



# Shifting Borders and a Tattered Passport: Intellectual Journeys of a Mormon Academic

*Armand L. Mauss*

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The life of a Mormon intellectual in the secular academic community is likely to include some contradictions between belief, scholarship, and the changing times. In his memoir, Armand L. Mauss recounts his personal and intellectual struggles—inside and outside the LDS world—from his childhood to his days as a graduate student at UC Berkeley in the 1960s through his many years as a professor.

As an important and influential observer and author in the Mormon intellectual world, Mauss has witnessed how, in attempting to suppress independent and unsponsored scholarship during the final decades of the twentieth century, LDS leaders deliberately marginalized important intellectual support and resources that could have helped, in the twenty-first century, to refurbish the public image of the church. As a sociologist, he notes how the LDS Church, as a large, complex organization, strives to adjust its policies and practices in order to maintain an optimal balance between unique, appealing claims on the one hand and public acceptance on the other. He also discusses national and academic controversies over the New Religious Movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Writing in clear language, Mauss shows how he has navigated the boundaries where his faith and academic life intersect, and reveals why a continuing commitment to the LDS Church must be a product of choice more than of natural or supernatural “proof.”

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