, satiric wit and sense of place and time to construct a completely believable and human world. A sterling performance." Library Journal

A sample from Bethlehem Road:

" 'Were you caretaker of the Bethlehem Road Hall seventeen years ago. Mr. Plunkett?'

'I was, sir. I was. Is there some trouble about it?'

'None that I know of. Did you lease the hall to a religious organization on a regular basis?'

'I did, sir; most assuredly. Eccentric people. Very strange beliefs, they had. Didn't baptize children. because they said children came into the world pure from God, and weren't capable of sin until they were eight years old. Can't agree with that, certainly I can't. Man is born in sin. Had my own children baptized when they were two months old, like a Christian should. But they were always civil and sober people, modestly dressed, and worked hard and helped each other.'

---page 233-34

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The Salt Lake Tribune  
22 April 1995  
pp. D1, D4

Through the Past Darkly: Mormon Writer Was Convicted of Murder at 15  
By Peggy Fletcher Stack

Characters in Anne Perry's mystery novels all inhabit the restricted world of Victorian England. In her own life as a Mormon, Perry has chosen a faith with clear-cut ideas about God and humanity.

But there are times, she says, when a good writer who would be great must go beyond the safety of known territory.

"You have to make a deeper and deeper journey into yourself," Perry, 55, said this week in a telephone interview from her home in Scotland. "If you are going to dredge up something of yourself, it is hard work."

Perry knows firsthand the agony of self-discovery.

She always wanted to be a writer. As a child in England she was hospitalized repeatedly for lung ailments and passed the time inventing stories.

She was 41 when her first mystery was published, and since then Perry has worked at a furious pace, often producing two novels a year. With 20 titles and 3 million books in print in the United States alone, Perry has finally achieved commercial success.

Last summer, when the future looked nothing but rosy, Perry was hit with a bombshell.

The international press got wind that 40 years earlier in New Zealand, Perry--born Juliet Hulme--was convicted of murder for helping to kill the mother of a friend.

Since she was only 15 at the time, Perry served just 5 1/2 years in prison.

The crime is the subject of a film, "Heavenly Creatures," playing in Salt Lake City. Perry has not seen the film and has no plans to do so, objecting to its depictions of her and her friend.

After prison, Perry changed her name and rejoined her mother and

stepfather in England. She kept busy in mostly clerical jobs in sales and fashion and worked as a flight attendant and insurance underwriter.

Her search for a career led her to Southern California, where she lived for five years. It was there, 27 years ago today, that she joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"I was raised agnostic," Perry said, respecting most religions but belonging to none.

But in California, an LDS neighbor "seemed to have something special."

She began to learn more about the Mormon faith. Though she struggled initially with some of its precepts, her friend urged her "not to work it through in your brain, just get down on your knees and pray."

She took the advice. The next morning, she recalled, "I knew I had the answer."

After deciding to join the church, Perry told LDS authorities about the murder. Though Perry didn't mention it, her baptism was probably approved by the church's governing First Presidency because church policy requires such approval before a convicted murderer can be baptized.

Perry said that among other doctrines, the Mormon notions of freedom and sin appealed to her.

"Sin has got to be having a choice and deliberately taking the wrong one," she said. "You sin when you turn your back on the light. You can't sin without the light to know the difference."

Jesus Christ's resurrection was not only about the body, Perry said, but "the cosmic regeneration of the whole Earth."

"Every day we can make a new start," Perry said.

In the late 1980s, Perry received an "apostolic blessing" from Elder Russell Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

"It was about my writing and what I can accomplish," she said. Though she declined to share details of the ritual because she considers it private and sacred, she said "it has provided the complete direction for my life and everything I do."

Like most active Mormons, Perry quickly became immersed in the church's communal life. Members of a congregation staff all the leadership positions in a local unit. Perry held positions in the Relief Society for adult women, in Young Women, in Primary for children under 12, and in Sunday School. She even served as a spokeswoman briefly.

"As a novelist, one of the best schooling grounds is a church calling," she said. "What a great thing it was for me as a writer to be a Relief Society president. I got to know people well and care about them."

Though her books are set in Victorian England, Perry has drawn on her Mormon experiences to create real and memorable characters. She also has used her faith to explore social issues such as spouse abuse, abortion, anti-Semitism, child abuse, slum profiteering and child prostitution.

Her books also examine psychological issues such as loyalty, identity and guilt.

But for the past several years, Perry has taken a new tack. She is working on a fantasy novel.

At first, she felt herself holding back, censoring the "inner passion"--fearing her fellow Mormons might not accept her work.

"I wish to obey, I have no desire to rebel, for to do so would be to imagine I know better than God what is good for me, or for others," Perry said in a 1988 speech. "I have had too many contrary experiences now to suffer that illusion any more."

Still, Perry knew that to be an artist, not an artisan, a person must "let go of the safety of known territory, that which is orthodox, already charted and pronounced safe, and strike off to explore a new region."

And so she has continued working on the fantasy, now planned for three volumes, which will explore Mormon themes of freedom and personal responsibility.

"It answers the question of who I am," she said.

In the last eight months since the news about her past became public knowledge, Perry has been forced to "dig down into my gut."

Even so, of Scott's novels, my favorite remains Seventh Son. And of the novellas The Bully and the Beast. This is a fantasy novella about a Forest Gump sort who also happens to be very large and formidable to look upon. And for a time, naive and easily manipulated by less scrupulous sorts. By Scott's own admission, the story rambles on for a while, but strikes pure gold with the introduction of a sardonic dragon, whose eyes might burn brightly, or fade to dark, depending on whether the Bully speaks the truth to it, or lies. A couple of people have posted about The Backslider's "Cowboy Jesus" doing something for them. I like the series of epiphanies in the Bully and the Beast.

Kevin Christensen  
Tech Writer  
Lawrence KS

From: BENSON PARKINSON <BYPARKINSON@cc.weber.edu>  
To: "Association for Mormon Letters Discussion List" <AML-LIST  
Subject: Re: Rumors (Anne Perry)  
Date: Mon, 15 May 1995 10:09:09 -0700 (MST)  
Reply-To: AML-LIST@chp.weber.edu

From: IN%"kevinc@lks.csi.com" "Kevin Christensen" 15-MAY-1995 09:58:45.37  
To: IN%"BYPARKINSON@cc.weber.edu" "BENSON PARKINSON"  
CC: IN%"kevinc@lks.csi.com"  
Subj: RE: Rumors

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>I heard a prominent British mystery writer was interviewed on NPR  
>a little while ago. This is the same writer who as an adolescent  
>helped her friend murder her mother, as portrayed in a recent  
>movie.

The file is called "Heavenly Creatures." The writer is Anne Perry, pseudonym for Juliet Hulme. I chanced to see her interviewed by Barbara Walters on 20/20. She is a thoroughly captivating individual, coming across to me as unpretentious and sympathetic, in stark contrast to the rather tacky woman who decided to tell the tabloid press where she was and what she was doing. The crime took place in New Zealand in 1954. Quoting from the San Francisco Chronicle, Monday, Nov 21, 1994:

-According to Perry, Pauline was suicidal, "I sincerely believed that her life was in the balance. Crazy as it sounds, I thought it was one life or the

other. I just couldn't face the thought of being responsible for her dying."  
There were extenuating circumstances. "Because of this chest ailment, said, "I had been treated with drugs that have since been withdrawn because they tend to warp judgement. And though the normal course of treatment was three months, I had them for nine."  
End quote.

She served 5 and 1/2 years in prison, a lot of it in solitary. After b released, she moved to Scotland. Before being baptized as Mormon, she told the local leaders about her history. She reports that everyone in her community has been supportive since the story broke. She lives quietly with her mother, and writes mysteries set in turn-of-the-century London.

--Kevin Christensen  
Technical Writer  
Lawrence, KS

From: BENSON PARKINSON <BYPARKINSON@cc.weber.edu>  
To: "Association for Mormon Letters Discussion List" <AML-LIST  
Subject: Re: PERRY (was Rumors)  
Date: Mon, 15 May 1995 12:17:29 -0700 (MST)  
Reply-To: AML-LIST@chp.weber.edu

From: IN%"sburton@unr.edu" "Stacy Burton" 15-MAY-1995 12:01:36.79  
To: IN%"BYPARKINSON@cc.weber.edu" "BENSON PARKINSON"  
CC:  
Subj: PERRY (was Rumors)

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15 May 1995 09:40:55 -0700  
Date: Mon, 15 May 1995 09:40:55 -0700 (PDT)  
From: Stacy Burton <sburton@unr.edu>  
Subject: PERRY (was Rumors)  
To: BENSON PARKINSON <BYPARKINSON@cc.weber.edu>  
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Here's the text of the NY Times article last fall. The SL Tribune article last month dealt more with Perry's Mormonism. Perry is British; she lived in New Zealand as an adolescent and in the United States in the later 1960s, where she joined the LDS Church in California.

Stacy Burton

The New York Times, Wednesday, August 17, 1994

BOOK NOTES

Uncovering A Mystery Writer's Hidden Past

by SARAH LYALL

For years Anne Perry has been a prolific and very successful author of exquisitely detailed mystery novels set in Victorian England. She is a familiar figure to readers and bookseller here as well as in her native Britain, so much so that three million copies of her 19 novels are in print in the United States alone.

That is why it comes as such a shock to those who know here and those who read her that Miss Perry, who is 55 and lives with her mother in the tiny Scottish village of Portmahomack, has a hidden past as startling as anything in the most melodramatic mystery story. Forty years ago, sent to New Zealand to recover from an illness. Just 15, she served five and a half years in prison before changing her name and beginning a new life.

For all these years, only her family and most immediate circle have known Miss Perry's secret. But it all surfaced recently when a forthcoming film about the infamous incident--in which Miss Perry helped a friend kill the friend's mother--caused journalists in New Zealand to track her

down. The news about Miss Perry has been seeping out, with articles in New Zealand and Britain, but isn't widely known in the United States.

Miss Perry's 20th book, "The Sins of the Wolf," which deals with a young nurse imprisoned for a crime she did not commit, is due to be published by Fawcett Columbine in September and the publisher has been positioning it as a big book that might put Miss Perry on national best-seller lists for the first time. Through her publisher and agent, the author turned down requests for an interview.

But she told a London newspaper last week that the murder took place when she was suffering from a severe chest ailment and her lone friend, a desperately unhappy teenager named Pauline, was threatening to commit suicide. So Miss Perry--who said she had been taking medication that has since been withdrawn from circulation because it impairs judgment--helped Pauline kill her mother by hitting the woman on the head with a rock. "I've completely blocked it out," Miss Perry told The Daily Telegraph. "All I can say is that it was violent, and quick."

About her friend Pauline, she said: "I sincerely believed that her life was in the balance. Crazy as this sound, I thought it was one life or the other. I just couldn't face the thought of being responsible for her dying. And I made a very foolish choice."

Miss Perry has done plenty of atoning over the years, living quietly and becoming involved in the Mormon church. Her literary agent in Loondon, Meg Davis, who first heard the story from a reporter in New Zealand, said Miss Perry had always feared that her past would overtake her.

"She wanted to put it behind her and make something of her life," Miss Davis said. "She's got a very strong ethical sense and she was very worried, because obviously this is something that makes you instantly judge a person. She's really had to take her courage into her hands and go into the local shops and tell them, because where she lives, everybody knows everybody else."

Miss Perry has been surprised, Miss Davis said, by the support she has received from colleagues and neighbors. And the author said in the interview that her faith had helped her make peace with what she did. "I think all Christian faiths will say that if you have paid the price and truly repented," she said, "there is forgiveness."

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From: BENSON PARKINSON <BYPARKINSON@cc.weber.edu>  
To: "Association for Mormon Letters Discussion List" <AML-LIST  
Subject: Re: PERRY (was Rumors)  
Date: Mon, 15 May 1995 12:48:54 -0700 (MST)  
Reply-To: AML-LIST@chp.weber.edu

Stacy Burton answered my query:

| Her name is Anne Perry. There was a long article about her in the NY  
| Times last fall and another by Peggy Fletcher Stack in the SL Tribune on  
| April 22nd.

You typed out the NY Times article for us. I wonder if you (or someone else) saved the Tribune review?



(Just to be sure, I called the Tribune. We can reprint their reviews in full as long as we say where they came from.)

Benson Parkinson  
Moderator, AML-List  
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Ogden, Utah, USA

From: BENSON PARKINSON <BYPARKINSON@cc.weber.edu>  
To: "Association for Mormon Letters Discussion List" <AML-LIST  
Subject: LDS MYSTERY WRITERS (TOURNEY)  
Date: Mon, 15 May 1995 13:12:46 -0700 (MST)  
Reply-To: AML-LIST@chp.weber.edu

From: IN%"austin@humanitas.ucsb.edu" "Michael Austin" 15-MAY-1995 13:09:05.  
To: IN%"byparkinson@cc.weber.edu" "AML-LIST"  
CC:  
Subj: LDS MYSTERY WRITERS

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15 May 95 12:08:58 PDT  
Date: Mon, 15 May 1995 12:08:58 -0700 (PDT)  
From: Michael Austin <austin@humanitas.ucsb.edu>  
Subject: LDS MYSTERY WRITERS  
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The discussion of Anne Perry has been quite interesting and has reminded me of a question I was going to pose to the list about another LDS mystery writer. One of my friends and colleagues here at UCSB is Leonard Tourney, an English professor who also writes excellent mysteries on the side. All of the mysteries are set in late-Elizabethan/Early-Stuart England and deal with the adventuress of a part-time constable (Matthew Stock) and his wife (Joan Stock) who solve murders. The titles include: The Player's Boy is Dead, Familiar Spirits, Low Treason, The Bartholemew Fair Murders, Old Saxon Blood, Witness of Bones, and Frobisher's Savage. All, I believe, are published in hard abck by St. Martins Press and in Paperback by Ballantine.

From what I have seen, the books have been well-reviewed by critics. However, I have never seen anything that discusses Leonard's religion. He is an active Latter-day Saint and a member of the Santa Barbara Stake High Council. I'm just curious as to whether or not anyone else has ever heard of Leonard's books (in an LDS context or otherwise). I have read most of them, and I think that they are great--but, because of the situation, I am somewhat biased.

Regards,

Mike

"It has made me ask questions I haven't asked before, or go into parts of myself I haven't explored," she said.

Her faith has also deepened.

"So often we trust in God with one foot on the ground," Perry said. "But when you are shoved into a whirlpool, you learn a different kind of trust."

She said she never wanted her past to be revealed in such a public way but maybe her story will help others.

"Let's remember that God's in charge," she said.

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Two photos: one of Perry's books, the other of Perry. The first is captioned "Anne Perry, who lives in Scotland, has published 20 titles and has more than 3 million books in print in the United States alone. Her mysteries often explore sin and redemption, something she is familiar with." The second is captioned, "Anne Perry was 41 when she published her first mystery novel."  
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conceptions of the Church's institutional imperatives.]

Benson Parkinson  
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Ogden, Utah, USA

From: BENSON PARKINSON <BYPARKINSON@cc.weber.edu>  
To: "Association for Mormon Letters Discussion List" <AML-LIST  
Subject: Re: PERRY, LIFE WRITING  
Date: Wed, 17 May 1995 17:45:51 -0700 (MST)  
Reply-To: AML-LIST@chp.weber.edu

Maureen Beecher wrote:

| New Zealand born Anne Parry (Perry?) is the writer in question, and  
| the movie has already appeared. Sorry I can't recall its title, but

Several have written in with information on Anne Perry (nee Juliet Hulme) and the film Heavenly Creatures. Our correspondents disagree on whether she was born in New Zealand or emigrated there from Britain, and whether she presently lives in Scotland or California.

We've been promised a copy of an interview by Peggy Stack that ran April 22nd in the Salt Lake Tribune that we've been told deals with her Mormonism.

I'd personally like to see a bit more on her books (I've enjoyed what info we've had), our correspondant's reactions to them, whether they contain references to Mormonism or gospel themes, etc.

| P.S. I'm pleased to be part of the exchange, but overwhelmed with the  
Glad to have you here.

| volume to date. I'd like to see some talk of life writing--diaries,  
| letters, autobiographies--become part of the dialogue. I'll put  
| together a post sometime, but it would be helpful to have some  
| background of what you may already have considered.

Please do. There has been some discussion on genres, including life writing, along the lines of whether or not it forms part of "Mormon Literature." I believe all correspondents (and the moderator) agree that it does.

The archive is available from me if you wish to go through it. It's large (400K) with 118 messages to date.

Benson Parkinson  
Moderator, AML-List  
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Ogden, Utah, USA

From: BENSON PARKINSON <BYPARKINSON@cc.weber.edu>  
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It's large (400K) with 118 messages to date.

Benson Parkinson  
Moderator, AML-List  
BYPARKINSON@cc.weber.edu  
Ogden, Utah, USA

From: BENSON PARKINSON <BYPARKINSON@cc.weber.edu>  
To: "Association for Mormon Letters Discussion List" <AML-LIST  
Subject: Re: PERRY  
Date: Wed, 17 May 1995 20:59:44 -0700 (MST)  
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From: Stacy Burton <sburton@unr.edu>  
Subject: Re: PERRY, LIFE WRITING  
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> correspondents disagree on whether she was born in New Zealand or  
> emmigrated there from Britain, and whether she presently lives in  
> Scotland or California.

The articles published about Perry in the last year in the NY Times, the  
SL Tribune, People, and so on consistently say that she is English, that  
she lived in New Zealand as an adolescent, and that she presently lives  
in Scotland.

> I'd personally like to see a bit more on her books (I've enjoyed  
> what info we've had), our correspondant's reactions to them,  
> whether they contain references to Mormonism or gospel themes,  
> etc.

There are two series, one with Thomas and Charlotte Pitt, another with  
William Monk, both set in Victorian England. I've read a few of the first  
series, set in the 1880s, and none of the second, apparently set in the  
1860s. One of the novels in the first series deals, eventually, with a  
character who has connections to a socially-suspect American religious  
group not unlike the Mormons.

Stacy Burton

From: BENSON PARKINSON <BYPARKINSON@cc.weber.edu>  
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Date: Wed, 17 May 1995 21:06:02 -0700 (MST)  
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