

The Grand Beehive. Compiled and with an introduction by Hal Cannon. Photographs by Brent Herridge. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1980. Pp. iii + 8, bibliography, 70 illustrations, index to illustrations. \$9.50, paper.

Reviewed by Willard B. Moore.

The delicate nature of religious expression presents many pitfalls to investigators of folk religion. As folklorists and anthropologists confront more and more complex settings, the yields are richer but the theories they apply to symbolic behavior are more heavily strained. Sign, symbol, icon and metaphor carry varying messages with multiple, and often contradictory, intentions among their creators and users. To get at the answers, one must examine accurate historical data and, at the same time, pursue a rigorous analysis of symbol meaning at the highest possible level. **The Grand Beehive** is a tantalizing but all-too-brief demonstration of these methodologies and one should know something of what has been written previously to appreciate its worth fully.

The student of semiotic communication would do well to review, for example, George Kubler's **The Shape of Time: Remarks on The History of Things** and his analysis of "prime objects" as resolution of conscious aesthetic (or spiritual) problems over time. In his attempt to replace the diffuse idea of **style** with a concept of "linked succession of prime works in replication," Kubler provided a base for structural analysis of artifacts which was carried forth by Glassie and others.¹

When religious and utopian communities choose to deal with shifting spiritual and physical environments, the importance assigned to any sign-image is often intensified through metaphor. Metaphor and symbol are images, then, which function like sign posts, building and reinforcing a group consciousness of what they are to themselves and to the outside world. In the process, group members draw upon acceptable congruencies, historic antecedents and the drama of the human will.² They transcend a weak and undefined state to one characterized by energy, creativity, faith and the ability to meet a changing reality. Fernandez, Armstrong and Sitney, for example, have used

a similar analysis to explain non-verbal metaphoric action in Austurian games, Yoruba sculpture, and American avant-garde films.³

A concise and most helpful contribution to the analysis of artifact as "prime object" and as metaphor is found in **The Grand Beehive**. The book is an elaboration on the catalogue for the Grand Beehive Exhibition which was presented at the Salt Lake Art Center in the Autumn of 1980 and which was seen in another version at the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery in 1981. Hal Cannon's economical and lucid essay on the history and meaning of the beehive image, and Brent Herridge's excellent photographs present the reader with a firm grasp of Mormon cultural change. Cannon's thesis is that the Mormon beehive image is linked to the iconography of early Grand Masonry which emerged during the Mormon Exodus to the West under the leadership of Brigham Young. At that time, what was to become the most pervasive symbol of Mormondom connoted an isolated, orderly and self-sufficient theocracy with antecedents in the biblical Jaredites and the holy language of Adam. By 1858, however, the dream of an isolated Kingdom under an all-seeing beekeeper God had disappeared. The metaphor for communality, self-sufficiency and secrecy clashed with the American demands for openness and independence and thus began the transition to the interpretation of the beehive as "industry" and economic success. As many of the illustrated plates testify, the eclectic population of modern Zion uses the beehive image as proof or promise of capitalist glory.

In his brief essay, the author eschews elaborate explorations of what seem to be enticing folk legends about bees, beehives and the origin of meanings. The accompanying bibliography, though equally abbreviated, contains the major sources for further reading in Mormon culture and symbolism. One obvious omission must be pointed out. The work of Mark P. Leone could easily have been cited since his observations on Mormon technology and utopian experiments on the frontier as "managed environments" are especially germane to the subject.⁴

Herridge's imaginative and meticulous documentation of the beehive image in all strata of life in Utah is the rationale for the book's publication. To make up the

collection, Herridge apparently sought out artists' paintings in which the beehive appears in realistic or abstract form, and added well-balanced and proportioned photos of quilts, tooled leather saddles, ice cream molds, fences, neon hotel signs, pastry, coffin plates and newel posts on the steps of the Mormon Temple. Most of the photos' captions carry dates for the artifacts and twenty-one of the seventy plates carry quotations from Mormon leaders and a few non-Mormon luminaries, including Mark Twain and Marcus Aurelius. The most valuable quotes are those taken from Mormon songsters and pioneer day toasts. In these phrases the Mormon sense of verbal metaphor is set forth to match the visual. Consider this toast offered on Pioneer Day, 1851:

Uncle Sam. May he have strength in his old age to correct his unruly boys that they may cease pillaging the bee-hive or destroying bees; that in times of winter they may have honey. (Plate 18)

A second rationale for the book lies in the persuasive efforts put into the Exhibition out of which the project grew. In the Foreword, Salt Lake Art Center director Allen Dodsworth confesses

In Utah there are representations of beehives everywhere, a fact of which I was only subconsciously aware before Hal Cannon and David Pendell visited me to propose an exhibition devoted to exploring the use of the beehive image. What first seemed a delightful but ridiculous idea began to appear more and more worth pursuing.

One of the tasks of folk culture scholars is to show others that many delightful aspects of life are neither ridiculous nor coincidental, and that the congruencies of intention and expression are worth examining. This is crucial in the public sector and the success of Cannon and his colleagues is heartening.

NOTES

1. George Kubler, **The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962, 1978), pp. 37-38, 129-130.

2. Elizabeth Sewell, **The Human Metaphor** (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), p. 118.

3. James Fernandez, "The Mission of Metaphor in Expressive Culture," **Current Anthropology** no. 2 (June 1974), pp. 119-133; Robert Plant Armstrong, **The Affective Presence** (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971); P. Adams Sitney, "Myth -- Ritual in American Avant-garde Films and Its Disappearance," a lecture given on 19 May 1980 at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the series, "The Past Redefined."

4. Mark P. Leone, "The Role of Primitive Technology in 19th Century American Utopias," **Material Culture**, 1975 Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society, eds. Lechtman Heather and Robert S. Merrill (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1977), pp. 87-107. Reference to another metaphorical use of the beehive image in social structure can be found in John Hostetler, **Hutterite Society** (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 37. See also, Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, **The Mormon Experience** (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1979), mentioned by Cannon and a comprehensive view of Mormon culture.

Kentucky Country: Folk and Country Music of Kentucky. By Charles K. Wolfe. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1982. Pp. ix + 199, photographs, discography, sources, index. \$16.00, cloth.

Reviewed by Gary Stanton.

Kentucky Country is a compendium of all the white country musicians from Kentucky who have ever made a recording, and quite a few who only expended their talents on radio. Arranged modestly in an essay format, it could have as easily been encyclopedic, although the connections and contrasts would have been sacrificed to ease locating of your favorite musician.

Charles Wolfe is the most knowledgeable, diligent, and prolific writer on southern music today. In articles, and books he has chipped away at the void of scholarship