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Introduction

Daniel C. Peterson

In the spring or early summer of 1820, "some few days" after his epochal vision of the Father and the Son, the young Joseph Smith gave an account of the experience to a Methodist minister with whom he "happened to be in company." The minister had been active in the "excitement" about religion that inspired Joseph's fateful decision to go alone into the woods near his house to pray. Naïvely, the boy expected his story of a Bible-like divine manifestation to be well received. It was not.

> I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there would never be any more of them.[1]

Had the young boy been more worldly or sophisticated, he would not have been surprised. Resistance to the idea of post-biblical revelation has been the standard, mainstream position of Christendom for many centuries now.

I've run across a couple of striking examples of this fact within just the past few weeks, entirely without seeking them. Here, for example, is a passage from Thomas B. Costain's *The Last Plantagenets*. The book is a narrative history of the English monarchy from the birth of Richard II in 1367 to the death

1. Joseph Smith—History 1:21.

of Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field on 22 August 1485. Costain (d. 1965), now largely forgotten, was a Canadian-American journalist who, relatively late in life, became a best-selling popular historian and historical novelist.

The setting is the late fourteenth century, amidst the seemingly endless battles of the so-called "Hundred Years War" between France and England, which Costain himself repeatedly describes as pointless and inordinately destructive. Richard II was the ruler of England. Unfortunately, the French king of the time was mentally ill and, often, delusional.

> The state of mind into which Charles VI of France fell at frequent and sudden intervals must have had its effect on his attitude toward the continuation of the war. He now wanted peace as much as Richard. There is every reason to believe that the two monarchs were right and that the war parties which existed in both countries, made up largely of ambitious uncles and strutting nephews as well as the noisy customers of alehouses, were wrong. Only the personal interest of these blustering war panders would be served by continuing the costly war.
>
> An unusual olive branch was sent to Richard by the King of France. A pilgrim from the Holy Land known as Robert the Hermit put in an unexpected appearance at Eltham Castle, escorted by seven horsemen of the French king. It was observed at once that there was a strange glint in his eyes, but it was not until he proceeded to tell his story that his full fanaticism became apparent.[2]

2. Thomas B. Costain, *The Last Plantagenets* (New York: Popular Library, 1963), 170–71.

I don't know what Costain's evidence was for the "strange glint" in the Hermit's eyes, and can well imagine that it reflects nothing more than storyteller's license, but the basis for the verdict of "fanaticism" is immediately apparent: It's the man's claim of revelation:

> The vessel in which he returned from Palestine had been caught in a furious gale. For three days the ship had been driven in the teeth of the wind and all on board were convinced they were lost. But to Robert there appeared an apparition in the clouds, a shining figure like an angel.
>
> "Robert," said the strange visitor from above, with uplifted hand and speaking in a tongue which the pilgrim did not recognize though he had no difficulty in understanding the words, "thou shalt escape this danger. Thou and all with thee for thy sake." The voice went on to explain what he must do. He must seek out the King of France and lay an injunction on him to bring about a peace with England. "This war," continued the heavenly visitor, "has raged too long—Woe unto such as will not hear thee."[3]

Now, on the face of it, the apparent angel's advice seems reasonable enough. Indeed, Thomas Costain himself has already effectively endorsed it several times by this point. And it's not hard to imagine that it might come from a divine source. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace," wrote the prophet Isaiah (52:7). "Blessed are the peacemakers," said the Savior himself (Matthew 5:9).

But perhaps Thomas Costain was hostile to all religion? No. It doesn't seem so. According to his Wikipedia biography—not,

3. Costain, *The Last Plantagenets*, 171.

perhaps, the most august of sources, but, so far as I can see, lacking any motivation to lie on this issue—he was raised as a Baptist, and was reported in the 1953 issue of *Current Biography* to be an active member of the Episcopal Church.[4] More to the point, perhaps, among his earliest books was a 1943 popular biography of Joshua, the successor of Moses to the leadership of the biblical Hebrews. And one of his most popular novels, *The Silver Chalice* (1952), centers on the "Holy Grail" and features such characters as the evangelist Luke, Joseph of Arimathea, the Gnostic arch-heretic Simon Magus (Acts 8:9–24) and his companion Helena, and the apostle Peter.

It seems that Thomas Costain was comfortable enough with the biblical accounts and with ancient miracles. But post-biblical revelations weren't even to be considered.

> As soon as the apparition dissolved from sight, the winds ceased and a gentle breeze took the vessel to Genoa. Robert went to Avignon and saw the Pope, who instructed him to reach the King of France at once. The French royal uncles scoffed at the pilgrim and his story, so Robert had left France and made his way to England. Richard listened attentively to the hermit's tale. He and John of Gaunt seemed ready to accept it as true, but Thomas of Woodstock, echoed by the Earl of Arundel, refused to believe a word of it. The two war leaders called the story the ravings of a madman and demanded that no credence be placed in it.[5]

Costain's account of the Earl of Arundel, and even more so of Thomas of Woodstock (King Richard's uncle), portrays the two men as cynical and self-serving traitors. His opinion was plainly shared by Richard II himself, who had them executed and murdered, respectively, in 1397. But when he's confronted

4. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_B._Costain.
5. Costain, *The Last Plantagenets*, 171.

by the Hermit's message of peace, a message with which he himself is clearly sympathetic, he endorses the position of the two villainous leaders of the English war party. Why? Plainly because the Hermit had claimed revelation.

> For once they were right. Robert the Hermit returned to his home in Normandy and was never heard of again. Fortunately for the cause of peace, however, there were better reasons for pursuing a pacific policy than the visions of a half-crazed pilgrim.[6]

The same curious attitude can be seen in a much greater writer, Charles Dickens (d. 1870). In his relatively brief book *A Child's History of England*, originally published in serial form between 1851 and 1853, Dickens spends a remarkable number of pages on the story of Joan of Arc (Jeanne d'Arc; d. 1431)—who was not only not English, but was a legendarily effective military *opponent* of the English. Manifestly, he likes her very much, as many other writers and composers (including even the cynical agnostic Mark Twain) have done, both before him and since. She was, he says, "religious," "unselfish," and "modest." "They threw her ashes into the river Seine," he says of the French who betrayed her and, despite his own nationality, of the English who executed her, "but they will rise against her murderers on the last day."[7]

Nevertheless, and despite the expressions of Christian piety that punctuate his *Child's History*, Dickens plainly doesn't entertain, even for a moment, the possibility that the visions of St. Margaret, St. Catherine, and St. Michael the Archangel that inspired her, the revelations that enabled her, an obscure teenage peasant girl, to lead the armies of France to repeated victories over the English, might have been real.

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6. Costain, *The Last Plantagenets*, 171.

7. Charles Dickens, *Master Humphrey's Clock and A Child's History of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 328, 330.

"There is no doubt," writes Dickens, "that Joan believed she saw and heard these things. It is very well known that such delusions are a disease which is not by any means uncommon."[8] There were, he explains, probably images of Michael and St. Catherine and St. Margaret in Joan's village church, and she probably spent too much time there looking at them, and so she began to hear voices and to see the images as if they were real angelic beings.[9] But the voices were "imaginary," mere products of her "fancy," reflective of a "disorder," a "disease."[10] She was, he suggests, probably a little vain, and was seeking attention.[11]

Now, I don't know whether Robert the Hermit really saw an angelic apparition summoning him to "renounce war and proclaim peace" (Doctrine and Covenants 98:16). Perhaps he was, in fact, a half-crazed fanatic with a strange glint in his eye. And perhaps St. Jeanne d'Arc really was mentally ill. At this remove in time, it's impossible to know.

What strikes me, though, is the automatic, reflexive certainty of both Costain and Dickens that the claims to revelation of the two individuals of whom they were writing—people for whom, respectively, Costain ought have had sympathy and Dickens actually did have sympathy—were completely false and indicative of mental disorder.

The last of the Nephite prophets, Moroni, writing in the first quarter of the fifth century A.D., knew that such attitudes would prevail when, centuries after his time, the Book of Mormon came forth to a modern audience. Accordingly, he addressed unbelievers:

> I speak unto you who deny the revelations of God, and say that they are done away, that there are no revelations, nor prophecies, nor gifts, nor healing, nor speak-

8. Dickens, *Master Humphrey's Clock*, 323.
9. Dickens, *Master Humphrey's Clock* 323.
10. Dickens, *Master Humphrey's Clock*, 323, 324, 329.
11. Dickens, *Master Humphrey's Clock*, 323.

> ing with tongues, and the interpretation of tongues; Behold I say unto you, he that denieth these things knoweth not the gospel of Christ; yea, he has not read the scriptures; if so, he does not understand them. For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing? (Mormon 9:7–9)

Nonetheless, the Book of Mormon has not, by and large, received the attention that it deserves. For all its potential significance in comparative religions, for all the historical influence that it has undeniably exercised, for all the spiritual value attributed to it by millions of believing Latter-day Saints, it has been left relatively unstudied. The eminent Judaic scholar Jacob Neusner put his finger on perhaps one of the reasons for this odd situation in an article published more than thirty-five years ago. "Among our colleagues," he remarked, "are some who do not really like religion in its living forms, but find it terribly interesting in its dead ones." To take a prominent example, Neusner continues, the Book of Mormon "is available principally for ridicule, but never for study. Religious experience in the third century is fascinating. Religious experience in the twentieth century is frightening or absurd."[12]

This journal exists, to a large extent, because we don't share the attitude to which Professor Neusner alludes. We unabashedly believe in modern-day revelation. And this belief grounds, motivates, and informs *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*. Moreover, we believe that it gives us a unique vantage point even for the study of the Bible—in which, with Thomas Costain and Charles Dickens, we also believe.

As always, my thanks go to those who have donated time and effort to The Interpreter Foundation, as well as those who

12. Jacob Neusner, "Religious Studies: The Next Location," *Bulletin of the Council on the Study of Religion* 8/5 (December 1977): 118.

have begun, very generously, to give of their money and means. This volume of *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* would not be possible without the careful attention of our proof readers and peer reviewers who work on the articles during our editorial process, overseen by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, Kevin Christensen, and Tanya Spackman. My thanks also go to Alison V. P. Coutts and Bryce M. Haymond, who prepare these pieces for actual publication.

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Finding Parallels: Some Cautions and Criticisms Part One

Benjamin A. McGuire

Review of Rick Grunder. Mormon Parallels: A Bibliographic Source. *Layfayette, New York: Rick Grunder—Books, 2008. 2,088 pp. On CD-ROM. $200.00.*

Abstract: *Discovering parallels is inherently an act of comparison. Through comparison, parallels have been introduced frequently as proof (or evidence) of different issues within Mormon studies. Despite this frequency, very few investigations provide a theoretical or methodological framework by which the parallels themselves can be evaluated. This problem is not new to the field of Mormon studies but has in the past plagued literary studies more generally. In Part One, this review essay discusses present and past approaches dealing with the ways in which parallels have been used and valued in acts of literary comparison, uncovering the various difficulties associated with unsorted parallels as well as discussing the underlying motivations for these comparisons. In Part Two, a methodological framework is introduced and applied to examples from Grunder's collection in Mormon Parallels. In using a consistent methodology to value these parallels, this essay suggests a way to address the historical concerns associated with using parallels to explain both texts and Mormonism as an historical religious movement.*

Introduction

In this essay I will both assess the methods used to identify and analyze parallels, and review Rick Grunder's *Mormon Parallels*.[1] I have broken my material into two parts. First I look at the problem of parallels. I do so both generally, and in the context of Grunder's work as a whole—as a work of comparison between early Mormon sources and other material. This section will be a work of comparison—a comparison of comparisons so to speak—in which I place Grunder's work in a historical context. This context provides a useful starting point to examine the content of *Mormon Parallels*. I will include some discussion of the intentions behind such a comparison and how these comparisons have been used in a polemic against the faith of the Saints. I will also reference discussions critical of the use of parallels and more recent attempts to rehabilitate the practice.

I begin (in Part One) with a discussion of problematic assumptions in comparisons, and then (in Part Two) I turn to the flawed results of their use. My essay is an examination of the perils of what has been called *parallelomania*. Grunder is aware of this term (see p. 27, and the footnote[2] to the article in which it was first used). Other labels are available like "comparisonitis"[3]

1. Rick Grunder has authored two works by the same name: *Mormon Parallels*. To distinguish between the two, I will be providing the date of publication. The earlier work is *Mormon Parallels* and is subtitled *A Preliminary Bibliography of Material Offered for Sale 1981–1987* (Ithaca, NY: Rick Grunder—Books, 1987). It documents 238 sources, compared to 500 in the later edition. It is also considerably shorter (about 125 pages compared to the later edition's 2,088). The later text is titled *Mormon Parallels: A Bibliographic Source* (Ithaca, NY: Rick Grunder—Books, 2008).

2. Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81 (1962): 1–13.

3. See, for example, Gian Biagio Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poetics*, trans. by Charles Segal (Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1986), and Bert Cozijnsen, "A Critical Contribution to the *Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti*: Jude and Hesiod," in *The Use of Sacred Books in the Ancient World*, ed. L. V. Rutgers, W. van der Horst, H. W. Havelaar, L. Teugels (Leuven: Peeters, 1998).

and "parallel hunting."[4] *Mormon Parallels* is nothing if not a work of comparison.

But comparison is not a new endeavor, either for authors and their texts or for those studying religions. In fact, Grunder's work belongs to a specific genre of comparative works. James Hanges has argued that

> the comparative choice is often made because the . . . figures of interest do not stand alone, but in one sense or another represent a distinctive group or society, usually to one of which the comparing agent belongs. This is frequently the case when religion provides the backdrop against which the comparative choices are to be portrayed. The theoretical underpinning of this kind of comparison is the assumption that groups come into being because of the genius of a single individual—groups follow and preserve the teachings of extraordinary leaders.[5]

The interest in founder figures comes at least in part because of their significance to large groups of people. And these comparisons are not just limited to the individual; they expand their reach to include the teachings of founder figures as they have been preserved by their followers.

In his introduction, Grunder sets out "THE THESIS of my twenty-five year study," which

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4. The "parallel hunter" is one of the oldest labels. It can be found, for example, in Ernest Henry Clark Oliphant, "How Not to Play the Game of Parallels," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 128/1 (1929): 1ff. See also Alexander Lindey, *Plagiarism and Originality* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1952), 60–61. There are many additional names that have been used, such as literary detective, literary investigator, and so on.

5. James Constantine Hanges, "Socrates and Jesus: Comparing Founder-Figures in the Classroom," in *Comparing Religions Possibilities and Perils?*, ed. Thomas Athanasius Idinopulos, Brian C. Wilson, and James Constantine Hanges (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 143.

> is that a very large part of what many of us have thought comprised the essence of Mormonism actually appeared in Joseph Smith's immediate world before it became part of Mormon language or thought. Most of the seeds of Joseph Smith's texts and prophecies enjoyed popular cultural dissemination in forms familiar to non-Mormons before they grew into scripture of the latter day. In surprising depth and degree, much of what Mormonism presents as if it were its own, actually flourished at various levels of society before Joseph Smith declared it. Enough solid evidence of this is now documented in reliable modern Mormon parallels, reasonably to suggest the presence—in Joseph Smith's natural environment—of the small portions which remain for us to discover (2008, p. 16).

Grunder is interested in what he terms the "essence of Mormonism"—and in discussing "Mormon language or thought" in terms of its founder, Joseph Smith. While not using the same terms, Grunder's comments fit the description provided by Hanges. Grunder makes comparisons involving Joseph Smith that fit into the theological backdrop of Mormonism. In fact, as Grunder describes it, a "Mormon Parallel" is an aspect "of Mormonism which first existed in a non-Mormon context available in Joseph Smith's world" (2008, p. 47). Grunder emphasizes the idea that virtually everything related to Joseph Smith can be found in and hence was derived from Smith's immediate environment.

This is like Abraham Geiger's arguments that

> assert that Jesus said nothing original or unusual; ... Chwolson's comment is typical "A Jew reading the gospels feels at home." By the early twentieth century, a cottage industry had developed of Jewish writers on the New Testament, seeking parallels between rabbin-

> ic literature and the gospels; . . . Arthur Marmorstein concluded his study by claiming that Jesus said nothing new. Others sought to demonstrate that Jews could best understand the New Testament; the biblical scholar and Zionist leader, Hirsch Perez Chajes, wrote, "You have to be a rabbinical Jew, to know midrash, if you wish to fathom the spirit of Christianity in its earliest years."[6]

Geiger's *Das Judentum und seine Geschichte* (published in three volumes beginning in 1865) was among the first attempt to understand the New Testament from an exclusively Jewish perspective. I include this material for two major reasons. First, I wish to illustrate by example the idea of a history of the comparative method[7] used by Grunder. Second, I aim to provide examples of how this methodology can be applied to any particular text (in this case Grunder's own introductory material). Whether this application is enlightening or misleading, however, will be shown to be an entirely separate question.

In this particular case, it is the person and the movement that make these comparisons seem both interesting and relevant. "The attention has," according to Grunder, "seemed only appropriate to some of us whose daily walk and very universe depended from earliest childhood upon the religious Restoration movement of Joseph Smith Jr., 1805–44, the farm boy who talked with God" (2008, p. 15). Yet, the process of identifying similarities in this way can be done for any person in any milieu – including even Grunder. We don't generally do so because we don't see such attention as interesting or particularly fruitful.

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6. Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 235.

7. I am not using this phrase to refer exclusively to the use of parallels popularly described with this same title in the 19th century by Edward B. Tyler, James Frazer, and others. I am including the "parallel-hunters" and other similar kinds of endeavors that came before and after the "comparative method."

Within the field of comparative literature this was eventually seen as a deeply flawed approach. Fernand Baldensperger, the first editor of *Revue de littérature comparée* gave his publication the motto: "The nature of things is more easily understood when one sees them grow, step by step, and when they are not viewed as being ready-made." He contributed to the discussion with his comments in the first volume: "In the affirmative portion of his essay, the editor of *Revue de littérature comparée* underscores the significance of *mobility* in international cultural life: 'Instead of considering great reputations as stars whose rise and orbit within a fixed heaven can be scanned, we should take into account the *mobility* of the planes from which the stars whose light will reach into the future have detached themselves.' In the comparatists' work yet to be done, the stress was to be laid on the second-rate writers and works including, one supposes, *Trivialliteratur* and the details hitherto neglected—to be uncovered only through extremely patient and painstaking labor."[8]

If we take a single body of work and hunt down parallels to it, we lose sight of any development or difference, and see instead what Grunder wants us to see—a ready-made Mormonism just waiting to be borrowed. Lost to us (and to Grunder) are all the other elements of the environment that didn't become a part of Mormonism, and the perspective that Mormonism was itself a part of the development of the environment in which it later existed. For Baldensperger, work on notable authors and texts was well underway – but it could only provide a partial understanding. The rest would come with the tedious examination of everything else.

To illustrate, I will, then, use Grunder's technique on Grunder's own work. I believe the exercise of comparing Grunder with other texts, as he compares the writings of ear-

8. Ulrich Weisstein, *Comparative Literature and Literary Theory*, trans. William Riggan (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1973), 178.

ly Mormonism to other texts, will prove enlightening. As we will see, these comparisons are not likely to enlighten us at all about the origins of Grunder's thesis. I intend to show that Grunder fails to achieve his objectives—for the same reasons that my own interspersed parallels fail to point out the origins of Grunder's own theory.

Most current discussions of parallels do in fact address this subject (though Grunder does not). Many texts that deal with comparative elements have sections titled something like "The Problem with Parallels."[9] The difficulties arise from two distinct sources. The first deals with what it means to compare things, why we compare them, and how we can appropriately use parallels once we find them. The second deals with the identification of parallels themselves—what constitutes valid or significant parallels, and how we identify them.

Having laid the groundwork with an account of the historical discussion of the comparative method, the second part deals with questions of methodology. Here I discuss the issues involved in identifying parallels, gauging significance, and so on. I address the elements of methodology that Grunder describes in his introductory material, critiquing his work, and providing my own methodological framework that I then use to evaluate several of Grunder's bibliographic sources. In this way, specific parallels are graded using the methodology I present.

Parallels and Expectations

Grunder explains that the sheer volume of parallels he has presumably located is overwhelming:

9. See, for example, L. Michael White, John T. Fitzgerald, "*Quod est comparandum*: The Problem of Parallels," in *Early Christianity and Classical Culture Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald, Thomas H. Olbright, and L. Michael White (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 13–39, and Everett Ferguson, "Introduction: Perspectives on Parallels," in *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 1–4.

> To the reader who may not be familiar with modern-era parallels, my assertions of their significant prevalence in the world of early Mormonism may sound overreached. In the face of distracting, assertive conclusions by prominent Mormon defenders who disregard these parallels, one might certainly ask what could drive a bibliographer to *exruciate* [*sic*] his way for decades through so many tedious books and papers written by generally obsessed religionists of the early nineteenth century who frankly needed to get a life. What has driven me to assemble the data which follow is the astounding contrast between ongoing dismissals of Mormon environmental origins by so many people, and the potentially overwhelming array of evidence which I find to the contrary. If defenders suggest that we have seen enough of the parallels to discount their overall value, I will point to the startling rate and degree to which even more exciting and corroborating examples continue to surface. (2008, p. 17).

In contrast to this point of view, the field of comparative studies recognizes that we should expect nothing less. There are two concerns. The first is that, simply put, if something exists within a historical setting, then it should conform to that historical setting, and that within that historical setting we should expect to find numerous correlations with other things that share that setting. Everett Ferguson holds that

> another image from geometry that has been used to describe the relation of Christianity to its context is "parallels," and these have caused various concerns to modern readers. This volume will call attention to a number of similarities between Christianity and various aspects of its environment. Many more could have been included, and probably many more than are cur-

> rently recognized will become known as a result of further study and future discoveries. What is to be made of these parallels? Do they explain away Christianity as a natural product of its environment? Must they be explained away in order to defend the truth or validity of Christianity? Neither position is necessary. . . . The kind and significance of the parallels may be further clarified by commenting on the cultural parallels. That Christians observed the same customs and used words in the same way as their contemporaries is hardly noteworthy in itself. Those things belonged to the place and time when Christianity began. The situation could not have been otherwise for Christianity to have been a real historical phenomenon, open now to historical study. To expect the situation to have been otherwise would require Christianity to be something other than it is, a historical religion. Indeed, if Christianity did not have these linguistic and cultural contacts with the first-century Mediterranean world the presumption would be that it was a fiction originating in another time and place.[10]

We could simply substitute the word Mormonism for Christianity here. Mormonism is clearly rooted in both a place and time. And so we should expect it to use the same customs and words in the same way as its contemporaries. This feature, as Ferguson points out, isn't really all that interesting. For Ferguson, there are more than adequate reasons to dismiss the sheer volume of parallels as being "hardly noteworthy." Both Grunder and Ferguson note that the supply of such parallels is virtually limitless—so why then is this abundance of such interest to the one and of little interest to the other? Grunder suggests one possible reason:

10. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 1–2.

> For many Mormons who emphasize uniqueness in Joseph Smith's texts and doctrines, his supposedly matchless contributions are not only distinctive and advanced beyond the elements or syntheses seen in other faiths, but they exist quite independently of the man who dictated and taught them. Joseph's scriptures and interpretations thus become evidence of prophecy beyond mortal powers….since much of the perceived prophetic uniqueness of Mormon details will not stand. Be they ever so enthralling, most of Mormonism's splendid elements and combinations were neither impossibly super-human nor compellingly prophetic in the context from which they were spoken by Joseph Smith. (2008, pp. 15–16)

The appearance of these parallels suggests to Grunder that most of Mormonism's thought isn't original, isn't unique, and certainly shouldn't be viewed as anything other than representative of the environment in which it developed. Ferguson on the other hand, in reference to the same issue with early Christianity (which can also be portrayed in the same way) tells us this:

> Where genuine dependence and significant parallels are determined, these must then be placed in the whole context of thought and practice in the systems where the contacts are discovered. Although Christianity had points of contact with Stoicism, the mysteries, the Qumran community, and so on, the total worldview was often quite different, or the context in which the items were placed was different. Originality may be found in the way things are put together and not in the invention of a completely new idea or practice. So far

> as we can tell, Christianity represented a new combination for its time.[11]

Lastly, both Grunder and Ferguson speak on the issue of faith. For both of these writers, the issue of parallels isn't one that directly challenges faith. Grunder writes:

> True faith deserves a full spectrum, and it is entirely appropriate to pursue its origins from all periods of history. Yet wherever modern parallels negate claims to exclusively ancient origins, one must be willing to see that fact, and to consider modifying one's claims without feeling that faith is necessarily compromised. (2008, p. 25)

> In this Bibliographic Source, I attempt to discover and analyze some of history's components and syntheses: elements and their combinations (or likely potential combinations) which confirm my thesis. I tackle only concrete cultural records here, not their intangible spiritual bases. Whatever one deems to be spirit must remain subjective, quite beyond physical analysis. Faith, by scripture definition, is "the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." I could hardly presume to reduce anything like that to technical patterns. That which is preserved physically in material form, on the other hand, can be tied down in some consistent manner, hopefully through honest and patient research. (2008, p. 26)

Likewise, Ferguson tells us:

> Christianity presented itself as the result of a new act by God in human affairs, as a divine revelation. Its authority is not dependent on absolute originality in its

11. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 3.

> teachings and practices. Many Christian believers in fact have minimized the originality in order to emphasize the divine preparation for Christianity. Christian claims rest on whether it is a revelation from God, not on its originality, and this is a claim not directly verifiable by historic examination. The decision for or against Christianity is a matter of faith, however much historical inquiry might support or discourage the decision.
>
> Neither the truth nor the value of Christianity depends on its uniqueness. The contents of this volume point to a number of areas where Christianity was not exactly paralleled in its contemporary setting. But if none of these points should stand further examination or future discoveries, nothing essential to Christianity is lost.[12]

Like both of these writers, my objective is not to engage questions of faith. There is a subtle difference between these two notions—the one by Grunder and the other by Ferguson. Grunder is set to "discover and analyze some of history's components . . . which confirm my thesis." It is all about the parallels, the similarities. Ferguson on the other hand concludes by stressing what he has told us consistently—there are a "number of areas where Christianity was not exactly paralleled in its contemporary setting." Parallels by themselves are rather uninteresting. We expect to find them when we compare anything—and even more so when we compare things that share common historical and cultural milieus. We are even more likely to find them when our thesis requires them and we search for them specifically. When we find them and we investigate them, however, ultimately it is the differences—the ways in which they are not exactly parallel—that provide us greater

12. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 619.

understanding. My purpose in this review essay is to explore not just the similarities but also the differences, and to provide a more useful framework through which we can recognize the parallels that exist and use them in appropriate ways to illuminate our subjects.

Part I: On Comparison

Ever since the notion of originality entered into the discussion of literature and religion, we have also seen those who challenge through comparison the originality of particular works and authors. The way this is accomplished is to produce lists of parallels—whether of texts, of artwork, or even of artifacts and practices. At times, such comparisons have been met with resistance:

> Indefatigable parallel-hunters, who have sought to represent Mrs. Wilfrid Ward's "One Poor Scruple" in the light of a counter-blast to Mrs. Humphrey Ward's "Helbeck of Bannisdale," should read the former's prefatory note, in which she states that "One Poor Scruple" took her seven years in its making and that it was practically completed three years ago. The fact that each novel deals with the Catholic question and that the plot of each culminates in the suicide of a woman are simply curious coincidences.[13]

While illustrating the frustration that could be felt in this regard, this observation also shows the connection between the notion of comparison and the notion of originality. When we write, do we see our own works as either borrowing from or responding to the works of others? The question of comparisons (and the comparative method) is one of origins, and Grunder tells us that "finding the origins of Mormonism is a full-time

13. Author unknown, *Public Opinion* 27 (New York, 1900): 158.

occupation" (2008, p. 11). Our first discussion deals with what it means to be original and to be unique. Grunder's primary argument in his introduction is against this notion of originality or uniqueness. Here from his text I repeat a short section for contrast:

> Much of the perceived prophetic uniqueness of Mormon details will not stand. Be they ever so enthralling, most of Mormonism's splendid elements and combinations were neither impossibly super-human nor compellingly prophetic in the context from which they were spoken by Joseph Smith (2008, p. 16).

> Of course Joseph had unique ideas. No two human beings are identical, but if every person who ever lived had at least one original thought, then my approach may be helpful—to search for an ever more expansive assessment of presumed Mormon uniqueness within an ever more responsible context. (2008, p. 23).

These two statements are somewhat contradictory. Grunder suggests that after the "small portion which remains" is discovered, what is left will be that which is original, and unique to Joseph Smith. But we are left with this problem of what it means to have an "original thought" at all. In his book *Production Culture*, John Thornton Caldwell describes an exchange between writer-producers Judd Apatow and Mark Brazill.

Caldwell provides the text of an e-mail exchange between the two that occurred in the fall of 2001 in which they argue over who was the one responsible for a creative idea. One of the e-mails from Apatow reads:

> I know it's hard to believe that your rock band TV idea, which every writer in this town has thought of at one point, was not on my mind half a year after you told it

> to me. Yes, you thought of breaking the fourth wall. Groucho and George Burns stole it from you. Maybe you should sue *Bernie Mac*. Why don't you sue the guys who have that new show *How to Be a Rock Star* on the WB. I must have told them your idea. Nobody has ever goofed on rock bands, not *Spinal Tap* or *The Rutles* or 800 *Saturday Night Live* sketches. I should have told everyone on the show, no rock band sketches, that's Brazill's area. . . . See, I have no original thoughts.[14]

I suppose that it could be argued that to be original, it must be, in every way, alone. Even where there is no contact, a person might not be original because someone, somewhere else, has had the same thought. So what does it mean to be unique? What does it mean to be original?

Uniqueness

There are different ways in which the term *unique* is used. When it first appeared, being *unique* meant that there was only one of something, or that it was without equal, or incomparable:

> *Unique* dates back to the 17th century but was little used until the end of the 18th when, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, it was reacquired from French. H. J. Todd entered it as a foreign word in his edition (1818) of Johnson's Dictionary, characterizing it as "affected and useless." Around the middle of the 19th century it ceased to be considered foreign and came into considerable popular use. With popular use

14. John Thornton Caldwell, *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 208.

> came a broadening of application beyond the original two meanings.[15]

Of course, as a term meaning *incomparable*, it has no value in comparison at all. As Jonathon Z. Smith notes, "The 'unique' is an attribute that must be disposed of, especially when linked to some notion of incomparable value, if progress is to be made."[16] So Grunder tells us that

> For many Mormons who emphasize uniqueness in Joseph Smith's texts and doctrines, his supposedly matchless contributions are not only distinctive and advanced beyond the elements or syntheses seen in other faiths, but they exist quite independently of the man who dictated and taught them. Joseph's scriptures and interpretations thus become evidence of prophecy beyond mortal powers. Some of Joseph's defenders identify tangible components of their prophet's work —specific text and concept details—which they believe Joseph could have obtained only through divine revelation. (2008, pp. 15–16)

However, we run into a problem. Not too much later Grunder admits that "the subject of early nineteenth-century Mormon antecedents cries out for a more sophisticated sense of history. Consider one recent collection of articles defending traditional Latter-day Saint positions, entitled 'Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon.' That compilation aspires to identify 'more than one hundred hits or other evidences and ancient parallels'" (2008, p. 24).

The issue for Grunder isn't really the implied uniqueness. We might more accurately say that he is referring to a

15. In *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* (2010), s.v. "unique," at http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/unique

16. Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 36.

uniqueness perhaps in Joseph's immediate environment—because Latter-day Saints, like the early Christians that Ferguson alluded to, are intentionally downplaying true originality. Mormonism as a restoration movement wasn't claiming any kind of explicit originality or uniqueness. Rather it argued for a return to something that was perhaps unique or original (in the origins of Christianity). Grunder's issue isn't with the claim of originality or the lack thereof, but with the implications for divine revelation (which is very much an issue of faith, and not so much an issue of historical speculation). Jonathan Z. Smith continues:

> The most frequent use of the terminology of the "unique" within religious studies is in relation to Christianity; the most frequent use of this term within Christianity is in relation to the so-called "Christ-event." . . . The uniqueness of the "Christ-event," which usually encodes the death and resurrection of Jesus, is a double claim. On the ontological level, it is a statement of the absolutely alien nature of the divine protagonist (*monogenes*) and the unprecedented (and paradoxical) character of his self-disclosure; on the historical level, it is an assertion of the radical incomparability of the Christian "proclamation" with respect to the "environment." For many scholars of early Christianity, the latter claim is often combined with the former so as to transfer the (proper, though problematic) theological affirmation of absolute uniqueness to an historical statement that, standing alone, could never assert more than relative uniqueness, that is to say, a quite ordinary postulation of difference. It is this illicit transfer from ontological to the historical that raises the question of

> the comparison of early Christianity and the religions of Late Antiquity.[17]

As Smith explains here, the notion of uniqueness in the context of early Christianity deals with two separate and distinct concerns. On the one hand, there is the claim within Christianity of a Jesus that is absolutely incomparable (the ontological and theological claim). On the other hand there is a statement of an environmental uniqueness—that the historical process that produces Christianity was different (relatively speaking) from any other historical process. The problem occurs, as Smith notes, when we suggest that ontological and theological claims are identical with historical claims—and thus suggest that all we need to do to deny the ontological and theological claims is to demonstrate that the environment and the process is not unique by stressing similarities (and not differences).

This, of course, also describes Grunder's work of comparison. In his thesis statement, he tells us that "enough solid evidence of this is now documented in reliable modern Mormon parallels, reasonably to suggest the presence—in Joseph Smith's natural environment—of the small portions which remain for us to discover"—that is, there is nothing unique to Mormon language and thought that cannot be found in Joseph's environment. But, Grunder doesn't stop there. Speaking of those defending the faith of the Saints, he insists that

> trying to strengthen spiritual belief in this manner is like building a house upon the sand, since much of the perceived prophetic uniqueness of Mormon details will not stand. Be they ever so enthralling, most of Mormonism's splendid elements and combinations were neither impossibly super-human nor compel-

17. Smith, *Drudgery Divine*, 39.

> lingly prophetic in the context from which they were spoken by Joseph Smith. (2008, p. 16)

Just as Christian apologists are said to have done, Grunder has "illicitly" moved from a historical context to what might be called an ontological context. In a sense, though, and this is independent of Grunder's arguments here about faith concerns within the Mormon community—an issue that I will address later—this is exactly the kind of approach that Smith, Ferguson, and a host of others are criticizing. In mapping out a way of moving forward from this predicament, Jonathon Smith writes: "What is required is the development of a discourse of 'difference,' a complex term which invites negotiation, classification and comparison, and at the same time, avoids too easy a discourse of the 'same.' It is, after all, the attempt to block the latter that gives the Christian apologetic language of the 'unique' its urgency."[18]

In other words, Christian apologists developed this concept of "uniqueness" in response to charges that Christianity was not in any way unique (even if there was and is some validity to the arguments for an ontological uniqueness). Likewise, Grunder's discourse of similarity will generally only bring out the same kind of response within the Mormon apologetic community. One purpose of this essay is to avoid this kind of confrontation. I will attempt to shift the discussion's focus from sameness to difference. Doing this has been anticipated. In fact, Grunder predicts this response when he considers "three likely faithful responses" to his work.[19] But in any case, Grunder

18. Smith, *Drudgery Divine*, 42.

19. Grunder, *Mormon Parallels*, 2008, 27–31. In this case, this kind of response would fit category B—"Toleration of these parallels, with dissatisfaction." I suppose that I fall in category A: "Utter disdain and disregard of the modern parallels." Of course, since my reasons, and my approach are not at all similar to the explanation provided by Grunder, I may not fit any of his categories: "Many Mormon defenders will wrestle with these parallels and will emerge, predictably, victorious. They will suggest that these data, while colorful and even

is right about one issue. This back and forth debate engaging sameness as opposed to uniqueness does not and cannot provide a solution. One major reason is described in some detail in the introduction to Larry Hurtado's text, *Lord Jesus Christ*. He introduces two major lines of thought dealing with the development of the idea that Jesus was divine. The one group claims that there is nothing extraordinary about such a belief—it is easy to understand Jesus as divine simply because he was divine. The other group he describes "arose in large part in reaction against this naïve and ahistorical view." For these, the notion of Jesus as divine wasn't particularly noteworthy either. After all, when viewed as a historical process, early Christian devotion could be seen as a natural expansion on "pagan" views. But of these two positions, Hurtado notes:

> Before we proceed further towards analyzing Christ-devotion as a historical phenomenon, however, it may be helpful to note a relevant (and in my view misguided) assumption shared by both the pre/anticritical and the history-of-religion approaches. It is worth identifying because it continues to be influential in both popular and scholarly circles. This is the notion that the validity of a religious belief or practice is called into question if it can be shown to be a truly historical phenomenon, and the product of historical factors and forces that we can attempt to identify and analyze…. Wishing to preserve the religious and theological validity of traditional christological claims, the anticritical view attempted to deny or minimize as far as possible the historically conditioned nature of early Christ-devotion.

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interesting, are, in the end, meaningless. 'Grunder,' they may say, 'has missed the point entirely, and has become lost in a jungle of parallelomania.'" From the title of my essay, my perspective ought to be fairly obvious. Grunder references Sandmel's well-known article on "parallelomania," but, as will be discussed later on, he doesn't seem to understand the notion at all.

> On the other hand, the history-of-religion scholars were convinced that their demonstration of the historically conditioned nature of early Christ-devotion proved that it was no longer to be treated as theologically valid or binding for modern Christians. In both views the assumption is the same: if something can be shown to have arisen through a historical process, then it cannot be divine "revelation" or have continuing theological validity.[20]

Hurtado sees the problem in terms of two sides competing with a similar but flawed set of assumptions. The assumption that Hurtado sees at work is that if something can be shown to arise through a historical process, then it cannot have been revealed. This is largely the same argument that Jonathon Smith provided. The one side attempts to show that because of the historical process, the subject matter cannot be revealed. The other side denies the historical process and simply claims revelation. Hurtado is quite clear about this: "The misguided assumption I am criticizing here has obviously worked mischief in scholarship. . . . It has led a good deal of historical-critical scholarship to opt for some simplistic historical analyses in the interest of opposing traditional Christian beliefs."[21]

The notion is applicable to our discussion here, because the same principle is at work. Grunder describes the pre/anticritical Mormon view in very similar terms (speaking with the voice of such an individual): "We already accepted the transcendent truth of Joseph's scriptures and teachings, so their evident prescience (confirmed, we suggested, only by later scientific and historical scholarship) must prove their origins to be prophetic and divine" (2008, p. 15). On the other side, Grunder's naïve

20. Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: MI, Eerdmans, 2003), 8.

21. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 9.

historical-critical pose claims that Mormonism was "worked up naturalistically through elements available in Joseph Smith's world" (2008, p. 30). A key aim of this essay is to point out (in agreement with Larry Hurtado) that this assumption is wrong. There is no question that Mormonism arises from a historical setting (one that can be studied). Its beginnings involved real people with real histories—all of whom started out as something other than a follower of the movement that would eventually be called Mormonism. But, in contrast to the idea that "most of Mormonism's splendid elements and combinations" were there, in Joseph's natural environment—and perhaps by extension that Mormonism's language and thought wasn't just produced from that environment, but that its existence was inevitable (and so it is utterly ordinary—and to some extent even irrelevant), my position mirrors that of Hurtado's—early Mormonism was "an utterly remarkable phenomenon" at the same time that it was "also the result of a complex of historical forces and factors."[22] In other words, the historical phenomenon certainly cannot be seen as unique in any sense of the word, and should not be seen as unique. But, ontologically, Mormonism presents us with something that is not ordinary, and is not commonplace. Grunder, on the other hand, has opted for a "simplistic historical analyses in the interest of opposing traditional [Mormon] beliefs."

Of course, Grunder insists that what he is doing is proper. He offers a statement from Grant Underwood's 2005 essay to support his program:

> Bushman wants to tap the promise of [broader, transnational] comparative history and I agree, but religious devotees are sometimes skittish about comparative analysis because it seems to rob their particular religion of its uniqueness. They assume that uniqueness

22. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 7.

> is prime evidence of their faith's divine origin. Such thinking, however, confuses a religion's character with its source. Similarity and difference are descriptive categories; they say nothing necessarily about origin. (2008, p. 31).[23]

Grunder then grants that "Dr. Underwood goes on to caution against both the oversimplification and the misapplication of parallels (2008, p. 48), against which practices I, too, have aspired to warn throughout this *Bibliographic Source*" (2008, p. 31). And yet, Grunder has clearly misunderstood Underwood's point. Why? According to Underwood,

> At times, parallelomania has been a problem in Joseph Smith studies as well. Was Joseph Smith (per Brooke) really a Renaissance magus redivivus? Is Mormonism (per Emerson) really an afterclap of Puritanism? Is the Book of Mormon (per Brodie or Vogel) just thinly veiled autobiography? Sometimes similarities can be so imaginative, they are imaginary. At least when Harold Bloom likens Smith's Nauvoo doctrines to the Jewish kabbalah, he is doing so comparatively, not genetically.[24]

Vogel's *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* is referenced and quoted with approval in *Mormon Parallels* dozens of time, often occurring in discussions about these origins mentioned by

23. Grunder references Grant Underwood's, "Attempting to Situate Joseph Smith," *BYU Studies* 44/4 (2005): 47.

24. Underwood, "Attempting to Situate Joseph Smith," 48. Underwood specifically mentions in his footnotes John L. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire : the Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet* (New York: Knopf, 1979); and Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of A Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004).

Underwood.[25] Furthermore, Grunder should have followed up on Underwood's references. He would have discovered something quite different than the enthusiastic endorsement he gives them. Underwood also tells us: "Inappropriate parallels are often a function of not knowing both sides of the comparison equally well. 'Two passages may sound the same in splendid isolation from their context, but when seen in context [they] reflect difference rather than similarity.'"[26] And this is often what we find in Grunder's sources. Grunder regularly misses the picture because he has fallen into the vices of the two-column style presentation of parallels. Underwood then refers us to William E. Paden on the issue of the comparative enterprise. Paden also presents a far different view of the comparative enterprise than we see from Grunder:

> Comparison can create error and distortion as well as insight and knowledge, and this is noticeably so in the area of religion. Religious phenomena have been compared for centuries, but not necessarily in the pursuit of fair description or accurate understanding.

25. Grunder cites and references both Brodie and Vogel. See for example, p. 474, where Grunder states: "If Fawn Brodie felt too confident about specifics of direct borrowing, she was yet ultimately right in the essence of what she saw." Or, "'Just like Nephi beheading Laban,' observes Dan Vogel, 'Smith's Adam finds it necessary to violate God's commandment against eating of the tree of knowledge in order to fulfill a higher law and bring about a greater good. Smith was not the originator of what is sometimes called the 'fortunate Fall,' but for more than obvious reasons, he was attracted to this otherwise obscure idea.' (Vogel 2004, 412–13)" (2008, p. 670). Or this statement: "This new Mormon doctrine was given privately, to crucial supporters. 'A close examination of the revelation,' according to Dan Vogel, 'reveals that Smith privately believed in Universalism.' If that statement shocks, it should startle us no more than Joseph's sudden and total reversal of a vital, hotly debated doctrine that went to the very heart of American Christianity" (2008, p. 1901). Had Grunder understood and followed Underwood's advice, instead of merely parroting it, we should perhaps have expected to discover some of the same conclusions about Vogel's work.

26. Underwood, "Attempting to Situate Joseph Smith," 48. Underwood quotes Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," 2, 9.

> Comparison is most often a function of self-interest. It gets used to illustrate one's own ideology. It easily becomes an instrument of judgment, a device for approval or condemnation.[27]

Paden lays out a "conceptual framework that avoids some of the past difficulties with comparative biases." Among these guidelines (or rules), three are worth mentioning. "Where comparative analysis deals with similarity, it deals with analogy rather than identity, in which things otherwise unlike, are similar in some respects." Parallels work in this way. We point out the things that are similar from within a context of difference—or as Ferguson noted, we have in fact a great many *in-exact* or *incomplete* parallels to examine. Paden goes on, "Comparative work is not only a process of establishing similarities or analogies. It is also the fundamental instrument for discerning differences." Paden explains that there are unique elements in the various religions. They are not all the same—but the proper use of parallels is to help point out these unique features, not to hide them. Finally, Paden tells us that "comparison is not an end in itself."[28]

While asserting that he has avoided the misapplication of parallels, in his *Mormon Parallels*, Grunder has missed all three of these important issues. He treats similarity as identity, he ignores difference in virtually every case, and for him the parallels themselves have become the end of the discussion—his assumption is not that we will discover something unique, but rather that everything will have parallels, and that there is very little (if anything at all) that is truly unique.

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27. William E. Paden, *Religious Worlds: The Comparative Study of Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), 2.

28. Paden, *Religious Worlds*, 4.

Originality

> What is originality? Undetected plagiarism. This is probably itself a plagiarism, but I cannot remember who said it before me. If originality means thinking for oneself, and not thinking differently from other people, a man does not forfeit his claim to it by saying things which have occurred to others.[29]

Once the notion of uniqueness is dispelled, those engaged in the use of parallels must then confront the closely-related notion of originality. In particular, originality became an issue when contemporary (often living) authors were placed under the microscope. It is one thing to be told that your ideas are not unique, but to be told that they are unoriginal is perhaps something altogether different. In this way, the two different meanings of unique tend to create two different perspectives. If being original means to be unique in the sense of being incomparable, then indeed there may truly be nothing original. If, on the other hand, being original means to be unique in the sense of being individual, then as Inge points out above, we can all claim to have original thoughts and create original texts. The strongest early responses to claims of plagiarism and unoriginality came from within the community of authors.[30]

In 1834, Johann Peter Eckermann published his highly influential *Gespräche mit Goethe*. When translated and published in English in 1836, this text recorded a series of conversations

29. William Ralph Inge, "Stolen Epigrams," in *Labels & Libels* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1929), 227.

30. See, for example, the 1827 letter that he published in the November 3rd issue of the *Edinburgh Saturday Post*. Robert McFarlane notes that "in 1827 an infuriated Thomas De Quincy railed against the 'thousands of feeble writers' who 'subsist by detecting imitations, real or supposed.'" McFarlane also provides several additional early examples with the same kind of invective, *Original Copy: Plagiarism and Originality in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 41–42.

between Eckermann and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe over the last nine years of Goethe's life (1823–1832). One particular discussion is of interest here, from Tuesday, December 16th, 1829. Eckermann writes:

> "Something similar," said I, "often happens in the literary world, when people, for instance, doubt the originality of this or that celebrated man, and seek to trace out the sources from whence he obtained his cultivation."
>
> "That is ridiculous," said Goethe, "we might as well question a strong man about the oxen, sheep, and swine, which he has eaten, and which have given him strength."[31]

As the attacks on living authors became more personal, so did the responses. Alfred Tennyson wrote this in a letter to Dawson responding to criticism in Dawson's Canadian edition of *The Princess*:

> But there is, I fear, a prosaic set growing up among us, editors of booklets, book-worms, index-hunters, or men of great memories and no imagination, who *impute themselves* to the poet, and so believe that *he*, too, has no imagination, but is for ever poking his nose between the pages of some old volume in order to see what he can appropriate. They will not allow one to say "Ring the bell" without finding that we have taken it from Sir P. Sidnet, or even to use such a simple expression as the ocean "roars," without finding out the

31. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Johann Peter Eckermann, and Frédéric Jacob Soret, *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret*, vol. 2, trans. John Oxford (London: Smith, Elder, London, 1850), 109. See also the discussion in McFarlane, *Original Copy*, 92–94. Goethe's comments reflect a view of originality to which we shall return.

> precise verse in Homer or Horace from which we have plagiarized it.[32]

Not long afterwards, Brander Matthews commented on these remarks:

> A pleasant coincidence of thought is to be noted between these words of Lord Tennyson and the remarks of Sir Walter Scott about "Gil Blas." Both poets think ill of the laborious dulness [*sic*] of the literary detective, and suggest that he is actuated by malice in judging others by himself. The police detective is akin to the spy, and although his calling is often useful, and perhaps even necessary, we are not wont to choose him as our bosom friend; the amateur literary detective is an almost useless person, who does for pleasure the dirty work by which the real detective gets his bread.[33]

Simply stated, on some level we can find a parallel to any source. An author may not recognize another's text in his writings at all—even if parallels may be found. This isn't to say that there isn't literary plagiarism. But, the concern here is with mistakenly finding it when it may not actually have occurred. The parallel-hunters and plagiarism hunters of the 19th and early 20th centuries were not terribly concerned with the texts themselves, but instead with the list of possible sources that were used to create them. Earlier in his essay, Matthews quotes James Russell Lowell speaking on behalf of responsible higher criticism—"we do not ask where people got their hints, but

32. Alfred Lord Tennyson, *The Works of Tennyson* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), 910.

33. (James) Brander Mathews, "The Ethics of Plagiarism," in *Pen and Ink* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 27. Matthews wrote this essay in 1886, and it was subsequently published in several venues.

what they made out of them."[34] Lowell also makes this comment: "The owners of what Gray 'conveyed' would have found it hard to identify their property and prove title to it after it had once suffered the Gray-change by steeping in his mind and memory."[35]

At some point, Lowell suggests, an idea is sufficiently changed or has become immersed in the thoughts of another that we lose the notion of ownership by a previous author. Alongside this return to an idea of originality came the early criticisms of the use of parallels to demonstrate textual reliance. Matthews makes this comment on their favorite format—the parallel column:

> The great feat of the amateur literary detective is to run up parallel columns, and this he can accomplish with the agility of an acrobat. When first invented, the setting of parallel passages side by side was a most ingenious device, deadly to an imposter or to a thief caught in the very act of literary larceny. But these parallel passages must be prepared with exceeding care, and with the utmost certainty. Unless the matter on the one side exactly balance the matter on the other side, like the packs on a donkey's back, the burden is likely

34. Mathews, "The Ethics of Plagiarism," 25. Mathews writes: "In his delightful paper on Gray, Mr. Lowell declares that 'we do not ask where people got their hints, but what they made out of them.' Mr. Lowell, I doubt me, is speaking for himself alone, and for the few others who attempt the higher criticism with adequate insight, breadth, and equipment. Only too many of the minor critics have no time to ask what an author has done, they are so busy in asking where he may have got his hints. Thus it is that the air is full of accusations of plagiary, and the bringing of these accusations is a disease which bids fair to become epidemic in literary journalism. Perhaps this is a sign, or at least a symptom, of the intellectual decadence of our race which these same critics sometimes venture to announce." The reference is to James Russell Lowell's essay, *Gray*, published in 1886.

35. James Russell Lowell, *The Writings of James Russell Lowell: Latest Literary Essays and Addresses* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1891), 41.

> to fall about the donkey's feet, and he may chance to break his neck. Parallel columns should be most sparingly used, and only in cases of absolute necessity. As they are employed now only too often, they are quite inconclusive; and it has been neatly remarked that they are perhaps like parallel lines, in that they would never meet, however far produced.[36]

Goethe's statement that I quoted earlier influenced George Eliot,[37] who had acquired a copy of his book, and expanded on the metaphor of eating an animal used by Goethe in her essay "Looking Backward," published in *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* in 1879. McFarlane describes it as follows:

> Theophrastus reflects on the origin and ownership of the "slice of excellent ham" upon which he once breakfasted. It belongs first and foremost, Theophrastus is prepared to admit, to the "small squealing black pig" from whose haunch it was carved. If one endeavors to determine provenance beyond that point, however, "one enters on a fearful labyrinth in tracing compound interest backward, and such complications of thought [reduce] the flavor of the ham." When read within the wider context of *Impressions*, a book preoccupied with questions of both intellectual property and intellectual propriety, it is clear that Theophrastus' meditation on the pig is a discreet parable . . .for the pointlessness of trying to ascribe ownership to literary works. The calculation of literary-intellectual debt Theophrastus suggests to be not only futile, but also disadvantageous: the actuarial effort involved will result in an impair-

36. Matthews, "The Ethics of Plagiarism," 27–28.
37. George Eliot was the pen name of author Mary Anne Evans (1819–1880).

> ment of the pleasure (the flavour of the ham) derived from the literary work itself (the black pig).[38]

In more recent times, J. K. Rowling, in a radio interview said, "The question you are most frequently asked as an author is: 'Where do you get your ideas from?' I find it very frustrating because, speaking personally, I haven't got the faintest idea where my ideas come from, or how my imagination works. I'm just grateful that it does, because it gives me more entertainment than it gives anyone else."[39] Rowling has endured her fair share of investigation by these literary detectives, although perhaps in her case, the motivation wasn't malice but money.

In July 2011, a plagiarism suit against Rowling was dismissed:

> The move marks the end of a bitterly fought battle in which Rowling was accused of having lifted the plot of the fourth book in the series—Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire—from Jacobs's book, Willy the Wizard.
>
> She and her publisher, Bloomsbury, had faced a demand for more than $1bn (£659m) in damages. . . . "As the judge noted, those behind the claim set about publicising the case with a view to exerting pressure and promoting their 'book'. Quite how they ever thought that we would succumb to pressure indicates a complete lack of understanding on their part. We are glad that the substantive action is now at an end." . . . The same claim had already been comprehensively rejected

38. MacFarlane, *Original Copy*, 92. MacFarlane references Eliot, George, *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, ed. Nancy Henry (London: William Pickering, 1994), 18. See also 27 in the original edition (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1879).

39. J. K. Rowling, "From Mr Darcy to Harry Potter by way of Lolita," *Sunday Herald* (21 May 2000), http://www.accio-quote.org/articles/2000/0500–herald-sun-rowling.html.

> in the US, where a judge in the Manhattan-based US district court for the southern district of New York said that "the contrast between the total concept and feel of the works is so stark that any serious comparison of the two strains credulity."[40]

Grunder, in his *Mormon Parallels* (2008) uses the word *originality* twice. The first is particularly important to this discussion:

> We may cherish Joseph's words. We can preach them from our pulpits. We resound them in our hymns. What we must not proclaim is their requisite exclusivity. Believe what you believe, simple and pure; a chaste and humble faith thrives upon its own merits. But oblige your beliefs with careless claims of indispensable originality; crown your beliefs with exaggerated novelty; or hang them upon inexact science and undisciplined selective history, and the walls may come crashing down. (2008, p. 16)

On the one hand, Grunder is right about hanging belief on a notion of indispensible originality. On the other hand, Grunder

40. Press Association, "Harry Potter Plagiarism Claim Struck Out," *The Guardian*, 8 July 2010. See http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2011/jul/18/harry-potter-plagiarism-struck-out#history-link-box. What was the basis for the claim? A press release issued by the plaintiffs stated that "both books tell the tale of a Wizard who discovers his true nature whilst a boy. Later, he partakes in an International Wizards Contest. In each book, the Wizard can only discover his central task in a special bathroom: to rescue artificially held hostages, from half-human creatures, acting as Contest agents, to earn points and win the Contest. In *Willy The Wizard*, a short, densely written, beautifully illustrated book, Jacobs created a fantasy world intertwined with the real world in which there are Wizard Schools, Wizard Brewing Villages, Wizard Chess, Wizard Trains, Wizard Hospitals, Wizard Travel by magic powder, Elves as Wizard Helpers, International Gatherings of Wizards etc. All of these Jacobs' concepts are echoed in Harry Potter. The Estate maintains that Jacobs' agent was Christopher Little, the same literary agent who years later 'discovered' J.K. Rowling. Little now oversees the Harry Potter brand worldwide." Rowling faced similar claims in 2002.

isn't really looking for originality. This distinction was discussed after the early complaints of abuse by parallels. Fernand Baldensperger, an influential leader in French Comparatism, published an attack on *Stoffgeschichte* (the study of subject matter) in 1921, in the first issue of the *Revue de Littérature Comparée*: "In ridding Comparative Literature of thematology, the hunt and the craze for sources, the 'small pleasure of searching for sources, not in order to extrapolate originality, but in order to reduce initiative and denounce plagiarism,'" and then it is reported that "Baldensperger made room for what he regarded as more relevant approaches and methods within the budding discipline." His own preference was for what he called genetics or artistic morphology.[41]

By the end of the 19th century, we find many discussions of the problems of using parallels as a way of investigating texts and authors. And within a few decades (in the early parts of the 20th century), the use of parallels to demonstrate relationships between texts and authors had taken a distant back seat. Most of the discussion from this period deals with ways to rehabilitate the process—first through a recognition of the problems encountered in using parallels, and then via a series of presentations on how to deal with those flaws.

Comparison of Comparisons[42]

The earliest arguments put forward dealt with empirical errors—those that could be easily detected and explained.

41. Ulrich Weisstein, *Comparative Literature and Literary Theory*, trans. William Riggan (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1973), 178. Weisstein references "Littérature comparée: Le mot et la chose," *Revue de littérature comparée* 1 (1921): 1–29, see especially 6, 10.

42. I am using this notion as a way of critiquing both the comparative process in which Grunder engages specifically, and the process more generally. I argue that *a* is like *b* in the same sense that *c* is like *d*, or in other words, the same situations that give rise to various works of comparison also generally seem to apply to Grunder's comparisons. Along these same lines, the idea of comparison of texts in this way, and the actual comparisons themselves, have a

Edward A. Freeman, in his *Methods of Historical Study* made this observation:

> I have often thought how easily two important reigns in our own history might be dealt with in the way that I have spoken of, how easily the later reign might be judged to be a mere repetition of the former, if we knew no more of them than we know of some other parts of history. Let us suppose that the reigns of Henry the First and Henry the Second were known to us only in the same meagre way that we know the reigns of some of the ancient potentates of the East. In short and dry annals they might easily be told so as to look like the same story. Each king bears the same name; each reigns the same number of years; each comes to the crown in a way other than succession from father to son; each restores order after a time of confusion; each improves his political position by his marriage; each is hailed as a restorer of the old native kingship; each loses his eldest son; each gives his daughter Matilda to a Henry in Germany; each has a controversy with his archbishop; each wages war with France; each dies in his continental dominions; each, if our supposed meagre annals can be supposed to tell us of such points, shows himself a great lawgiver and administrator, and each, to some extent, displays the same personal qualities, good and bad. Now when we come really to study

history and a literature of their own. As Hanges tells us: "In comments specifically devoted to pedagogy, Smith reminds us that students need to be exposed to comparisons; nothing must stand alone,… comparison opens up space for criticism. . . . I am convinced that we can use such examples comparatively to meet Smith's pedagogical goal, not just in terms of comparing religious objects, but as a means of critiquing the act of comparison itself." James Constantine Hanges, "Interpreting Glossolalia and the Comparison of Comparisons," in *Comparing Religions Possibilities and Perils?* ed. Thomas Athanasius Idinopulos, Brian C. Wilson, and James Constantine Hanges (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 181.

> the two reigns, we see that the details of all these supposed points of likeness are utterly different; but I am supposing very meagre annals, such as very often are all that we can get, and, in such annals, the two tales would very likely be so told that a master of higher criticism might cast aside Henry the Second and his acts as a mere double of his grandfather and his acts. We know how very far wrong such a judgment would be; and this should make us be cautious in applying a rule which, though often very useful, is always dangerous in cases where we may get utterly wrong without knowing it.[43]

Freeman was dealing with the issue of parallels specifically as it affects the reading and writing of history. In reading fiction, we often presuppose that the events are generally made up—creations of imagination. In the modern era we often see this explicitly formulated.[44] Documents claiming some sense of historiography are more ambiguous, and parallels made between them are problematic. In this context, Freeman highlighted two particular issues. The first is that parallels can occur between similar but verifiably different events. Although in Freeman's example, the events are related (and the relationship helps to explain some but not all of the similarities), this model could be extended to any two sets of otherwise unrelated events. The second issue involves the notion of redefining relevant material in more simplistic language. The two very different events, if reduced to the same general terms sound similar enough that the higher critic

43. Edward A. Freeman, *The Methods of Historical Study* (London: Macmillan, 1886), 138–39.

44. The use of a standard disclaimer indicating that "the characters and events presented in this film [or photoplay] are fictitious" became a fixture following the libel suit over MGM's movie *Rasputin and the Empress* in 1932. John T. Aquino, *Truth and Lives on Film: The Legal Problems of Depicting Real Persons and Events in a Fictional Medium* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2005), 25.

could assume that they represented the same original event. The risk, as Freeman demonstrates, is that in such cases, the analysis would not only be wrong, but that there might also be no real way of identifying or correcting the error. Historians use texts, but those in other disciplines such as literary and religious studies are also dependent on them. Their responses to these issues were much more specific.

In 1899, in his *A Biblical Introduction*, W. H. Bennett argued that "as the treatment of the argument from literary parallels is very difficult, and needs much discrimination, it may be as well to say a few words on the subject, in order to show what is the point at issue."[45] He then provided five reasons that make arguments from parallels "irrelevant." Three of these are of particular interest:

> (ii.) Many alleged parallels are entirely irrelevant, and are only such as must naturally exist between works in the same language, by authors of the same race, acquainted with the history and literature, customs and traditions which were earlier than both of them. . . .
>
> (iii.) In considering two similar passages, A and B, there are at least three possible explanations of their resemblance. A may be dependent on B, or B on A, or both A and B may be dependent on something prior to both of them. A critic with a theory—and everybody starts with a prepossession in favour of some theory—is tempted to take for granted that the relation of the parallel passages is in accordance with his theory. If he holds that B is older than A, it seems to him that A is so obviously dependent on B, that this dependence proves the early date of B. But, as a rule, it is very difficult to determine which of two similar passages is dependent

45. W. H.Bennett and Walter F. Adeney, *A Biblical Introduction* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1899), 39.

> on the other. Often the question can only be settled by our *knowledge* that one passage is taken from an earlier work than the other; and where we do not possess such knowledge the priority is quite uncertain, and a comparison of the passages yields little or no evidence as to the date of the documents in which they occur. . . .
>
> (v.) Where a work is known to be composite, a literary parallel to one section affords no direct evidence of the date of the other sections.[46]

Bennett was not the first to raise these, but he brought some attention to the issue. The beginning of the twentieth century marked what has been called a "crisis of literary studies."[47] We can find dozens of additional critiques on the process of accumulating parallels that followed. I have included here brief mention of a few of the most influential. In 1929, for example, E. H. C. Oliphant commented on the topic in his essay titled "How Not to Play the Game of Parallels":

> It is time to take critical stock of what has been accomplished, to expose the absurdity of much that is being done in this field of scholarship, and to endeavor to estimate the value of the work that really counts.

His presentation was as follows:

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46. Bennett and Adeney, *Biblical Introduction*, 39.

47. "Given the 19th century's general fondness for comparison as an intellectual exercise and the subsequent density of its articulations in the academic world, the chronologically late appearance of a Comparative Literature discipline is particularly significant—for it can be seen as a confirmation of the hypothesis that only the crisis of literary studies around 1900 triggered its emergence." (Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht,"The Origins of Literary Studies—And Their End?" *Stanford Humanities Review* 6/1 [1998]). http://www.stanford.edu/group/SHR/6–1/html/gumbrecht.html. Gumbrecht references David Palumbo-Liu, "Termos da (in)diferença: cosmopolitismo, politica cultural e o futuro dos estudos da literatura," *Cadernos da Pós / Letras* 14 (1995): 46–62.

> First let it be remarked that passages are not to be considered parallels because they duplicate thought without any duplication of language. Ideas may be common to many writers, and nothing is to be inferred from such similarity. Verbal parallels that do not duplicate ideas may also be ignored. The parallelism in such cases may be regarded as merely accidental. The only true parallel is one that duplicates both thought and the expression of thought. If we accept that interpretation, we shall knock out about seventy percent of what are presented as parallels.
>
> Regarding everything that is offered to us as a parallel, we have to inquire not only whether or not it fulfils this condition, but also, if it does, whether it possesses any significance. It is possible to have a duplication of both language and thought, and yet for the thought to be so trite as to make it ridiculous to attach any importance to its repetition. And, even if the suggested parallel passes that test, we have yet to ask ourselves whether or not it cannot be paralleled in the work of some other writer than the one to whom it is desired to attribute both passages.[48]

As with many others writing in the early 20th century on the subject of literary parallels, Oliphant's intention wasn't merely to discredit the practice (although he represents a body of literature that effectively did just that), but to rehabilitate the practice. From his perspective, the vast majority of parallels that were being published were absurd—and here he provides an early discussion of a methodology designed to narrow down the scope of parallelisms to those that "possesses any significance."

48. Ernest Henry Clark Oliphant, "How Not to Play the Game of Parallels," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 28/1 (January 1929): 1.

Oliphant, coming from a different discipline than Bennett, highlights two additional aspects of the criticism of parallels. The first is the question of what constituted a relevant parallel or a "true parallel." That is, how should one gauge significance of the literary parallels we are presented with? The second related issue is the question of how to exclude alleged parallels that were proposed merely on the basis of a verbal overlap that was only to be expected from authors writing in the same language, from essentially the same time and place. Not long after Oliphant's article was published, Muriel St. Clare Byrne tells us that while parallels abound, "It is very important, however, for every parallel-hunter to formulate and obey certain golden rules before he bases thereupon any deductions." These rules were:

1. Parallels may be susceptible to at least three explanations: (a) unsuspected identity of authorship (b) plagiarism, either deliberate or unconscious (c) coincidence;
2. Quality is all-important, and parallels demand very careful grading—e.g., mere verbal parallelism is of almost no value in comparison with parallelism of thought coupled with some verbal parallelism;
3. Mere accumulation of ungraded parallels does not prove anything;
4. In accumulating parallels for the sake of cumulative effect we may logically proceed from the known to the collaborate, or from the known to the anonymous play, but not from the collaborate to the anonymous;
5. In order to express ourselves as certain of attributions we must prove exhaustively that we cannot parallel words, images, and phrases as a body from other acknowledged plays of the period; in other words, the negative check must always be applied.[49]

49. Muriel St. Clair Byrne, "Bibliographical Clues in Collaborate Plays," *The Library: A Quarterly Review of Bibliography* 13/1 (June 1932): 24.

Much more comprehensive strategies came later—as well as new approaches to the relationships between texts. Methodologies and criteria were fashioned that took a more critical look at parallels and their use. The corollary to new methods for evaluating parallels was the rejection of the previous collections. Harold Love tells us that "the mass of trivial and approximate resemblances accepted by an earlier generation of Elizabethan scholars have long been recognised as possessing little evidential value."[50] How then do we explain these similarities? Literary theory began differentiating between these two issues—where material was used in a genetic fashion and where similarities were caused by common themes and elements within an environment, as well as the impact readers have on recognizing these similarities. These features have been described by the term "intertextuality."

Intertextuality

> Intertextuality is the shaping of texts' meanings by other texts. It can refer to an author's borrowing and transformation of a prior text or to a reader's referencing of one text in reading another.[51]

The word *intertextuality* was coined by Julia Kristeva in 1967. Kristeva was expanding on the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin. In her essay, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," she presented us with the following: "Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of *Intertextuality* replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least *double*."[52] Perhaps a more

50. Harold Love, *Attributing Authorship: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 89.

51. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intertextuality.

52. Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," in *The Kirsteva Reader,* ed. T. Moi (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 37.

understandable distinction can be found in Benjamin Somer's *A Prophet Reads Scripture*:

> One approach is oriented toward "influence" and "allusion," the other toward "intertexuality." Literary critics have long focused on the former approach, asking how one composition evokes its antecedents, how one author is affected by another, and what sources a text utilizes. That approach is diachronic, because it distinguishes between the earlier text (the source or the influence) and the later one (the alluding text or the influenced). It focuses attention on the author as well as on the text itself.
>
> "Intertextuality" (as Clayton and Rothstein use the word) encompasses manifold connections between a text being studied and other texts, or between a text being studied and commonplace phrases or figures from the linguistic or cultural systems in which the text exists. As Ziv Ben-Porat explains, these connections do not arise exclusively from an intentional and signaled use of an earlier text, such as citation (which might be studied under the rubrics of influence or allusion). The connections may result from the way that expressions in a given text reflect linguistic, esthetic, cultural, or ideological contexts of the text at hand; other texts may share those contexts, and hence links among many texts may be noticed, whether the authors of the texts knew each other or not.[53]

Underneath the umbrella of intertextuality we find several kinds of connections between texts. Some of them do stem from what might be termed influence (and this influence can

53. Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture* (Stanford, CT: Stanford University Press, 1998), 7.

range from very specific, where an author borrows, or quotes from a source, to very general, as when an author is influenced by an entire body of literature without seeming to use a specific source or text). Other connections can be explained as the result of shared milieus, shared subject matter, or even shared languages of origin. Some connections may be only understood when the texts are read by certain audiences, connections that did not exist for the original author of a text. Whatever the source(s) of these connections, they exist for all texts. Grunder seems to have this in mind (although he uses different terms) when he wrote:

> We are scarcely dealing here with issues of pointed study or conscious borrowing. No single one of these writings was essential to the work of Joseph Smith, and this *Bibliographic Source* hangs upon no individual concept—upon no particular text. It is, rather, the very existence of the Mormon parallels which these sources display—in such great number, distribution, and uncanny resemblance to the literary, doctrinal and social structures which Joseph formed—which may command our attention. (2008, pp. 37–38).

In contrast to this point we have Ferguson's remarks that I presented earlier: "That Christians observed the same customs and used words in the same way as their contemporaries is hardly noteworthy in itself."[54] In other words, every religious movement that arises in a particular historic era, which has a real history with real individuals and real texts, will produce parallels "in such great number, distribution, and uncanny resemblance to the literary, doctrinal and social structures" with its environment. If we were to find a movement that had none of these features, which did not have such great numbers of

54. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2.

seeming "parallels," we would have to start from the position that it wasn't a real religion but was fictional, and that it must have come from some other time and place. Without these points of contact, such a religion would be completely inaccessible to its potential adherents. What is for Grunder "uncanny" is merely expected and commonplace for Ferguson.

Somer concludes: "Hence links among many texts may be noticed, whether the authors of the texts knew each other or not." Grunder suggests, "It really does not matter whether Joseph Smith actually read any specific manuscript or book, because an entire culture is on display" (2008, p. 37). And yet, this isn't a novel or noteworthy insight. We already recognize that the roots of Mormonism occur in a cultural setting—more than this, Mormonism isn't a *result* of a cultural environment, it is a *part* of it, and its existence helps to shape and reshape that cultural setting. In this way, we must also ask (where Grunder does not) how many of his parallels are due purely to these cultural settings, as well as the more complicated question of how many of these parallels exist only because we (the present day readers) note these connections.

Environmental versus Genetic Origins

Grunder tells us in his thesis statement that "most of the seeds of Joseph Smith's texts and prophecies enjoyed popular cultural dissemination in forms familiar to non-Mormons before they grew into scripture of the latter day." According to Kristeva, this is exactly what we should expect—and not just in Joseph Smith's writings, or the collected works of Mormonism. This is true of any author, of the collected writings of any group, and it is just as true of Grunder's literary efforts. If this is the extent of our consideration, then there is truly nothing original—not just with Joseph Smith, but with any author. Similarities can be found between any two texts. Identifying the kind of

intertextuality that exists between two texts becomes an important part of understanding their similarities.

Texts can be original (or perhaps even unique) in two different ways. We have an ontological level, where we see a text as a communicative act, with an author and an intended meaning. We also have a historical level in which a text occurs in a particular place and time—and becomes (as Kristeva put it) "a mosaic of quotations." From Jonathon Z. Smith's perspective on originality in religion, Grunder's work (and others like it) represents an "illicit move from ontological to the historical that raises the question of the comparison of" texts. A text can be original—it can be an author's own thoughts (as opposed to being the thoughts of someone else)—and still come about through a historical process that necessarily leaves behind similarities to many other texts.

To avoid this illicit move, we need to consider both of these two aspects independently—the meaning of a text (as a communicative act) as well as the historical context in which it was produced. Some texts show environmental similarities (they share language, ideologies, aesthetics, and cultural backgrounds). Other texts are related in a more direct fashion—they have a direct literary connection, or what I will refer to here as a *genetic* relationship. When these texts borrow from each other, whether that occurs as quotation, allusion, reinscription,[55] or some other use, there is textual reliance. In more general terms, I use *textual reliance* to describe what happens when one text occurs in the way it does because another text occurs in the way that it does. The idea of genetic origins implies a relationship

55. In this context, *reinscription* refers to the re-appropriation or re-writing of a text. In doing this, past texts are given new meaning in a new context. For discussion see Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 269–82. For additional discussion and some useful examples, see Felisa Vergara Reynolds: *Literary Cannibalism: Almost The Same, But Not Quite/ Almost The Same But Not White* (PhD diss. Cambridge: Harvard University, 2009).

that can be described—parent and child, or perhaps as ancestor and descendant. In these cases we can describe a relationship between texts that is much more definite than talking about environmental issues of which an author may or may not be aware.[56] Thus, textual reliance doesn't always mean unoriginality either:

> During his mental crisis in 1896, Strindberg read the Swedish visionary [Swedenborg] (*On Heaven and Hell*, among others), and he refers explicitly to him in the book where he describes his crisis, *Inferno*. His own conception of hell is clearly and admittedly reminiscent of that of the older writer. Nevertheless, it seems as if the reading of Swedenborg did not add anything new to his views. Rather, the descriptions of Hell confirmed ideas with which he was long since familiar, e.g., from Schopenhauer (G. Brandell). In other words, he used what he was already prepared to find. In such a situation, how are we to determine Swedenborg's impact on his inferno theology?[57]

Discussions of this sort are beyond the scope of this essay, but it is necessary to be aware of these kinds of obstacles to any

56. Although, see Bert Cozijnsen, "A Critical Contribution to the *Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti*: Jude and Hesiod", cited in note 3, above. Cozijnsen argues that this distinction is not descriptive enough, and suggests movements towards a discussion of intertextuality that offers a broader description. He also suggests that "the paradigm of 'analogy or genealogy' is liable to apologetic misuse. In his recent *Drudgery Divine* Smith has illustrated how 'from a standpoint of protecting the privileged position of early Christianity, it is only genealogical comparisons that are worthy of note, if only typically, insistently to be denied'." (See also Smith, *Drudgery Divine*, 48.) As my present review deals with the entire gamut of parallels offered by Grunder, Cozijnsen's apprehension isn't warranted, and I generally stick to these larger categories to keep the discussion easier to follow. A somewhat more nuanced view is introduced in the section on Methodology.

57. Sven Linnér, "The Structure and Functions of Literary Comparisons," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 26/2 (1967): 178.

simple differentiation. Finally, when we compare a text to its environment, there is a sense that we are looking at the text as a product of that environment as opposed to the text being a part of that environment: "The problems associated with hunting for parallels are accentuated when we speak of someone, say Paul, and his 'background.' The next step is then to think of Paul as [merely] taking things from his 'background' and adapting them to his own circumstances and purposes. It is potentially fruitful, and certainly more realistic, to place Paul in the context of these discussions."[58]

When we say that Mormonism shares features with the restorationist movement, it isn't because Mormonism borrows from such a movement. Rather, Mormonism was a part of that movement—and we should understand the movement at least in part in terms of Mormonism (which remains perhaps its most successful contributor). In this sense, we have to be careful when we talk about the backgrounds of Mormonism within *Mormon Parallels*. White and Fitzgerald continue with this comment (that is also relevant to the discussion of *Mormon Parallels* here): "Thus, parallels alone are not enough. . . . There is a need for more nuanced treatment of social-historical as well as archaeological-cultural data in order to provide contextual grounding and correlation for the parallels. We need to discover both the social realities and the cultural understanding of their day."[59]

Comparison Revisited

> The structure of the literary comparisons is, fundamentally, very simple. It can be described thus: the

58. Abraham J. Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament," in *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters*, ed. E. J. Epp and G. W. Macrae (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 299, as quoted in White and Fitzgerald, "*Quod est comparandum*," 38.

59. White and Fitzgerald, "*Quod est comparandum*," 38.

> critic lays the two texts he wishes to compare before his reader, points to them, and expects the reader to exclaim: "How striking, how similar!"[60]

For Grunder the lines between environmental and genetic parallels are blurred. After all, without a movement from historical to ontological, environmental influence really doesn't help deal with questions of originality. For Grunder there isn't a need to specify whether or not a certain parallel is environmental or genetic. For his purposes, the fact that a seeming parallel exists is evidence enough to support his thesis. The question of its significance is pushed into the background. Anthony J. Blasi asks what the purposes for our comparison are. But Blasi insists that "the guidelines that one should draw up for oneself should depend on those purposes."[61] In addition, "To pose the question of such purposes in any meaningful way, it is necessary to describe comparison itself in the most elementary manner possible. As an operation, comparison utilizes two kinds of concept—inclusive and exclusive. The inclusive concept enables two or more cases to be accepted as examples of what the concept includes. The inclusive concept prevents our comparing 'apples and oranges.' Thus the question arises in the comparative study of religion whether Buddhism and theistic religions can be compared; some concept broad enough to include both needs to come into play before any true comparison can be made. The exclusive concept distinguishes between the two or more cases that are being compared. They cannot be identical; otherwise no comparison is in order. These two concepts are not mutually exclusive because a comparison entails both a sameness and a difference. The difference is all the more informative since it characterizes the two (or more) cases in

60. Linnér, "Structure and Functions of Literary Comparisons," 169.

61. Anthony J. Blasi, "Comparison as a Theoretical Exercise," in *Comparing Religions: Possibilities and Perils?* ed. Idinopulos et al., 19.

differing ways; the two cases are not merely two phenomena that would be similar in all respects save not being identical. That is to say, the difference is not simply that between singularity and plurality."[62]

When I present a more formal methodology in the next section, my purpose is to reinforce the boundary between ontological and historical meanings for these texts by offering categories for the parallels that Grunder has provided us. I will sort into three distinct groups: those that appear to be genetic in nature, those that seem to be environmental, and those that do not seem to be parallels at all (this last group being the "apples and oranges" of the mix). Where we have genetic relationships, I hope to be able to describe more closely the possible natures of these relationships. This will allow us to see what cannot be original, and what might be original, and in doing so, we can use a language of both similarity and difference to investigate our texts.

A Note on Coincidence and Randomness

As a final note, there needs to be some basic discussion of the idea of coincidence. One of the issues that very frequently crops up in a discussion of parallels is how likely or unlikely the parallels are that have been found (particularly when we find them together in a group). Bruce G. Schaalje made this observation:

> One of the messages that I hope my Intro Stats students remember after the semester is that *apparently-weird stuff happens*. The classic example is of a guy, call him Bob, who won a million dollar lottery twice in a seven year period. The probability seems way small. The probability of winning once is 1 in 13 million, so the probability of winning twice would seem

62. Blasi, "Comparison as a Theoretical Exercise," 19.

> to be 1/13M squared, or about 1 in half a quintillion. That just couldn't happen, so Bob must be a cheater. However, this calculation is misleading. The question is not about *Bob* winning the lottery twice in a seven-year period, it's about *someone, somewhere* winning a million-dollar lottery twice in seven years. Bob wasn't identified *before* he started playing the lottery, and then followed up. He was identified *after* the thing happened. It turns out that, given all the people who repeatedly buy lottery tickets, the probability of someone-somewhere winning the lottery twice in a seven year period is over 90%.[63]

This, as Schaalje insists, is "the crux of parallelomania." You look for any parallels between two texts, and when you find them (perhaps several of them), "you act (mistakenly, not maliciously) as if you had that exact coincidence in mind before you started looking. The real probability that . . . you would find a bunch is actually very high."[64] In this case, what may seem highly suspect or too coincidental to be believable as random chance is really quite believable. Where we are dealing with environmental influence on a text in its historical process, any two texts can display large quantities of similarities found through comparison. But, a mountain of these parallels (while seemingly too large to be mere coincidence) isn't evidence of a more genetic relationship. As one of the "five golden rules" I provided earlier points out: "Mere accumulation of ungraded parallels does not prove anything."

In one instance Grunder does bring up the issue of potential coincidence. It comes in his discussion of Carsten Niebuhr's *Travels Through Arabia*. He notes that:

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63. G. Bruce Schaalje, http://www.mormondialogue.org/topic/51164–more-book-of-mormon-studies/page__p__1208922271#entry1208922271.

64. Schaalje, 1/12/2011.

> some Book of Mormon Defenders place heavy emphasis upon a very old tribal area near Sana (in Yemen, in the southwestern portion of the Arabian peninsula), identified with the consonants, "NHM," thus called "Nehhm," "Nehem," "Nihm," "Nahm," or similar variants. Those scholars propose that location for a site which is mentioned in the Book of Mormon portion which occurs in Arabia: "And it came to pass that Ishmael died, and was buried in the place which was called Nahom" (1 Nephi 16:34).

Ultimately, Grunder's explanation for this parallel is that it represents random chance:

> Certainly, we will not turn away from the obvious Book of Mormon defense point that the word "Nahom" is not merely compatible with known ancient sounds: it also corresponds geographically to a likely ancient counterpart in the Book of Mormon story. But how many hundred other locations existed along any proposed Lehi route through Arabia, for which Joseph Smith might have happened to come up with the same three consonants in order, instead of this particular example? And in the entire Book of Mormon saga of a thousand years and more—through two hemispheres—is it not fair that Joseph Smith should get one place name right—at least its consonants? (2008, pp. 1052–54).

Apparently, coincidence is a useful notion only when it is applied to the parallels presented by the defenders of Moromonism, and even then, Grunder downplays the full strength of the apologetic argument.[65]

65. While Grunder concedes that the name is similar, and that the location is appropriate, he ignores the further linguistic and rhetorical linkages that can be found in the textual narrative. The Nahom similarity is perhaps one of the most frequently discussed parallels in Mormon studies, and has been identified

Some Comments on Ideology

I have already commented to some extent on the nature of Grunder's work as a polemical argument. This plays out in other more obvious ways. Many of Grunder's parallels are not original to this *Bibliography*, and when these are mentioned, there is often just a reference to earlier literature.[66] In some instances, where these parallels have been responded to in some fashion, Grunder discusses the responses. In parallel 26 (*Antimasonic State Convention of Ohio, Canton, 1830*), for example, he tells us on the subject of the phrase *secret combinations*: "A few articles thrown at this topic by Mormon defenders in recent years serve primarily as models of what not to do when attempting ad-hoc historiography" (2008, p. 130).

I deal with his response in a more detailed fashion in the section on method. But, the invective he displays for what he

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as one of the better arguments raised for the historicity of the Book of Mormon. Rather than deal with the range of issues that have been raised, Grunder instead reduces them to these two points—and in doing so he conceals the issues that Mormon defenders have identified. For those arguments see Warren P. Aston and Michaela Knoth Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994); Warren P. Aston, "Newly Found Altars from Nahom," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10/2 (2001): 56–61; S. Kent Brown, "'The Place Which Was Called Nahom': New Light from Ancient Yemen," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/1 (1999): 66–68 Alan Goff, "Mourning, Consolation, and Repentance at Nahom," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon,* ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991), 92–99; Noel B. Reynolds, "Lehi's Arabian Journey Updated," in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel Reynolds (Provo: FARMS, 1997), 379–89; and Eugene England, "Through the Arabian Desert to a Bountiful Land: Could Joseph Smith Have Known the Way?" in *Book of Mormon Authorship*, ed. by Noel B. Reynolds (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982, repr. Provo: UT, FARMS, 1996), 143–56.

66. For example, in his first parallel, rather than quoting from the source, Grunder writes: "Adair was important in the propagation of Hebrew Indian origin theories which were later reflected, by whatever means, in the Book of Mormon. See Vogel 1986, 18, 41–42, 54, 57, 64–65, 105; Brodie, 45 n.; Bushman 1984, 134" (2008, p. 57). Grunder references dozens of other polemical works detailing parallels.

terms defenders of Mormonism comes through. In some cases, it causes the selection of parallels. For example, in Parallel 55, Grunder provides us with a source identified as: "BIBLE. New Testament. Apocryphal books. Gospel of Nicodemus. German. 1819; BIBLE. Old Testament. Apocryphal books. Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. German. 1819." Grunder introduces the text in this way:

> Includes *the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, noted for its reference to multiple heavens. In *Christ's Eternal Gospel* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), O. Preston and Christine H. Robinson refer to this *Testament*, noting that "Levi describes three heavens, or degrees of glory, that will exist in the hereafter to segregate the righteous from the unrighteous." p. 168. The Robinsons chose a Medieval recension of this source, which corresponded to Paul's third heaven (and Mormon doctrine). In reality, the text speaks of *seven* heavens, which are mentioned in the German edition considered here, p. 123. (2008, p. 243)

These comments are fascinating. Grunder has apparently included this text as a way of responding to the Robinsons' earlier assertions about Mormonism's teachings. Grunder notes that the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* is significant because it refers to multiple heavens. Of course, so does the Apostle Paul in the New Testament (which is also contained in this source, but which Grunder doesn't emphasize). In taking this jab at what is at least in part an apologetic text, Grunder makes a significant error. It is widely accepted in Biblical scholarship that the Testament of Levi in its original form had three, not seven heavens.[67]

67. The vision originally included three heavens, although in some forms of the text (α) 3:1–8 has been modified and expanded in order to depict seven heavens. Cf. 2 Corinthians 12:2 where Paul ascends in a vision to the "third

So we have multiple versions of this text, some with an original three-heaven cosmology, some with seven. Grunder's source contains the version with seven in its copy of the Testament of Levi. Engaging modern scholarship, as Grunder does, using such a source is problematic—and it demonstrates that Grunder is using his parallel as a response. Perhaps this is no different from the *ad hoc* historiography of which he accuses others. For Joseph Smith, the notion of three heavens was clearly connected to Paul (and not to some other source)—and Joseph reworked 1 Corinthians 15:40 in his emendations to the New Testament to reflect this perspective: "Also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial, and bodies telestial; but the glory of the celestial, one; and the terrestrial, another; and the telestial, another."[68]

Given this, the application of the Testament of Levi to the question of Mormonism's view of multiple heavens is problematic. Earlier in his introduction, Grunder gives us this bit of warning with regard to apologetic authors: "The problem with such presentations is that their authors generally misunderstand the chronologically and geographically closer, much more forthright setting in which Joseph Smith actually thrived. In order for their arguments to work, these defenders have to neglect or underestimate the modern, proximate context to a regrettable degree, often with over-confident disregard of the world in which Mormonism emerged" (2008, p. 24).

The obvious and near source of the New Testament for a theology involving three heavens is ignored in favor of this tradition that was probably unfamiliar to Joseph Smith (certainly

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heaven," H. C. Kee, "Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 788, n.2d. For a more detailed discussion of this idea along with references to the supporting literature see Adela Yarbro Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism,* [JS] Sup 50 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 25–30. For an opposing (minority) view see J. E. Wright, *The Early History of Heaven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 143–48.

68. Joseph Smith Translation of 1 Corinthians 15:40.

not as familiar as the New Testament). The source's inclusion in this bibliographic source seems to be more of a polemic against a perceived LDS apologetic than a serious consideration of this source as representing an environmental influence on the idea of three heavens in Mormon theology. In this case, the polemical argument itself comes with disregard to the closer source. And of course, in this particular instance, Grunder is simply wrong. In his introduction, Grunder tells us that

> our seemingly irreconcilable, opposing stances which divide Mormon studies must render this simplistic summarizing problem in historiography even more serious among Saints. Extreme divergence encourages deliberate neglect of any sources which appear to be unfriendly. There is very little middle ground, but considerable effort to distract readers away from alternative views. Utter disdain for scholars—as human beings—who express contrary understanding is neither regretted, it seems, nor even convincingly camouflaged. (2008, p. 20)

When Grunder encounters publications that clash with his views, he simply attacks them. On the one side he declares, as discussed above, that the defenders' point of view is the perfect example of how not to proceed. The work they are critical of is described as "the best informed analysis of Joseph Smith ever written" (2008, p. 130–31, n.66). Grunder has positioned himself on one side of this division in Mormon studies, and despite what I view as his attempts to camouflage his point of view, it is hard to see in these kinds of remarks anything but "utter disdain." Ironically, he commits the very errors for which he castigates the "apologists."

In another example, we have for Mormon Parallels 4, 5, and 6, three maps of Africa. Grunder introduces the first map in this way:

> Although this is a small map for such a vast region, with relatively few place names designated, the engraver has identified "Comoro," a chain of French-owned volcanic islands (the Archipel des Comores) northwest of Madagascar, located on the map near the intersection of the lines for 50 degrees east and 10 degrees south. (2008, pp. 62–63)

The parallel (which isn't actually stated here[69]) is between the name "Comoro" and the name of the hill "Cumorah." While I discuss the idea of using single words as a possible parallels in my presentation of an appropriate method in the second section of this essay, this parallel in particular is useful in a discussion on ideology because of its curious history. In connection with this parallel, Grunder tells us that

> these islands were a stopping place for Captain Kidd, who figured prominently in the treasure-hunting lore of Joseph Smith's world. I notice, with some reservations, an interesting treatment of this subject by Dr. Ronald V. Huggins, "From Captain Kidd's Treasure Ghost to the Angel Moroni: Changing Dramatis Personae in Early Mormonism," in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36:4 (Winter 2003), 17–42. (2008, p. 63).

The purpose of this passage seems clear: Grunder isn't interested merely in placing the name Comoro into Joseph's environment, he wants to provide some reason for Joseph being interested in this particular kind of source. It is not just an item on one map, as we see from the inclusion of Parallels 5 and 6, but effectively all maps that include the Comoro islands. And

69. This is a good example of Linner's comments previously quoted: "The structure of the literary comparisons is, fundamentally, very simple. It can be described thus: the critic lays the two texts he wishes to compare before his reader, points to them, and expects the reader to exclaim: 'How striking, how similar!'" (Linnér, "The Structure and Functions of Literary Comparisons," 169).

so he introduces us to Captain Kidd, and the legends about Captain Kidd that he thinks were circulating in Joseph's environment.[70] As far as I can tell, the first suggestion of this "parallel" can be found in a short article written by Fred Buchanan in Sunstone in 1989. Buchanan's proposal apparently had its roots in the Hofmann forgeries,[71] and was extended with the suggestion that the capitol city of the Comoro Islands was a city named Moroni. Grunder is aware of the arguments raised in that article (he quotes Buchanan extensively in 2008, pp. 866–867.) What Grunder doesn't quote or mention is the connection between the Comoros Islands and Captain Kidd that Buchanan raises:

> A person I had been corresponding with . . . had written and mentioned that the famous buccaneer "Captain" William Kidd, who is reputed to have hidden gold and treasure at Garderner's Island, New York, and in a variety of new England locations, actually visited the Comoro Islands during his voyage to East Africa. . . . Ultimately I found that Kidd actually spent a considerable amount of time in the vicinity of the Comoros between March and August 1697, and that the islands were an important stopping-off point on the long voy-

70. Grunder also raises this contention on p. 1459.

71. "During the Mark Hofmann salamander letter episode I became interested in the origins of Mormon names again. . . . I traced down some recent research on the history of the Comoro Islands and learned that the names 'Moroni' and 'Comoro' are both derived from the local Comoron dialect and mean, as far as I can determine, 'in the place of the fire.' The islands have one of the world's largest active volcanoes. Given the excitement over the salamander letter, I began to wonder if there were some connection between the Moroni in the Comoros and the word 'Moron,'" Frederick S. Buchanan, "Perilous Ponderings" (column, "Turning Time Over to . . ."), *Sunstone* (June 1989), 7–8. It is interesting to note that the Salamander letter seems to have been influential for Grunder as well—as he notes in his introduction, "Years after I saw my salamander." He discusses the event and his own response to the Hoffman affair in 2008, pp. 35–38.

> age from New York to India. In fact, New York was a major source of supplies for pirates in business in the Indian Ocean. Captain Kidd, buried treasure, Comoro and Moroni—Joseph Smith, treasure hunting, gold plates, Cumorah and Moroni? Is all this coincidence or is there a connection between the activities of a Scottish buccaneer in the Indian Ocean in the late seventeenth century and the development of a prophet in upper New York in the early nineteenth century? Did Joseph Smith have access to accounts of Captain Kidd's exploits, which became more and more elaborate in the years following his hanging in London in 1701? Did accounts of Kidd's rendezvous at Comoro and Moroni color the folklore about Kidd's buried treasure to which young Joseph may have been exposed?[72]

From this starting point we get the much later Huggins' article mentioned by Grunder (along with his expressed but undetailed reservations). However, as pointed out by Mark Ashurst-McGee, the very few connections that have been claimed between early Mormons and Captain Kidd do not come from Mormon sources, and are quite late.[73] Additionally the capitol city Moroni has not yet been found on any early map showing the Comoro Islands. Grunder notes in his discussion of the first map that "the Encyclopædia Britannica records volcanic eruptions beginning in 1830 on the island of Great Comoro (Grande Comore) where Maroni, the capitol of this territory (not shown on the map discussed here or on other period maps which I have examined), is located (Encyclopædia Britannica eleventh

72. Buchanan, "Perilous Ponderings," 7–9.

73. Huggins's abuse of historical sources and problematic conclusions are addressed in Mark Ashurst-McGee, "Moroni: Angel or Treasure Guardian?" *Mormon Historical Studies* 2/2 (2001): 39–75; see also *FARMS Review* 18/1 (2006): 34–100, at http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/review/?vol=18&num=1&id=600.

ed., 6:794–95, 'Comoro Islands')" (2008, p. 63). More recently, Mike Reed located an eighteenth century map of Anjouan, one of the Comoro islands, with an indicated anchorage identified as Meroni. Although this is adjacent to an entirely different island than the one with the city Moroni, it does demonstrate that if all we are concerned with is identifying homonyms, eventually we will find what we are looking for.[74]

The interesting corollary is that while we find this rather small location indicated on this map, the present day capitol of Comoro, Moroni, has yet to be found on any maps contemporary with the publication of the Book of Mormon, and while this isn't a guarantee that it won't be found (it wouldn't surprise me if it were), it does indicate that its importance was far less than it is today. In this way, these "parallels" are caused because we are expecting to find them—they are sought by a modern reader who has a different set of expectations than any contemporary reader would have, and the heightened importance attached to these names is caused by (and not the cause of) later rumors about Joseph Smith, including the texts forged by Mark Hofmann.

The point of bringing out these facts is to show that without the underlying (but as yet undemonstrated) narrative, there is no reason to actually connect the Comoro Islands with the Cumorah in the Book of Mormon. Homonyms, by themselves, cannot themselves tell us anything about two texts in comparison (or even two traditions in comparison). The character who runs into a bar to get a drink shares nothing with the character who runs into a bar and falls over with a concussion. Yes, both contain the same word—bar. But in both cases, the word is a very different word—they are actually unrelated. Perhaps those who share these expectations, rooted in the Hoffman forgeries expect that the relationship will be borne out upon further

74. The map is by Jacques Nicolas Bellin, dated to 1748, and can be found at http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/africa/central-south.html.

discoveries. But, in such a situation, the expectation is not one of any sort of environmental parallels but of a specific genetic connections. The names in the Book of Mormon occur (as the argument goes) precisely because of Captain Kidd's travels to the Comoro Islands and the city of Moroni that can be found there.

Adding to this, among all three maps, Grunder finds no other points of comparison between these maps and the Book of Mormon (which is somewhat surprising, given that the first map contains other names that are similar or identical to other names used in the Book of Mormon [e.g., Angola]). The narrow focus is not on finding similar words as much as it is on supporting the pre-existing theory.

> The longer the critic's road from the texts he wishes to compare to the actual point of confrontation, the greater the un-certainty of his results. For we must ask ourselves: how faithful is his translation to the original, and how much of their meaning have the thoughts extracted lost by being taken out of their context? Everyone realizes that questions like these have to be asked, and that they are hard to answer.[75]

These kinds of entries are not included by Grunder to try and explicate the environment from which early Mormon discussions developed. Rather they are heavily vested in much more recent debates between Mormonism's critics and its defenders.

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75. Linnér, "Structure and Functions of Literary Comparisons," 172.

Finding Parallels: Some Cautions and Criticisms Part Two

Benjamin A. McGuire

Review of Rick Grunder. Mormon Parallels: A Bibliographic Source. *Layfayette, New York: Rick Grunder—Books, 2008. 2,088 pp. On CD-ROM. $200.00.*

Abstract: *Discovering parallels is inherently an act of comparison. Through comparison, parallels have been introduced frequently as proof (or evidence) of different issues within Mormon studies. Despite this frequency, very few investigations provide a theoretical or methodological framework by which the parallels themselves can be evaluated. This problem is not new to the field of Mormon studies but has in the past plagued literary studies more generally. In Part One, this review essay discusses present and past approaches dealing with the ways in which parallels have been used and valued in acts of literary comparison, uncovering the various difficulties associated with unsorted parallels as well as discussing the underlying motivations for these comparisons. In Part Two, a methodological framework is introduced and applied to examples from Grunder's collection in Mormon Parallels. In using a consistent methodology to value these parallels, this essay suggests a way to address the historical concerns associated with using parallels to explain both texts and Mormonism as an historical religious movement.*

Part II: A Preliminary Methodology

> The process of recognizing parallels—like Darwin discovering distinctive but similar species of finches on the various islands of the Gallapagos—is first and foremost the assembly of a data set on and from which new analysis will need to be based. On first sight, the similarities must evoke some appropriate theoretical explanation. But upon reflection and with the collection of each new data set, one will begin to evaluate and analyze not only the data but also the previous theories themselves. . . . The process of comparison in the light of new data sets must also cause us to reformulate—or as Smith puts it, to deconstruct and reconstruct—the theories themselves.[1]

Over the past two centuries, there have been many lists of rules offered on the process of presenting parallels. As often as not, these are discussions on what shouldn't be done as opposed to what should be. I referenced several of these in my introductory material (see Part I of this essay). Most of these deal with the idea of direct borrowing—of situations where there is a proposed genetic connection between two texts. Grunder's material is a bit different. He stresses that he is not interested in demonstrating direct connections so much as in finding these parallels in Joseph's environment. In some ways, as I will demonstrate in Grunder's parallels, he is conflating these two ideas—genetic and environmental connections. By stressing that what is found in parallels is not original, he is suggesting that the Mormon parallels he finds show that Mormon traditions and texts drew from their environment in a more or less genetic fashion.

1. White and Fitzgerald, "*Quod est comparandum*," 36–37.

Comparing two bodies of literature is in itself not all that unusual, and much of the same process is involved as when we compare individual texts. As Linnér tells us: "So far I have dealt mainly with the relation between individual texts. The basic problems of method remain the same when the critic chooses to handle larger entities, such as whole *oeuvres*, literary periods, or even national literatures."[2]

Here, however, we run into another significant problem with Grunder's approach. He is attempting to compare Mormon sources with other texts from the same environment. Yet, as noted earlier, the Mormon sources are already a part of that environment. In attempting to separate them—in attempting to make them a derivative of that environment in which they are themselves already in the act of influencing and changing—Grunder has misunderstood some of the issues. In order to separate them, we have to produce some kind of rational basis for distinguishing between the two groups of literature. Usually, this is not difficult:

> We cannot escape the conclusion that personal, epistolary and literary relations between the two groups [i.e., German and English Romantics] were extremely tenuous. Among the English, only Coleridge and De Quincey show the influence of German Romantic ideas; among the Germans, English Romantic influences from Byron and Scott come later. The two movements existed at the same time, but they ran parallel without making deeper contacts, if we except Coleridge, whose very isolation points to the gulf between the two movements. But lack of historical contacts does not, of course, preclude similarities and even deep affinities.[3]

2. Linnér, "Structure and Functions" 71–72.

3. René Wellek, *Confrontations: Studies in the Intellectual and Literary Relations Between Germany, England, and the United States During the*

Grunder insists that the "'Mormon Parallels' in this *Bibliographic Source* are aspects of Mormonism which first existed in a non-Mormon context available in Joseph Smith's world" (2008, p. 37).

Part of the problem is that, at least for early Mormonism, every single early Mormon (without exception) existed first in a non-Mormon context, including Joseph Smith. There is no line of demarcation that separates many of these texts related to Mormonism from that larger environment. That environment shaped Mormonism just as Mormonism in return contributes to that evolving environment. Grunder's approach separates them by saying, in essence, "These on the one side are Mormon sources, and these on the other side are everything else." Part of my methodological concerns require that we redirect that initial suggestion, return these Mormon "sources" back to their environment, and examine the parallels from a more appropriate perspective. In some cases, this may eliminate or reduce claims of uniqueness of a specific teaching. In other cases it may enhance them.

I will begin by providing a series of basic definitions. These detail in general terms the major categories of parallels, and provide some basic guidelines to help identify what ought not to be considered a valid parallel. Following these definitions, I will address the issue of significance—that is, what kinds of parallels are purely environmental (and thus not significant at all in helping us understand the texts) and which are derivative in some way either from the broader environment or from specific sources. By separating these two categories, even if I fail to address the more complex situations, I can at least identify parallels that deserve more attention, and cut away those that while certainly parallels, have little interest to us. Additionally,

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Nineteenth Century (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1965), 11, as cited in Linnér, "Structure and Functions ," 72.

I will comment on the selection of texts used as the basis for Grunder's *Bibliography*.

What constitutes a valid parallel?

The term *parallel* itself is often used in different ways. A dictionary definition reads:

1 a : a parallel line, curve, or surface b : one of the imaginary circles on the surface of the earth paralleling the equator and marking the latitude; *also* : the corresponding line on a globe or map—see latitude illustration c : a character || used in printing especially as a reference mark

2 a : something equal or similar in all essential particulars : counterpart b : similarity, analogue

3 : a comparison to show resemblance

4 a : the state of being physically parallel b : an arrangement of electrical devices in a circuit in which the same potential difference is applied to two or more resistances with each resistance being on a different branch of the circuit—compare series c : an arrangement or state that permits several operations or tasks to be performed simultaneously rather than consecutively.[4]

The definitions that we are most interested in are the second and third. The notion of a parallel of the sort that Grunder is using both shows a resemblance by comparison, and claims that there are these equivalencies between the sets of otherwise disparate elements that Grunder has produced.

A parallel, then, represents some kind of similarity. It can be a verbal similarity in the text (involving use of the same or similar words). It can be a thematic similarity involving the same kinds of ideas. It can be a structural similarity for which ordering is important. It might be a purely aesthetic similarity where the appearance of the text is highlighted. Part of identi-

4. *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* (2010), s.v., "parallel". Retrieved 22 August 2010, from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/parallel

fying the parallel is to find a way to make it apparent and visible to others:

> It should be noticed here that the comparative demonstration, however subtle and protracted it may be, still does not lead up to a logical deduction. We are not asked by the critic to draw a conclusion, but to confirm that we see what he points out to be seen. I believe this comes rather close to what the biologist does when he compares microscopic slides from two species. He fills in a certain pattern (of nerves, cells, or whatnot) so as to make it more easily observable. It has been there all the time, and the preparation does not add anything; it only helps us to distinguish one particular pattern among many others.[5]

This is a rather broad definition, but I think it is useful, particularly if we are interested in evaluating parallels that involve more than deliberate mimesis—that is, parallels that are attributable to environmental issues or even those that appear to be entirely coincidental. However, if we use the above analogy, there are instances where what we see does not give us sufficient evidence of a pattern with which to claim some kind of meaningful sameness.

Verbal Parallels: Words

Early in his list of parallels, Grunder offers us three virtually identical proposals (2008, pp. 62–65). The proposed similarity occurs in a single word: Comoro compared to the name Cumorah in the Book of Mormon (and Grunder notes the several variants of this word in the original manuscript and the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon as well as in at least one other early LDS source—"Comoro," "Camorah,"

5. Linnér, "Structure and Functions," 171.

"Cumorah," and "Comorah"). Later, he provides other examples, as he notes: "Homonyms to the Book of Mormon's Hill Cumorah appeared in many works of the period" (2008, p. 517) . He details many of these: Comora (2008, p. 694); Cormorant (2008, p. 303)—which he describes as "resonant with the name, 'Cumorah'"—"Cormorin" (2008, p. 1637-8); "Go-mor'rah" (2008, p. 1821) and its variant "Gomorrah" (2008, p. 1921), both places add identical information "cf. Cumorah, both sites of massive destruction of the wicked."

All of these parallels are problematic. When we deal with homonyms (using the term rather loosely as Grunder does), part of the point is that there is no relationship between the words. They merely sound alike, or look alike. We could add to his list—"Camorra" (a secret society in Italy that originated some time before the Book of Mormon was published), "Camora" (generally spelled "Zamora" today, a city in Spain that was besieged during the 11th century—and even described in the popular story of Don Quixote), and the city of Komarno in Hungary, located at the confluence of the Danube and the Vah rivers.[6]

Can we speak of parallels in a single word? Is the word "too" really a parallel to the word "two" or to the word "to"? Do these help us understand a text or a relationship between one text and another? Clearly they don't. I think that we have to conclude that in nearly every case, these are not valid parallels.

Part of the issue here goes to Grunder's purposes in eliminating originality. Generally speaking, we see words as the basic units of meaning in texts. It is the fact that we all use the same words that lets us communicate in texts. Occasionally we might encounter unknown words, or unique words, or an au-

6. The highlight of the city was a fortress, completely surrounded by water, which has been a significant strategic position since at least Roman times. A 1594 map of the fortress can be seen here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Komarno1594.jpg

thor may produce a neologism. But to reduce originality even in the words that are not had elsewhere, we must reduce them to a sequence of letters and sounds (which then no longer have any meaning at all) and locate similarities to them. Since all words are sequences of letters and sounds, it isn't difficult at all to create a nearly endless string of such similarities (particularly if we, like Grunder, are not too fussy over identical sounds or spellings). If we allow for parallels of this sort, then no word is ever unique or original.[7] There are several parallel sources listed in Grunder's work that follow this pattern.[8]

Additionally, there is another concern. At times, Grunder seems to be arguing for a genetic connection between a specific pair of homonyms. If the only concern is for similar looking or sounding words, then there isn't a need for additional explanation beyond placing the terms in the environment. When Grunder quotes Buchanan as saying, "If subsequent research on the origins of the names Moroni and Cumorah point to the Comoro Islands as a source . . . " (2008, p. 867) he is forwarding this argument for a genetic connection. When he suggests, as I note above that Gomorrah is a plausible parallel for Cumorah

7. Although, as an example of an exception, we have *The Codex Seraphinianus*, written by Luigi Serafini. "The book is approximately 360 pages long (depending on the edition), and appears to be a visual encyclopedia of an unknown world, written in one of its languages, a thus-far undeciphered alphabetic writing" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Seraphinianus). Since the text uses its own characters and its own language, it has not been translated or read by anyone other than its author. It thus illustrates the problem with using something absolutely original in this kind of context—it has no meaning that others can grasp and thus fails as a communicative act.

8. See especially pages 1921–24 where the source is listed as: *A COMPREHENSIVE PRONOUNCING AND EXPLANATORY DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, with Pronouncing Vocabularies of Classical and Scripture Proper Names*. Although Grunder emphasizes that the name section contains only 12 pages, he doesn't mention that each of those pages may contain as many as 350 names. To find some similarities when comparing Book of Mormon names to the several thousand other names presented in this source should not be unexpected, particularly when we are only looking at the spellings, and allowing for a fair amount of variance between the two similar words.

because "both [were] sites of massive destruction of the wicked" Grunder is making an argument for a genetic connection. And yet both cannot be the source of the name Cumorah in the Book of Mormon. If even one of these is accurate, then all of the others must be coincidental parallels. Perhaps Grunder is arguing that Joseph synthesized the name Cumorah from the entire list of potential homonyms—and yet this strains credulity. All of these near homonyms cannot have equal value, and yet Grunder presents them as if they do.

For the reasons provided above, similarity between words (based on sounds and characters used) are generally only useful when we deal with questions of derivation, of etymology, and (for texts) with genetic connections. There is no value to dealing with words when we discuss environmental similarities. My methodology rejects as parallels these kinds of similarities between single words unless one of the more direct relationships mentioned above can also be determined.

Parallels identified on the basis of the words used are called verbal parallels. In providing for the widest useful identification of verbal parallels, I have adopted the definition of Jon Paulien:

> A Verbal parallel can be defined as occurring whenever at least two words of more than minor significance are parallel between [sources]. . . . These two major words may be coupled together in a phrase or may even be separated, provided they are in clear relationship to each other in both passages of the suggested parallel.[9]

9. Jon Paulien, "Elusive Allusions," *Bible Review* 33 (1988): 41–42. Paulien recognizes that parallels can occur in a single word. He writes: "Allusions to the OT may be characterized by similarity of thought and theme as well as wording. Such single-word parallels are to be distinguished from 'stock apocalyptic' in that they have 'direct contextual moorings in particular texts' of previous literature" (p. 42). This is in line with my recognition of single words as potential legitimate parallels when they are used within a context of reliance or genetic relationships.

Verbal Parallels: Shared Phrases

Of course, longer strings of identical text (much more than two words) provide a self-evident demonstration of their relationship to each other. But when the text is not of sufficient length, we must concern ourselves with showing that the words are used in similar ways, that their meanings are similar (as opposed to different), and that the relationships between the sources is otherwise consistent. Of course, one of the ways that this is commonly done is to show the relative uniqueness or some kind of technical usage of the shared phrase. It is at this point the Muriel St. Clair Byrne suggested we need to apply the "negative check." As Harold Love explains:

> Here LION, Gutenberg and similar electronic archives come into their own, since as well as providing illusory parallels they also assist mightily in shooting down those which arise from common parlance of the time. Once we have encountered an unusual expression in the writings of three of four different authors it ceases to have any value for attribution.[10]

While this is aimed at more direct genetic connections between texts and asserting authorship of one text based on similarities to another work or body of work, it applies here as well. Phrases that are part of the common language of the time do not generally help us. At best, they place a text within a certain time and place (but we generally already have such information for the Mormon parallels). In order to connect one text to a specific tradition or body of material, something more specific must be used. This argument is raised by Grunder in parallel 26 (2008, p. 130 ff). The issue there is the use of the phrase "secret combinations" in the Book of Mormon and in Masonic literature. While this argument is not new to Grunder (he ref-

10. Love, *Attributing Authorship*, 91.

erences Dan Vogel's *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet*), he attempts to extend Vogel's arguments over the nature of the phrase in response to criticisms of Vogel's work.[11]

Grunder attempts to bolster Vogel's arguments by suggesting that to him, "the objections by early 1830 *Masons who were opposed* to applying the term, 'all secret combinations' exclusively to Freemasonry and other secret fraternal societies—and many antimasons' insistence that 'all secret combinations' *did* refer *exclusively* to such groups, by that time and in such context—says much" (2008, p. 130). He insists that this usage of the phrase is exclusive to this context.

In addition, we are told, contrary opinions are "utterly innocent of the most obvious consideration of the evolution of language." Grunder then goes on to provide what he believes is an analogous situation:

> Most alert, educated individuals of the 1960s–70s, for example, must have noticed the linguistic evolution of the term, chauvinism. Prior to the 1970s women's movement, that term was heard rather infrequently, and its definition was the one which it had enjoyed since the early mid-nineteenth century—that of "Exaggerated patriotism of a bellicose sort; blind enthusiasm for national glory or military ascendancy . . ." (Oxford English Dictionary, 1971 edition). By the

11. Grunder mentions Daniel C. Peterson, "'Secret Combinations' Revisited," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1/1 (1992): 184–88; Paul Mouritsen, "Secret Combinations and Flaxen Cords: Anti-Masonic Rhetoric and the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12/1 (2003): 64–77; Nathan Oman, "'Secret Combinations': A Legal Analysis," *FARMS Review* 16/1 (2004): [49]–73; and Andrew H. Hedges and Dawson W. Hedges, "No, Dan, That's Still Not History" (review of Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet*. [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004]), *FARMS Review* 17/1 (2005): 205–22. He ignores Daniel C. Peterson, "Notes on 'Gadianton Masonry'," in *Warfare in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), 174–224.

> mid-1970s, however, most of us heard the term only in conjunction with "male," until finally, a chauvinist, in everyday speech, came to mean a man who was blind to women's issues. Then, as that specialized application of the word became entrenched and common, it evolved further, expanded in popular usage to apply to a person who was irrationally prejudiced against any cause at hand. (2008, p. 131)

There is a severe problem with Grunder's comparison here. If we follow Harold Love's advice, we find hundreds of examples of the use of this phrase "secret combination." Some of them occur before the publication of the Book of Mormon, some of them occur after, and some of them are contemporary. On the whole, only a minority of these instances relate to freemasonry. So while there may be a distinct evolution of the term *chauvinism*, with the phrase *secret combinations* we have the same term being used repeatedly to refer to different things and different groups. The term doesn't evolve as Grunder's claim requires. It gets applied and reapplied to these different organizations (often simultaneously when the time period is appropriate) because the meaning of the phrase doesn't change (as it did with the example that Grunder provides).

Grunder then provides us with three "intellectual wrongs" that he explains are used by those who disagree with Vogel's theory:

> (1) He or she will look for the term *chauvinist* primarily in sober, formal writings, rather than in whatever popular-level (or simple ephemeral) productions which may have survived. He will do this by searching easily-accessible documents rather than spending decades perusing obscure remnants and productions of the grass-roots culture of the entire twentieth century. (2008, p. 132)

Love gives us a different perspective on this. He tells us that:

> When Byrne wrote, the accumulation of parallels was a labour-intensive business which depended on incessant reading of the works concerned. Today a phrase can be pursued almost instantaneously through the magnificent on-line LION archive, which covers all fields of English and American drama and of authored volumes of poetry up to 1900, and in many cases beyond, and is rapidly extending into prose.[12]

The search through digital archives is simple, it is fast—if it were used as the primary source for documenting a parallel (as Grunder is doing) it would be inappropriate. As a negative check, as Love explains, these digital archives work very well to identify when an argument has overstepped the evidence. Grunder's criteria for selecting texts helps create a hidden bias.[13] What Grunder labels as an intellectual wrong—using these archives as a negative check on the hypothesis—is actually a very appropriate way to avoid the kinds of mistakes that have been identified over the last two centuries of literary investigation.

> (2) He will consult only a very few contrary sources in his "research." During his perfunctory visit among those sources, he will notice very few women's-issue occurrences of chauvinist. He must acknowledge a few examples which his scholarly opponents have already cited, but he will quantify those unfavorable occurrences carefully, creating an artificial impression of

12. Love, *Attributing Authorship*, 90.

13. If, for example, all we look at is documents related to freemasonry, then it seems to me that Grunder has intuited a connection in exactly the same mode for which he criticizes others. To parody Grunder, the investigator will look for the term *secret combination* primarily in masonic texts rather spending decades perusing the rest of the cultural literary legacy in which the term may be found.

> over-all low frequency, and a misleading impression of careful precision in his study. (2008, p 132)

Negative checks, by nature, generally don't need to include the evidence that is already presented. On the other hand, since the writing of those critical essays, the scope of accessible digital archives has increased. These kinds of experiments can be reproduced by anyone with internet access. As of the writing of this essay, searching one digital archive suggested that between the beginning 1828 and the beginning of 1832, only 8.8 percent of published books that contained the phrase *secret combination* also including information on masons.[14] In this specific case, the over-all low frequency isn't just a misleading impression.

> (3) Finding it difficult to identify equal frequency of chauvinist before the 1970s compared to the post-1970 period, he will extend his sampling generously backward before the relevant period. Then, he will carry the sampling forward, beyond the target period, taking care to identify enough widely-evolved usages of

14. The Google Books digital archive, for example, provides us with 771 documents containing the phrase *secret combination* published between 1780 and 1840 (search completed Sept. 14, 2011). If we exclude all of the texts from that result that also include the character strings "freemason" and "mason", we end up with 750 texts. This is by no means an exact count due to issues with the archives, but, if only 2.8 percent of the texts that the Google search provided are Masonic related texts, clearly there is a problem with Grunder's assumptions here. For those wishing to try this experiment themselves, the search is done at books.google.com, with a date range set to 1/1/1780 to 1/1/1840, and the search terms are +"secret combination" -mason -freemason (the + forces inclusion while the - forces exclusion in the search). This is just one digital archive—it is the sheer volume of hits that makes us seriously question Grunder's conclusions. If we narrow the same search down to 1/1/1828-1/1/1832, we get 103 and 94 as the results—the number of texts dealing with freemasons has gone up significantly from 2.8 percent to 8.8 percent—a huge surge which we would expect considering the contemporary issues that Grunder points out. But, this surge does not begin to suggest that there is such a narrowing of the language that Grunder insists had to have happened.

> the now-popularized term to create an illusion of an even continuum of traditional or non-women's-movement definitions and occurrences of chauvinist, over a period of a century or more. Such an approach, then, would ignore the genuine frequency, the placement, and the significance of the linguistic term under study by searching primarily the most easily-accessible, formal texts; by ignoring the sources most likely to contain contrary data; and by ignoring the entire phenomenon of the evolution of a linguistic term's definition and frequency of use when impacted by a single, dramatic, concentrated social movement. (2008, p. 132)

The reverse is certainly also true. If we present only Masonic documents from a very narrow slice of time, if we ignore all instances of a phrase that are both contemporary and relevant (relevant because it is an identical phrase used in the same environment that the Masonic documents come from), and we ignore the genuine frequency of the phrase in the total body of literature created by the larger cultural milieu, then we create a picture where only one conclusion can be drawn. The difference of course between the anti-masonic movement and the feminist movement is that the first died almost immediately. Within less than a decade, the anti-masonic movement was over, and the fraternal societies had become even more popular than they were before the Morgan affair.[15] The feminist movement was not a brief vanishing phenomenon, and has

15. See, for example, Ami Pflugrad-Jackisch's *Brothers of a Vow: Secret Fraternal Orders and the Transformation of White Male Culture in Antebellum Virginia* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 28: "The orders' widespread popularity did not come easily, however. The Morgan affair and the subsequent anti-Masonic movement of the 1830s threatened to stamp out American secret fraternal organizations once and for all. Beginning in the 1840s, however, secret fraternal orders resurrected their fraternities and remade their public image, becoming even more popular than they had been during the early national period. In the decades leading up to the Civil War, white men estab-

persisted for decades. On the other hand, the notion of "secret combinations" has been used to describe labor movements, Freemasons, members of the Ku Klux Klan, communists, and even the Republican Party, along with nearly every other group or organization that has been accused of nefarious motivations. This continuum of usage works because the phrase has never linguistically evolved into such a narrow technical framework as the word *chauvinist* did.

Grunder is quite right in the idea that technical usage or exclusive similarities can create significant parallels. However, in this case, his narrow focus on sources prevents him from properly applying a negative check. In responding to Grunder's short list, I suggest that these issues are "intellectual wrongs" only if we use them as evidence for our theory. When used (as the critical arguments do) as a negative check, these approaches are not only important, they are necessary to either validate the argument, or in this case, to refute it.

Thematic Parallels

Moving away from words and phrases, we encounter the notion of meaning. Thematic parallels are parallels in thought, in doctrine, or in practice that go beyond the mere words used to convey that thought. Like words, there can be limitations to the range of these parallels:

Perhaps the first thing to observe is that there are only a limited number of options in any given historical setting. Only a certain number of ideas are possible and only a certain number of ways of doing things are available. We need not wonder at similarities, which need not necessarily be a sign of borrowing, in one direction or the other. Many things in a given historical and cultural setting will be arrived at independently by more than one group, simply because there is not an unlim-

lished more than a dozen new secret fraternal orders modeled on the Masons and Odd Fellows."

ited number of options available about how to do something. For example, how many ways are there to select leaders in a community? We could list inheritance, election, appointment by one or a few in authority, or chance (e.g., casting lots). Any additions made to the list will not generally extend the range of possibilities. That two groups use the same method does not necessarily mean that one is copying the other.[16]

Of course, we aren't entirely concerned here with copying (genetic relationships), yet the point is valid for this discussion. Thematic parallels can occur naturally. As with words, we need to look at contexts—comparing the similarities we see with the differences—and in this way determine if we have a valid parallel or a superficial similarity that is not carried out by a more detailed analysis. Do the proposed thematic parallels work the same way in both places? Are the similarities essential to the material (i.e., are the ways in which the proposed text, narratives, practices, or doctrines more central to the individual traditions than their differences)?

Structural Parallels

Structural parallels are not about the textual content, but about how it is presented. Structural parallels generally are far more significant in determining genetic connections because they often imply that one text is modeled or patterned on another text. When we see two or more texts that follow a specific and identical pattern—when they both introduce similar language and themes in the same order—we have structural parallels.[17] As with the other kinds of parallels, the longer the pattern is sustained, the stronger the parallel becomes. Structural paral-

16. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2.

17. Paulien, "Elusive Allusions," 43. See also my discussion in Ben McGuire, "Nephi and Goliath: A Case Study of Literary Allusion in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 18/1 (2009): 16–31.

lels can also include stylized forms (existing in poetic material), aesthetic appearances, and even sequences of sound when read aloud.

With structural parallels, our concern with differences is also important, but in a different way. Structural similarities can occur within an entire body of material (like the Ten Commandments from Hebrew scripture), and yet there are often variances in order and content. Finding a set of the Ten Commandments would place a text into that group of materials that contains such a list, but the specific ordering or pattern might narrow down the field of potential genetic connections. In several cases we might consider (as with thematic parallels) the potential for similar sequences being quite independent, even if identical. Birth and death are such natural parts of any person's experience that finding the one before another in a text, while clearly a parallel, wouldn't necessarily give us a reason to look beyond simple coincidence. The significance of such structural parallels is diminished when many sources share the same structure.

Parallels in Art

Among Grunder's set of parallels are pieces of artwork. Art, in general, is a more difficult topic in which to discuss parallels because it often comes without an appropriate framework for comparison. In these cases, we need to be particularly cognizant of how important placing these parallels into an appropriate social and cultural context is, and then try to understand how important the similar elements are within those independent contexts. The purpose and the intention of an entire piece of art then becomes important (even if difficult to assess) when attempting to compare art, and our own interpretation plays an obvious role (as the present viewer). Here we see the greatest room for making our own expectations play an exaggerated role in finding parallels where none actually exist.

The Two Column Format

One of the traditional ways of presenting parallels is the sort that Grunder generally follows—the two column format. We present the two texts side by side to highlight the similarities. In some instances, particularly when a parallel has been noted extensively in other literature, he simply refers us to that literature.[18] This approach, as demonstrated earlier, has generally been widely criticized. In dealing with this approach here, one set of more recent criticisms stands out. Alexander Lindey detailed many of what he calls the "vices" of using parallels in his book *Plagiarism and Originality*:

1. Any method of comparison which lists and underscores similarities and suppresses or minimizes differences is necessarily misleading.
2. Parallels are too readily susceptible of manipulation. Superficial resemblances may be made to appear as of the essence.
3. Parallel-hunters do not, as a rule, set out to be truthful and impartial. They are hell-bent on proving a point.
4. Parallel-hunting is predicated on the use of lowest common denominators. Virtually all literature, even the most original, can be reduced to such terms, and thereby shown to be unoriginal. So viewed, Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* plagiarizes Dickens' *David Copperfield*. Both deal with England, both describe the

18. For example, parallel 1, the author James Adair and his works are mentioned, along with a number of secondary sources (Bushman, Brodie, and Vogel). There is no presentation of actual parallels, and the reader is expected to turn to the secondary literature to discover them. Grunder does, however, attempt to place the material in close proximity to Brigham Young: "A similar list from Adair was printed in a newspaper of the town in which teen-aged Brigham Young was living in 1819 (MP 32, Auburn Gazette)" (2008, 58) This kind of appeal isn't terribly meaningful in an argument that is purely about environmental issues—instead it suggests that Grunder is trying to establish a more intimate connection necessary for an argument of genetic connections.

slums of London, both see their hero exalted beyond his original station. To regard any two books in this light, however, is to ignore every factor that differentiates one man's thoughts, reactions and literary expression from another's.

5. Parallel columns operate piecemeal. They wrench phrases and passages out of context. A product of the imagination is indivisible. It depends on totality of effect. To remove details from their setting is to falsify them.
6. Parallels fail to indicate the proportion which the purportedly borrowed material bears to the sum total of the source, or to the whole of the new work. Without such information a just appraisal is impossible.
7. The practitioners of the technique resort too often to sleight of hand. They employ language, not to record facts or to describe things accurately, but as props in a rhetorical hocus-pocus which, by describing different things in identical words, appears to make them magically alike.
8. A double-column analysis is a dissection. An autopsy will reveal a great deal about a cadaver, but very little about the spirit of the man who once inhabited it.
9. Most parallels rest on the assumption that if two successive things are similar, the second one was copied from the first. This assumption disregards all the other possible causes of similarity.

Whatever his vices or virtues, the parallel-hunter is a hardy species. He is destined, as someone had said, to persist until Judgment Day, when he will doubtless find resemblances in the very warrant that consigns him to the nether regions.[19]

19. Alexander Lindey, *Plagiarism and Originality* (Westbrook, CT: Greenwood Press, 1952), 60–61.

These vices point out the dangers of asserting a genetic connection between two texts (or between two traditions). While Grunder tries to deflect this kind of criticism in dealing as he suggests with environmental issues, most of these criticisms still apply to the collection that Grunder has produced. How do we avoid making these mistakes? I engage a set of four similar rules:

- Differences are as important as similarities.
- Parallels need to be examined in progressively expanding contexts.
- Parallels should be discussed in a detailed and specific fashion.
- Rhetorical values, the intentions of an author, and the purposes of a text should all to be taken into consideration.

To illustrate these 4 principles, I will apply them towards the parallel Grunder titles: "REST NEEDED FROM MENTAL EXERCISE; the Mind like a Tightly-Strung Bow" (2008, p. 69). The parallel, as Grunder presents it, is as follows. The first source is taken from William Alcott's *The Young Man's Guide*, originally published in 1833. The second is taken from a personal recollection published in the *Juvenile Instructor* on August 1, 1892. Both are reproduced here from Grunder's text.

Source 1:

> Some of our students *in commons* and elsewhere, suppose themselves highly meritorious because they have adopted the plan of appointing one of their number to read to the company, while the rest are eating. But they are sadly mistaken. Nothing is gained by the practice. On the contrary, much is lost by it. The bow cannot always remain bent, without injury. Neither can the mind always be kept 'toned' to a high pitch. *Mind* and *body* must and will have their relaxations [p. 68].

Source 2:

> . . . I have played ball with him [Joseph Smith] many times in Nauvoo. He was preaching once, and he said it tried some of the pious folks to see him play ball with the boys. He then related a story of a certain prophet who was sitting under the shade of a tree amusing himself in some way, when a hunter came along with his bow and arrow, and reproved him. The prophet asked him if he kept his bow strung up all the time. The hunter answered that he did not. The prophet asked why, and he said it would lose its elasticity if he did. The prophet said it was just so with his mind, he did not want it strung up all the time. . . . [Elder William M(oore). Allred, St. Charles, Bear Lake County, Idaho, b. 1819, quoted in "Recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith," *Juvenile Instructor* 27/15 (1 August 1892): 472.]

Sameness and Difference

Comparisons by nature suggest examining two or more things. If we reduce texts to their similarities, the only conclusions we can draw is that they are alike (even if that view is in error). By introducing the differences, we can start to look a little deeper at what makes the comparison interesting. Are the elements that first seemed similar only superficially so? Are they in fact quite closely related? Does the use of a particular phrase in one text provide additional understanding for the use of a similar phrase in another text? In this case, the texts were chosen for several reasons. One of them is that there is an obvious similarity. It occurs in the use of the idea of a strung bow as a metaphor applied to the mind. But, with that similarity also come differences (if there weren't any differences we would have identical texts).

First, in the Alcott text, the reference is not just to the mind. Alcott tells us that "*Mind* and *body* must and will have

their relaxations." There is no reference to the body in the Allred recollection. The other primary difference between the two is the language. Despite the header that Grunder gives it, only the words "bow" and "mind" occur in both selections, and the word "strung" occurs only in the Allred recollection. The other words—rest, needed, mental, exercise, tightly—occur in neither text. These observations give us something to look at more closely. Does the language used tell us anything about the natures of these two texts within their specific contexts? Does the distinction between *Mind* and *Mind and Body* warrant further examination?

Context: An Expanding Circle

The Alcott passage is taken from his *The Young Man's Guide*. It is one of a genre of books (which continues, although in very different forms perhaps, to the present time) in which instruction is provided for young people. It is divided into seven chapters, each with several sections. The quote that Grunder provides comes from the seventh section ("On Forming Temperate Habits") of the first chapter ("On the Formation of Character"), which consists of guidelines for eating and drinking. The section in which the quotation is taken deals with issues of eating too quickly (or not quickly enough), and appropriate conversation at the dinner table. The full paragraph in which it occurs (which is helpful for understanding the context) is provided below:

> The idea of preventing conversation about what we eat is also foolish, though Dr. Franklin and many very wise men, may have thought otherwise. Some of our students in *commons* and elsewhere, suppose themselves highly meritous because they have adopted the plan of appointing one of their number to read to the company while the rest are eating. But they are sadly mistaken. Nothing is gained by the practice. On the contrary,

> much is lost by it. The bow cannot always remain bent, without injury. Neither can the mind always be kept "toned" to a high pitch. *Mind* and *body* must and will have their relaxations, or be revenged on us.

What sort of injury does Alcott suggest will come? He tells us in the preceding paragraph that inappropriate eating produces "stomach or liver complaints, or gout or rheumatism." And after providing us with the material Grunder quotes, he tells us in no uncertain terms: "But I do say, and with emphasis, that food must be *masticated*." This is not so much a text about mental exercise as it is about proper habits while eating.

The Allred recollection on the other hand, is quite short—part of a longer series of recollections by various other individuals, but the Allred comments are distinct both from the rest of the article and from the periodical in which they were published. They are reproduced below in their entirety:

> As I was not quite fifteen years old when I first saw him, I cannot remember many of his sayings at that time; but as he was returning, he preached in the Salt River Branch.
>
> I was with him in the troubles at DeWitt, Adam-ondi-ahman, and in Far West. I have played ball with him many times in Nauvoo. He was preaching once, and he said it tried some of the pious folks to see him play ball with the boys. He then related a story of a certain prophet who was sitting under the shade of a tree amusing himself in some way, when a hunter came along with his bow and arrow, and reproved him. The prophet asked him if he kept his bow strung up all the time. The hunter answered that he did not. The prophet asked why, and he said it would lose its elasticity if he did. The prophet said it was just so with his mind, he

> did not want it strung up all the time. Another time when I heard him preaching he said if he should tell the people all the Lord had revealed to him, some would seek his life. Even as good a man as old Father C----, here on the stand, he added, (pointing back to him) would seek his life.
>
> I was present when he preached the first sermon on baptism for the dead. I remember my father said it was astonishing to him to think he had read the Bible all his life and he had never looked at it in that light before. I was present at the first baptism for the dead.

The contexts seem to be quite different. It is true that there is a similarity there, but that similarity isn't nearly as neat and tidy when we look at larger contexts; at this point, we need to expand our examination beyond the two texts in question.

Frequency in Other Sources

Earlier, I quoted the 5th of Muriel C. St. Byrne's five golden rules:

> In order to express ourselves as certain of attributions we must prove exhaustively that we cannot parallel words, images, and phrases as a body from other acknowledged plays of the period; in other words, the negative check must always be applied.[20]

The idea behind the negative check is quite simple: if we can find a proposed verbal parallel in multiple sources, then it becomes very unlikely that the parallel in question is one of genetic nature. The same idea applies when we compare a text to a larger body of materials or a tradition—if we can find the same parallels outside of that body of literature or that tradition, then

20. Byrne, "Bibliographical Clues in Collaborate Plays," *The Library: A Quarterly Review of Bibliography* 13/1 (June 1932): 24.

establishing a connection between the text and that tradition or body of material becomes much more difficult. Most digital archives allow for searching by date range. The two primary electronic repositories I use are Google Books and the Making of America Archive hosted by the University of Michigan.[21]

Grunder indicates that he is specifically looking at the environmental argument:

> "It may be appropriate here to remind the reader that Mormon parallel works need not be candidates as specific sources necessarily consulted by Joseph Smith. Instead, this *Bibliographic Source* seeks to offer a broad and realistic social/intellectual context for Joseph's teachings in a variety of generally significant texts such as the one here at hand. (2008, p. 66)

When we begin searching for these parallels, our perception of Grunder's similarities begins to change dramatically. There are two larger traditions that these two texts variously use, and both find wide circulation at the time of Joseph Smith. The first comes to us through the Odes of Horace (written sometime around 23 BC). The passage in question comes from Book 2, chapter 10, line 19: *Neque semper arcum tendit Apollo*. John Devoe Belton explains to us that this phrase means: "*Apollo does not always keep his bow bent*. The quotation is ordinarily used in the sense that there are times when we all need relaxation from the point of high tension."[22] Of course, the original

21. These databases can be found at books.google.com and http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moagrp/

22. John Devoe Belton, *A Literary manual of Foreign Quotations, Ancient and Modern with Illustrations from American and English Authors and Explanatory Notes* (New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1891), 122. Devoe continues by quoting *Guy Mannering*, the novel published by Walter Scott in 1815: "'And pray, Mr. Sampson, are these three hours entirely spent in construing and translating?' 'Doubtless—no—we have also colloquial intercourse to sweeten study—*neque simper arcum tendit Apollo*.'" Scott, "Guy Mannering," Chap. 15.

text by Horace doesn't convey this sentiment, but we know that it had built this public perception much earlier than the texts we are currently considering, as we see from this commentary originally published in 1712:

> *Homer* says, that the Arrows of this God brought the Plague into the *Grecian* Camp; the Reason of which is evident. In like Manner, when *Horace* says here, that *Apollo* has not always his Bow bent, he means that *Apollo* does not always afflict Mankind with the forementioned Calamities; it is therefore a wrong Application of these Words, which a great many make, when they use them to express that the Mind ought not always to be upon the Stretch, but should now and then be allowed some Relaxation.[23]

The phrase in several forms became something of a euphemism. Alcott himself had already used it in 1839, in another of his books:

> It is impossible for the liver to be thus excited, at times, to increased action, without falling into correspondent inactivity at other times. The bow cannot always remain bent—it must react or rebound. The pendulum, too, which has vibrated too far in one direction, will vibrate too far on the other direction, as the natural and inevitable consequence. So with the action of the liver.[24]

Here, the comparison is made—not between the mind and a bow, but uses the euphemism to refer again to the body, including the connection (only implicitly made here) that like the bow being injured, so too is the body injured. There are

23. David Watson, *The Odes, Epodes, and Carmen Seculare of Horace Translated into English Prose* (London, 1760), 153. I have quoted from the fourth edition of the text.

24. William Alcott, *Tea and Coffee* (Boston: George W. Light, 1839), 146–47.

numerous allusions to this metaphor in literature,[25] and there is little doubt that this idea would have been at least somewhat familiar to the early followers of Joseph Smith.

The second tradition is also interesting. In the Allred recollection, Joseph relates a story about a prophet. Much like Horace, the source of that narrative is quite old, and can be traced back at least as far as John Cassian (AD 360–435). It seems unlikely (but possible) that Cassian was the author of this account (more likely he in turn adapted an earlier convention). R. Alan Culpepper provides a nice summary of the story: "John was stroking a partridge when a hunter appeared and expressed surprise that the great apostle was amusing himself in this way. John asked the hunter why he did not keep his bow strung all the time, and the hunter answered that if he did so, it would soon be weakened from the constant strain. John replied that just in the same way, the mind needs to relax from time to time."[26]

Cassian's text was quite popular and was quickly distributed and translated from the Latin into Greek. Later versions often made changes,[27] but the story of John and the partridge remained largely intact. Closer to Joseph's time, this narrative was given a rebirth when it was used by Francis De Sales in his text titled *Introduction to the Devout Life*, first published in French in 1609, and subsequently published in many languages

25. Several of these references make a clear connection between the phrase that Alcott uses and Horace as a source. For example, "It may, perhaps, strike some readers as rather strange, that we should have ascribed to Cromwell a capacity for rough practical fun, little in accordance, no doubt, with the general stream of his character. But the bow cannot always remain bent; Neque semper arcum Tendit Apollo," William Henry Farm, "Blanche Dorrimer (A Tale of the Commonwealth)," *Blackwood's Lady's Magazine* 10 (1841), 17.

26. R. Alan Culpepper, *John, The Son of Zebedee: The Life of a Legend* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 196. Culpepper references several different versions of the story and traces a number of sources in his text.

27. E.g. *The Acts of John*, chapters 56 and 57.

including English. In translation, De Sales account reads as follows:

> It is necessary sometimes to relax our minds as well as our bodies by some kind of recreation. St. John the Evangelist, as Cassian relates, was one day found by a huntsman with a partridge on his hand, which he was caressing for his recreation. The huntsman asked how such a man as he could spend his time in so poor and mean an occupation? St. John replied: Why dost thou not carry thy bow always bent? For fear, answered the huntsman, that if it were always bent, it would loose its spring and become useless. Be not surprised, then, replied the apostle, that I should sometimes remit a little of the close application and attention of my spirit and enjoy a little recreation, that I may afterward employ myself more fervently in divine contemplation.[28]

The similarities between the Allred account and the narrative of John and the partridge are remarkable. It seems quite likely that when (as Allred recollects) Joseph related the story of "a certain prophet," that prophet was none other than John the Evangelist. The other elements follow in roughly the same order—a hunter sees the man amusing himself, confronts him, is asked about his bow, answers, and is then told that the mind is like the bow and needs to rest from time to time. This is a far more complex string of similarities, and there can be little doubt that the story that Allred provides relies heavily (either directly or through Joseph Smith) on this tradition about John the Evangelist. There is also little doubt that these issues also reflect a tradition present in Joseph's environment. But Grunder's *Mormon Parallel* doesn't give us a cultural or intellectual context for Joseph's teaching.

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28. Francis De Sales, *An Introduction to the Devout Life*, trans. unknown (London: Rivingtons, 1877), 177–78.

The Devil is in the Detail

"It is as dangerous historically to exaggerate the similarities as it is to become overly comfortable with the differences" (1987, p. xviii).

In this specific example of the prophet and the bow, the header that Grunder provides, which functions also as a description of the parallel, is misleading. It is more of a synthesis or an interpretation of the two accounts that he is proposing. In order to make them appear more closely related than they are, he has used his own language to describe the similarity. This language also induces his readers to focus on certain generalities in order to highlight those similarities. As we look at the details, however, we notice differences. The more generic and less specific our comparison is, the more likely we are to be making errors. We cannot simply pay attention to the details that support the similarity. The counter question becomes important. If we present the differences in the same fashion that the similarities are presented, do we make at least as convincing a case in the opposite direction?

Comparisons don't have to be limited to two options, and by introducing additional texts to our comparison, we discover that some details glossed over or ignored really do matter. On this basis we can make some determinations about the nature of these proposed parallels. My conclusions, of course, do not change the idea that the text Allred gives us was influenced by his environment (or that Joseph's remarks weren't influenced by his immediate environment). What we learn is that the environment proposed by Grunder as represented in the Alcott text was not that influence, and the parallel that he proposes is superficial and not significant.

Rhetorical Value

The term *Rhetorical Value* probably needs some explanation. "Rhetoric is defined broadly to include all the linguistic and literary choices a writer makes in order to communicate

with his audience."[29] When we consider rhetoric, we are looking at the author and at the author's intention.[30] Grunder comments briefly on this:

> Of course I have focused upon my subject, and the selections were chosen from each work to demonstrate my thesis. What I have never done consciously—and I hope, never done at all—is to misrepresent an author's intent in any passage through inappropriate choice of portions to quote. . . . Cursory comparison of some of my selections beside their original full sources may cause the occasional reader to wonder why I did not quote more. I believe, however, that upon more extensive analysis, the integrity of my representations from these writings will stand. (2008, p. 44)

> Never, however, have I consciously quoted these passages in any manner calculated to misconstrue the sense the authors intended. It was impossible to indulge in lengthy analysis of the possible relationships which may have existed between these citations and the Mormon elements to which they bear some affinity. That is for the professional historians to undertake. (1978, p. xxxiv)

Looking for an author's intent is a work of interpretation. We may well get closer in some instances than in others. Grunder is right in holding that a detailed analysis of relationships between texts can be very lengthy. Already, my discussion

29. Gary L.Tandy, *The Rhetoric of Certitude: C.S. Lewis's Nonfiction Prose* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2009), xi-xii.

30. This is not intended as an argument for or against the idea of authorial intention. It simply expresses the view that certain features of texts—like rhetorical figures—can only be understood in terms of the intentions of an author. Likewise, deliberate mimesis of a text or borrowing from a source can only be understood in terms of the intentions of an author.

of the Alcott-Allred parallel here far exceeds the half page that Grunder provides for it, where he literally provides nothing but the two texts in a two column parallel format. Without any discussion of interpretation, we can only guess at what Grunder has taken to be the author's intent. We can only guess at whether or not the text presented provides an accurate representation of that intent. In this way, however, Grunder has committed one of Lindey's vices: "5. Parallel columns operate piecemeal. They wrench phrases and passages out of context. A product of the imagination is indivisible. It depends on totality of effect. To remove details from their setting is to falsify them."[31]

Rhetorical value deals with interpretations and also intentions of the author's of texts. In the case of these two examples, we have some wildly variant contexts. The Alcott text occurs, as I noted, in a book of instruction for young men. More narrowly, it occurs in a section that is primarily devoted to consuming food and drink. The material touches on these subjects: drunkenness, gluttony, eating too quickly, conversation during meals (the context for the parallel Grunder provides), chewing your food, and drinking water. The section ends with these two rules:

> 1st. The fewer different articles of food used at any one meal, the better; however excellent in their nature those may be which are left untasted. 2. Never eat a moment longer than the food, if well masticated, actually *revives* and *refreshes* you. The moment it makes you feel heavy or dull, or palls upon the taste, *you have passed the line of safety.*[32]

For us to assume that the essential point of this text—of the rhetoric—is that, without a break, mental exercise can be damaging to the mind is rather problematic. Only if we assume

31. Lindey, *Plagiarism and Originality*, 61.
32. Alcott, T*ea and* Coffee, 57–58.

that the similarity is itself the essential message does this come through the text. On the other hand, the Allred narrative deals with a somewhat different issue. The problem, as the story tells us, isn't about mental exercise, it is why a man who is a prophet would spend his time engaged in such activities as playing with a partridge, or playing with children. In a sense though, the rhetorical purpose of the narrative is not only to justify the behavior of Joseph Smith, it also compares him in a not so subtle way to John the Evangelist, author of the Gospel of the same name in the New Testament. If it is okay for John to play with a partridge, it is certainly okay for Joseph to play ball with children. In this sense, the second text isn't really about the notion that the mind must occasionally take a break from mental exercise either. In focusing strictly on the similarities—in making them the essence of both texts, Grunder has reinterpreted them as referring to "mental exercise"—a misunderstanding of both sources grounded on a desire to conflate them.

A careful look at the rhetoric of each text—and more importantly at the rhetorical value and role played by the alleged similarities reveals two texts that are not very close at all.

Distance

As a final concern in this particular example, there is an issue of distance. Grunder tells us that we should prefer closer (in terms of time and distance) sources to more distant sources. I think that this is generally good advice. However, in several cases (and the example being looked at here is not an exception), the distance is between publication of the sources and not to alleged originals. Here, we have in Allred, a recollection written some decades after the events it claims to describe. It may well have been influenced in the intervening years—however, given that the tradition that the Allred account draws upon can be found through that entire time period, this has very little impact on the discussion.

> Little could Joseph Smith, Sr., have imagined as well how popular his dream about the Tree of Life would eventually become among generations of Mormon Sunday Schoolers. Even though the dream as refined in the Book of Mormon narrative (1 Nephi 8) certainly represented an important didactic allegory for Mormon readers. (1987, p. xvii)

The account of Joseph Smith, Sr.'s dream is taken from Lucy Mack Smith's account written in 1845 (and later first published in 1853). As Grunder notes: "some scholars urge that Lucy may have read the later Book of Mormon imagery back into her husband's account (Bushman 1984, 50; Griggs, 259–60). In the end, we simply cannot know." The issue here ought to be clear. By 1844, the Book of Mormon was a part of the environment of Lucy Mack Smith (one with which we expect she was fairly familiar). There is some confusion here over the distinction between source and environment. Grunder wants us to understand that there is no strict evidence (apart from the similarities of course) that Smith's history relied on the Book of Mormon. And yet, Grunder uses her history as evidence of environmental sources that were specifically used by Joseph Smith in his production of the Book of Mormon. There is an inconsistency here that is created by first suggesting that distance is an important consideration when looking at parallels, and then ignoring that consideration when it doesn't suit the argument.

Distance is obviously a more important argument when looking at genetic connections. But it is also important when dealing with environmental suggestions as well. When making a claim for environmental causes, we need to be careful of what we insert into the environment and what it means. Those issues that often detract from genetic claims (multiple sources,

patterns of language, etc.) often contribute toward an environmental understanding.

A Note on Selecting Texts

In any study of parallels, the process of choosing texts is important. In general, we are usually more concerned with what is left out than what is left in. Grunder provides us with the criteria that he used for inclusion in his list of materials:

> SCOPE: LIMITED TO ITEMS WHICH I HAVE OWNED OR HANDLED.
>
> A totally comprehensive study of Mormon parallels would be impossible, even for the period immediately surrounding Joseph Smith's religious work. It would require, in the strictest sense, an examination of every imprint and every manuscript, piece of art and other cultural artifact produced at the time. Even a thorough inspection of all printed holdings in American libraries for the period would be out of the question.
>
> A line had to be drawn, so I drew it at personal ownership: I have only included items which I was able to discover and acquire (or accept personal responsibility for) in my own research collection or antiquarian business. I also included a very small number of items owned by friends. In two instances, I worked off copies supplied by friends, rather than the original imprints themselves. The kind of work I do is too slow and strenuous to perform while sitting in a library's rare book reading room. Personal ownership or custody allowed leisure to examine many items thoroughly, often in excruciating detail, and it removed most potential restrictions of permission to publish or illustrate (2008, p. 47).[33]

33. In his earlier text, Grunder notes that his primary concern was with parallels to the Book of Mormon (1987, xviii).

In the age of digital archives, it is easier to be more inclusive than was Grunder. Better results come from being more and not less inclusive, and I prefer larger bodies of texts over smaller groupings. There are several reasons why inclusiveness is preferable. A bibliographic collection that Grunder has accumulated has such a narrow focus that it causes him to miss a great deal of information. Just as Mormonism comes out of something that precedes it, so does each of these texts belong to the historical era that both precedes and produces them and in which they were written. We expect to find connections between not just these texts but with every other text. While we can focus narrowly on the proposed sources for examination, the negative check needs to be far more inclusive than exclusive.

Much of this information could have been gathered by a quick search of electronic holdings that are publicly available. But in a work that is as polemical as is Grunder's collection, there is a sense in several places that he has acquired material and included it in this volume because others have suggested a connection. A good example of this is his inclusion of three maps (Parallels 3, 4, 5), which are included because of a single word found on those maps ("Comoro"). They are included because of a suggestion made by Frederick Buchanan, in a brief column in *Sunstone* in 1989.[34] Another instance, previously addressed, is the issue of connection between the tiered system of heaven and the Testament of Levi.

The point here is that this is not some kind of routine or "objective" selection process. Grunder has included in his collection of presumed parallels nearly every text that others have suggested might have been used as a source for the Book of Mormon. In many cases, Grunder doesn't provide the parallels—he simply references the works of others. In other cases,

34. See note 71 in Part One of this article.

some references are noticeably absent. This is exactly the wrong way to go about this process.[35]

One additional issue needs to be needs to be raised. Many of Grunder's sources are rare if not unique. Obtaining access to these sources can be difficult. This isn't merely an issue of checking Grunder's accuracy, but in having full texts available for comparison. This creates at times an increased burden on anyone seeking to expand or examine his comparisons. While electronic archives have expanded in recent years, and a great many of his rarer sources are now reasonably accessible, Grunder has made it very difficult to verify his sources, or to recontextualize them outside of his interpretation of essentialness of the material he presents. To return to the question of "Comoro," we have an extreme example in a map of Africa, where he extracts a single word (one that is a homonym and not even an exact match) to compare to a single word used nine times in the Book of Mormon. Without the pre-determination of significance, such a parallel would never be recognized by readers of these texts. In many cases, without the full texts, we cannot even evaluate our own responses to the suggestions.

Once More: Genetic versus Environmental Parallels

In the specific example I used, we found neither genetic nor significant environmental parallels between the two sources that Grunder proposed. For each source, though, I was able to determine an environmental parallel—a textual ancestor and traditional interpretation on which each was dependent and so perhaps genetically linked. In dealing with environmental parallels, the key feature is not a single text but a host of them, all of which share a set of common features. Genetic parallels generally look at single texts and their relationships.

35. For a discussion on this theme, see Linnér, "Structure and Functions," 172–74.

In several cases, Grunder explains to us that he is not interested in pointing to a direct connection between his sources and the Mormon texts he provides. He speaks of environmental studies (2008, p. 39). He wants us to find Mormonism in everything, and everywhere. This isn't a terribly difficult task. And it isn't particularly interesting. All that his kind of study can do for us is to verify in some sense that Mormonism is a real movement with a real history that grew out of a specific time and place. It cannot tell us much more than that. The most basic kind of similarity that Grunder presents us with are homophones. On pages 898–99, he presents us, for example, with a list of "terms which sound similar to later 'Mormon' words." If we define *Mormon Words* in the same way Grunder defines *Mormon Parallels* (that is, as words in "Mormonism which first existed in a non-Mormon context available in Joseph Smith's world" [2008, p. 47]), then we could safely assume that everything could be adequately covered by environmental studies. The same could be said of every religious movement, every society (as a whole), and every culture. There isn't much that is unique when presented in this fashion. Because of this, such a study would be absolutely useless. Grunder's claim that he is purely interested in environmental concerns seems problematic. He tells us, for example that:

> These ideas crept through the culture not only by being read, but through more subtle and often indefinable processes which occurred in art, singing, gossip, storytelling, preaching and praying, and through other aspects of a particularly active system of oral tradition which had to flourish then even more powerfully than in today's mass-media-communicated world. And, as is still the case today, the appearance of an idea in *written* and *printed* sources generally suggested the presence of that idea already circulating *orally* some-

> where—if not everywhere—in the environment. The books and papers which I analyze in this *Bibliographic Source* were thus no more causes than they were *indicators*: not necessarily contributing directly to the mind of Joseph Smith, but standing as evidence that the thoughts which he proclaimed were waiting in the air. These works do not presume that "Joseph Smith once read us," so much as they insist that "we were already there." (2008, p. 38)

The fact that we can find such texts is an indication that their content is in the environment.[36] When Grunder makes comments about his sources, he tries to make connections between the source and early Mormon figures. For example, with parallel 1, Grunder notes that "a similar list from Adair was printed in a newspaper of the town in which teen-aged Brigham Young was living in 1819." This kind of detail attempts to connect a particular Mormon figure with a source—an approach that has little meaning outside of an argument for some kind of influence. In other places, the claims aren't so subtle:

> Attempts by Nat Turner and others to accomplish that very thing (including the John Murrell plot in mid-1835) —along with Mormon political difficulties in Missouri—undoubtedly combined to inspire Oliver Cowdery's August 17, 1835 declaration that, . . . (2008, p. 75–76)

> The American antimasonic movement which raged while Joseph Smith dictated the Book of Mormon suggests its background influence in a number of the Book's passages which describe mafia-esque intrigues

36. While this certainly true—printed material is evidence of that material being in the environment in some way—it is also evident that not everything that is printed in the modern world has wide distribution or is circulating orally everywhere.

> of ancient American bands of robbers after the order of one Gadianton. (2008, p. 138)

Grunder looks for single sources, not widespread traditions. His focus on these individual sources looks far more like an argument for genetic dependency than claims for a shared environment. When his analysis is wrong, it is wrong because he has "missed the forest for the trees." Grunder in many ways is a mirror image of the "apologists" that he derides: "They come at the reader," he complains,

> with wave upon wave of erudite-sounding arguments, often drawn from ancient sources with esoteric names and from phenomena which are nearly unassailable by the layperson. With each 'hit' presented comes a question, stated or implied. (2008, p. 24)

But Grunder presents literally thousands of pages of esoteric texts, without having to overtly provide much of his own interpretation. He tries to pull the rug out from under his "apologist" opponents by asserting frequently that it doesn't matter if this specific text was a source or not—its mere existence is evidence enough. What is the implied argument that comes with the presentation of each new parallel? There is nothing new or original within Mormonism.

We can often see direct influence from a specific source (or a group of related sources) reflected in a new text. Sometimes this is explicitly stated. My own essay here (and Grunder's work) documents in citations (or footnotes) hundreds of sources that are used and that have influenced our respective published works. While not always explicitly identified, we can often gauge with some certainty that the work one individual produces borrows from or was highly influenced by the work of another (even if we cannot always tell the direct path that the influence took).

Once we have determined the similarities, we can then identify the differences, and start to rediscover what is historically original. This is true of Joseph Smith and Rick Grunder. At the conclusion of each examination we should be able to say with some certainty if a legitimate environmental parallel exists, if that parallel rises to a level of influence or genetic connection, and make some preliminary observations on how the parallel was used and developed within the Mormon source.

Conclusion

"Inevitably, the presentation of so much material in this study will crave conclusions about what it all means" (2008, p. 26).

What does all of it mean? It should be quite obvious that Mormonism is a real movement, coming from a real historical period and from a recognizable environment. It seems reasonable that we should see environmental influences coming from that time and place within Mormonism. I repeat, this shouldn't come as a surprise. The collection of texts in Grunder's bibliography, however, doesn't help enlighten as much as Grunder believes it should.

More than a dozen of Grunder's parallels come in texts produced by the Temperance Movement (all of them presented in comparison with the Word of Wisdom in Doctrine and Covenants Section 89). The highlight shared between this large body of literature and early Mormonism is the negative view on alcohol (strong drinks). There is a clear environmental issue, shared by both of these movements with the larger social group to which both belong. The information we have (from the historical record) from that time period tells us that alcohol consumption in the U.S. was at record levels per capita, peaking at around 1830.[37] Serious health concerns directly linked to

37. W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 8–9.

alcohol had been in circulation for the better part of a century,[38] and those concerns (and later similar explanations) contributed to a growing public discourse. In response to these issues, the temperance movement began to pick up speed about the same time as early Mormonism began to take form. Just one organization alone, the New York State Temperance Society, managed to distribute more than four and a half million tracts between 1829 and 1834 describing the evils of strong drinks (the entire population of the United States was at that time about thirteen million).[39] That this should become a topic for religion in general and in Mormonism more specifically isn't odd. If anything surprises us, it is that the Word of Wisdom doesn't engage in the language of these temperance groups, and doesn't label strong drinks as the tool of the devil. Rather it suggests that "inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink among you, behold it is not good, neither meet in the sight of your Father, only in assembling yourselves together to offer up your sacraments before him" (D&C 89:5). While we can see that there is a great deal of potential for an environmental relationship between these kinds of texts, the individual tracts from the Temperance Movement end up having very little in common with the Word of Wisdom or its later interpretation by Mormons.[40] So why does Grunder feel the need to provide so many of these texts? The several examples that Grunder provides don't demonstrate to us the inevitability of the Word of

38. Sometimes incorrectly, as the case may be. In one of the first such publications, Thomas Cadwalader had attributed the West India Dry-Gripes to drinking rum (in his essay "Essay on the West India Dry-Gripes," published by Benjamin Franklin in 1745). This was only partially true. Drinking the rum did cause the painful (sometimes fatal) maladies, but it wasn't caused by alcohol *per se*. The actual cause was lead poisoning derived from lead-lined stills used to make the rum.

39. W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic*, 196.

40. It wasn't until the beginning of the twentieth century that Latter-day Saints finally enforced a ban on alcohol in ecclesiastical policy. And the ban on coffee, tea, and tobacco was never a part of the Temperance Movement agenda.

Wisdom within Mormon thought—and they don't apparently cause the development in Mormon thought on the topic of alcohol consumption.

While Grunder's bibliographic work can be helpful in pointing out some of the areas in which we can look for these environmental causes, it isn't helpful in explaining them. Similarity without difference is merely identity. When we examine parallels more closely, all we find are differences. The repeated insistence that these parallels are important is really an attempt to drive home covert conclusions, and not to simply provide additional examples or possibilities. As Grunder tells us in a discussion about weights and values in the Book of Mormon:

> If one were dictating from one's head during the early period of the United States, and one were thinking of silver, gold, and grain, I think the most obvious units would be the dollar and the bushel. Both were made up of repeatedly doubled units, in common folk-binary divisions. . . . If the American/Book of Mormon correlations which I have presented are not perfect, they are simplicity itself when viewed against the labored arguments offered by modern Book of Mormon defenders. I cannot say that Joseph Smith thought consciously like I propose, but I will insist that his task was easier than many people have imagined. (2008, pp. 484–46)

There is a subtext to this comment. Joseph's task in this statement can only refer to the production of the Book of Mormon. Grunder's bibliography is not a collection of potential parallels to Mormonism taken from its earliest environment. It is a series of stealthed polemical arguments—aimed primarily at "modern Book of Mormon defenders." As such, its value in identifying real potential sources, and even real environmental influences, is limited. What value there might

be in collecting such a range of sources is diminished by the polemical nature of the work's contents (as well as by its sheer volume), the lack of availability in its sources for casual comparison, and a summary approach that misinforms more often than it illuminates. In the end, Grunder comes across as one of Tennyson's index-hunters, one of those "men of great memories and no imagination, who *impute themselves* to the poet, and so believe that *he*, too, has no imagination, but is for ever poking his nose between the pages of some old volume in order to see what he can appropriate."[41] And the Mormonism that we discover in the pages of Grunder's book becomes ham that has lost its flavor. Mormonism isn't the hints that we can find, it is what has become of them.

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41. Tennyson, *The Works of Tennyson*, 910.

When Hypotheses Collide: Responding to Lyon and Minson's "When Pages Collide"

Brant A. Gardner

Abstract: *At the end of 2012, Jack M. Lyon and Kent R. Minson published "When Pages Collide: Dissecting the Words of Mormon." They suggest that there is textual evidence that supports the idea that Words of Mormon 12-18 is the translation of the end of the previous chapter of Mosiah. The rest of the chapter was lost with the 116 pages, but this text remained because it was physically on the next page, which Joseph had kept with him.*

In this paper, the textual information is examined to determine if it supports that hypothesis. The conclusion is that while the hypothesis is possible, the evidence is not conclusive. The question remains open and may ultimately depend upon one's understanding of the translation process much more than the evidence from the manuscripts.

Jack M. Lyon and Kent R. Minson published "When Pages Collide: Dissecting the Words of Mormon" at the end of 2012. They conclude:

> Without the benefit of Royal Skousen's landmark publications on the original Book of Mormon text, scholars have previously described Words of Mormon verses 12–18 as a "bridge" or "transition" that Mormon wrote to connect the record of the small plates with his abridgment from the large plates. Based on the now-available documentary evidence, that analysis can be seen as faulty—an attempt to explain what should never have needed explaining. There is no "bridge"

> between the small plates and the rest of the Book of Mormon. There is only the Words of Mormon itself (consisting of verses 1–11), where Mormon simply explains why he is including the small plates with the rest of the record. The verses that follow (12–18) belong in the book of Mosiah.[1]

That is an important suggestion. If correct, it fully supports their conclusion that "this paper provides a new explanation of what may have occurred—one that makes sense based on the documentary and textual evidence. This may seem like a small matter, but it could have important ramifications for study and scholarship."[2] Most important is their assertion that "based on the now-available documentary evidence, that analysis [that words of Mormon verses 12–18 are a bridge between the text from the small to the text from Mormon's plates] can be seen as faulty." Having suggested that their conclusion is based on Skousen's meticulous work on the Book of Mormon manuscripts, it is critical to understand how, and if, Skousen's information leads to that conclusion.

Lyon and Minson argue that verses 12–18 physically existed as part of the Original Manuscript and immediately preceded what we have as Mosiah chapter 1. These verses would have been the last text of the previous chapter that happened to have been written on the hypothetical page 117 of the translation prepared by Joseph Smith and Martin Harris (the completed 116 having been lost). Thus, rather than a bridging synopsis, the text would represent text that was originally intended to be the conclusion to the lost chapter preceding our current Mosiah chapter 1.

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1. Jack M. Lyon and Kent R. Minson, "When Pages Collide: Dissecting the Words of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 51/4 (2012): 134.
2. Lyon and Minson, "When Pages Collide," 134–35.

On the other hand, I have suggested that verses 12–18 form an inspired recapitulation of the missing material, but are not representative of any text from the original plate text or dictation.[3] Before examining the evidence, we should note that our separate interpretations probably arise from our differing ideas about the nature of the Book of Mormon translation. Lyon and Minson more closely follow Skousen's often-articulated position that "Joseph Smith received an English-language text word for word, which he read off to his scribe."[4] I suspect that their preference for Skousen's translation theory informs their disagreement with my suggestion: "Gardner is correct in his assessment that the 'material so precisely fits' with the remaining text of Mosiah, but, in our view, he is incorrect in his conclusion of what that means. The documentary and textual evidence supports the simpler explanation outlined in this paper."[5] If they are correct that "the documentary and textual evidence supports the simpler explanation," then my hypothesis was incorrect. The critical part of the argument is the suggestion that there is textual evidence in Skousen's work that inevitably leads to their simpler explanation.

Lyon and Minson use D&C 10:41 to demonstrate that Joseph did not turn over everything that had been translated to Martin Harris: "Therefore, you shall translate the engravings which are on the plates of Nephi, down even till you come to the reign of king Benjamin, or until you come to that which you have translated, which you have retained." The dictated manu-

3. Brant A. Gardner, *The Gift and Power: Translating the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Greg Kofford Books, 2011), 245–46.

4. Royal Skousen, "Some Textual Changes for a Scholarly Study of the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 51/4 (2012): 99. See also Royal Skousen, "Translating the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins,* ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1997), 64, and Royal Skousen, "How Joseph Smith Translated the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7/1 (1998): 24.

5. Lyon and Minson, "When Pages Collide," 136, n. 19.

script was written on prepared gatherings, typically consisting of 12 pages folded over to create a set of 24 pages. Lyon and Minson suggest that Martin was given complete gatherings, and any text that had already been dictated and written on the next incomplete gathering represents that which was retained. This makes sense because the evidence shows that the gatherings were created prior to the scribe writing upon them.[6] Thus they suggest that "what he had retained was the end of Mosiah chapter 2 (which is now Words of Mormon verses 12–18) and perhaps more."[7]

That Martin received only the gatherings that were completed, and that if there were any text already begun on the next gathering it would have been retained, is eminently reasonable. Unfortunately, it cannot be asserted from that possibility that there actually was text retained on the 117th page (the next page of the next gathering). If we assume a completely regular 24-page gathering, Skousen suggests that the lost 116 pages extended through part of five gatherings.[8] Dividing 116 pages by 24 gives us 4.83 gatherings. That is close to a full set of five 24-page gatherings and makes it reasonable to hypothesize that Martin received complete gatherings.

However, since the math also suggests that the 116 pages would not completely fill five 24-page gatherings, it is also possible that there would have been blank space at the end of the fifth gathering. Because the evidence suggests that the gatherings were created prior to use, any blank space diminishes the probability that there was a text fragment retained on page 117. If there were blank space as suggested by the less-than-full us-

6. Royal Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2001), 1:31. More information on the gatherings is found on pp. 34–36. Skousen notes that while the gathering was created before text was added, the text was added prior to the time the gatherings were stitched together (p. 34).

7. Lyon and Minson, "When Pages Collide," 127.

8. Skousen, *Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon,* 35.

age of the pages in the gathering, there wouldn't be any text on the next gathering as it should have been simply continued in the fifth gathering.

While the empty space would preclude Lyon and Minson's hypothesis, it is correct only if all of the gatherings were uniformly 24 pages. The lack of the Original Manuscript for this section makes it difficult to come to a firm conclusion. However, the extant gatherings of the Printer's Manuscript did not always contain precisely 24 pages. Lyon and Minson's hypothesis is still possible, but not inevitable.

If Martin had received completely full gatherings, and there was some text already translated and recorded on the sixth gathering, then only serendipitous coincidence would have placed the next chapter at the beginning of the next page. Oliver Cowdery conserved paper by continuing subsequent chapters on the same page and typically right after the end of the previous chapter. This continues to leave room for Lyon and Minson's suggestion that verses 12–18 were at the top of page 117 of the original and preceded the recording of "Chapter" on that same page.[9] So far, the textual evidence at least leaves the door open for their solution, but does not conclusively support it.

At this point, we turn to a different type of textual evidence. In this case, we are examining the text on the manuscript, although it must be emphasized that the Original Manuscript is not extant for this crucial juncture. Accepting that when Joseph began translating again, he picked up in the book of Mosiah rather than starting with 1 Nephi, then the earliest extant translated text does not appear until Alma 10:31.[10]

9. Lyon and Minson, "When Pages Collide," 131, argue, after presenting the verses in question and the indication of the "Chapter" for what we have as Mosiah 1, that "*Somewhere* in that text is the end of the Words of Mormon and the beginning of page 117."

10. Skousen, *Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon,* 35.

Therefore, the evidence comes from the Printer's Manuscript, which was the copy Oliver made to deliver to the compositor.

Lyon and Minson cite Skousen's analysis of an anomaly at the beginning of what we have as Mosiah Chapter 1. It is sufficiently important to repeat:

> Originally, Oliver Cowdery simply wrote *Chapter III* (on line 3). This chapter specification reflects the probable reading of the Original Manuscript, which is no longer extant for any of the book of Mosiah. *Chapter III* implies that the beginning of the current book of Mosiah was indeed the beginning of chapter 3 of Mosiah in the original Book of Mormon text. The 116 lost pages containing the book of Lehi probably included part of the original first two chapters of the book of Mosiah."[11]

Clearly, something was wrong with the *Chapter III* and it was later corrected to Chapter I. The question is what caused the numbering anomaly. Skousen suggests that there were two missing chapters of Mosiah, a proposition Lyon and Minson accept. It is a proposition that I had also accepted until this exercise forced me to directly consider this issue. It is absolutely important to emphasize that all of this information comes from the Printer's Manuscript and not from the Original. Were this information in the Original Manuscript the conclusions could be different.

First, Skousen's research demonstrates that the chapter numbers are later additions to the Printer's Manuscript. That is, the word *Chapter* was indicated, but not the number. At some later point, the numbers were added:

11. Royal Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, (Provo, UT: FARMS), 2.1.41 (no printed number, text accompanying plate 3).

> "Chapter" is assigned to small books that contain only one section (such as Enos, Jarom, and Omni). And the chapter numbers are added later, in heavier ink and more carefully written (sometimes with serifs). In one place in the printer's manuscript the added number is in blue ink rather than the normal black (now turned brown).
>
> And sometimes the inserted chapter numbers are incorrect. For instance, at the beginning of 2 Nephi (see the above transcription), the initial "Chapter" is assigned the number VIII as if it were the next chapter in 1 Nephi (which in the original text contained seven chapters). Moreover, in numbering the chapters in Mosiah in the printer's manuscript, Oliver accidentally skipped one number when he came to chapter 8 and incorrectly listed it as "Chapter IX." This misnumbering then continues through to the end of Mosiah.[12]

This misnumbering directly impacts our understanding of the change from *Chapter III* to *Chapter I.* Lyon and Minson note an anomaly: "Oliver's editing on other nearby pages also shows his confusion about what was going on in the manuscript at this point. For example, after he had written the phrase 'The Words of Mormon,' he inserted 'Chapter 2.d' (meaning 'Chapter Second') above it, indicating that he may initially have seen the Words of Mormon as a second chapter in the book of Omni. If so, that could also explain the 'Chapter III' at the beginning of the book of Mosiah."[13] While I will suggest that this is precisely so, Lyon and Minson reach a different conclusion with the following justification: "One must keep in mind, however, that 'Chapter 2.d' is a supralinear addition, while 'Chapter

12. Royal Skousen, "Critical Methodology and the Text of the Book of Mormon," *FARMS Review* 6/1 (1994): 138.

13. Lyon and Minson, "When Pages Collide," 132.

III' is not, indicating that 'Chapter III' was part of the original manuscript. In addition, if Oliver had simply been continuing the number in the printer's manuscript, he likely would have written 'Chapter 3.d' rather than 'Chapter III.'"[14]

The first problem with their conclusion is that it makes a statement about what must have been in the Original Manuscript solely on the basis of the type of numbering, Arabic or Roman. Unfortunately, the data do not support that conclusion. Oliver's previous numbering in the Printer's Manuscript indicates that he was very comfortable alternating between the use of Roman numerals and 2d, 3d, 4th-style notations. The first chapter in both 1 and 2 Nephi is "Chapter first," but the third chapter in 1 Nephi and the second of 2 Nephi begin with Roman numerals.[15] The single chapter books (Enos, Jarom, and Omni) are all introduced as "The Book of . . . Chapter first."[16] Thus we cannot hang much weight on the thread of the change in numbering style. Oliver was not sufficiently consistent that "Chapter III" must represent anything that was in the Original Manuscript. In fact, if he had been copying from the Original, the format could easily have been Arabic numerals as that is what we find for 1 Nephi chapters 2 and 3.[17]

Oliver's after-the-fact numbering of Chapter III was likely occasioned by his previous numbering in Omni. The begin-

14. Lyon and Minson, "When Pages Collide," 132–33.

15. Skousen, *Printer's Manuscript,* 69, line 36 has Chapter 2nd for the second chapter of 1 Nephi. The third chapter begins on page 78, line 13, and has "Chapter III." The first chapter of 2 Nephi is "Chapter 12st" on page 143, line 25. The second chapter, page 154, line 11, is "Chapter II." Thus the mixing of the two styles is common and not indicative that Chapter III must have been copied from the *Original Manuscript.*

16. Skousen, *Printer's Manuscript,* Enos, 270, line 10; Jarom, 274, line 4; and Omni 276, line 11.

17. Skousen, *Original Manuscript,* 81, 95. It is interesting that chapter confusion again occurs between 1 and 2 Nephi, with overwritten chapter numbers and then supralinear "second" to mark the "second" book of Nephi, followed by the supralinear "chapter I."

ning of the book of Omni has "The Book of Omni Chapter first."[18] Although Oliver was familiar with that use for single chapter books, he was faced with a second textual issue as he looked at what was written for the end of Omni and the beginning of Words of Mormon. At that point, Skousen indicates a line, an unusual marking, but certainly making an apparent difference between the end of Omni 1 and what followed. What followed, however, didn't replicate the model of the beginning of a new book. It simply begins "The words of Mormon And now I Mormon . . . ."[19] There was clearly a division, but not the kind of marker that Oliver had seen for a new book (which announces "The book of . . ."). Therefore his initial solution was to call it a chapter (even seen in the Original Manuscript when 1 Nephi ended and 2 Nephi begins—it was originally marked as a Chapter rather than a new book). It is unclear when Words of Mormon became its own book as that is not indicated in the manuscript. According to the manuscript, it might have been presented to the compositor as the second chapter of Omni.[20]

The best we can say from the textual evidence is that the seam between the small plates translation, Words of Mormon, and the beginning of Mosiah was no more clear for Oliver than it is for us. When he attempted to make sense of it, Oliver initially saw Words of Mormon as a chapter in Omni, and he appears to have numbered *Chapter III* in Mosiah following that line of reasoning. Remembering that this evidence is from the Printer's Manuscript, Oliver's choice makes sense if he was numbering the chapters in the Printer's Manuscript rather than copying the chapter numbers from the Original. Skousen's evidence is

18. Skousen, *Printer's Manuscript,* 1:276.

19. Skousen, *Printer's Manuscript,* 281, lines 22–23. Punctuation and capitalization as in the typescript, but supralinear additions are left out.

20. This may have some interesting ramifications for the way the plate text constructed books and chapters. The evidence here was that there was a marked break to separate Words of Mormon, but that Mormon did not consider it a "book" and therefore marked it differently.

that the numbers were added to the Printer's Manuscript after the copy had been made, and the evidence suggests that Oliver did. When Oliver inserted the chapter numbers after making the copy, he didn't see the typical indication of a new book and therefore numbered Mosiah as though it were a continuation of Omni. The title "Book of Mosiah" is written supralinearly and therefore indicates a later addition. Having cast Words of Mormon as chapter two of Omni, he wouldn't have realized his mistake immediately, though he certainly did after reading through the text in Mosiah.[21]

This explanation of the textual timeline is at least as viable as that presented by Lyon and Minson. With the evidence that Oliver numbered the chapters in the Printer's Manuscript only after the copy was completed and the later supralinear addition of the label "Book of Mosiah," I suggest that it is actually more likely. The textual evidence of the chapter numbering does not provide evidence to support Lyon and Minson's conclusions. Thus, what would be their strongest textual support for their hypothesis does not, in fact, support their conclusion.

The final question Lyon and Minson address is the probability that some text existed on page 117 prior to the beginning of the full chapter in Mosiah. They quote an email exchange with Royal Skousen in which Skousen indicates, "As far as how pages of O [original manuscript] can end, it appears that the scribe would write to the end of the page and then continue on the next page, no matter where he was. I went through pages 3–14 of O, as a sample and found 9 cases where the page begins with a sentence fragment but 3 cases where the page be-

21. My reconstruction of the process, from this evidence, is that Oliver wrote the text indicating books and chapters. However, they were all in continuous text. In order to number them, Oliver had to review and read the text. Therefore, he would have numbered Chapter III based on what he had done previously, but then discovered that he was reading Mosiah and therefore returned to make the change, at which time he would also have inserted the supralinear "The book of Mosiah."

gins with a sentence."[22] This strongly suggests that there would have been text on the retained page 117 that preceded the word "Chapter." It is also possible that by sheer serendipity there was a clean division between what Martin took and the beginning of page 117, but it would seem that having some remaining text is much more likely, supporting Lyon and Minson's hypothesis.

It is entirely plausible that there was text retained prior to where we have the beginning of Mosiah Chapter 1. However, their conclusion was that there was textual evidence for this, and there is not. It is plausible without specific support. Without any actual textual evidence to determine whether or not verses 12–18 of Words of Mormon represent that proposed text, we are left with only the content of the verses themselves. Who wrote them? I don't believe that Skousen's textual evidence tells us. We have to make some educated deductions from what is available. I list verses 11–18 of Words of Mormon to include the text Lyon and Minson consider to be the retained transition (12–18).

> 11 And they were handed down from king Benjamin, from generation to generation until they have fallen into my hands. And I, Mormon, pray to God that they may be preserved from this time henceforth. And I know that they will be preserved; for there are great things written upon them, out of which my people and their brethren shall be judged at the great and last day, according to the word of God which is written.
> 12 And now, concerning this king Benjamin—he had somewhat of contentions among his own people.
> 13 And it came to pass also that the armies of the Lamanites came down out of the land of Nephi, to battle against his people. But behold, king Benjamin gathered together his armies, and he did stand against

22. Lyon and Minson, "When Pages Collide," 131.

> them; and he did fight with the strength of his own arm, with the sword of Laban.
> 14 And in the strength of the Lord they did contend against their enemies, until they had slain many thousands of the Lamanites. And it came to pass that they did contend against the Lamanites until they had driven them out of all the lands of their inheritance.
> 15 And it came to pass that after there had been false Christs, and their mouths had been shut, and they punished according to their crimes;
> 16 And after there had been false prophets, and false preachers and teachers among the people, and all these having been punished according to their crimes; and after there having been much contention and many dissensions away unto the Lamanites, behold, it came to pass that king Benjamin, with the assistance of the holy prophets who were among his people—
> 17 For behold, king Benjamin was a holy man, and he did reign over his people in righteousness; and there were many holy men in the land, and they did speak the word of God with power and with authority; and they did use much sharpness because of the stiffneckedness of the people—
> 18 Wherefore, with the help of these, king Benjamin, by laboring with all the might of his body and the faculty of his whole soul, and also the prophets, did once more establish peace in the land. (Words of Mormon 1:11–18)

Although Lyon and Minson are willing to suggest the entire block of verses from 12–18 appeared at the top of page 117,[23] they note Skousen's opinion: "It strikes me that it is verse 12 that does not belong to the original Mosiah chapter II, but

23. Lyon and Minson, "When Pages Collide," 131.

from verse 13 to the end of Words of Mormon could be the end of Mosiah chapter II (original chapters)."[24] Skousen is open to at least this verse not being part of the translation from the plates: "Maybe verse 12 is the basic link between the Words of Mormon and the book of Mosiah. It could have even been added by Joseph Smith to connect things up."[25] While Skousen and I disagree on the nature of the translation, in at least one verse we agree that we may have text in our current Book of Mormon that was not translated from the plates. What, however, of the rest of the verses?

Admitting that it is certainly *possible* that they represent the text at the top of page 117, I nevertheless cannot see it as the *probable* source. First, the serendipity of retaining only a few verses that happen to synopsize major content as being the very text that happened to be copied onto page 117 is almost as unlikely as beginning that page precisely at a chapter beginning. Even if we would not have a sentence fragment, we would have had a conceptual fragment. The sentence or sentences should have been chapter conclusions, not a summary. This is easily checked by examining the chapters that Mormon wrote. Mormon does not end chapters with a synopsis of what he has just written. It places too heavy a burden on the hypothesis to take something otherwise unattested in Mormon's writings and posit them as authentic to his original.[26]

24. Lyon and Minson, "When Pages Collide," 131; quoting from an email exchange.

25. Lyon and Minson, "When Pages Collide," 131.

26. Lyon and Minson, "When Pages Collide," 131. Skousen notes some anomalies in the construction of these verses. He notes that "'somewhat contentions'[is] a very odd expression for the Book of Mormon. I don't think we have the word "somewhat" occurring right before a noun anywhere else in the text." I don't know that this allows us to come to any conclusions, but it does suggest that there is something anomalous in the text, an anomaly I would extend to the ultimate source of the text, which I have suggested is prophetic rather than a translation from the plate text.

The final bit of "evidence" upon which my skepticism relies is admittedly highly subjective. In my view, this simply isn't the way Mormon would have written this information. Mormon's descriptions of events do not have this level of terseness until 4 Nephi, which I argue has a different structural intent than other writings, and one that does not apply to these verses.[27] These verses describe nothing short of the crucial events that led up to Benjamin's speech. They deal with an external war with the Lamanites, an internal civil war, and a religious crisis. Compare the treatment in this synopsis with similar topics in the book of Alma. These are things that Mormon cares about deeply. They are an important part of the story of the struggle of faith that he is building. I suggest that it is so completely incongruous for Mormon to have written this synopsis that we must look to another source. This is a synopsis of material that should have been in the missing text from the beginning of Mosiah.[28] It is not the way Mormon wrote about those topics. It is not the way Mormon closed chapters. If we are looking at textual evidence, the evidence of how Mormon constructed his chapters argues against his authorship of these verses.

These verses are worth examining to determine their relationship to the text on the gold plates. Lyon and Minson read these verses as text from the Original Manuscript and therefore part of the translation and thus Mormon's words. Reviewing the evidence they present, I do not find that the textual evidence is any help in solving the question. Looking at the verses themselves, I cannot see Mormon's hand in them. That is, of course, a subjective judgment. Consequently, there is unlikely to be any

27. Brant Gardner, "Mormon's Editorial Method and Meta-Message," *FARMS Review* 21/1 (2009): 99–104.

28. The missing text may or may not have been two chapters. The reason for assuming that there were two chapters is related to the change in numbers, but that may be related to the Printer's Manuscript chapter numbers rather than the original. It is clear that text is missing, but I can no longer confidently say that it is two chapters.

firm conclusion on this matter. If one's preferred understanding of the translation of the Book of Mormon suggests that our English Book of Mormon is, using Skousen's terminology, a tight translation of the original, then one would support a reconstruction that allows these verses to be seen as part of that tight translation. If, on the other hand, one believes that the translation was less rigidly connected to the plate text, then there is room for these verses to be the inspired recapitulation of information that had been irretrievably lost. Lyon and Minson's suggest that "based on the now-available documentary evidence, that analysis [that words of Mormon verses 12–18 are a bridge between the text from the small to the text from Mormon's plates] can be seen as faulty." The evidence is not as conclusive as their statement suggests. The question is still open.[29]

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29. Lyon and Minson, "When Pages Collide," 134.

The Spectacles, the Stone, the Hat, and the Book: A Twenty-first Century Believer's View of the Book of Mormon Translation

Roger Nicholson

Abstract: *This essay seeks to examine the Book of Mormon translation method from the perspective of a regular, nonscholarly, believing member in the twenty-first century, by taking into account both what is learned in Church and what can be learned from historical records that are now easily available. What do we know? What should we know? How can a believing Latter-day Saint reconcile apparently conflicting accounts of the translation process? An examination of the historical sources is used to provide us with a fuller and more complete understanding of the complexity that exists in the early events of the Restoration. These accounts come from both believing and nonbelieving sources, and some skepticism ought to be employed in choosing to accept some of the interpretations offered by some of these sources as fact. However, an examination of these sources provides a larger picture, and the answers to these questions provide an enlightening look into Church history and the evolution of the translation story. This essay focuses primarily on the methods and instruments used in the translation process and how a faithful Latter-day Saint might view these as further evidence of truthfulness of the restored Gospel.*

In his 1916 book, *The Birth of Mormonism*, John Quincy Adams provided this rather colorful description of the Book of Mormon translation method.

> The process of translating the "reformed Egyptian" plates was simple though peculiar. It was all done with

> the Urim and Thummim spectacles, but it was instant death for any one but Joe to use them. Even when he put them on, the light became so dazzling that he was obliged to look through his hat. Moreover, when so engaged, no profane eyes were allowed to see him or the hat. Alone, behind a blanket stretched across the room, Joe looked into his hat and read the mystic words.[1]

Any Latter-day Saint will immediately be able to sort the familiar from the unfamiliar elements of this story. We see the Urim and Thummim and the blanket shielding the translator from others in the room, but what is all of this talk about a hat?

As an active Latter-day Saint, I cannot remember a time when I was not familiar with the story of the translation of the Book of Mormon. The story with which we are quite familiar from Sunday School and Seminary describes Joseph using the Urim and Thummim (the Nephite interpreters) to look at the gold plates while screened from his scribe by a curtain. Joseph dictated the entire text of the Book of Mormon to his scribe, picking up the next day right where he had left off the day before, and the text was written without any punctuation. Joseph never required that any of the previous text be re-read when the translation started again the next day. The bulk of the translation was accomplished within a roughly three-month period, and the resulting text is remarkably consistent not only with itself, but with the Bible. The circumstances surrounding the translation and production of the Book of Mormon can only be considered miraculous when considered by a believing member of the Church.

There is, however, another story with which many have become familiar in recent years. Modern portrayals of the translation process such as that shown in the popular animated tele-

1. John Quincy Adams, *The Birth of Mormonism* (Boston: Gorham Press, 1916), 36.

vision show *South Park*[2] depict Joseph looking at a stone in the bottom of his hat and dictating to his scribe, without the use of a curtain. The popular online encyclopedia Wikipedia displays a "twenty-first century artistic representation of Joseph Smith translating the golden plates by examining a seer stone in his hat."[3] A Google search of "Book of Mormon translation" or "seer stone Joseph Smith" produces a large number of such images, many of them hosted by websites that are critical of the Church's truth claims. This is a method which I did not learn about in Seminary, and there are anecdotal stories of Latter-day Saints who, upon being presented with this portrayal, simply deny that this method may have ever been employed, attributing such depictions to "anti-Mormon" sources.

Depictions of the translation process by artists have also contributed to the confusion. Latter-day Saints are quite familiar with a variety of artistic portrayals of Joseph and Oliver as they participated in the translation process. Some depict Joseph and his scribe sitting at a table with a curtain across the middle. Others show Joseph and Oliver sitting together at a table, with no curtain in view and the plates clearly visible, yet we know that Oliver was not allowed to view the plates prior to acting as one of the Three Witnesses. One thing that these scenes have in common is that they do not depict the Urim and Thummim, despite the fact that we know that a translation instrument was used during the process. We see no crystal stones mounted in a set of "spectacles," nor do we see the breastplate.[4]

2. *South Park* Season 7, Episode 12, "All About Mormons" originally broadcast on 19 November 2003. http://www.southparkstudios.com/full-episodes/s07e12-all-about-mormons.

3. Wikipedia article "Seer Stone (Latter Day Saints). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seer_stone_(Latter_Day_Saints).

4. For example, the illustrated *Book of Mormon Stories* (1978) shows Joseph and a scribe separated by a curtain. Joseph is looking directly at the plates without using a translating instrument. The *Book of Mormon Reader* (1985) and *Book of Mormon Stories* (1997) both replace this scene with one of Joseph and his scribe sitting at a table in the open, with the plates clearly in view. No attempt

We certainly never see Joseph gazing into the bottom of his hat while dictating.

The twenty-first century has given us access to a wealth of historical sources that were simply unavailable to the average Latter-day Saint in previous decades. Now one must ask the question: Which of these portrayals is correct? In searching for an answer, we start with a modern Church manual in order to provide us with our first clue. The following description of the translation process appears in the 2003 *Church History In The Fulness Of Times Student Manual* (hereafter referred to as the *Student Manual*).

> Little is known about the actual process of translating the record, primarily because those who knew the most about the translation, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, said the least about it. Moreover, Martin Harris, David Whitmer, and Emma Smith, who assisted Joseph, left no contemporary descriptions. The sketchy accounts they recorded much later in life were often contradictory.[5]

It makes perfect sense that those who were directly involved in or observed the translation would have the most accurate information. What, then, did these witnesses say that appears to have been contradictory? Were there other witnesses that can shed light on these events? What did outside sources have to say about the translation process? As Latter-day Saint

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by the artist is made to depict the Urim and Thummim. There exists one image that may be found on the Internet which depicts Joseph Smith using the breastplate and spectacles, which is claimed to be from a "1970s" edition of the *Book of Mormon Reader*. A collection of images representative of the various ways the translation process has been depicted may be viewed on Blair Hodges' *Life on Gold Plates* blog, "The 'Stone-In-Hat' Translation Method in Art," posted on October 27, 2009. http://www.lifeongoldplates.com/2009/10/stone-in-hat-translation-method-in-art.html.

5. *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003), 58.

researcher Brant Gardner summarizes it, "What stories shall we believe? What stories of the translation could we or should we tell? Which stories are true? For this last question, I would suggest that they are *all* true. That is, they are true for the people who are telling them."[6]

What did Joseph and Oliver say?

The logical place to begin is with the translator himself. What did Joseph Smith say about the Book of Mormon translation process? As it turns out, he said very little about the actual translation method used to produce the Book of Mormon, except to note that it was performed "by the gift and power of God." The *Student Manual* notes that Joseph deliberately did not give many details of the process.

> The Prophet was reluctant to give the details about the translation. In a Church conference held 25–26 October 1831 in Orange, Ohio, Hyrum requested that a firsthand account of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon be given. But the Prophet said, "It was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon." Joseph explained in an open letter to a newspaper editor in 1833 the heart of the matter, but he gave few particulars, stating that the Book of Mormon was "found through the ministration of an holy angel, and translated into our own language by the gift and power of God." His explanation is consistent with the Doctrine and Covenants, which says that he was granted "power to translate through the mercy of God, by the power of God, the Book of Mormon" (D&C 1:29) and that the Lord "gave him power from on high, by the means

6. Brant A. Gardner, *The Gift and the Power: Translating the Book of Mormon* (Draper, UT: Greg Kofford Books, 2011), 8.

which were before prepared, to translate the Book of Mormon" (D&C 20:8).[7]

Joseph very consistently told people who asked that he had translated by the gift and power of God. He did not wish to focus on the method, but rather the result. Since Joseph chose not to provide details, we must examine what the other witnesses to the translation said in order to get a more accurate picture of the methods employed.

Oliver Cowdery was the next witness closest to the translation, since he acted as scribe for the majority of it. Some of Oliver's descriptions of the translation are very much consistent with the story that we are already familiar with. However, Oliver's comments deserve a more detailed review. We will revisit Oliver's comments in more detail later.

What did Martin Harris, David Whitmer, and Emma Smith say?

The *Student Manual* refers to "sketchy accounts" given "much later in life" by Martin Harris, David Whitmer, and Emma Smith. What is contained in these late accounts? How do they contradict what we know about the translation process?

There are two things that these three descriptions have in common: (1) they were all given near the end of the person's life, and (2) they all describe the use of a translation instrument placed in a hat. These stories may initially appear to be inconsistent with the story that we are familiar with today, but there is a good reason for this.

Near the end of her life in 1879, some 49 years after the publication of the Book of Mormon, Emma Smith Bidamon was interviewed by her son Joseph Smith III. Emma described her memories of the translation process. "In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table

7. *Church History in the Fulness of Times,* 58.

close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us."[8]

This description raises some immediate questions. Where is the Urim and Thummim? Where is the curtain? Why is Joseph using a hat? Where are the plates? It is very easy to see that Emma's description appears to contradict the account that we learn of in Sunday School.

David Whitmer's descriptions of the translation process also were given near the end of his life, with two notable descriptions given in 1885 and 1887, over 55 years after the publication of the Book of Mormon. Whitmer claimed that Joseph described the method to him, and he provides some detail that Emma did not.

> [H]e used a stone called a "Seers stone," the "Interpreters" having been taken away from him because of transgression. The "Interpreters" were taken from Joseph after he allowed Martin Harris to carry away the 116 pages of Ms [manuscript] of the Book of Mormon as a punishment, but he was allowed to go on and translate by use of a "Seers stone" which he had, and which he placed in a hat into which he buried his face, stating to me and others that the original character appeared upon parchment and under it the translation in English.[9]

Note that Whitmer mentions the *Interpreters*—which we know as the Urim and Thummim—as being distinct from the "seers stone." Whitmer is indicating that the interpreters were

8. "Emma Smith Bidamon Interview with Joseph Smith III, February 1879," in *Early Mormon Documents*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 1:541.

9. David Whitmer, quoted by Zenas H. Gurley, cited in Richard van Wagoner and Steven Walker, "Joseph Smith: 'The Gift of Seeing'," *Dialogue* 15/2 (Summer 1982), 54.

taken from Joseph after the loss of the 116 pages and not given back to him. He mentions the use of a stone and a hat, just as Emma did. Again, there is no curtain mentioned.

One might wonder at this point if this account is inconsistent with what the Church has taught. However, Elder Russell M. Nelson quoted David Whitmer's 1887 account to a group of new mission presidents in 1992. This description is found in the July 1993 *Ensign* and is on the Church's official website, lds.org. Elder Nelson states,

> The details of this miraculous method of translation are still not fully known. Yet we do have a few precious insights. David Whitmer wrote:
> "Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man." (David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, Richmond, Mo.: n.p., 1887, p. 12.)[10]

It is clear that Elder Nelson is quite aware of the stone and the hat. As it turns out, this is not a unique mention of these items within Church publications. A search on lds.org for the

10. Russell M. Nelson, "A Treasured Testament," *Ensign,* July 1993. http://www.lds.org/ensign/1993/07/a-treasured-testament.

term "seer stone translation" produces the following description from the September 1974 issue of the Church's official children's magazine, the *Friend*: "To help him with the translation, Joseph found with the gold plates 'a curious instrument which the ancients called Urim and Thummim, which consisted of two transparent stones set in a rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate.' Joseph also used an egg-shaped, brown rock for translating called a seer stone."[11]

It is apparent that not only are the descriptions of Emma Smith and David Whitmer different than the process that we are familiar with, but that the Church has periodically made mention of some of this information.

Next, we examine what Martin Harris had to say. Martin was quite closely involved with the early translation process, since he acted as Joseph's scribe for the first 116 pages of manuscript. As indicated by the *Student Manual*, near the end of his life, Martin Harris also provided a description of the translation process. Martin granted an interview to Joel Tiffany in 1859, in which he described the translation instrument that we commonly know as the Urim and Thummim.

> The two stones set in a bow of silver were about two inches in diameter, perfectly round, and about five-eighths of an inch thick at the centre; but not so thick at the edges where they came into the bow. They were joined by a round bar of silver, about three-eighths of an inch in diameter, and about four inches long, which, with the two stones, would make eight inches. The stones were white, like polished marble, with a few gray streaks. I never dared to look into them by placing them in the hat, because Moses said that "no man could see God and live," and we could see anything we

11. "A Peaceful Heart," *Friend*, September 1974, 7. http://www.lds.org/friend/1974/09/a-peaceful-heart.

> wished by looking into them; and I could not keep the desire to see God out of my mind. And beside, we had a command to let no man look into them, except by the command of God, lest he should "look aught and perish."[12]

This description is quite interesting, because Harris describes placing the *Nephite interpreters* in the hat, rather than a stone. Indeed, Martin's account of placing the Nephite interpreters in the hat even appears to contradict David's and Emma's account of Joseph using his own seer stone. Furthermore, all three accounts do not appear to be consistent with the story that we are familiar with of Joseph using the Urim and Thummim, sitting behind a curtain and looking at the plates while dictating to Oliver Cowdery.

The Spectacles and the Hat

To gain a better understanding of how the translation process was viewed at the time that it occurred, we can examine how contemporary newspapers described it. In 1829, the New York newspaper *Rochester Advertiser and Daily Telegraph* reported on the translation of the Book of Mormon. The report, understandably, takes a skeptical tone.

> [A]nd after penetrating "mother earth" a short distance, the [Golden] Bible was found, together with a huge pair of spectacles! He had been directed, however, not to let any mortal being examine them, "under no less penalty" than instant death! They were therefore nicely wrapped up and excluded from the "vulgar gaze of poor wicked mortals!" It was said that the leaves of the bible were plates of gold, about 8 inches long, 6 wide, and one eighth of an inch thick, on which were

12. "Martin Harris Interview with Joel Tiffany, 1859," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:305.

> engraved characters or hyeroglyphics. By placing the spectacles in a hat, and looking into it, Smith could (he said so, at least,) interpret these characters.[13]

This account seems consistent with Martin Harris's story that the Nephite interpreters were placed in a hat. Note, also, that the *spectacles* are *not* referred to as the Urim and Thummim. Did Joseph actually use a hat with the Nephite interpreters? We also see Martin's 1859 recollection that he "never dared to look into them" because "no man could see God and live," being amplified by the 1829 news account into a "penalty" of "instant death." This account, or one like it, is likely the genesis of the story related by John Quincy Adams in 1916 of the threat of "instant death" waiting to befall anyone but Joseph if they attempted to use the interpreters.

This newspaper description wasn't an aberration. The same description was repeated almost one month later in a New York publication called *The Gem: A Semi-Monthly Literary and Miscellaneous Journal*, "By placing the spectacles in a hat and looking into it, Smith interprets the characters into the English language."[14]

Four months later, in February 1830, Martin Harris is quoted in the *New York Telescope*,

> [H]e proceeded to the spot, and found the bible, with a huge pair of spectacles. . . . He is said to have shown some of these characters to Professor Samuel L. Mitchell, of this city, who could not translate them. Martin Harris returned, and set Joseph Smith to the business of translating them: who, "by placing the

13. "Golden Bible," *Rochester Advertiser and Daily Telegraph* (New York, 31 August 1829). Reprinted from *Palmyra Freeman*, 11 August 1829. http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/BOMP/id/176.

14. "Golden Bible," *The Gem: A Semi-Monthly Literary and Miscellaneous Journal* (Rochester, New York: 5 September 1829), 70. http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/BOMP/id/161.

> spectacles in a hat and looking into them, Joseph Smith said he could interpret these characters."[15]

In June 1830, *The Cincinnati Advertiser* mentioned a "white stone" and the hat.

> A fellow by the name of Joseph Smith, who resides in the upper part of Susquehanna county, has been, for the last two years we are told, employed in dedicating as he says, by inspiration, a new bible. He pretended that he had been entrusted by God with a golden bible which had been always hidden from the world. Smith would put his face into a hat in which he had a white stone, and pretend to read from it, while his coadjutor transcribed.[16]

The reference to a "white stone" is consistent with Harris's description of the Nephite interpreters. All of these newspaper accounts are entirely consistent with Martin Harris's 1859 description, given 30 years later. Therefore, it appears that Martin Harris told a consistent story.

We have evidence that Martin Harris, both at the time that the translation occurred, and at the end of his life, perceived that Joseph used the Nephite interpreters, or "spectacles," together with a hat in order to interpret the characters on the gold plates. The use of the hat as part of the translation process was clearly noted. Martin's description would coincide with the period of time that he acted as scribe, which corresponded with the translation of the 116 lost pages of manuscript. The idea that the Urim and Thummim was placed in a hat sounds quite

15. C. C. Blatchley, "Caution Against the Golden Bible," *New-York Telescope* 6/38 (20 February 1830), 150. http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/BOMP/id/4211,

16. *Cincinnati Advertiser and Ohio Phoenix,* June 2, 1830. Reprinted from *Wayne County Inquirer*, Pennsylvania, ca. May 1830. http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/BOMP/id/201.

different from the mental picture that we might have of Joseph using the *spectacles* like a pair of glasses to view the plates. However, recall that Martin described the stones in the interpreters as "white, like polished marble, with a few gray streaks." This does not necessarily imply that they were transparent.

The references in newspapers to placing the spectacles in a hat continued for several years after the publication of the Book of Mormon. The October 15, 1831, *Daily Albany Argus* mentions the need to shield the interpreters from ambient light. "The preacher said he found in the same place two stones, with which he was enabled, by placing them over his eyes and putting his head in a dark corner, to decypher the hieroglyphics on the plates!"[17] The *Morning Star*, Limerick, Maine (March 7, 1833) states that "an angel gave him a pair of spectacles which he put in a hat and thus read and translated, while one of the witnesses wrote it down from his mouth."[18] Note that these newspaper accounts as late as 1833 still make *no* reference to the term "Urim and Thummim," instead referring to the Nephite translators as "stones" or "spectacles."

The *Protestant Sentinel* in 1834 was either unaware of, or unwilling to use, the term *Urim and Thummim* to refer to the spectacles. They were, however, quite aware of the placement of the spectacles in the hat. The story has evolved somewhat to the point that the *plates* are in the hat as well.

> In the year 1828, one Joseph Smith, an illiterate young man, unable to read his own name, of Palmyra, Wayne County, New York, was reported to have found several golden plates, together with a pair of spectacles, relics of high antiquity. The spectacles were designed to aid mental vision, under rather peculiar circumstances.

17. *Daily Albany Argus* VI/1866, Oct. 15, 1831. http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/NY/miscNYSe.htm#040931.

18. *Morning Star* VII/45, March 7, 1833. http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/NE/miscMe01.htm#030733.

> They were to be adjusted, and the visage thrust into a close hat. This done Smith could interpret the sacred mysteries of the plates, in which lay, by the hypothesis, in the top of the hat![19]

The phrase "aid mental vision" is worthy of note. Although we do not know where the writer got this idea, the statement implies that the spectacles did not necessarily function like a pair of glasses, but more like a seer stone.

The *New York Weekly Messenger* in 1835, five years after the Book of Mormon was published, claimed that both the "plate" and the "two smooth flat stones" were placed in a hat.

> Smith pretended that he had found some golden or brass plates, like the leaves of a book, hid in a box in the earth, to which he was directed by an Angel, in 1827,—that the writing on them was in the "Reformed Egyptian language,"—that he was inspired to interpret the writing, or engraving, by putting a plate in his hat, putting two smooth flat stones, which he found in the box, in the hat, and putting his face therein—that he could not write, but as he translated, one Oliver Cowdery wrote it down.[20]

Although there are some amusing variations being introduced to the story relative to what we currently know, one thing that is consistent with all of the newspaper accounts mentioned so far is that they all mention the use of the *Nephite interpreters* (the spectacles) and the *hat*.

Even the Prophet's brother William, 53 years after the publication of the Book of Mormon, talked of Joseph placing the Urim and Thummim in a hat.

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19. "Mormonism," *Protestant Sentinel* (Schenectady, New York) n.s. 5/1 (4 June 1834): 4–5. Reprinted from *New England Review*, ca. May 1834.

20. "Mormonism," *New York Weekly Messenger and Young Men's Advocate* (29 April 1835). Reprinted from *The Pioneer* (Rock Springs, IL), March 1835.

> He translated them by means of the Urim and Thummim, (which he obtained with the plates), and the power of God. The manner in which this was done was by looking into the Urim and Thummim, which was placed in a hat to exclude the light, (the plates lying near by covered up), and reading off the translation, which appeared in the stone by the power of God.[21]

Joseph Knight was a good friend of the Prophet Joseph. His account identifies the Urim and Thummim as the *glasses*. Significantly, Knight also mentions the hat.

> Now the way he translated was he put the Urim and Thummim into his hat and darkened his eyes, then he would take a sentence and it would appear in bright Roman letters, then he would tell the writer and he would write it. Then that would go away, the next sentence would come, and so on. But if it was not spelled right it would not go away till it was right, so we see it was marvelous. Thus was the whole translated.[22]

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21. "William Smith, *On Mormonism*, 1883," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:497.

22. "Joseph Knight Sr., Reminiscence, Circa 1835–1847," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 4, 17–18. Spelling and punctuation have been modernized for readability. Original spelling is as follows: "Now the way he translated was he put the urim and thummim into his hat and Darkned his Eyes than he would take a sentance and it would apper in Brite Roman Letters then he would tell the writer and he would write it[.] Then <that would go away> the next sentance would Come and so on But if it was not Spelt rite it would not go away till it was rite[,] so we see it was marvelous[.] thus was the hol [whole] translated. " One item of interest here is Joseph Knight's use of the term *Urim and Thummim* to describe the "glasses." The question is whether Knight's account was recorded in 1827, or whether it was recorded after 1833, when the term *Urim and Thummim* was in common usage. According to Dean Jessee, Knight's account is "undated and unsigned," with the words "22 Sept. 1827" being "inserted by Thomas Bullock, a church clerk from 1843 to 1847." Knight's account, therefore, cannot be used to establish with any certainty that the term *Urim and Thummim* was applied to

These accounts present a case for considering the idea that Joseph placed the *spectacles*, which we know as the Urim and Thummim, into a hat during the translation process. We usually assume that Joseph had the plates on the table and looked at them *through* the spectacles.

The Spectacles as Urim and Thummim

As previously noted, none of the contemporary newspaper accounts printed in the 1830 to 1833 timeframe mentions the Urim and Thummim. Instead, they mention *spectacles* or a *white stone*. How, then, did the spectacles found by Joseph Smith come to be known as the Urim and Thummim? One of the earliest known references to the spectacles as the Urim and Thummim appeared in the Latter-day Saint newspaper *The Evening and Morning Star* in January 1833, three years after the Book of Mormon was published. The wording is interesting, as it appears to be one of the earliest times that the term *Urim and Thummim* is applied to the instruments of translation.

> The book of Mormon, as a revelation from God, possesses some advantage over the old scripture: it has not been tinctured by the wisdom of man, with here and there an Italic word to supply deficiencies.-It was translated by the gift and power of God, by an unlearned man, through the aid of a pair of Interpreters, or spectacles-(known, perhaps, in ancient days as Teraphim, or Urim and Thummim).[23]

Note the use of the word "perhaps." It does not appear that the term *Urim and Thummim* was generally associated with the interpreters at this point in time.

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the Nephite interpreters (the *glasses*) in 1827. See Dean Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," *BYU Studies* 17/1 (1976), 2.

23. W. W. Phelps, *The Evening and The Morning Star*, 1/8 (January 1833), 57.

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints even made a point of noting that the term *Urim and Thummim* only came into use after 1833.

> The proofs are clear and positive that the story of the Urim and Thummim Translation does not date back, for its origin further than 1833, or between that date and 1835; for it is not found in any printed document of the Church of Christ up to the latter part of the year 1833, or the year 1834. The "Book of Commandments" to the Church of Christ, published in Independence, Mo., in 1833, does not contain any allusion to Urim and Thummim; though the term was inserted in some of the revelations in their reprint in the "Book of Doctrine and Covenants" in 1835.[24]

The association of the term *Urim and Thummim* with the spectacles thus appears to have come into use several years after the publication of the Book of Mormon. The term may not have actually been used during the period of translation itself. Historian D. Michael Quinn, however, feels that the term may have been applied as early as 1828. "This was the term in the 'Manuscript History of the Church' for the object through which early revelations were received to 1830, and this statement about the Urim and Thummim has appeared in the headings to these early revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants from 1921 to the present."[25]

However, Quinn also notes that "there was no reference to the Urim and Thummim in the headings of the Book of Commandments (1833) or in the headings of the only editions

24. *The True Latter Day Saints' Herald,* 26/22 (15 November 1879).

25. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View, Revised and Enlarged* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 174–75.

of the *Doctrine and Covenants* prepared during Smith's life (in 1835 and 1844)."[26]

In 1836, we finally find a reference to the Urim and Thummim in a non-LDS publication. The story was printed in the *Ohio Observer*. Truman Coe resided in Kirtland, Ohio, but was not a member of the Church. He appears to be repeating what either Joseph Smith, or other Church members in Kirtland, told him, and therefore employs the term *Urim and Thummim* to refer to the interpreters. Significantly, Coe does *not* mention the use of a hat. "The manner of translation was as wonderful as the discovery. By putting his finger on one of the characters and imploring divine aid, then looking through the Urim and Thummim, he would see the import written in plain English on a screen placed before him."[27]

Brant Gardner observes that Coe "certainly did not accept the story at face value," but that he "seems to have reported it without sarcasm or distortion." Gardner also notes that Coe's story "provides a picture of the translation that has endured from at least 1836 to modern times."[28] Indeed, Coe's account appears to be very close to the story that we use in the Church today, even correlating with certain modern artwork showing Joseph sitting at a table with his finger on the plates.

In 1840, we find a hostile account that actually employs the term *Urim and Thummim* to refer to the interpreters. In this account, the spectacles are placed on the eyes and there is no mention of the use of a hat.

> He declared that an angel was sent from God to make known to him the place in which the book was concealed,—that he searched and found the same,—that the words were engraved on plates of gold in a language

26. Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View,* 175.

27. "Truman Coe Account, 1836," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:47. Originally printed in *Ohio Observer* (Hudson, Ohio), 11 August 1836.

28. Gardner, *The Gift and the Power*, 7.

> which no man understood,—and that two large jewels resembling diamonds were given to him, which, being applied to the eyes, like spectacles, enabled him to get at the meaning and translate the Book of Mormon into English. These jewels were, he said, the Urim and Thummim of the Old Testament.[29]

An 1891 interview with the prophet's brother William Smith provides a description of the Urim and Thummim and its relationship to the breastplate. At the time that William gave his description, the term *Urim and Thummim* had been used for many years to describe the Nephite interpreters. William said that "a silver bow ran over one stone, under the other around over that one and under the first in the shape of a horizontal figure 8 much like a pair of spectacles." William also said that the spectacles were "much too large for Joseph," and that Joseph "could only see through one at a time using sometimes one and sometimes the other. By putting his head in a hat or some dark object it was not necessary to close one eye while looking through the stone with the other. In that way sometimes when his eyes grew [tired] he [relieved] them of the strain."[30]

William said that Joseph "looked through" the stones "one at a time," which naturally implies that he was looking *through them at the plates*, yet the placement of his "head in a hat or some dark object" seems to negate the idea that the plates were located on the other side of the stone. Because the Nephite interpreters took the form of "spectacles," we naturally assume that Joseph was required to look *through* the interpreters directly at the characters on the plates.

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29. *A Letter to Those Who Have Attended Mormonite Preaching* (London: J. B. Bateman, 1840), 1–4.

30. "William Smith interview by J. W. Peterson and W. S. Pender, 1890," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:508.

The Spectacles and the Stone

Having seen contemporary newspaper accounts that are entirely consistent with Martin Harris's late life description that the spectacles were used with a hat early in the translation process, what are we to make of the descriptions of Emma Smith and David Whitmer? They describe the use of a "seer stone" and a hat. The stone is mentioned infrequently in Church publications, but there are several notable instances. As previously noted, *The Friend* mentions two translation instruments, stating that "Joseph found with the gold plates" a "Urim and Thummim, which consisted of two transparent stones set in a rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate," and that "Joseph also used an egg-shaped, brown rock for translating called a seer stone."[31]

Here we have evidence that Joseph employed more than one instrument during the translation process. Further confirmation can be found in an account by Edward Stevenson printed in the *Deseret News* in 1881, in which he quoted Martin Harris as saying "that the Prophet possessed a seer stone, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim, and for convenience he then used the seer stone."[32]

We now see that Martin was aware of the existence of and distinction between two different translation instruments. In fact, we learn from the January 1988 *Ensign* that Martin not only knew that Joseph used both the Nephite interpreters and a seer stone, but that Martin once actually *swapped* Joseph's stone with a different one in order to test Joseph's ability to translate.

> From April 12 to June 14, Joseph translated while Martin wrote, with only a curtain between them.

31. "A Peaceful Heart," *Friend*, September 1974, 7. http://www.lds.org/friend/1974/09/a-peaceful-heart.

32. *Deseret News*, 28 December 1881.

> On occasion they took breaks from the arduous task, sometimes going to the river and throwing stones. Once Martin found a rock closely resembling the seer-stone Joseph sometimes used in place of the interpreters and substituted it without the Prophet's knowledge. When the translation resumed, Joseph paused for a long time and then exclaimed, "Martin, what is the matter, all is as dark as Egypt." Martin then confessed that he wished to "stop the mouths of fools" who told him that the Prophet memorized sentences and merely repeated them.[33]

Martin wanted proof that Joseph was actually capable of using the stone to translate. Since he dared not look at the spectacles in accordance with the Lord's commandment, he would only have ventured to switch Joseph's own seer stone. Emma Smith also confirms that Joseph switched between the Urim and Thummim and seer stone. Emma stated, "Now the first that my husband translated, was translated by use of the Urim, and Thummim, and that was the part that Martin Harris lost, after that he used a small stone, not exactly, black, but was rather a dark color."[34]

With this statement, Emma establishes a timeframe for the transition from the Nephite interpreters to the seer stone. She states that it occurred after the loss of the 116 pages and upon the resumption of translation.

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33. Kenneth W. Godfrey, "A New Prophet and a New Scripture: The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, January 1988. http://www.lds.org/ensign/1988/01/a-new-prophet-and-a-new-scripture-the-coming-forth-of-the-book-of-mormon.

34. "Emma Smith Bidamon to Emma Pilgrim, 27 March 1870," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:532. Text has been formatted for readability. Original text is as follows: "Now the first that my <husband> translated, [the book] was translated by use of the Urim, and Thummim, and that was the part that Martin Harris lost, after that he used a small stone, not exactly, black, but was rather a dark color."

David Whitmer, who only observed the translation after the loss of the 116 pages, also distinguished the Urim and Thummim (the spectacles) from the seer stone.

> With the sanction of David Whitmer, and by his authority, I now state that he does not say that Joseph Smith ever translated in his presence by aid of Urim and Thummim; but by means of one dark colored, opaque stone, called a "Seer Stone," which was placed in the crown of a hat, into which Joseph put his face, so as to exclude the external light. Then, a spiritual light would shine forth, and parchment would appear before Joseph, upon which was a line of characters from the plates, and under it, the translation in English; at least, so Joseph said.[35]

Another Whitmer interview notes that while Joseph was not allowed by the Lord to display the Urim and Thummim, he was able to show others his seer stone.

> That Joseph had another stone called seers' stone, and "peep stone," is quite certain. This stone was frequently exhibited to different ones and helped to assuage their awful curiosity; but the Urim and Thummim never, unless possibly to Oliver Cowdery. . . . Elder David Whitmer's idea was that the translation was made by the seers' stone, as he calls it, not the Interpreters, and Emma Smith's (Bidamon) statement accords with Whitmer as published in Herald some years since. The only discrepancy between the statements of the witnesses is that relating to the detail of the translation; and, as shown above, David and Emma, in the nature of things, did not know just how the Urim and Thummim

35. *The True Latter Day Saints' Herald* 26/22 (15 November 1879). http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/IL/sain1872.htm#111579.

> were used, as they had never seen them. The reader will please bear in mind that no one was allowed to see either the plates or the Urim and Thummim, except as God commanded. The Eight Witnesses were allowed to see the plates and handle them as shown above; none else.[36]

In 1886, David Whitmer indicates that Joseph used his own seer stone to translate all of our current Book of Mormon text. In this interview, Whitmer states that the spectacles were never returned after the loss of the 116 pages and that a seer stone was *presented* to Joseph Smith for the purpose of continuing the translation.

> By fervent prayer and by otherwise humbling himself, the prophet, however, again found favor, and was presented with a strange oval-shaped, chocolate-colored stone, about the size of an egg, only more flat, which, it was promised, should serve the same purpose as the missing urim and thummim (the latter was a pair of transparent stones set in a bow-shaped frame and very much resembled a pair of spectacles). With this stone all of the present Book of Mormon was translated.[37]

However, Whitmer's assertion that Joseph was *presented* with a stone is most likely not correct, since Joseph already possessed at least one seer stone prior to receiving the Nephite interpreters. One could speculate that the angel took Joseph's stone away at the same time that he took the plates and the Nephite interpreters, and then returned it to him after consecrating it

36. Zenas H. Gurley, quoting "Dr. Robinson," Source: Zenas H. Gurley, "The Book of Mormon," *Autumn Leaves* 5 (1892): 451-54, located on the Book of Abraham Project. http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/BOM-Witn.html.

37. "Mormon Relics," *The Sunday Inter-Ocean*, Vol. 15, No. 207 (Chicago, Illinois, 17 Oct. 1886). Also *Saints' Herald* 33 (13 November 1886): 706, cited in Van Wagoner and Walker, "The Gift of Seeing," 53–54.

for the purpose of translation. There is, however, no evidence to confirm that this is the case other than the fact that Joseph was *allowed* to use the stone for this purpose.

Not only did Joseph possess a seer stone prior to receiving the Nephite interpreters: He was already quite familiar with the manner of its use. Matthew B. Brown notes that, "Joseph Smith reportedly said in 1826, while under examination in a court of law, that when he first obtained his personal seerstone he placed it in his hat, and discovered that time, place, and distance were annihilated; that all intervening obstacles were removed, and that he possessed one of the attributes of Deity, an All-Seeing Eye."[38]

Brown goes on to note that Brigham Young confirmed this view, "When Joseph had a revelation he had, as it were, the eyes of the Lord. He saw as the Lord sees."[39]

In fact, upon receiving the Nephite interpreters, Joseph viewed them as a more powerful version of the stone that he already possessed. Joseph Knight recalled that Joseph appeared to be more excited about receiving the *glasses* than the gold plates themselves. After Joseph returned from retrieving the plates, Joseph Knight recalled,

> After breakfast Joseph called me in to the other room and he set his foot on the bed and leaned his head on his hand and says, "Well, I am disappointed." "Well," say I, "I am sorry." "Well," says he, "I am greatly disappointed. It is ten times better than I expected." Then he went on to tell the length and width and thickness of the plates, and, said he, they appear to be gold. But he seemed to think more of the glasses or the Urim and Thummim than he did of the plates for, says he, "I can

38. Matthew B. Brown, *Plates of Gold* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2003), 167.

39. Brown, *Plates of Gold*, 167.

> see anything. They are marvelous. Now they are written in characters and I want them translated."[40]

The idea that the Nephite interpreters were a more powerful version of Joseph's seer stone is interesting, since it implies that there was something special about the stones themselves. It is more likely, however, that it was Joseph's own perception that the stones were superior because these stones had been consecrated by God for the purpose of seeing things.

However, the idea that the Nephite interpreters were superior to a common "seer stone" was accepted by twentieth-century apostle and Church historian Joseph Fielding Smith. In response to accounts that indicated that Joseph may have used his own seer stone during the translation of the Book of Mormon, Elder Smith flatly stated that he did not believe this to be true, since the stone was inferior to the Nephite interpreters. In *Doctrines of Salvation*, published in 1956, Smith states that he considers such accounts "hearsay."

> While the statement has been made by some writers that the Prophet Joseph Smith used a seer stone part of the time in his translating of the record, and information points to the fact that he did have in his possession such a stone, yet there is no authentic statement in the history of the Church which states that the use of such a stone was made in that translation. The information

40. "Joseph Knight Sr., Reminiscence, Circa 1835-1847," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:15. Spelling has been modernized and formatted for readability. Original spelling and formatting is as follows: "After Brackfist Joseph Cald me in to the other Room and he set his foot on the Bed and leaned his head on his hand and says well I am Dissop[o]inted. well, say I[,] I am sorrey[.] Well, says he[,] I am grateley Dissop[o]inted, it is ten times Better then I expected. Then he went on to tell the length and width and thickness of the plates[,] and[,] said he[,] they appear to be Gold But he seamed to think more of the glasses or the urim and thummem then [than] he Did of the Plates for[,] says he[,] I can see any thing[.] They are Marvelus[.] Now they are written in Caracters and I want them translated[.]"

> is all hearsay, and personally, I do not believe that this stone was used for this purpose. The reason I give for this conclusion is found in the statement of the Lord to the Brother of Jared as recorded in Ether 3:22–24. These stones, the Urim and Thummim which were given to the Brother of Jared, were preserved for this *very purpose of translating the record*, both of the Jaredites and the Nephites. Then again the Prophet was impressed by Moroni with the fact that these stones were given for that very purpose. It hardly seems reasonable to suppose that the Prophet would substitute something evidently *inferior* under these circumstances. It may have been so, but it is so easy for a story of this kind to be circulated due to the fact that the Prophet did possess a *seer stone*, which he may have used for some other purposes.[41]

We have now established that there are multiple accounts from witnesses and Church sources confirming that Joseph switched from the spectacles or Nephite interpreters to a seer stone during the Book of Mormon translation process. The next question is: Why did Joseph switch between translating instruments? Was it simply for "convenience," as Martin Harris indicated?

One possible explanation is that the size of the interpreters may have been a hindrance to their use. William Smith described the Nephite interpreters as "much too large for Joseph and he could only see through one at a time using sometimes one and sometimes the other."[42] Charles Anthon, who had to have obtained his information from Martin Harris, provided additional detail when he wrote that "these spectacles were so

41. Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:225–26.

42. "William Smith interview by J. W. Peterson and W. S. Pender, 1890," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:508.

large that if a person attempted to look through them, his two eyes would have to be turned towards one of the glasses merely, the spectacles in question being altogether too large for the breadth of the human face."[43]

John Corrill, in 1839, confirmed that Joseph had returned the Urim and Thummim to the angel before the Book of Mormon was published, noting that "After finishing the translation, the plates and stones of Urim and Thummim were again taken and concealed by the angel for a wise purpose, and the translation published to the world in the winter of A. D. 1829 and '30."[44]

Another possible explanation is that the Nephite interpreters were never returned to Joseph, and that he was expected to continue the translation using his own seer stone. David Whitmer seems to indicate this as a possibility when he claims that the Urim and Thummim were taken from Joseph and that he was "presented" with a seer stone.

Based upon these accounts, it appears that Joseph began the translation process using the Nephite interpreters, and that at some point he may have used them with a hat. After the loss of the 116 pages, he may have either switched to his own seer stone or continued to use the Nephite "spectacles," again with the hat. In fact, given the consistent reports of the use of the hat during translation, it is not possible to know with certainty whether Joseph was using the Nephite interpreters or the seer stone in the hat during this period of time. One thing seems certain based upon witness accounts—during the period of the translation process after the loss of the 116 pages, Joseph sat in

43. "Charles Anthon to E. D. Howe, 17 February 1834," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:378.

44. John Corrill, *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints* (1839), 12. http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/fullbrowser/collection/BOMP/id/4577/rv/compoundobject/cpd/4592.

the open, without a curtain, dictating to his scribe while looking into his hat.

The Spectacles and the Stone as Urim and Thummim

At some point several years after the publication of the Book of Mormon, both the Nephite interpreters (the spectacles) and the seer stone became referred to as the *Urim and Thummim*. When the term *Urim and Thummim* was introduced in 1833, it did not refer uniquely to the instrument that Joseph recovered with the plates, but also referred to Joseph's own seer stone, which he possessed prior to the translation of the Book of Mormon. In 1907, Elder B.H. Roberts clearly associates the term with both the stone and the Nephite interpreters.

> The seer stone referred to here was a chocolate-colored, somewhat egg-shaped stone which the Prophet found while digging a well in company with his brother Hyrum. It possessed the qualities of Urim and Thummim, since by means of it-as described above-as well as by means of the "Interpreters" found with the Nephite record, Joseph was able to translate the characters engraven on the plates.[45]

In common Church conversation, the designation *Urim and Thummim* is always assumed to be referring to the Nephite interpreters that Joseph recovered with the plates. Only those familiar with the sources will realize that there was more than one translation instrument. The term *Urim and Thummim* referred to any instrument used for the purpose of translation or the receipt of revelation.

The January 2013 *Ensign* clarifies that Joseph used multiple revelatory instruments, and that they all were classified under the name *Urim and Thummim*.

45. B. H. Roberts, *Defense of the Faith and the Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1907), 1:257.

> Those who believed that Joseph Smith's revelations contained the voice of the Lord speaking to them also accepted the miraculous ways in which the revelations were received. Some of the Prophet Joseph's earliest revelations came through the same means by which he translated the Book of Mormon from the gold plates. In the stone box containing the gold plates, Joseph found what Book of Mormon prophets referred to as "interpreters," or a "stone, which shall shine forth in darkness unto light" (Alma 37:23–24). He described the instrument as "spectacles" and referred to it using an Old Testament term, Urim and Thummim (see Exodus 28:30).
>
> He also sometimes applied the term to other stones he possessed, called "seer stones" because they aided him in receiving revelations as a seer. The Prophet received some early revelations through the use of these seer stones.[46]

The idea that there could be more than one Urim and Thummim is not unusual, and we only need to look to the Bible. The Urim and Thummim referred to in the Bible is not the same instrument used by the Nephites or by Joseph Smith. However, the Biblical references to the Urim and Thummim *do* associate the instrument with a breastplate. Exodus 28:30 states, "And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord. Leviticus 8:8, states, "And he put the breastplate upon him: also he put in the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim." From the Church's official website, lds.org, we learn that the Urim and Thummim was "an ancient

46. Gerrit Dirkmaat, "Great and Marvelous Are the Revelations of God," *Ensign*, January 2013, 45–46. http://www.lds.org/ensign/2013/01/great-and-marvelous-are-the-revelations-of-god.

instrument or tool prepared by God and used by Joseph Smith to aid in the translation of the Book of Mormon. God provided a Urim and Thummim to His prophets in ancient times (see Exodus 28:30; 1 Samuel 28:6; Ezra 2:63).

The Urim and Thummim is not a unique instrument: God did not provide *the* Urim and Thummim, but instead provided *a* Urim and Thummim. There can be more than one instrument called "Urim and Thummim."

The Biblical Urim and Thummim was also used to receive revelation, and indicated in 1 Samuel 28:6, "And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets."

Didn't Joseph Smith Talk of the Urim and Thummim?

During the latter part of his life, Joseph Smith clearly referred to the instruments used for translation as the Urim and Thummim. Joseph Smith said in the *Elders Journal* in 1838, "I obtained them and the Urim and Thummim with them, by the means of which I translated the plates, and thus came the Book of Mormon."[47]

A more well known example is the Wentworth Letter, printed in the 1 March 1842, edition of the *Times and Seasons*. Joseph writes, "With the records was found a curious instrument, which the ancients called 'Urim and Thummim,' which consisted of two transparent stones set in the rims of a bow fastened to a breastplate. Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record by the gift and power of God."[48]

However, did Joseph use the term *Urim and Thummim* to refer to the translation instruments during the period that

47. *Elder's Journal*, July 1838, 1:43.

48. "Church History," *Times and Seasons*, 1 March 1842. Also found in "The Wentworth Letter," By Joseph Smith Jr. (1805–44), *Ensign*, July 2002. https://www.lds.org/ensign/2002/07/the-wentworth-letter.

he was translating the Book of Mormon? *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* credits Joseph Smith as saying, "The angel was rejoiced when he gave me back the Urim and Thummim."[49] It initially appears from this statement that Joseph used the term *Urim and Thummim* to refer to the Nephite spectacles at the time he was translating. However, an examination of the endnote for this entry reveals that this text is from Lucy Mack Smith's 1845 manuscript history of the Prophet's life, which was written well after the term *Urim and Thummim* came into general use. Furthermore, upon examining the original text of Lucy's 1845 manuscript, we note some interesting alterations. The text was originally written by Lucy partially in the third person.

> I then continued, Joseph, "my supplications to God without cessation that his mercy might again be exercised towards me and on the 22 of September I had the joy and satisfaction of again receiving the record into my possession and I have commenced translating and Emma writes for me now but the angel said that if I get the plates again that the Lord would send someone to write for me and I trust that it will be so"—he also said that the angel seemed rejoiced when he gave him back the plates and said that he was pleased with his faithfulness and humility also that the Lord was pleased with him and loved him for his penitence and diligence in prayer in the which he had performed his duty so well as to receive the record and he [was] able to enter upon the work of translation again.[50]

49. *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, (2007), 71. Quoted by Lucy Mack Smith, "The History of Lucy Smith, Mother of the Prophet," 1844–1845 manuscript, book 7, p. 11, Church Archives.

50. "Lucy Smith History, 1845," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:370–71. Spelling and punctuation have been modernized for readability. Original spelling, strikeouts and additions noted by editor Vogel are as follows: I then con-

After strikeouts and word replacements, the complete text reads as if it were written by Joseph himself, with all references to "the plates" and "the record" now replaced with "the Urim and Thummim."

> "I continued," said Joseph, "my supplications to God without cessation that his mercy might again be exercised towards me and on the 22 of September I had the joy and satisfaction of again receiving the Urim and Thummim into my possession and I have commenced translating and Emma writes for me now but the angel said that the Lord would send someone to write for me and I trust that it will be so - he also said that he was rejoiced when he gave me back the Urim and Thummim and that God was pleased with my faithfulness and humility and loved me for my penitence and diligence in prayer in the which I had performed his duty so well as to receive the Urim and Thummim and was able to enter upon the work of translation again."[51]

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tinued[,] <said> Joseph[,] my supplications to God without cessation that his mercy might again be exercised towards me and on the 22 of September I had the joy and satisfaction of again receiving the record <urim and Thummin> into my possession and I have commenced translating and Emma writes for me now but the angel said that if I get the plates again that the Lord woul[d] send some one to write for me and I trust that it will be so-he also said that the ange<l> <he> seemed <was> rejoiced when he gave him <me> back the plates <urim and Thummin> and said that he <God> was pleased with his <my > faithfulness and humility also that the Lord was pleased with him and loved him <me> for his <my> penitence and diligence in prayer in the which he <I> had performed his duty so well as to receive the record <urim and Thummin> and he <was> able to enter upon the work of translation again.

51. "Lucy Smith History, 1845." Original spelling, strikeouts and additions noted by editor Vogel are as follows: I then continued[,] <said> Joseph[,] my supplications to God without cessation that his mercy might again be exercised towards me and on the 22 of September I had the joy and satisfaction of again receiving the record <urim and Thummin> into my possession and I have commenced translating and Emma writes for me now but the angel said that if I get the plates again that the Lord woul[d] send some one to write for me and I trust that it will be so-he also said that the ange<l> <he> seemed <was> rejoiced

Since Lucy is the one who originally wrote the text of Joseph's statement, we have established this reference to the Urim and Thummim as a late second-hand statement. The use of the term to refer to the translation instruments is unsurprising, but its use as a replacement for references to the plates is unusual. By the time Lucy's history was published in 1853, there was no indication that these "Urim and Thummim" references originally referred to the plates, and it now appeared that Joseph Smith himself had spoken these words.

> "After the angel left me," said he, "I continued my supplications to God, without cessation, and on the twenty-second of September, I had the joy and satisfaction of again receiving the Urim and Thummim, with which I have again commenced translating, and Emma writes for me, but the angel said that the Lord would send me a scribe, and I trust his promise will be verified. The angel seemed pleased with me when he gave me back the Urim and Thummim, and he told me that the Lord loved me, for my faithfulness and humility."[52]

It was common practice in the nineteenth century to rewrite historical third-person accounts as first-person accounts. Such was also the case with *History of the Church*.

Oliver Cowdery and the Urim and Thummim

Oliver Cowdery, as Joseph's scribe during the period of translation that produced the text of the Book of Mormon that we have today, is arguably the best witness of the method used.

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when he gave him <me> back the plates <urim and Thummin> and said that he <God> was pleased with his <my > faithfulness and humility also that the Lord was pleased with him and loved him <me> for his <my> penitence and diligence in prayer in the which he <I> had performed his duty so well as to receive the record <urim and Thummin> and he <was> able to enter upon the work of translation again.

52. "Lucy Smith History, 1845," 370–71.

Some of Oliver's accounts of the translation process refer to the Urim and Thummim and the Nephite interpreters. For example, in 1834, W.W. Phelps wrote a letter to Oliver Cowdery noting that the translation occurred "through the aid of the 'Urim and Thummim,' 'Nephite Interpreters,' or Divine Spectacles."[53] Oliver wrote an article in the *Latter Day Saint's Messenger and Advocate* in which he described the translation process:

> These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the *inspiration* of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated, with the *Urim and Thummim*, or, as the Nephites would have said, "Interpreters," the history, or record, called "The book of Mormon."[54]

The *Messenger and Advocate* was a Church newspaper, and its audience was primarily members of the Church. It is clear that by 1834, Urim and Thummim was the accepted name within the Church for the instruments used during the translation. There is no distinction being made between Nephite interpreters and seer stone.

After Oliver left the Church, he continued to hold to his testimony of the Book of Mormon, although he no longer believed that Joseph Smith was inspired to lead the Church. There is a well-known quote attributed to Oliver Cowdery circulating on the Internet that is used as evidence that Oliver became skeptical of his role in the translation of the Book of Mormon, and that he specifically mentioned the use of the seer stone as the Urim and Thummim. Oliver is purported to have said the following in 1839:

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53. W. W. Phelps, "Letter No. 4," *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1/5 (Feb. 1835), 65. http://en.fairmormon.org/Messenger_and_Advocate/1/5.

54. Oliver Cowdery, *Latter Day Saint's Messenger and Advocate* 1/14. Emphasis in original. http://en.fairmormon.org/Messenger_and_Advocate/1/1.

> I have sometimes had seasons of skepticism, in which I did seriously wonder whether the Prophet and I were men in our sober senses, when he would be translating from plates, through "the Urim and Thummim" and the plates not be in sight at all.
>
> But I believed in both the Seer and the "Seer stone," and what the First Elder announced as revelation from God, I accepted as such, and committed to paper with a glad mind and happy heart and swift pen; for I believed him to be the soul of honor and truth, a young man who would die before he would lie.[55]

The document containing these statements is known to be a historical forgery, although it was accepted as genuine for many years after it came to light in 1906. The document consists primarily of phrases authored by Oliver Cowdery, which were extracted from several 1834 and 1835 issues of the *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* and then placed into a different context. The document also utilizes a rephrasing of concepts discussed in David Whitmer's 1887 *An Address to All Believers in Christ*.[56] Richard Lloyd Anderson explains the origin of this forgery in the April 1987 *Ensign*.

> In 1906 the "mountain evangelist" R. B. Neal, a leader in the American Anti-Mormon Association, published a document with much fanfare but without evidence of the document's authenticity. Reverend Neal claimed that the publication was a reprint of an 1839 document

55. Oliver Cowdery, *Defence in a rehearsal of my grounds for separating myself from the Latter Day Saints*, (1839), 5. This document is a historical forgery. http://books.google.com/books?id=imVVAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

56. The Cowdery phrases were extracted from the *Messenger and Advocate* 1/1; 2/1; 1/ 5; 1/7 and 1/10 . Whitmer material was taken from *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, 27, 31, 35, 42, 45, 61, 62, and 95.

> explaining Oliver Cowdery's apostasy: *Defence in a Rehearsal of My Grounds for Separating Myself from the Latter Day Saints*. "No more important document has been unearthed since I have been engaged in this warfare," R. B. Neal asserted. With such convictions, one can be sure that Reverend Neal would have produced evidence to prove that the original actually existed. But all we have is his 1906 first printing, which is silent about why no one had ever heard of the document until a half century after Oliver Cowdery's death.[57]

There is another matter involving Oliver Cowdery that we must take into account. We know that at some point during the translation process that Oliver Cowdery desired to translate. His attempt, and subsequent failure to do so, has provided one of the Church's most well known object lessons. Most members of the Church are likely familiar with the lesson offered in Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–9:

> Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me. But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right. But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong; therefore, you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me.

The lesson taught is a very powerful one, and defines for Latter-day Saints the manner in which we can receive personal

57. Richard Lloyd Anderson, "I Have a Question," *Ensign*, April 1987. https://www.lds.org/ensign/1987/04/i-have-a-question.

revelation. Elder Richard G. Scott discussed this in the April 2007 General Conference.

> Some misunderstandings about prayer can be clarified by realizing that the scriptures define principles for effective prayer, but they do not assure *when* a response will be given. Actually, He will reply in one of *three* ways. First, you can feel the peace, comfort, and assurance that confirm that your decision is right. Or second, you can sense that unsettled feeling, the stupor of thought, indicating that your choice is wrong. Or third—and this is the difficult one—you can feel no response.[58]

Oliver's failed attempt to translate provided this valuable lesson to generations to come. However, when we consider the translation process itself, do we ever wonder what *method* Oliver would have employed in his attempt to translate? We know that Oliver was *not allowed* to view the plates or the Nephite interpreters until he became one of the Three Witnesses. Yet, we typically assume that the process of translation required the use of the Nephite interpreters and a view of the plates. There is a contradiction here: The story of Oliver's attempt at translation does *not* fit with the common image of Joseph and Oliver sitting at a table separated by a curtain.

How, then, did Oliver attempt to translate the plates during the period of time prior to being a witness? What translation instrument did Oliver use? Although Oliver's translation attempt does not fit the scenario in which the Nephite interpreters are employed, it does fit perfectly well with the use of the stone and the hat, with Oliver and Joseph sitting in plain view of one another and the plates covered.

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58. Richard G. Scott, "Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," *Ensign,* May 2007. http://www.lds.org/ensign/2007/05/using-the-supernal-gift-of-prayer.

Richard Lloyd Anderson, in an article in the September 1977 *Ensign,* noted this inconsistency regarding Oliver and the plates.

> Oliver Cowdery says, "I . . . handled with my hands the gold plates." Yet another Witness, David Whitmer, insisted that he had never handled the plates; he only watched as the angel in the vision displayed the plates and other sacred objects. Since Whitmer and Cowdery were together at this impressive vision, one must infer that Cowdery did not handle the plates at that time. Thus a distinction emerges between the key secretary and his witness brother-in-law: at some time during the translation process Oliver Cowdery evidently handled the plates.[59]

Anderson's conclusion is that "Oliver Cowdery might well have handled the plates during his translation attempt."[60] This is based upon the common assumption that the use of the Nephite interpreters, as *spectacles*, required the translator to view the plates directly through them. Anderson assumes that the process involved "the physical art of placing the translating instruments directly over the plates." Anderson also quotes a second-hand account that he states "explicitly says that the translator placed the Urim and Thummim over the characters on the plates, though it must be judged with great caution." The account is given by Church member Samuel W. Richards. Richards visited Oliver Cowdery, and described the visit as follows:

> "He [Oliver Cowdery] represented Joseph as sitting at a table with the plates before him, translating them by means of the Urim and Thummim, while he sat beside

59. Richard Lloyd Anderson, "'By the Gift and Power of God'," *Ensign*, September 1977, 79. http://www.lds.org/ensign/1977/09/by-the-gift-and-power-of-god.

60. Anderson, "By the Gift and Power," 79.

> him writing every word as Joseph spoke them to him. This was done by holding the 'translators' over the hieroglyphics, the translation appearing distinctly on the instrument, which had been touched by the finger of God and dedicated and consecrated for the express purpose of translating languages."[61]

Anderson qualifies the account by noting that "it is doubtful whether Samuel Richards could quote Oliver accurately in 1907, fifty-nine years after their intimate visit. In fact, he continued the above statement by picturing Oliver Cowdery as successfully translating himself, thus learning how Joseph Smith performed that work. But the contemporary revelation to Oliver Cowdery says the opposite (D&C 9), which means that no one besides Joseph Smith knew personally the exact means of translation."[62]

This account would also imply that Oliver actually viewed the Nephite translation instrument and the plates prior to acting as one of the Three Witnesses. It seems more reasonable, however, that Oliver may have attempted to translate without having to view the plates, though he could have "handled" the plates while covered.

Did Oliver attempt to translate using Joseph's seer stone? This is one possibility. Another possibility is that Oliver possessed his own revelatory instrument and attempted to use it to translate. There is such an inference in the original text to Doctrine and Covenants Section 8, which discusses Oliver's "gift."[63] This is clarified on the Church's official Church History

61. Personal Statement of S. W. Richards, 25 May 1907, at Harold B. Lee Library, BYU, Special Collections, quoted in Anderson, "By the Gift and Power," 79.

62. Anderson, "By the Gift and Power," 79.

63. It was a common practice for Joseph to edit and supervise others in editing the wording of revelations. The Church has recently published the original text of the revelation comprising D&C Section 8, in which the Lord tells Oliver, "[R]emember this is thy gift now this is not all for thou hast another gift which

website, history.lds.org. In the article "Oliver Cowdery's Gift," by Jeffrey G. Cannon, we learn that Oliver possessed a divining rod, which he used to receive revelation.

> Oliver Cowdery lived in a culture steeped in biblical ideas, language and practices. The revelation's reference to Moses likely resonated with him. The Old Testament account of Moses and his brother Aaron recounted several instances of using rods to manifest God's will (see Ex. 7:9–12; Num. 17:8). Many Christians in Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery's day similarly believed in divining rods as instruments for revelation. Cowdery was among those who believed in and used a divining rod.[64]

Since Oliver had used his divining rod to receive revelation in the past, it is not unreasonable to assume that Oliver may have attempted to use his own revelatory instrument during his attempt to translate. This would satisfy the requirement that he not view the plates or the Nephite interpreters prior to becoming one of the Three Witnesses.

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is the gift of working with the sprout Behold it hath told you things Behold there is no other power save God that can cause this thing of Nature to work in your hands." Revelation, April 1829–B [D&C 8], in Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Stephen C. Harper, eds., Manuscript Revelation Books, vol. 1 of the Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009), 17. The phrases found in the Revelation book "working with the sprout" and "thing of Nature to work in your hands" were first edited by Sidney Rigdon, and subsequently by Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and Frederick G. Williams for inclusion in the Book of Commandments to read "working with the rod" and "rod of nature, to work in your hands." This wording has led some to speculate that Oliver possessed his own revelatory instrument and that he used it during his attempt to translate. In preparation for the publication of this revelation as part of the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, these phrases were ultimately edited to read "gift of Aaron" and "gift of Aaron to be with you."

64. Jeffery G. Cannon, "Oliver Cowdery's Gift," *Revelations in Context* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 15 December 2012). https://history.lds.org/article/doctrine-and-covenants-oliver-cowdery.

References to the Urim and Thummim in the Doctrine and Covenants

There are a number of references to the Urim and Thummim in the Doctrine and Covenants. Could any of these be used to determine when the term came into use? The Doctrine and Covenants mentions a number of revelations that were received by Joseph Smith through the Urim and Thummim. D&C 130, which has numerous references, was received in 1843, well after the term was commonly used. Of greater interest are D&C Sections 10 and 17, which were received during the time that translation was in progress.

Doctrine and Covenants 10 was received in the summer of 1828. Upon reading verse 1, it initially appears that the term *Urim and Thummim* was used at the time that the revelation was received.

> Now, behold, I say unto you, that because you delivered up those writings which you had power given unto you to translate by the means of the Urim and Thummim, into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them.

However, the term *Urim and Thummim* was added in 1835 when the revelation was included in the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. The same revelation in the 1833 Book of Commandments does not refer to the instrument used for translation. "Now, behold I say unto you, that because you have delivered up so many writings, which you had power to translate, into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them."

More intriguing is D&C 17, which was received in June 1829 "through the Urim and Thummim." Verse 1 informs the Three Witnesses that "you shall have a view of the plates, and also of the breastplate, the sword of Laban, the Urim and Thummim, which were given to the brother of Jared upon the mount, when he talked with the Lord face to face, and the

miraculous directors which were given to Lehi while in the wilderness, on the borders of the red sea."

Not only are the translation instruments a key subject of the revelation, but the term *Urim and Thummim* is directly associated with the Nephite interpreters, "which were given to the brother of Jared." The original text of Section 17 was not part of the Book of Commandments, and was initially printed as Section 42 in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.[65] The original text of this revelation can be found in "Revelation, June 1829–E [D&C 17]," *Joseph Smith Papers*.

> Behold I say unto you that you must rely upon my word which if you do with full purpose of heart you shall have a view of the plate and also the breastplate, the sword of Laban, the Urim and Thumim which was given to the brother of Jared upon the mount when he talked with the Lord face to face and the marvelous directors which was given to Lehi while in the wilderness on the borders of the red sea.[66]

The Historical Introduction to this section in JSP states that "Revelation Book 2 contains the earliest extant copy of this revelation. Undated, it apparently was copied sometime after 25 November 1834 by scribe Frederick G. Williams. No ear-

65. Doctrine and Covenants, 1835. P. 171. *Joseph Smith Papers*, Church Historians Press. http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835#179.

66. Revelation, June 1829-E [D&C 17], located on the Joseph Smith Papers website. Spelling and punctuation have been modernized and strikeouts and insertion marks have been removed for readability. The original text reads as follows: "Behold I say unto you that you must rely upon my word which if you do with full purpose of heart you shall have a view of the plate and also the brestplate the sword <of Laban the> Urim, and Thumim of Laban the Urim and Thumim <which was> given to the brother of Jared upon the mount when he talked with the Lord face to face and the marveelus directors which was given to Lehi while in the wilderness on the borders of the red sea . . ." http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/revelation-june-1829%e2%80%93e-dc-17.

lier copy is extant. The 1835 Doctrine and Covenants and later accounts give the date as June 1829." If the actual date upon which this revelation was committed to paper was in 1829, this would establish that the term *Urim and Thummim* was associated with the Nephite interpreters during the period that translation was in progress. Unfortunately, the written version of this revelation cannot be dated earlier than 1834.

The Stone and the Hat

Prior to the appearance of the angel Moroni, Joseph possessed several stones that he used for the purpose of locating things, the most well known use being the location of lost objects or buried treasure. This was not as unusual of an activity at that time as it would appear to be from our modern perspective. In 1825 the *Wayne Sentinel* in Palmyra reported that buried treasure had been found "by the help of a mineral stone, (which becomes transparent when placed in a hat and the light excluded by the face of him who looks into it)."[67] Regarding the Smith family and treasure seeking, Latter-day Saint scholar Richard Bushman notes,

> So that once you spread out this process so that Joseph Smith is not a peculiarly weird version of treasure seeking but that it was widely practiced suddenly it was no longer a blot on his character or his family's character. It was no more scandalous than say gambling–playing poker today. A little bit discredited and slightly morally disreputable but not really evil; and when it was found that all sorts of treasure seekers were also serious Christians, why not the Smith's too? So instead of being a puzzle or a contradiction it was just one aspect

67. "Wonderful Discovery," *Wayne Sentinel*, Palmyra, New York (27 December 1825).

> of the Smith family culture and not really anything to be worried about.[68]

It makes logical sense that the Lord would choose to approach someone who would readily accept the idea that one could "see" using a stone. Joseph already believed that the stone could be used to "see" things, and the transition from using the stone to receive information to a means of receiving revelation from God would have been straightforward. Recall that to Joseph, the spectacles that he received from Moroni were simply a more powerful version of the stone that he already possessed.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks discussed the treasure-seeking culture of that time, noting that "it was indulged in by upright and religious men such as Josiah Stowel[l]," who employed Joseph Smith "at fourteen dollars a month, in part because of the crushing poverty of the Smith family."[69]

The Church's *Student Manual* tells us that "Joseph and his brothers hired out by the day at whatever work was available. Treasure hunting, or 'money digging,' as it was then called, was popular in the United States at this time. In October 1825, Josiah Stowell, from South Bainbridge, New York, a farmer, lumber mill owner, and deacon in the Presbyterian church, came to ask Joseph to help him in such a venture."[70] The Prophet's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, noted that "after laboring for the old gentleman about a month, without success, Joseph

68. Richard L. Bushman, "Joseph Smith Miscellany" (Mesa, Arizona: FAIR, 2005 FAIR Conference). http://www.fairlds.org/fair-conferences/2005-fair-conference/2005-a-joseph-smith-miscellany.

69. Dallin H. Oaks, "Recent Events Involving Church History and Forged Documents," *Ensign,* October 1987, 63. The name "Stowel" is sometimes spelled as "Stowell" or "Stoal." http://www.lds.org/ensign/1987/10/recent-events-involving-church-history-and-forged-documents.

70. *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 42.

prevailed upon him to cease his operations."[71] In March of the next year, several of Stowell's relatives felt that Joseph had been defrauding Stowell, and brought charges against him. Joseph was taken before a judge and charged with "glasslooking." In fact, the June 1994 *Ensign* noted Joseph's trial and acquittal for "glasslooking" as one of the "highlights in the Prophet's life."

> Highlights in the Prophet's Life 20 Mar. 1826: Tried and acquitted on fanciful charge of being a "disorderly person," South Bainbridge, Chenango County, New York. New York law defined a disorderly person as, among other things, a vagrant or a seeker of "lost goods." The Prophet had been accused of both: the first charge was false and was made simply to cause trouble; Joseph's use of a seer stone to see things that others could not see with the naked eye brought the second charge. Those who brought the charges were apparently concerned that Joseph might bilk his employer, Josiah Stowell, out of some money. Mr. Stowell's testimony clearly said this was not so and that he trusted Joseph Smith.[72]

Brant Gardner clarifies the role that Joseph and his stone played within the community of Palmyra:

> Young Joseph Smith was a member of a specialized sub-community with ties to these very old and very respected practices, though by the early 1800s they were respected only by a marginalized segment of society.

71. Lucy Mack Smith, in Scott Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor, *The Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft), 124. Also cited in "Lucy Smith History, 1845," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:310. Lucy's statement regarding Joseph's work for Stowell (spelled "Stoal" in her manuscript) only appears in the 1853 version and does not appear in the original 1845 manuscript.

72. "Highlights in the Prophet's Life," *Ensign*, June 1994, 24.

> He exhibited a talent parallel to others in similar communities. Even in Palmyra he was not unique. In D. Michael Quinn's words: "Until the Book of Mormon thrust young Smith into prominence, Palmyra's most notable seer was Sally Chase, who used a greenish-colored stone. William Stafford also had a seer stone, and Joshua Stafford had a 'peepstone' which looked like white marble and had a hole through the center." Richard Bushman adds Chauncy Hart, and an unnamed man in Susquehanna County, both of whom had stones with which they found lost objects.[73]

The August 1987 *Ensign* relates how Brigham Young talked of Joseph obtaining his first seer stone "by digging '15 feet underground' after seeing it first in another seer stone."[74] This occurred while Joseph was digging a well in the company of Willard Chase, who was himself a treasure seeker. Chase's own account of the event noted that "after digging about twenty feet below the surface of the earth, we discovered a singularly appearing stone, which excited my curiosity. I brought it to the top of the well, and as we were examining it, Joseph put it into his hat, and then his face into the top of his hat."[75] Joseph ul-

73. Brant A. Gardner, "Joseph the Seer—or Why Did He Translate With a Rock in His Hat?" 2009 FAIR Conference presentation. Gardner references [9] D. Michael Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 38. and [10] Richard L. Bushman, Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 70. http://www.fairlds.org/fair-conferences/2009-fair-conference/2009-joseph-the-seer-or-why-did-he-translate-with-a-rock-in-his-hat.

74. Wilford Woodruff journal, 11 September 1859, cited in Richard Lloyd Anderson, "The Alvin Smith Story: Fact and Fiction," *Ensign*, August 1987. http://www.lds.org/ensign/1987/08/the-alvin-smith-story-fact-and-fiction.

75. "Willard Chase Statement, Circa 11 December 1833," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:65–66. Published in Eber Dudley Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed* (Painesville, OH: Telegraph Press, 1834), 240-8. Chase claimed, "It has been said by Smith, that *he* brought the stone from the well; but this is false. There was no one in the well but myself. The next morning he came to me, and wished to

timately ended up keeping the stone, and it is this stone that he may have used during translation. Chase's statement, made several years after the publication of the Book of Mormon, asserted that he was the rightful owner of the stone, claiming to have only lent it to Joseph.

Prior to receiving the plates, Joseph used the stone to "see" things as a seer. In 1835, Oliver Cowdery described how the angel Moroni revealed the location of the golden plates to Joseph Smith, stating that "the vision of his mind being opened at the same time, he was permitted to view it critically; and previously being acquainted with the place, he was able to follow the direction of the vision, afterward, according to the voice of the angel, and obtain the book."[76] At the time of Moroni's visit, Joseph was well acquainted with the use of the seer stone to "see" things. It is not unreasonable to suppose that Joseph looked into his stone in order to see the vision of the hill in which the plates were hidden after receiving Moroni's instructions regarding their location. One such account supporting this idea was given by Henry Harris in 1833, in which he stated, "I had a conversation with [Joseph], and asked him where he found them [the plates] and how he come to know where they were. He said he had a revelation from God that told him they were hid in a certain hill and he looked in his stone and saw them in the place of deposit."[77]

Joseph Knight also recounts that Joseph used the stone to identify his future wife Emma as being the person who should accompany him to retrieve the plates, noting that Joseph

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obtain the stone, alleging that he could see in it; but I told him I did not wish to part with it on account of its being a curiosity, but I would lend it."

76. Oliver Cowdery, *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1/5 (February 1835), 80.

77. Henry Harris, statement in Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 252.

"looked in his glass and found it was Emma Hale, Daughter of old Mr. Hale of Pennsylvania, a girl that he had seen before."[78]

The Spectacles, the Stone and the Curtain

The image of Joseph translating using the stone and the hat does not match the picture that we typically have in our mind of Joseph looking at the plates through a pair of "spectacles," while sitting behind a curtain. However, the use of the stone and the hat provides a distinct advantage in bolstering the claim that Joseph received the Book of Mormon text through revelation. The absence of a curtain during the latter part of the translation, during which the entire text of the Book of Mormon that we now have was produced, substantially weakens the critical argument that Joseph dictated the Book of Mormon by plagiarizing a number of other works. Instead of having Joseph obscured by a curtain or blanket, which could have hidden any number of reference materials, Joseph sat in the open, dictating the text of the Book of Mormon to Oliver while looking at the interpreter placed in his hat. Now, instead of "Joseph the plagiarist," those wishing to provide an alternate explanation of the translation must assert "Joseph the plagiarist who has a photographic memory." This is of particular value with respect the biblical passages contained within the Book of Mormon, which duplicate the textual structure of the King James Version. Joseph was never seen consulting a Bible as he dictated the text of the Book of Mormon. One must either assume that he consulted a Bible out of view of others and memorized the text, or accept the claim that the text was revealed to him as he dictated it.

78. Dean Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," *BYU Studies* 17/1 (1976), 2. Original spelling: "looked in his glass and found it was Emma Hale, Daughter of old Mr. Hail of Pensylvany, a girl that he had seen Before."

That having been said, there is ample evidence that a curtain or sheet of some kind was used during the early period of translation. Martin Harris is quoted as saying as much in an 1831 issue of the *Palmyra Reflector*. According to the *Reflector*, "Harris declares, that when he acted as amanuenses, and wrote the translation, as Smith dictated, such was his fear of the Divine displeasure, that a screen (sheet) was suspended between the prophet and himself."[79] This would correspond to the early period of the translation during which Harris acted as scribe, prior to the loss of the 116 pages of manuscript.

The use of the curtain to screen the translator from the scribe certainly makes sense if the translation instruments being employed are the Nephite interpreters. Critic Eber D. Howe in his 1834 book *Mormonism Unvailed* notes that Harris mentions the use of a "screen."

> [Martin Harris] says he wrote a considerable part of the book, as Smith dictated, and at one time the presence of the Lord was so great, that a screen was hung up between him and the Prophet; at other times the Prophet would sit in a different room, or up stairs, while the Lord was communicating to him the contents of the plates. He does not pretend that he ever saw the wonderful plates but once, although he and Smith were engaged for months in deciphering their contents.[80]

The claim that Harris said that he saw the plates "but once" is quite consistent with the stage of the translation process during which a curtain was employed. Harris only saw them once when he acted as one of the Three Witnesses. It is apparent that during the initial stage of the translation process the sacred objects were required to be hidden from view of others. Charles

79. *Palmyra Reflector*, 1829–1831, "Gold Bible, No. 6," (19 March 1831) in *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:248.

80. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 14.

Anthon, whose only knowledge of the process was relayed to him during a visit by Martin Harris, states,

> This young man was placed behind a curtain, in the garret of a farm house, and, being thus concealed from view, put on the spectacles occasionally, or rather, looked through one of the glasses, decyphered the characters in the book, and, having committed some of them to paper, handed copies from behind the curtain, to those who stood on the outside. Not a word, however, was said about the plates having been decyphered "by the gift of God:" Every thing, in this way, was effected by the large pair of spectacles.[81]

John A. Clark, in a 1834 book chapter criticizing Mormonism, also associates the use of the curtain with the period during which Harris acted as scribe.

> The way that Smith made his transcripts and translations for Harris was the following; Although in the same room, a thick curtain or blanket was suspended between them, and Smith concealed behind the blanket, pretend to look through his spectacles, or transparent stones, and would then write down or repeat what he saw, which, when repeated aloud, was written down by Harris, who sat on the other side of the suspended blanket.[82]

Clark's mention of "transcripts" would make sense with the use of a curtain, since it is known that Joseph copied char-

81. "Charles Anthon to E. D. Howe, 17 February 1834," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:379.

82. John A. Clark, "Gleanings by the Way" (Philadelphia, 1842), 230. Available in Google Books: http://books.google.com/books/about/Gleanings_by_the_way.html?id=Q-sQAAAAIAAJ.

acters off the plates, and would have needed to shield them from view at that time.

Another hostile account published ten years later in 1844 notes that "The 'prophet,' as he is now called, took care, of course, that neither of them, nor any one else, should see the plates, the part of the room he occupied having been partitioned off from where they sat by a blanket."[83]

Pomeroy Tucker, a friend of Martin Harris who later became skeptical of Harris's involvement with Mormonism, claims that Joseph dictated "from behind a blanket-screen drawn across a dark corner of a room at his residence-for at this time the original revelation, limiting to the prophet the right of seeing the sacred plates, had not yet been changed, and the view with the instrument used was even too brilliant for his own spiritualized eyes in the light!"[84] Since Tucker never observed the process of translation, it is likely that he heard this story from Martin Harris himself.

So far, all of the accounts describing the use of a curtain appear to have originated with Martin Harris. However, during an interview for the *Chicago Tribune* in 1885, Book of Mormon witness David Whitmer also mentioned the use of a curtain, although this particular account contains some obvious inaccuracies.

> [Joseph] Smith [Jr.], also said that he had been commanded to at once begin the translation of the work in the presence of three witnesses. In accordance with this command, Smith, Cowdery, and Whitmer proceeded to the latter's home, accompanied by Smith's

83. Robert Baird, *Religion in the United States of America* (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1844), 647–49.

84. Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1867), 36. Available in Google Books: http://books.google.com/books/about/Origin_rise_and_progress_of_Mormonism.html?id=1SPym5-HSN4C.

> wife, and bearing with them the precious plates and spectacles. The house of senior Whitmer was a primitive and poorly designed structure, but it was deemed the most secure for the carrying out the sacred trust on account of the threats that had been made against Smith by his mercenary neighbors. In order to give privacy to the proceeding a blanket, which served as a portiere was stretched across the family living room to shelter the translators and the plates from the eye of any who might call at the house while the work was in progress. This, Mr. Whitmer says, was the only use made of the blanket, and it was not for the purpose of concealing the plates or the translator from the eyes of the amanuensis. In fact, Smith was at no time concealed from his collaborators, and the translation was performed in the presence of not only the persons mentioned, but of the entire Whitmer household and several of Smith's relatives besides.[85]

There are elements of this account that make it appear that the interviewer has mixed various aspects of the translation process. For example, it was not required that Joseph perform the translation in the presence of three witnesses—this is obviously a reference to the Three Witnesses. However, it is interesting to note that the interviewer states that Whitmer actually made an effort to specify that a blanket was used only to shield the translation process from others who might stop by. This may indicate that a curtain was used in a different manner in the Whitmer home than it was during Martin Harris's tenure as scribe. Whitmer is then said to describe the actual translation process.

85. "David Whitmer Interview with *Chicago Tribune*, 15 December 1885," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:153. Also reprinted in the *Deseret News*, 6 January 1886.

> Each time before resuming the work all present would kneel in prayer and invoke the Divine blessing on the proceeding. After the prayer Smith would sit on one side of the table and the amanuenses, in turn as they became tired, on the other. Those present and not actively engaged in the work seated themselves around the room and then the work began. After affixing the magical spectacles to his eyes, Smith would take the plates and translate the characters one at a time.[86]

In this instance, Whitmer seems to indicate the use of the Nephite interpreters in full view of others. Since Whitmer would not have been allowed to view the spectacles or the plates prior to being one of the Three Witnesses, this account does not correlate with other accounts, even those other accounts coming from Whitmer himself. It is possible that Whitmer described both aspects of the early translation using the spectacles and blanket as well as the later situation in which Joseph placed the translation instrument into his hat and dictated in full view of others. The interviewer may not have distinguished the various elements present during different periods of translation, and may have simply conflated these different elements into the single story that was produced.

By the time that the translation resumed after the loss of the 116 pages, the translation method appears to have changed substantially. Even if a blanket or curtain was used in the Whitmer home for any period of time, it appears to have quickly disappeared. The translation of the entire text of the Book of Mormon that we now have took place primarily at David Whitmer's home. Not only is the use of a curtain not apparent, but there is an actual denial that it was used in the process. David Whitmer's sister, Elizabeth Ann Whitmer Cowdery, stated,

86. "David Whitmer Interview with *Chicago Tribune*," in *Early Mormon Documents,* 5:153–54.

> I cheerfully certify that I was familiar with the manner of Joseph Smith's translating the book of Mormon. He translated the most of it at my Father's house. And I often sat by and saw and heard them translate and write for hours together. Joseph never had a curtain drawn between him and his scribe while he was translating. He would place the director in his hat, and then place his [face in his] hat, so as to exclude the light, and then [read] to his scribe the words as they appeared before him.[87]

Elizabeth asserts that the translation at the Whitmer home was performed using the translation instrument in the hat, thus eliminating any need for a curtain to shield the Nephite interpreters and the plates from view. Even the anomalous account reported to have come from David Whitmer regarding the use of a curtain at his home includes the claim that the translation occurred in the open, where anyone could observe it. The fact that Elizabeth felt the need to make such a statement at all strongly implies that there was still a story in circulation among the Latter-day Saints that a curtain was used in the translation process. In 1887, David Whitmer, who two years earlier in the 1885 *Chicago Tribune* interview asserted the use of the Nephite interpreters and curtain, now also described the translation method using the stone and the hat.

> I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing.

87. Elizabeth Ann Whitmer Cowdery, "Elizabeth Ann Whitmer Cowdery Affidavit, 15 February 1870," in *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:260.

> One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man.[88]

What Instrument Did Joseph Use to Translate the Book of Mormon?

In 1886, David Whitmer indicates that Joseph used his own seer stone to translate all of our current Book of Mormon text. In this interview, Whitmer indicates that the spectacles were never returned after the loss of the 116 pages and that a seer stone was made available to Joseph Smith for the purpose of continuing the translation; however, there is no way to confirm that this was actually the case.

What eventually happened to Joseph's seer stone? According to David Whitmer, "After the translation of the Book of Mormon was finished early in the spring of 1830 before April 6th, Joseph gave the Stone to Oliver Cowdery and told me as well as the rest that he was through with it, and he did not use the stone anymore."[89] The stone ultimately made its way to Utah. At one point, the stone was present at the Manti Temple dedication. Wilford Woodruff wrote about this event in his journal: "Before leaving I Consecrated upon the Altar the seers Stone that Joseph Smith found by Revelation some 30

88. David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (1887), 12.

89. Whitmer, *An Address*, 32. Joseph Smith's claim that he no longer needed the seer stone in order to receive revelation was one factor in Whitmer's eventual disillusionment with him.

feet under the Earth Carried By him through life."[90] In 1956, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith commented that "the statement has been made that the Urim and Thummim was on the altar in the Manti Temple when that building was dedicated. The Urim and Thummim so spoken of, however, was the seer stone which was in the possession of the Prophet Joseph Smith in early days. This seer stone is currently in the possession of the Church."[91] This means that the instrument by means of which the Book of Mormon *may* have been all or partially translated is currently still in the possession of the Church, as opposed to the "original" Urim and Thummim (the Nephite interpreters), which were returned to the angel Moroni at some point during or after the translation.

References to the stone being used during the Book of Mormon translation are not confined to the nineteenth century. We have already seen a reference to the stone in the September 1974 *Friend* and Elder Russell M. Nelson's quote of David Whitmer's description of the stone and the hat in the July 1993 *Ensign*. These are not the only instances. Elder Neal A. Maxwell quoted Martin Harris in the January 1997 *Ensign*, noting that "Martin Harris related of the seer stone: 'Sentences would appear and were read by the Prophet and written by Martin.'"[92] In 1988, Elder Maxwell also referred to "the light-shielding hat reportedly used by Joseph Smith during some of the translating of the Book of Mormon."[93] In the January 1988 *Ensign*, Church Educational System area director Kenneth Godfrey mentioned that "translation involved sight, power,

90. Wilford Woodruff's journal, 18 May 1888, quoted in Richard O. Cowan, *Temples to Dot the Earth* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 1997).

91. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956), 3:225.

92. Neal A. Maxwell, "'By the Gift and Power of God'," *Ensign,* January 1997, 36. http://www.lds.org/ensign/1997/01/by-the-gift-and-power-of-god.

93. Neal A. Maxwell, *Not My Will, But Thine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 26.

transcription of the characters, the Urim and Thummim or a seerstone, study, and prayer."[94] Brigham Young University professor Richard Lloyd Anderson, in the September 1977 *Ensign,* quotes David Whitmer's statement that "Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light."[95]

Elder Dallin H. Oaks clarified that "it should be recognized that such tools as the Urim and Thummim, the Liahona, seerstones, and other articles have been used appropriately in biblical, Book of Mormon, and modern times by those who have the gift and authority to obtain revelation from God in connection with their use."[96]

Early Church members knew that Joseph received revelation through the Urim and Thummim, which could have been either the Nephite interpreters or the seer stone. Doctrine and Covenants 28 states that "Hiram Page, a member of the Church, had a certain stone and professed to be receiving revelations by its aid concerning the upbuilding of Zion and the order of the Church. Several members had been deceived by these claims, and even Oliver Cowdery was wrongly influenced thereby."[97] The fact that Oliver "was wrongly influenced thereby" clearly indicates that Oliver was quite aware that the Urim and Thummim was not limited to a single instrument. The resolution of this situation involved the Lord clarifying that, "no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., for he

94. Kenneth W. Godfrey, "A New Prophet and a New Scripture: The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, January 1988. http://www.lds.org/ensign/1988/01/a-new-prophet-and-a-new-scripture-the-coming-forth-of-the-book-of-mormon.

95. Anderson, "By the Gift and Power," 79.

96. Dallin H. Oaks, "Recent Events Involving Church History and Forged Documents," *Ensign,* October 1987, 63. http://www.lds.org/ensign/1987/10/recent-events-involving-church-history-and-forged-documents.

97. Heading to Doctrine and Covenants 28.

receiveth them even as Moses" (D&C 28:2). Page's stone was destroyed and any revelations that he received through it were disavowed. The problem was not the fact that Hiram Page was using a stone other than Joseph's Urim and Thummim to receive revelation, but rather the fact that he was not authorized to receive revelation on behalf of the Church.

The Stone and the Hat Become Buried in History

We already know that Joseph Smith was reluctant to describe the translation process in detail. Brigham Young University professor Stephen Ricks feels that Joseph's "reticence was probably well justified and may have been due to the inordinate interest which some of the early Saints had shown in the seer stone or to the negative and sometimes bitter reactions he encountered when he had reported some of his sacred experiences to others."[98] Thus, Joseph never discussed the details regarding which translation instrument he used to both translate the Book of Mormon and to receive revelation. Joseph simply told people that he received his early revelations through the "Urim and Thummim."

During the 1930s, Dr. Francis Kirkham endeavored to "gather and evaluate all the newspaper articles he could locate about the Book of Mormon."[99] Many of these articles were obtained from newspaper collections located in the New York area and have recently been made available in an online database hosted by the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship.[100]

98. Stephen D. Ricks, *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Maxwell Institute, n.d.), http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/transcripts/?id=10

99. Keith W. Perkins, "Francis W. Kirkham: A 'New Witness' for the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, July 1984. https://www.lds.org/ensign/1984/07/francis-w-kirkham-a-new-witness-for-the-book-of-mormon.

100. This effort on the part of the Maxwell Institute was referred to as the "Kirkham Project." See "Early Book of Mormon Writings Now Online," *Insights*

As we have seen, many of these news accounts refer to the use of the spectacles or stone together with a hat, consistent with the late statements of Martin Harris and David Whitmer. Kirkham, in the October 1939 *Improvement Era*, quoted the accounts of the stone and the hat given by Martin Harris and David Whitmer. Kirkham, however, did *not* accept the eyewitness accounts that Joseph actually used a seer stone in the translation of the Book of Mormon, concluding that "the statements of both of these men are to be explained by the eagerness of old age to call upon a fading and uncertain memory for the details of events which still remained real and objective to them."[101] In his 1951 book *A New Witness For Christ in America*, Kirkham believed that "it may not have been expedient for the Prophet to try and explain the method of translation for the reason his hearers would lack the capacity to understand. It seemed sufficient to them at that time to know that the translation had been made by the gift and power of God."[102] Kirkham goes on to say that, "After a lapse of forty years of time, both David Whitmer and Martin Harris attempted to give the method of the translation. Evidently the Prophet did not tell them the method."[103] Despite the fact that elements of Harris's and Whitmer's story were consistent with each other, Kirkham simply refused to accept the idea that the accounts might have basis in the truth.

30:2 (Provo, UT: Maxwell Institute), which notes that "for more than 10 years Matthew Roper, research scholar at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship and head of the project, has been collecting this literature. The collection builds upon the early efforts of Francis W. Kirkham, an educator for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. According to Roper, during the 1930s Kirkham began collecting rare newspapers relating to early Latter-day Saint history. Subsequent researchers and historians have discovered many additional items, all of which are included in this new collection."

101. Francis W. Kirkham, "The Manner of Translating the Book of Mormon," *Improvement Era*, October 1939, 632.

102. Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America* (Independence, MO: Press of Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1951), 194.

103. Kirkham, *A New Witness*, 196.

In 1956, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith knew of the seer stone, but did not believe that Joseph actually used it during the translation of the Book of Mormon.

> SEER STONE NOT USED IN BOOK OF MORMON TRANSLATION. We have been taught since the days of the Prophet that *the Urim and Thummim were returned with the plates to the angel.* We have no record of the Prophet having the Urim and Thummim after the organization of the Church. Statements of translations by the Urim and Thummim after that date are evidently *errors*.[104]

Like Kirkham, Joseph Fielding Smith simply refused to accept accounts of Joseph having utilized his seer stone for the purpose of translation as having any validity. In his opinion, such accounts were simply erroneous.

During the twentieth century, the story of Joseph translating behind a curtain while employing the Nephite interpreters as the Urim and Thummim remained firmly established and generally uncontested among the general Church membership. Latter-day Saint scholars, however, continued to research the stories of Joseph's use of the seer stone. Such references never made it into the general Church curriculum or the awareness of the general Church membership. If you were a scholar, then you knew that Joseph used a seer stone. If you were a regular Church member, then you knew that Joseph used the Nephite interpreters. Discussions of Joseph's use of "seer stones" or the practice of "treasure seeking" remained primarily in the realm of LDS scholars. During the tenure of Church Historian Leonard J. Arrington, from 1972 and 1982, some attempts were made to make certain elements of Latter-day Saint history more accessible to the average member. One 1976 book

104. Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:225. Emphasis in original.

produced during this period, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, by James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, noted in a straightforward manner Joseph's acquisition of his seer stone and its use in the translation of the Book of Mormon.

> Sometime around 1822, before his first visit from the angel Moroni, Joseph was digging a well with Willard Chase, not far from the Smith home, and he discovered a smooth, dark-colored stone, about the size of an egg, that he called a seerstone. He later used it to help in the translation of the Book of Mormon and also in receiving certain revelations.[105]

The visibility of these issues among the general Church membership began to change significantly in the early 1980s as the result of a very unusual and tragic event: the exposure of the Mark Hofmann forgeries. Suddenly, newspapers were talking about salamanders and treasure guardians in association with some of the Church's founding events.

Mark Hofmann was a member of the Church who became involved with the acquisition and sale of historic documents during the early 1980s. He seemed to have a knack for acquiring missing documents that were alluded to by other documents related to Church history. For example, Hofmann claimed to have located a blessing in which Joseph Smith III was allegedly promised that he would be the next prophet of the Church. Hofmann also produced what he claimed was the Anthon transcript, which matched a description of the document provided by Charles Anthon himself. The most famous document in the collection of Hofmann forgeries was the Salamander Letter, which was purportedly written by Martin Harris. Hofmann's documents were so well crafted that they fooled a number of experts in the field, and they were all considered genuine for

105. James. B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed., rev. and enl. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 40–41.

a period of time. During that period of time, a new wave of Latter-day Saint historical works were produced, taking into account the "magical" aspects emphasized in the Salamander Letter. There was also an effort to reconcile and integrate the new information with existing accounts.[106]

Some of Hofmann's documents were created based upon existing eyewitness accounts regarding treasure seeking, and to some extent simply amplified concepts that were already known to historians. Once the forgeries were exposed, it became necessary to re-examine what had been written to support the now discredited documents.[107] Although the Hofmann forgeries were discounted, the underlying legitimate historical accounts that fueled their creation began to become more well known among the general Church membership. Joseph's early involvement with treasure seeking, beyond what had long been documented in Church publications regarding his efforts with Josiah Stowell, became more well known. Elder Dallin Oaks emphasized that this in no way diminished Joseph's standing as the Prophet of the Restoration.

> Some sources close to Joseph Smith claim that in his youth, during his spiritual immaturity prior to his being entrusted with the Book of Mormon plates, he sometimes used a stone in seeking for treasure. Whether this is so or not, we need to remember that no prophet is free from human frailties, especially before he is called to devote his life to the Lord's work.

106. A list of known Hofmann forgeries related to Church history appeared in "Fraudulent Documents from Forger Mark Hofmann Noted," *Ensign*, October 1987.

107. Richard Lloyd Anderson, "The Alvin Smith Story: Fact and Fiction," *Ensign,* August 1987. Anderson states, that "attempts to reposition the foundations of the Church on the basis of documents tied to Mark Hofmann are now outdated, because he has pleaded guilty in open court to selling false documents. Thus, revised histories based on these documents must now be revised themselves."

> Line upon line, young Joseph Smith expanded his faith and understanding and his spiritual gifts matured until he stood with power and stature as the Prophet of the Restoration.[108]

The Translation Process Was Spiritual, Not Mechanical

The translation of the Book of Mormon was a spiritual process, not a mechanical one. The interaction of seer with seer stone is fascinating from a historical perspective, but it is not the most important aspect of the process. It should be kept in mind that Joseph chose to emphasize that the most important aspect of the translation was that it was accomplished by the gift and power of God. The precise means by which God accomplished that purpose are primarily of historical interest, and are not required to build faith. Joseph initially received revelation through the Urim and Thummim (either the spectacles or the stone), but eventually learned that he did not need a physical aid in order to act in the capacity of prophet and seer. One of the important lessons taught to Joseph during this process is that the use of these instruments required faith and humility, in order for Joseph to know the Lord's will. David Whitmer describes this.

> At times when Brother Joseph would attempt to translate, he would look into the hat in which the stone was placed, he found he was spiritually blind and could not translate. He told us that his mind dwelt too much on the earthly things, and various causes would make him incapable of proceeding with the translation. When in this condition he would go out and pray, and when he became sufficiently humble before God, he could then proceed with the translation. Now we see how very

108. Oaks, "Recent Events."

> strict the Lord is, and how He requires the heart of man to be just right in His sight, before he can receive revelation from Him.[109]

Joseph eventually realized that his ability to communicate with the Lord was not dependent upon a sacred object, but was instead a function of his faith and humility. He spiritually outgrew the need to use the Nephite interpreters or the seer stone, thereby setting the pattern by which every person has the promise of receiving personal revelation. The objects used to guide him to this realization eventually became unimportant in light of the greater lesson learned.

Viewing the Translation Process from a Twenty-First Century Perspective

It is still desirable to reconcile the various accounts of the translation in order to understand how some have viewed various aspects of the process as contradictory. From this believer's perspective, the story of the translation of the Book of Mormon and the subsequent emphasis and de-emphasis of its various elements appears to have taken the following course:

- Joseph Smith received the plates and the Nephite interpreters from the Angel Moroni.
- Joseph began the process of translation using the Nephite interpreters, with Martin Harris as scribe. A curtain separated the translator from the scribe, thus shielding the plates and the Nephite interpreters from view.
- Joseph may have placed the Nephite interpreters in a hat in order to shield them from the light, in accordance with the method that he used when utilizing his own seer stone.

109. Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers,* 30.

- At times, Joseph may have switched to using his own seer stone, placing it in the hat. On one such occasion, Martin swapped the stones, which he would never have dared to do had Joseph been using the Nephite instrument.
- Upon completion of and subsequent loss of the 116 pages of manuscript, the Angel Moroni took back the plates and the Nephite interpreters.
- After a sufficient time of repentance, the plates were returned to Joseph, along with the Nephite interpreters.
- Joseph began translating using either the Nephite interpreters or his seer stone, either of which may have been placed in the hat. The witnesses would not necessarily have been able to determine which instrument he was using, although Martin Harris's swapping of the stone to test Joseph indicates that the stone was used at some point. This translation process occurred in plain view of those around Joseph, including his scribe Oliver Cowdery. There was no curtain present during this period of the translation process.
- The translation process using the stone and the hat was observed directly by David Whitmer, Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery and Emma Smith, who shared their observations with interviewers many years later near the end of their lives.
- As early as three years after the publication of the Book of Mormon, the term *Urim and Thummim* became applied to both the Nephite interpreters and the seer stone. In the minds of the early Saints, they were essentially the same instrument used for the same purpose.
- The term *Urim and Thummim* subsequently became understood as representing the Nephite interpreters exclusively, and the use of the seer stone and the hat became pushed back in history. The lack of a need to use a

curtain to shield the translator from the scribe likewise became buried in history. The translation process became represented within Church literature and artwork by its earliest iteration: Nephite interpreters and plates shielded from the scribe by a curtain.

- During much of the twentieth century, reports that the stone and the hat had been employed during the translation were dismissed with skepticism.
- Partially as a result of the Mark Hofmann forgeries, new publications brought documents related to the use of the stone and the hat back into the public eye.
- With the advent of the Internet, numerous documents related to the translation process became easily accessible to the general Church membership, once again highlighting the use of the stone and the hat. References to these items entered the popular media. The presence of this information made it appear that the story that we are familiar with in Church is contradicted by that provided by witnesses such as Martin Harris, David Whitmer, and Emma Smith.
- The Church initiated efforts to make early documents such as the Joseph Smith Papers easily accessible, further supporting these early accounts.

The apparent contradictions between accounts of the translation are not actually contradictions at all, and are primarily the result of certain elements of the translation process being de-emphasized, or even denied at various points during the last century and a half. The use of the Nephite interpreters as Urim and Thummin, the use of the seer stone as Urim and Thummim, and the use of the hat with both instruments, as well as the appearance and disappearance of the curtain, all fit into the translation scenario at various stages of the process.

Conclusion

The average member now has access to an abundance of information regarding the Book of Mormon translation process. The Internet has allowed hundreds of documents to be made available to anyone interested in viewing them, rather than restricting them to just scholars who take the time to access the archives. The *Joseph Smith Papers* project is a significant boon to historians and researchers who wish to view and examine the original documents associated with the restoration. One significant new product of this effort is the Church History website history.lds.org, which hosts *Revelations in Context*.[110] On this site, the Church provides unprecedented detail regarding the production and evolution of the revelations received by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

With regard to the specific procedures involved in the translation, Brant A. Gardner's 2011 book *The Gift and the Power: Translating the Book of Mormon* provides a detailed analysis of the process.

The use of the seer stone should be of no particular surprise or concern to any Latter-day Saint who accepts that Joseph received a set of sacred stones that were consecrated for the purpose of receiving revelation and translation. After all, what precisely is the difference between using one seer stone versus another? One can assume that Joseph continued to use the Nephite interpreters, since they were the instrument that was consecrated specifically for the purpose of translation. However, it is entirely reasonable to assume that God could consecrate any other instrument that He wished to serve that purpose as well.

It is clear from the contemporary accounts that the object placed within the hat could either be the spectacles or the seer

110. *Revelations in Context*. https://history.lds.org/series/doctrine-and-covenants-revelations-in-context?lang=eng#/date/10/1.

stone. Both were classified by the early Latter-day Saints as "Urim and Thummim." It is therefore safe to say that, regardless of which actual instrument Joseph was using at any particular point in time, he did indeed translate the entire Book of Mormon using the Urim and Thummim.

The primary issue that seems to concern some is the idea that Joseph translated in the open, in full view of others, by placing the instrument of translation in a hat and dictating text without looking directly at the plates. Why would the Lord allow Joseph to alter the method used to translate? The 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon contains over 580 pages, which were dictated without repetition at a rate of seven to eleven-and-a-half pages per day.[111] This is a significant accomplishment, regardless of the precise method used during the translation. A reasonable conclusion is that by allowing Joseph to dictate the entire Book of Mormon text in full view of witnesses without the process being obscured in any way, it significantly strengthens the position that Joseph was indeed receiving revelation rather than consulting other materials.

Finally, what of the plates themselves? If Joseph was not actually required to look at them directly during translation, then what *was* their purpose? Recall that the Urim and Thummim was a revelatory instrument. This means that rather than "translating" the plates in the traditional sense, Joseph received revelation that inspired him with an understanding of what was written there. He then expressed these concepts during dictation using his own language.[112] The Book of Mormon, therefore, constitutes Joseph's greatest and longest revelation.

111. John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "How Long Did It Take to Translate the Book of Mormon?" (Provo, UT: Maxwell Institute). http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/books/?bookid=71&chapid=767.

112. There are various schools of thought among Book of Mormon scholars regarding whether the text of the Book of Mormon represents a "loose translation" as opposed to a "tight translation" of the meaning of the characters on the plates. Given that I am not a scholar, it is not my intention to draw any conclu-

The plates did serve an important purpose, however. The Three Witnesses and the Eight Witnesses confirmed that the Nephite record actually existed and testified of this to the world, even after some of them left the Church. The witnesses' testimony has endured against all attempts to discredit them. The fact that the plates actually existed, and that Joseph had to exert great effort to recover and protect them, helped shape the Prophet's character during these crucial early years. And, the existence of a set of literal plates made it crystal clear that Joseph's account was a real history: a genuine ancient people had learned of Christ, and had actually seen the Risen Lord. Joseph's revelation was no romantic novel, nor was it pious make-believe.

An examination of the translation method in light of the information now available should not be used as a foundation for faith, nor should it contribute to the destruction of one's faith. It is simply history, and as such provides a richer and more in-depth understanding of what actually happened, as well as filling in some of the gaps that are apparent in the story that we know. Elder Neal A. Maxwell offers some wise advice against becoming too focused on the mechanics of, rather than the results of, the translation.

> We are looking beyond the mark today, for example, if we are more interested in the physical dimensions of the cross than in what Jesus achieved thereon; or when we neglect Alma's words on faith because we are too fascinated by the light-shielding hat reportedly used by Joseph Smith during some of the translating of the Book of Mormon. To neglect substance while focusing on process is another form of unsubmissively looking beyond the mark.[113]

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sions regarding this aspect of the translation. I simply assert that some form of revelation occurred.

113. Maxwell, *Not My* Will, 26.

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Book Review

Kevin Christensen

Review of Margaret Barker, Temple Mysticism: An Introduction *(London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2011), 181 pp. $18.94.*

Margaret Barker is a biblical scholar whose books have been attracting increasing Latter-day Saint attention for over a decade. She has also been making inroads in the wider circles of scholarship, as evidenced by her *Temple Theology: An Introduction* being shortlisted for the Michael Ramsey Prize for theological writing, the first woman so honored. And she was awarded a Doctor of Divinity by the Archbishop of Canterbury for *Temple Themes in Christian Worship*. She is a prolific writer and a busy speaker.

The first and, I think, only obstacle for LDS readers in Margaret Barker's *Temple Mysticism* can be removed by seeing what she means by temple mysticism. The term *mysticism* has been employed in a range of meanings by different writers (including me). Misunderstanding what she means by temple mysticism can set a wrong expectation for her book. Let me digress to illustrate. When I went to England in 1973, I had to learn what the English meant by *biscuit*, *chips*, *lift*, *bonnet* and *boot*. Where I came from, the words meant something else. Once I understood what these terms meant, what the signs signified in that context, I got on very well. As a more academic example, because both Eliade and Jung use the word *archetype*

in different ways there is something amiss in reading them as though they each meant the same thing by it.[1]

I think I may be a fairly typical LDS reader in getting my first serious introduction to the term *mysticism* from Hugh Nibley's "Prophets and Mystics," which is a chapter in *The World and the Prophets*.[2] It happens that Barker's approach to temple mysticism is quite distinct. Nibley defines mysticism as "an intuitive and ecstatic union with the deity obtained by means of contemplation and other mental exercises."[3] He emphasizes the incommunicable nature of the experiences, the impersonal view of deity, and the need for a teacher/guide to direct the student on the path to illumination. While Nibley's essay defines mysticism in a conventional way, I have discovered other approaches and sources that use the term differently.[4] Margaret Barker's temple mystics report a very different kind of experience than that sort Nibley describes in his essay. For Barker, temple mysticism centers on "seeing the Lord." Her temple mystics are unquestionably more akin to Lehi, Nephi, Alma, Joseph Smith, and Sidney Rigdon than are Nibley's mystics.

This book is a thematic sequel to her earlier book, *Temple Theology: An Introduction*. She uses the title, *Temple Mysticism*, to emphasize the experiences that precede and underlie the theology, ritual, and liturgy that make Temple Theology. The point is to emphasize what Ninian Smart calls "the Experiential

1. William Hamblin, "Joseph or Jung: A Response to Douglas Salmon," *FARMS Review* 13/2 (2001): 99–100.

2. Hugh Nibley, *The World and the Prophets* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954).

3. Nibley, *World and the Prophets*, 89; citing Eduard Lehmann.

4. My favorite LDS approach essay has become Mark E. Koltko, "Mysticism and Mormonism: An LDS Perspective on Transcendence and Higher Consciousness," *Sunstone* 13/2 (April 1989): 13–19. I have also been influenced by the approaches in Ninian Smart, *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983), especially 71–72, and Ian G. Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 78–84.

Dimension" of faith, that is, the wine that makes the wine bottles necessary and important.[5] Barker uses the term *mysticism* to evoke notions of personal experience and the ritual context that intends to evoke that reality, rather than mere intellectual theologizing or moralizing.

Once adjusted to Barker's use of the term *temple mysticism*, LDS readers should find themselves very comfortable with her approach. Her defining examples of temple mystics are Isaiah and John. With Isaiah, she cites the vision in Isaiah 6, in which the prophet reports, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne." She then comments that "John identified the enthroned figure of Isaiah's vision as Jesus in glory, showing that Jesus' closest disciples understood him in the context of temple mysticism, and indeed identified him as the figure at the very centre of the mystical vision" (p. 2). Barker explains that "Jesus himself received visions in the manner of temple mystics, and that these formed the core of Revelation," and she says that recognizing this is "important for recovering temple mysticism and for establishing its key role in early Christianity" (p. 24). She explains that

> there are glimpses elsewhere of Jesus the temple mystic: he saw the heavens open at his baptism (Mark 1:10), and the heavenly voice named him as the divine Son. Origin knew that at his baptism, Jesus saw the chariot throne that Ezekiel had seen by the River Chebar (Ezekiel 1:14–28). Jesus then spent 40 days in the wilderness "with the wild beasts and the angels served him" (Mark 1:13, my translation). He was alone and so must have reported these experiences to others, and presumably not in Greek. This is important because in Hebrew the "wild beasts" would have been the same as the "living creatures" of the chariot throne, *hayyot* (Ezek. 1:5; Rev. 4:6), and the serving angels would have been the

5. Smart, *Worldviews*, 62.

> working hosts in the throne vision since "serve" '*abad*,' also means worship in Hebrew (Rev. 5:11). Jesus' mystical experience in the desert is described more fully in the opening scene of Revelation. (p. 25)

For Barker, "seeing the Lord—temple mysticism—was both controversial and suppressed" (p. 25). The ones doing the suppressing were the Deuteronomists, and she has shown how many Bible texts have been changed and/or corrupted to prevent their being read to say that God could be seen.

> The Qumran texts have shown beyond reasonable doubt that . . . Hebrew texts of special interest to Christians were changed or disappeared. One of the proof texts at the beginning of Hebrews is in the LXX and in a Qumran fragment, but "Let all God's angels worship him" (LXX Deut. 32:43; Heb. 1:6) is not in the MT. This key verse shows that Jesus was identified as Yahweh, the first born. Yahweh, the LORD, is not usually identified as the first-born son, but that was the original belief. Yahweh was the son of God Most High—as Gabriel announced to Mary (Luke 1:32)—and so the Hebrew scriptures witness to Father and Son. The Christian proclamation "Jesus is LORD" meant Jesus is Yahweh. The human manifestation of the LORD, the son of God Most High, was at the heart of temple mysticism, but was one of the crucial pieces of evidence that did not become part of the MT. Nor did the verse about God Most High dividing the nations among "the sons of God", of whom Yahweh received Jacob (Deut. 32:8). The sons of God became in the MT the incomprehensible "sons of Israel". There are many examples, as we shall see, in the course of reconstructing temple mysticism. (pp. 27–28)

She further defines what she means by *temple mysticism* by saying, "The temple mystics were messengers from heaven to earth; their vision was not just a private ecstasy, but always a call to be the bearer of revelation" (p. 5). Here again her temple mysticism is quite distinct compared to the picture of mystics I got from Nibley, where private ecstasy is a key characteristic. Still, commonalities in their uses of the term *mystic* involve a personal encounter with God and experience involving a profound sense of oneness. And her discussions throughout all of her work resonate with LDS scripture and casts as much light on them by implication as upon the Bible by direct examination:

> In the Hebrew scriptures, then, there are two positions: the LORD could be seen—the temple tradition—and the LORD could not be seen. "We have beheld his glory" wrote John (John 1:14), and the climax of the book of Revelation, and thus of the New Testament is that the servants of God-and-the-Lamb stand before the throne and see his face (Rev. 22:4). Christianity was rooted in the older temple tradition and its mysticism. (p. 55)

Several LDS writers have observed how neatly her approach fits with what we have in the Book of Mormon and indeed casts new and significant light there.[6] Barker's comments on the

6. For example Brant Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical & Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon: Vol. 1 First Nephi* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007); LeGrand L. Baker and Stephen D. Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord?: The Psalms in Israel's Temple Worship and in the Book of Mormon* 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City, Eborn Books), 2011; Alyson Skabelund Von Feldt,*"His Secret Is with the Righteous": Instructional Wisdom in the Book of Mormon*, Occasional Papers 5 (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2007); and Kevin Christensen, *Paradigms Regained: The Scholarship of Margaret Barker and Its Significance for Mormon Studies*, Occasional Papers 2 (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2001), 94; Frederick M. Huchel, "Antecedents of the Restoration in the Ancient Temple," *FARMS Review* 21/1 (2009), 9–25; D. John Butler, *Plain and Precious Things: The Temple Religion of the Book of Mormon's Visionary Men* (Kindle, 2012).

Book of Mormon at the Joseph Smith Conference at the Library of Congress demonstrate her agreement.[7] What is more, non-LDS scholars who have become interested in her work are also becoming aware of the agreement with LDS scripture and temple worship. For example, early in 2012, she delivered the Fr Alexander Schmemann Memorial Lecture at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, New York. After the recording of her talk on "Our Great High Priest, The Church as the New Temple," during a Q&A period she was directly asked about the Mormon interest in her work.[8] This is in part due to the close collaboration and communication she has had with many LDS scholars since her 2003 visit to BYU, her 2005 talk on "Joseph Smith and the First Temple Tradition," and ongoing interactions at SBL meetings, and Temple studies groups, first in England and more recently in Utah. It also derives from the obvious convergence of key ideas: Jesus seen as Yahweh incarnate, El Elyon as the Father of Yahweh, Melchizedek priesthood, plain and precious things being lost from the canon, the notion of a Mother in Heaven, and the importance of the council visions, the tree of life, Jerusalem 600 BC, the central importance of the temple, and much more.

This book is a thematic sequel to her earlier *Temple Theology: An Introduction*. Readers of her earlier books, especially those directed more to scholars than to lay readers, may find much that is familiar. For instance, readers of *The Great High Priest* will find familiar the sections on Pythagoras as influenced by First Temple ideas, such as she demonstrates in

7. See Margaret Barker, "Joseph Smith and Preexilic Israelite Religion," in *Brigham Young University Studies* 44/4 (2005): 69–82. Also Margaret Barker and Kevin Christensen, "Seeking the Face of the Lord: Joseph Smith and the First Temple Tradition," in Reid L, Neilson and Terryl Givens, eds., *Joseph Smith Jr.: Reappraisals after Two Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 143–72.

8. http://ancientfaith.com/podcasts/svsvoices/our_great_high_priest_the_church_is_the_new_temple.

Ezekiel, and follows through Pythagoras into Plato's Timaeus. Readers of her Isaiah and Enoch commentaries may recognize many of the ideas that get more popular treatment here. But there is also much that is new. The middle chapters of her book explore "three fundamental characteristics of temple mysticism: first the unity, and then the light and the glory" (p. 43). I was particularly impressed by the section "Born from Above," in which she shows how "John took several themes from temple mysticism to show how far the Jews had lost touch with their original temple teachings" (pp. 100–104). She discusses how John's contemporary Josephus "defined 'the Jews' as people who had returned from Babylon, which means the heirs of those who had purged the temple and rejected the older ways" (p. 101). She suggests that John used the term in the same way and illustrates in several passages in his gospel, how they "no longer understood their own heritage" (p. 101). She discusses Jesus' meeting with Nicodemus, who did not understand the concept of being "born again." Jesus explains in terms of what Barker shows is the First Temple tradition, but had to ask, "Are you the teacher in Israel, and yet you do not understand this?" (p. 101).

She then analyzes Psalm 110, showing that it describes "what happened in the Holy of Holies as the human king became the divine Son" (p. 102). She observes that "some early Christians naturally read this verse as a prophecy of the birth of Jesus; by changing one letter they made 'womb' into 'Mary': 'I have begotten you as the Morning Star from Mary'" (p. 103). These pages make for an interesting context against which to read Alma 7:10, about Jesus being "born of Mary," and further, for considering Alma as a teacher in Zarahemla, who in his temple-themed discourses does seem very much in tune with the thought world that Barker explores.

She discusses the high priestly blessing, "found on minute silver scrolls dated to about 600 BCE, the end of the first

temple period" (p. 42). The scrolls quote Numbers 6:25, the priestly blessing "May the LORD make his face to shine upon you." William Hamblin has pointed out how these scrolls are early evidence for writing on metal and, specifically, writing from one of the Books of Moses.[9] It is also interesting in light of Barker's analysis to reconsider Mosiah 13:5 and 3 Nephi 19:25, 30, for accounts of the shining.

The penultimate chapter offers an insightful discussion of the Servant in Isaiah and the significance of Jesus' self-identification as the Servant. She ranges across the role of the high priest in the Day of Atonement, variant readings in different versions of the servant songs, including the scrolls and the Targums, and makes comparisons with 1 Enoch. She makes insightful observations and suggestions, noting the implications of textual variants, and suggests in some instances alternate readings of the Hebrew.

A final postscript describes several phases and explanations of what ultimately we recognize as apostasy. First, she cites the purges instigated by the Deuteronomists, and notes their observable effect on the writings they transmitted. Secondly, she notes how the Church needed to distinguish between Christianity and Gnosis, despite "early gnostic thought" having "much in common with temple mysticism" (p. 170). Thirdly, she describes "pressure in the Church for Christians not to practice Jewish customs." As a consequence, "the temple roots of Christianity were less well understood, and Judaism itself was changed after the destruction of the temple." Then she looks at the education of most New Testament scholars "as classicists, rather than Hebraists" who then saw key elements in Christianity as "Platonism, rather than the temple tradition." All of this fits very well with the picture in the Noel Reynolds's

9. William Hamblin, "Sacred Writing on Metal Plates in the Ancient Mediterranean," *FARMS Review* 19/1 (2007): 40.

edited survey, *Early Christians in Disarray: Contemporary LDS Perspectives on the Christian Apostasy.*[10]

LDS scholars of the apostasy have traditionally focused on the loss of plain and precious things that followed on the death of the apostles. Barker's work has encouraged several of us to look back at Lehi's world. The obvious issue, of course, is what about the use of Deuteronomy in the Book of Mormon and the points of agreement between Jeremiah and Deuteronomy? Any text, I think, can be used by many people, and often it is the points of resemblance that form the foundation of rivalry that emerges in differences. Given that significant degree of agreement with and knowledge of Deuteronomy, I find it striking that Jeremiah's points of disagreement with Deuteronomy match with the key points that Barker identifies as defining the reform.

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10. Noel B. Reynolds, ed., *Early Christians in Disarray: Contemporary LDS Perspectives on the Christian Apostasy* (Provo, UT: FARMS: 2005).

"In the Mount of the Lord It Shall Be Seen" and "Provided": Theophany and Sacrifice as the Etiological Foundation of the Temple in Israelite and Latter-day Saint Tradition

Matthew L. Bowen

Abstract: *For ancient Israelites, the temple was a place where sacrifice and theophany (i.e., seeing God or other heavenly beings) converged. The account of Abraham's "arrested" sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22) and the account of the arrested slaughter of Jerusalem following David's unauthorized census of Israel (2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21) served as etiological narratives—explanations of "cause" or "origin"—for the location of the Jerusalem temple and its sacrifices. Wordplay on the verb* rāʾâ *(to "see") in these narratives creates an etiological link between the place-names "Jehovah-jireh," "Moriah" and the threshing floor of Araunah/Ornan, pointing to the future location of the Jerusalem temple as the place of theophany and sacrifice par excellence. Isaac's arrested sacrifice and the vicarious animal sacrifices of the temple anticipated Jesus's later "un-arrested" sacrifice since, as Jesus himself stated, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day" (John 8:56). Sacrifice itself was a kind of theophany in which one's own redemption could be "seen" and the scriptures of the Restoration confirm that Abraham and many others, even "a great many thousand years before" the coming of Christ, "saw" Jesus's sacrifice and "rejoiced." Additionally, theophany and sacrifice converge in the canonized revelations regarding the building of the*

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latter-day temple. These temple revelations begin with a promise of theophany, and mandate sacrifice from the Latter-day Saints. In essence, the temple itself was, and is, Christ's atonement having its intended effect on humanity.

When Jesus told his opponents, "Your father Abraham **rejoiced** to **see** my day: and he **saw** it, and was glad" (John 8:56), he alluded to his own atoning sacrifice and to the Genesis 22 account of Abraham's "binding"[1] and arrested sacrifice of Isaac. In this narrative, the Hebrew verb *rāʾâ* (to "see") serves as a verbal link that offers both a basis for the site of the temple as a place where the Lord was "seen" and a location where sacrificial substitute was "provided"[2] ("seen-to"). In other words, the Genesis 22 narrative makes the verb *see* a sacrificial and temple-related term. Ancient Israelite writers and editors make this convergence of *theophany* (seeing a manifestation of God)[3] and sacrifice the etiological basis (i.e., cause or origin) of the location of the Jerusalem temple and its name, "Mount Moriah." Using the verb *rāʾâ*, several Old Testament texts create etiological links between the place-names "Jehovah-jireh," "Moriah," and the threshing-floor of Araunah/Ornan, these pointing to the future location of the Jerusalem temple as the place of theophany and sacrifice *par excellence* and serving as the basis for subsequent temple worship, including Latter-day Saint temples.

The arrested sacrifice of Isaac, a prototype sacrifice for the vicarious animal sacrifices in Israel's cult and Jesus's "*un*-arrested" sacrifice, served as the foundation story for Israel

1. Sometimes called the "Akedah" (*[ha]ʿăqēdâ*), "the binding," a term derived from the verb *to bind* in Genesis 22:9 ("and he bound [*wayyaʿăqōd*] Isaac his son").

2. In Genesis 22:8, the Latin Vulgate translates *yirʾeh* (LXX *opsetai*) with *providebit*. English "provide" conveys the sense of "looking ahead" in order to supply something.

3. *Theophany* = "appearance of God," Greek *theos* ("god") + *phaneia* ("appearance").

and Judah's most important temple, the temple in Jerusalem. However, later events in the vicinity of Mount Moriah would imbue every temple experience—from the Jerusalem temple to Latter-day Saint temples—with additional sacred significance. The etiological narratives[4] of the Hebrew Bible (our "Old Testament") that explain the location of the Jerusalem temple as a convergence of theophany and sacrifice help us better understand the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ and its relevance in our lives. These narratives also help us better understand events pertaining to the establishment of latter-day temples, beginning with the Kirtland Temple, and how the Savior's atonement is inextricably at heart of their building and everything done in them today. Latter-day temples are also places where theophany converges with sacrifice, both in the temples' concept and day-to-day function, as revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

The Mountain as "Temple": The Place of Sacrifice and Theophany

Mountains as "temples" in the scriptures have been already been widely discussed,[5] because theophanies often occur atop mountains.[6] Sacrifice on mountains, though less often dis-

4. Etiological narratives attempt to explain the "origins" of things, and they are very common in the Hebrew Bible. Scholars widely debate these etiological narratives as "history." To say that a narrative is "etiological," however (in my view), is not necessarily to say that it is "ahistorical."

5. See, e.g., John M. Lundquist, "What is a Temple: A Preliminary Typology," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 84–89.

6. For example, Nephi writes about being "caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into **an exceedingly high mountain**, which I never had before seen, and upon which I never had before sat my foot" (1 Nephi 11:1). On this mountain Nephi not only "beheld" the Tree of Life that his father Lehi had seen (1 Nephi 8), but he saw "the Spirit of the Lord" and "beheld that he was in the form of a man," and the "Spirit of the Lord" spoke to him (i.e., conversed with him) "as a man speaketh with another" (11:11). Nephi also there witnessed "the condescension of God," beholding the "mother of God, after the manner of the flesh,"

cussed, is equally important to what ancient Israelites saw as the *raison d'etre* for the temple.

The connection between mountains and sacrifice in ancient Israel is evident in the practice of sacrificing at "high places" (*bāmôt*), i.e., sacrificing at an elevated place. Sacrifice at these "high places" was later condemned and suppressed by kings Hezekiah[7] and Josiah[8] and evaluated negatively[9] by the Deuteronomistic Historian(s),[10] who promoted a centralized cult at Jerusalem (in accordance with Deuteronomy 12:1–14) versus localized (rural) worship.

Sacrifice on mountains is attested elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. Genesis 31:54 indicates that Jacob at the conclusion of an oath with Laban, "offered sacrifice upon [a] mount" and held

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and the Savior as "Son of God going forth among the children of men" (11:24). Similarly, it was on a "**mount** which [was] called Shelem, because of its **exceeding height**" (Ether 3:1) that "the Lord showed himself" unto brother of Jared, because the latter knew by faith that the Lord "speak[s] the truth" and is "a God of truth" who could not lie (Ether 3:12–13). Moses's earliest encounters with the Lord are also described as atop or in the precincts of "mountains" (see Exodus 3:1, 19:3 Moses 1:1, 42). Moses's last mortal experience atop a mountain further evidences it as a place of revelation (Deuteronomy 34:1). Ezekiel, the priest and prophet of Judah's exile, records that he was brought back to the land of Israel "in the visions of God" and "set . . . upon a very high mountain," from which he saw a rebuilt Jerusalem temple (the temple had by then been destroyed) in minute detail (Ezekiel 40:2 and following). The Apostle John reports an experience similar to that of Nephi and Ezekiel, stating that the Lord "carried [him] away in the spirit to a great and high mountain" (Revelation 21:10). John notably sees heavenly Jerusalem built like a temple.

7. See 2 Kings 18:4, 22; 21:3.

8. See 2 Kings 23:8–20.

9. Of the thirty-nine kings of Israel (nineteen) and Judah (twenty), the Deuteronomistic Historian evaluates only eight of them positively (all of them from Judah). Of these eight, only two receive an almost "unqualified" positive evaluation—Hezekiah and Josiah—this because they suppressed worship at the high places.

10. On the Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomistic History, see Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981); German original: Martin Noth, *Uberlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1943).

a communal meal ("they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount").[11] According to Numbers 28:6 the "continual burnt offering" of the Israelite temple was "ordained in mount Sinai." A major part of Moses' blessing upon the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar (Deuteronomy 33:18–19) was that "they [would] call the people unto the mountain [where] they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness" (33:19; cf. Isaiah 56:6–7).

Perhaps more significantly, Ezekiel equates the "holy mountain of God" or "the mountain of God" with "Eden the garden of God" (see Ezekiel 28:13– 16; cf. 28:11–19; 31:8–18), drawing on extant pre-exilic Israelite traditions regarding the Fall.[12] Genesis 3:8 indicates that the Garden of Eden was the "presence of the Lord," where he "walked" and was seen. As we shall see below, the "joy" of Adam and Eve's "redemption" (Moses 5:11) was that after the Fall they would "again in the flesh . . . see God" on account of "sacrifice" (5:10).

"Why Dost Thou Offer Sacrifices Unto the Lord?" Adam's Altar and the Regaining of the Lord's "Presence"

Joy and redemption are of a piece with theophany and sacrifice.[13] The "laughing" (a narrative play on "Isaac [*Yiṣḥāq*]" in Genesis 17:17; 18:12–13, 15; 21:6), i.e., "rejoicing" (JST Genesis 17:17; 21:3, 6) that accompanied the Lord's announcement of the birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah must have been equaled by the "rejoicing" that accompanied the arrested sacrifice of Isaac when Abraham "saw" the meaning of the offer-

11. This episode is the etiological explanation for Mizpah ("the Lord watch [*yiṣep*] between me and thee"; Genesis 31:49), an important Israelite cultic site in later years.

12. See Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis. Part 1: From Adam to Noah*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), 74–82; Bruce M. Pritchett Jr., "Lehi's Theology of the Fall in Its Preexilic/exilic Context," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3/2 (1994): 49–83.

13. Psalm 27:6; 107:22; Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 33:11; 1 Samuel 11:11; Nehemiah 12:43; Philippians 2:7; 1 Nephi 5:9.

ing of his son Isaac and the significance of its arrest. This joy and gladness was noted by the Savior himself: "Abraham **rejoiced** to see my day: and saw it **and was glad**" (John 8:56). Jesus's words also appear to allude to or play on the meaning of the name "Isaac" ("may he laugh"; "may he rejoice"). In the Book of Mormon, Nephi_2, the son of Helaman, also alludes to Abraham's "rejoicing" over "seeing" his son's, his posterity's, and his own redemption in Jesus Christ:

> Yea, and behold, Abraham **saw** of his coming, and **was filled with gladness and did rejoice**. Yeah and behold I say unto you that Abraham not only knew of these things, but there were many before the days of Abraham who were called by the order of God, yea, even after the order of his Son; and this that **it should be shown** unto the people, a great many thousand years before his coming, **that even redemption should come unto them**." (Helaman 8:17–18; JST Genesis 15:5[14])

Nephi teaches here that people "a great many thousand" years before the Savior's atoning sacrifice understood the in-

14. JST Genesis 15:5: "And he brought him forth abroad and he said, **Look now toward[s] heaven**, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him: so shall thy seed be. And Abram said, Lord, how wilt thou give me this land for an everlasting inheritance? And the Lord said, Though thou was dead, yet am I not able to give it thee? And if thou shalt die, yet shalt thou possess it, for the day cometh that the Son of Man shall live; but how can he live if he be not dead? he must first be quickened. And it came to pass that Abram **looked forth** and **saw** the days of the Son of Man and was glad and his soul found rest" (emphasis mine). This passage provides important context for what follows in Genesis 15:6: "And he [Abram] believed in the Lord and he [the Lord] counted it [un]to him for righteousness." It is this very "belief" or "faith" that the Lord puts to the test in Genesis 22, when Abraham is again required to "look forth" or "see" his own redemption and the redemption of his son Isaac ("thine only Isaac," JST Genesis 22:16) and the redemption of his numberless posterity in the arrested sacrifice of Isaac and Jehovah's "providing" the ram caught in the thicket. For the JST text see Thomas A. Wayment, ed., *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the Old Testament: A Side-by-side Companion with the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009), 70–71.

timate connection between theophany, sacrifice, and temple because they were "shown" that "even redemption should come unto them."

The antiquity of sacrifice in connection with theophany is further suggested in Moses 5:4, which records that after the fall, Adam and Eve "called upon the name of the Lord and . . . heard the voice of the Lord from the way toward the Garden of Eden, speaking unto them, [but] **they saw him not**; for they were shut out from his presence." The loss of the "presence" or "face" (Heb. *pānîm*, *pĕnê*) of God was one of the earliest consequences of the Fall. In other words, the theophany that was a part of life in the Garden ceased with the Fall.

When Adam and Eve lost the "presence" of God, they also lost the temple. Donald W. Parry has shown that the Garden of Eden, as described in Genesis, represents a prototype temple or sanctuary.[15] **F**or them to regain his "presence" or "face," Adam and Eve and their posterity also needed to "regain" the temple. Mercifully, the Lord took immediate steps to ensure that they could regain his "presence." Parry further suggests that the Lord's clothing Adam and Eve with "coats of skins" (Genesis 3:21) implies that they were taught the ordinance of sacrifice while still in the Garden of Eden and that they were perhaps clothed in the skin of the sacrificial animal,[16] an ever-present *type* of their future redemption that was to be worn upon the body.[17] Once they had been taught the meaning of "sacrifice" (see below), they would be able, with eyes of faith, to "see" their eventual redemption even in the clothing upon their bodies.

Moses 5:5–8 chronicles the sacrifices that Adam and Eve obediently continued to offer after they were driven out of the

15. Donald W. Parry, "Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, 126–51.

16. Parry, "Garden of Eden," 142.

17. They "put on" Christ (see Romans 13:14; Galatians 3:7; cf. Alma 40:2; Mormon 6:21). Cf. "put[ting] off the natural man [i.e., like an article of clothing] and becom[ing] a saint through the atonement of Christ" (Mosiah 3:19).

Garden and lost God's presence. Following their consistent, faithful obedience, Adam and Eve were again granted a theophany in which they were taught the true meaning of the sacrifices that they were offering:

> And he gave unto them commandments that they should **worship the Lord their God**, and should **offer the firstlings of their flocks for an offering unto the Lord**. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord. And after many days **an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam**, saying: Why dost thou **offer sacrifices** unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me. Then the angel spake, saying: **This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father**, which is full of grace and truth. Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore.

The "offer[ing]" of "the firstlings of . . . flocks" presupposes Adam's having built an altar. The altar upon which Adam makes these offerings in "similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten [cf. Hebrew *yĕḥîd*, used of Isaac; Genesis 22:2, 12, 16] of the Father," is for him and his posterity the beginning of regaining the "temple"—the Lord's presence.

If, as Moses 4:31 (Genesis 3:24) indicates, Adam and Eve were "driven out" to the east of Eden and resided there (cf. Moses 5:1–4), the altar presupposed in this narrative would also have been situated east of the garden temple, the cherubim, and the way of the tree of life. The location of the sacrificial altar on the east of tabernacle and the east-facing Jerusalem temple finds its analog in Adam's altar, and it is not impossible that the former was thought to be a representation of the latter (as it is in present-day Latter-day Saint temple worship). Whatever

the case, the narrative of Moses 5 establishes Adam's altar-sacrifices as antecedents for future temple "worship" among all of the families of the earth and for humanity's regaining the theophany of the garden temple.

The narrative never divulges the identity of the "angel of the Lord" who "appears" to Adam and Eve, although frequently in scripture the "Angel of the Lord" is indistinguishable from the Lord himself.[18] In either case, the "appearance" of this divine being was a reward for Adam's faithful obedience and perhaps especially Eve's "seeing" with an eye of faith (Genesis 3:6; Moses 4:12; 5:10–11). It was a sign to them that the Lord's "presence" or "face" was not irredeemably lost to them. And so it was that the Lord "sent angels to converse with [humanity], and **caused** [them] **to behold of his glory**" (Alma 12:29), i.e., "God [himself] conversed with men and made known unto them the plan of redemption, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world" (Alma 12:30), whose central figure was a sacrificial "Lamb … slain from the foundation of the world."[19] Through the law of sacrifice and a theophany (the appearance of a divine being) which taught its meaning (Moses 5:4–8), Adam and Eve saw their redemption and resurrection with opened eyes: they comprehended that they would "again in the flesh . . . see God" and they had joy (5:10–11).

Thus, according to modern revelation, theophany and sacrifice in a temple setting are inextricably linked from the very beginning, *theophany itself being a sign that the Atonement works—that humanity is redeemed from the fall and brought back into the Lord's presence*.[20] The revelation regarding the Garden and the Fall (Moses 5) that came to the Prophet Joseph

18 John W. Welch, "Ten Testimonies of Jesus Christ from the Book of Mormon" in *A Book of Mormon Treasury: Gospel Insights from General Authorities and Religious Educators* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2003), 316–42.

19. Moses 7:47; Revelation 13:8.

20. See especially Ether 3:13; Isaiah 6:1–8.

Smith through his work of translating/revising the KJV extends the tradition of sacrifice and theophany back through time "a great many thousand years" (Helaman 8:18). The Prophet's work of translation effectively grounded the temple in these primeval events. For the Latter-day Saints, temple "tradition" begins here.

Perhaps not coincidentally, revelations to the prophet on the building of a modern temple begin shortly after the revelation of the text of Moses 5 (in June-October, 1830) and the Enoch revelation in Moses 6–7 (November-December 1830). In D&C 36:8, part of a revelation given in December 1830, the Lord promised a theophany in a temple: "Gird up your loins and I will suddenly come to my temple."[21] The latter-day temple was from the beginning also associated with theophany and, as we shall see, with sacrifice.

"God Shall Provide Himself a Lamb": The Arrested Sacrifices of Isaac and Jerusalem

The Genesis narratives that describe the life of Abraham (Genesis 12–24) are concerned with not only Israel's future inheritance of the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but also, the future building of the Jerusalem temple.[22] These narratives describe Abraham's building a number of altars, usually at places where Abraham also experiences a theophany, often accompanied by the Lord's making him promises. In several instances, these places are tied to the theophanic experiences in the text by means of *paronomasia*; that is, a wordplay

21. In a January 1831 revelation, the Lord reiterates this promise of a theophany to the saints: "the day soon cometh that ye shall see me, and know that I am; for the veil of darkness shall soon be rent" (D&C 38:8). This same revelation mentions the "Zion of Enoch" from Moses 6–7, further suggesting that Joseph's notion of "temple" emerges, at least in part, from this nexus of revelations.

22. The Genesis narratives, especially in the much-edited form that we now have them, are sometimes seen by biblical scholars as windows on the contemporary concerns of their editors and redactors.

involving similar sounding words. For example, it is at **Moreh** [*Môrʾeh*] that "the Lord **appeared** [*wayyērāʾ*] unto Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, **who appeared** [*hannirʾeh*] unto him" (Genesis 12:6–8). Genesis 13:14–18 reports that the Lord commanded Abram to lift up his eyes, "**and look** [*ûrʾēh*] . . . For all the land which thou **seest** [*rōʾeh*], to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." This becomes the basis for Abram's tenting at "the plain [or, at the oak] of **Mamre** [*Mamrēʾ*]," where again he built an altar to the Lord. (Genesis 13:14–18).

In other words, Abraham built functional "temples"—or the beginnings of temples— at places where he received the promise of eternal seed and land and where the Lord required him to "see," or look forward to, the fulfillment of his promises to him with "an eye of faith" (cf. Ether 12:19; Alma 5:15; 32:40). Throughout his life, Abraham had to "**see** the promises afar off" (Hebrews 11:13; JST Genesis 15:5), yet he persistently "believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23). It is important to note that Abraham himself never inherits "the land" in mortality as promised here (see Hebrews 11:8–13) but "dies in faith" as a "stranger and pilgrim" on that land (Hebrews 11:13).

Here at Mamre another significant event is that the Lord himself acts to bring about the promise (see Hebrews 11:11–12) of a numberless "seed" or posterity to Abraham through Sarah.[23] What follows will prove to be one of the defining events in Abraham's life: "the Lord **appeared** [*wayyēraʾ*]" to Abraham again at the "plains [or oak] of **Mamre** [*Mamrēʾ*]"

23. Abraham has already been granted a son in Ishmael by Hagar, but Isaac is the one through whose line the Messiah would come and in whose seed the promises would be fulfilled (see especially Genesis 17:19; 21:12).

as "tent of the door in the heat of the day." "And he lift[ed] up his eyes **and looked** [*wayyarʾ*], and lo, three men stood by him: and **when he saw** them [*wayyarʾ*], he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground" (18:1–2). Abraham's obeisance (*hištaḥăwâ)* and hospitality hint at the importance—and perhaps the divinity—of these three visitors. Here at Mamre, Abraham receives the promise of Isaac, the fulfillment of which he and Sarah will be required to "see" with "an eye of faith."

Abraham's and Sarah's ability to "see" with an "eye of faith" was truly put to the test later in Isaac's life when the Lord subsequently commanded Abraham to offer up his son Isaac, the child on whom all of the Lord's promises to Abraham rested (see Hebrews 11:17–18): "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of **Moriah** [*hammōriâ*]; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Genesis 22:2) Abraham obediently "goes unto the place of which God had told him" (22:3). The narrative then notes that "on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and **saw** [*wayyarʾ*] the place afar off" (22:4; cf. Hebrews 11:13; Isaiah 33:14). Abraham's ability to see Moriah "afar off"[24] suggests more than good eyesight in a physical sense or "farsightedness," but his ability to "beh[o]ld with an eye of faith" (Ether 12:19).

In Genesis 22:8, the Hebrew verb *rāʾâ* ("see") takes on the sense "provide," thus becoming a sacrificial term: "And Abraham said, My son, God **will provide himself** [*yirʾeh-lô*, literally, "will see to himself"] a lamb for a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:8). Thus far, Abraham has been either the subject or the indirect object of the verb to "see." Here God is the subject but he also becomes an implied object of the verb. God will "see to" the lamb that will be the burnt offering: he will provide

24. Cf. see 2 Peter 1:9; Moses 6:27.

himself as the lamb. It is not clear yet that Abraham knows exactly how this will happen, but he knows that all things are possible to the Lord (see Genesis 18:14),[25] and he proceeds in faith:

> And they came to the place which God had told him of [Moriah]; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou **fearest God** [*yereʾ-ʾElōhîm*], seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, **and looked** [*wayyarʾ*], and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place **Jehovah-jireh** [*Yhwh yirʾeh*]: as it is said to this day, **In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen** [*behar Yhwh yērāʾeh*]. (Genesis 22:9–14)

A number of things merit attention here. First, the Hebrew expression "mount of the Lord [*har Yhwh*]" is identical to the phrase used by Isaiah to describe the temple, "the mountain of the Lord's house" (Isaiah 2:2) or the "mountain of the Lord [*har Yhwh*]" (2:3) that would be "established in the tops of the mountains" in the "last days" (Isaiah 2:2–3; cf. Micah 4:1–3). Moshe Garsiel suggests that in these passages (Isaiah 2:2–3; Micah 4:1–3) the "ancient name of the temple site is hinted at—Mount Moriah (*hr-h-mwryh*—הר המוריה), as it is called in

25. Cf. Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 18:27.

2 Chronicles 3:1 or 'the land of Moriah' . . . in Gen[esis] 22."[26] Notably, the phrase "Mount of the Lord," or "mountain of the Lord," is used in Numbers 10:33 as a reference to Mt. Sinai (Horeb), where Jehovah himself was seen by Moses and the elders of Israel (Exodus 24) and where he literally "caused" Israel "to see" his glory (Deuteronomy 5:24). The temple was the architectural embodiment of Sinai, but it was also the architectural embodiment of Abraham's "Moriah," where he literally placed everything the Lord had given him and everything that the Lord had promised him upon the altar.

Secondly, the narrative's language is ambiguous. Besides the traditional Masoretic reading, "in the mount[ain] of the Lord it shall be seen" (*běhar Yhwh yērā'eh*), the consonantal text (*bhr Yhwh yr'h*),[27] can be read in other ways, including "In the mountain, Jehovah shall be seen [*bāhār Yhwh yērā'eh*]" or "in the mountain, Jehovah shall be provided." This idea is reflected in the other ancient witnesses to the Old Testament (OT) text. The Septuagint (LXX) reads "in the mount, the Lord appeared [*en tō orei kyrios ōphthē*]."[28] or, "was seen," i.e., "was provided." Two LXX manuscripts, the Peshitta, the Targums, and a Vulgate manuscript affix the pronoun "this" to this "mount," thus "in this mountain, Jehovah shall be seen" or "in this mountain, Jehovah shall be provided." The name *Jehovah-jireh* (*Yhwh yir'eh*) means simply "the Lord shall see," "the Lord shall provide," or (re-vowelled as *yērā'eh*) "the Lord shall appear." The wordplay in Genesis 22:14 suggests what—or

26. Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns*, trans. Phyllis Hackett (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1991), 147.

27. I.e., minus the late vowelling of the Masoretes, Jewish scholars working between the 7th and 11th centuries AD who attempted to standardize (i.e., "fix" [< *māsōrâ* = "bond"]) the pronunciation of the Hebrew Bible.

28. The Greek LXX formulates attempts to preserve the idea of the Hebrew wordplay, Abraham "called the name of the place *Kyrios eiden* ["the Lord saw"] in order that they might say today, 'In this mount, the Lord appeared."

whom—the Lord shall *see to* and *provide*: not merely the offering of a ram (an *'ayil* or *'êl*, 22:13), but the offering of himself (an *'ēl*, "God").[29]

Last, and perhaps most important,the act of offering Isaac was "accounted unto Abraham" for "righteousness" and obedience (see Jacob 4:5; cf. Genesis 15:6) because Abraham himself "account[ed] that God was able to raise [Isaac] up, even from the dead, from whence he also he received him in a figure" (Hebrews 11:19). In other words, Abraham not only "saw" that the Lord would "provide" himself a lamb (i.e., provide himself as the Lamb) but also that the Lamb would be resurrected and bring about the resurrection of the dead, thus "providing" (or preparing) a way for the fulfillment of all of the Lord's promises. Abraham "saw" that *even if he were to offer Isaac*, the Lord would still faithfully fulfill his promise of posterity as numberless as the stars of heaven or the sands of the sea.

Later narratives about David's theophany and the arrested slaughter of Jerusalem at the threshing floor of Araunah/Ornan (2 Samuel 24 and its parallel in 1 Chronicles 21) also repeatedly use the verb *rāʾâ* (to "see") to explain the appropriateness of the site of the Jerusalem temple (2 Samuel 24:3, 13, 17, 20; 1 Chronicles 21:15–16, 20–21, 23, 28).[30] In 2 Samuel 24:17 (1 Chronicles 21:16), David "sees" the destroying angel

29. From a phonological standpoint, the "seen" or "provided" ram (*'ayil/'*êl) of Genesis 22:13 evokes the idea of a "divine" offering—a God ('ĕl [or 'ĕlōhîm]). Jesus, as Yhwh, would be "provided" as such an offering.

30. Baruch A. Levine, "'The Lord Your God Accept You' (2 Samuel 24:23): The Altar Erected by David on the Threshing Floor of Araunah," *Eretz Israel* 24 (1994): 122–29; Zeev Yeivin, "Araunah's Threshing Floor and David's Vision Concerning the Construction of the Temple," *Beit Mikra* 34 (1988–89): 268–288; Menahem Naor, "Halawarnâ the Jebusite: Araunah the King," *Beit Mikra* 34 (1990): 155–61; Isaac Kalimi, "The Land of Moriah, Mount Moriah, and the Site of Solomon's Temple in Biblical Historiography," Harvard Theological Review 83/4 (Oct., 1990): 345–362 Sara Japhet, "From King's Sanctuary to Chosen City," *Judaism*, 46/2 (1997): 132–39.

in theophany, slaughtering Israel on account of David's own sin and is about to destroy Jerusalem. The Lord arrests the slaughter ("It is enough, stay now thine hand") at the future temple site. In the Chronicler's version of the story, David intercedes on behalf of the people: "even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these **sheep**, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee O Lord my God be on me, and upon my father's house" (1 Chronicles 21:17). Jesus, one of David's "father's house," later suffers and dies very near this site both for David's sins and the sins of all humanity (see below).

David is then commanded through Gad the seer to "rear up [set up] an altar unto the Lord in the threshingfloor of Araunah [Ornan][31] the Jebusite" (2 Samuel 24:18; 1 Chronicles 21:18). In the Chronicler's version, Araunah (Ornan) too "saw" the angel (21:20) and thus sells the site to David, who then builds an altar there and offers sacrifice (21:28). The 2 Samuel version indicates that once the altar is built and David offers "burnt offerings and peace offerings" that "the Lord was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel" (2 Samuel 24:25). In other words, not only was vicarious sacrifice at this specific site necessary for the slaughter of Israel and Jerusalem to be permanently "arrested," but the temple had to be built at this specific site, hence the "theophany" of the destroying angel indicating where the Lord wanted the temple built.

The Jerusalem temple is later built by Solomon, and the Chronicler specifically connects this threshing floor with the site of Isaac's arrested sacrifice and the building of the temple: "Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem **in mount Moriah** (*bĕhar hammôrîyâ*; see Genesis 22:2), where the Lord **appeared** [*nirʾâ*] unto David his father,

31. In the 2 Samuel 24 version of the story, the Jebusite's name appears as "Araunah"; in the 1 Chronicles 21 version of the story, his name appears as "Ornan" (cf. also 2 Chronicles 3:1). I have included both versions of the name side-by-side throughout this paper to help the reader avoid confusion.

in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite" (2 Chronicles 3:1). The name "Moriah" occurs only in these two passages.

There is indeed a "figure" in the arrested sacrifice of Isaac and the arrested slaughter of Jerusalem for those who have faith in Christ, many of whom "die in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them far off . . . [are] persuaded of them" (Hebrews 11:13). For those with "eyes to see" (Deuteronomy 29:5), the establishment of the Jerusalem temple at Moriah/Jehovah-jireh is about more than Isaac's arrested sacrifice, the arrested slaughter of Jerusalem, and the vicarious animal sacrifices performed there that memorialized these events—it is to "**look forward** to [God's] Son for redemption" (Alma 13:2; cf. 5:5). Sacrifice itself is a kind of theophany in which one "sees" one's own redemption.

"They Saw God, and Did Eat and Drink": Theophany and Sacrifice on Mount Sinai

After Moses led Israel out of Egypt and into the wilderness, Israel experienced the Lord's "presence." Exodus 24 describes a theophany unlike any other in the OT, given the number of persons involved and the clarity with which Jehovah, the God of Israel, is seen:

> Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: **And they saw** [*wayyirʾû*] the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of children of Israel he laid not his hand: also **they saw** [saw-in-vision, *wayyeḥĕzû*] God, and did eat and drink" (Exodus 24:9–12).

Why did the Lord *not* lay his hand upon them? According to 24:5–8, sacrifices preceded this theophany, and atoning

blood was sprinkled upon the people. The participants in the theophany also participated in a sacramental meal. The slaughter or death, often feared by those who "see" God, was "arrested"[32]—a result of "atonement" (cf. Isaiah 6:7; Moses 1:18).

Exodus 20:18 suggests that the remainder of Israel saw the Lord, or the visible signs of his presence, at some remove. Deuteronomy 5:24 indicates that the Lord "caused them to see" his glory, but Israel "hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence" (D&C 84:24), two consistent aspects of their behavior in the wilderness commemorated and warned against in Israel's temple hymns (see Psalm 95; especially vv. 8–11).

The Sinai-Horeb experience and the Lord's "face" or "presence" retained tremendous ritual significance, the temple becoming "the architectural realization and the ritual enlargement of the Sinai experience."[33] According to Exodus 23:17 and Deuteronomy 16:16, every Israelite male was to come to the temple three times in a year. The consonantal formula (*lrʾwt ʾt-pny Yhwh*) usually translated "appear before the Lord" because of the Masoretic vowelling (*lērāʾôt ʾet pĕnê Yhwh*), could also be rendered "see the Lord's face"[34] (*lirʾôt ʾet pĕnê Yhwh*) in most instances.[35] In either case, Israel was to go to the tem-

32. See Genesis 32:30; Deuteronomy 5:25; Judges 6:22–23; Isaiah 6:1–7.

33. See Lundquist, "What is a Temple?," 85; See also Donald W. Parry, "Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God," in *By Study and Also By Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS,1990), 1:482–500.

34. See E. Jan Wilson, "The Biblical Term *lirʾot ʿet penei yhwh* in the Light of Akkadian Cultic Material," *Akkadica* 93 (Mei-Augustus, 1995): 21–25. Although the Akkadian evidence that Wilson cites for this reading is not unproblematic (see Klaas R. Veenhof, "'Seeing the Face of God': The Use of Akkadian Parallels,'" Akkadica 94–95 [1995]: 33-37), the plausibility of his reading, given the unvowelled character of pre-Masoretic texts, stands. Biblical texts attest the "seeing" of God's face (e.g., Genesis 32:30; 33:10; Exodus 33:11; Numbers 14:14; Job 33:26; 1 Corinthians 13:12; cf. Deuteronomy 5:4; Judges 6:22).

35. See, e.g., Exodus 23:15; 23:17; 34:20, 23; Deuteronomy 16:16; 31:11; Isaiah 1:12; Psalm 42:3; 1 Samuel 1:22.

ple to "see" or "be seen by" the Lord, and Leviticus 9:3–4 specifically instructs Israel that sacrifices are to be offered at the temple "[because] today the Lord **will appear** [*nirʾâ*] unto you. (Leviticus 9:3–4).

Gethsemane and Golgotha: The "Mount(s)" Where Jehovah Was "Provided"

In a real sense, Jesus's entire life can be said to constitute his atoning sacrifice (see Mosiah 3:5–7). The "anguish" that Jesus Christ suffered "for the wickedness and abominations of his people," which was "so great" that "blood c[ame] from every pore" (3:7), he suffered in "Gethsemane,"[36] a "garden" near the Wadi Kidron[37] that separates the Mount of Olives from the Temple Mount, evidently on the slope of the former.[38]

Of the gospel writers, Luke describes Jesus's suffering in Gethsemane in the greatest detail, incorporating important details that the other evangelists leave out. He notes not only that the Savior's sweat was "great drops of blood falling to the ground," also that in the midst of his indescribable "agony," that there was a theophany: the angel that "appeared" (*ōphthē*)[39] to him from heaven and "strengthened" (*enischyōn*) him (Luke 22:41–44). In LXX Genesis 12:7, 17:1 and in the Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen 22:27) this form of the verb is used of God appearing to Abraham. The Savior, in performing the greatest act of faith in cosmic history, was strengthened just as he (as Jehovah) had strengthened the faithful[40] and had

36. Gethsemane = literally, "oil press"; see Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:32.

37. Cf. John 18:1.

38. See especially Luke 22:39.

39. As *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (p. 719) notes, this verb form is used mostly of beings who make their appearance in a transcendent manner, almost always w. dat[ive] of the pers[on] to whom they appear."

40. The Lord's (Jehovah's) "strengthening" his people is a prominent theme in scripture. Genesis 49:24 speaks of "the arms of [Joseph's] hands [being] made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob," while Hebrews 11 states that

"made [many] strong even unto the sitting down in the place which [he has] prepared in the mansions of [the] Father" (Ether 12:37).

Here we consider again the basic meaning of the place name of Isaac's arrested sacrifice, *Jehovah-jireh*, "The Lord shall see." Merrill J. Bateman, commenting on Abinadi's exegesis of Isaiah 53 (Mosiah 14–15), suggests that Isaiah's phrase "he shall see his seed [*yirʾeh zeraʿ*]"[41] denotes Jesus's "seeing" the numberless souls for whom he suffered, spirits whom he "saw" or somehow "experienced" in Gethsemane.[42] Like his use of *yirʾeh* ("he shall see") Isaiah's use of *zeraʿ* ("seed") recalls the Abraham-Isaac stories. It was in Isaac that Abraham's "seed" would be called (Genesis 21:12), and in Gethsemane,

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Sarah "received strength to conceive" Isaac (11:11) and takes note of those who "out of weakness were made strong," i.e., by the Lord (11:34). See also Judges 16:28; Psalm 41:3; Daniel 10:18–19; Zechariah 10:6, 12; 1 Nephi 1:20; 2 Nephi 3:21; Mosiah 23:2; 24:15; Alma 2:18; 28; 36:23; 3 Nephi 4:10; Moses 1:20–21.

41. Mosiah 5:7; D&C 76:2.

42. Merrill J. Bateman ("The Power to Heal from Within," *Ensign*, May 1995, 14) stated, "In the garden and on the cross, **Jesus saw each of us** and not only bore our sins, but also experienced our deepest feelings so that he would know how to comfort and strengthen us." Elder Bateman ("A Peculiar Treasure," in *Speeches* [Brigham Young University] [Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 1996], 5–11) shared this additional insight: "For many years I envisioned the Garden of Gethsemane and the cross as places where an infinite mass of sin and pain were heaped upon the Savior. Thanks to Alma and Abinadi, it is no longer an infinite mass but an infinite stream of people with whom **the Savior became intimately acquainted** as he suffered our sins, pains, and afflictions. I testify that **he knows each of us**, is concerned about our progress, and has the infinite capacity not only to heal our wounds but also to lift us up to the Father as sanctified sons and daughters. " Elder Bateman ("One by One," *Brigham Young Magazine* [Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, Spring 1998], 4–5) further observed: "There were many years in which I believed that the atoning process involved an infinite mass of sin being heaped upon the Savior. As I have become more familiar with the scriptures, **my view of the Atonement has expanded**. The Atonement involved more than an infinite mass of sin; **it entailed an infinite stream of individuals with their specific needs**. Alma records that Jesus took upon himself the pains, afflictions, temptations, and sicknesses of his people. In addition, **he experienced their weaknesses so that he would know how to help them** (see Alma 7:11–12)."

Jesus "took on him the seed of Abraham" (Hebrews 2:16) in a very personal way, taking upon him their pains, sicknesses, and sins. He "saw" the "seed" for whom he was the substitute "ram" or "lamb" and what would be required for their "succor" (Alma 7:11–13), i.e., what would be needed to make them "even as" he is.[43] In a sense, this was the *other* "theophany" that Jesus saw in Gethsemane: his "seed" as they were, are, and will be.[44] And perhaps his seed "saw" him.

What Jesus suffered after Gethsemane was anything but an anticlimax. This is suggested not only by the detailed narratives of the gospel writers who describe the spitting, buffeting, and other physical and verbal abuse that Jesus endured, but also by scriptural texts that indicate that his suffering on the cross was "seen" hundreds and even thousands of years beforehand. Enoch, who had seen Jehovah "weep" at humanity's wickedness and had himself mourned, rejoiced at seeing Savior "lifted up," knowing the blessings that this would mean for himself and for Zion: "And behold, Enoch **saw** the day of the coming of the Son of Man, even in the flesh; and **his soul rejoiced**, saying: The Righteous is lifted up, and **the Lamb is slain** from the foundation of the world; and through faith I am in the bosom of the Father, and behold, Zion is with me" (Moses 7:47).

Nephi too, on "an exceedingly high mountain," was privileged to "see" the same event: "And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, the … everlasting God judged of the world; and I saw and bear record. And I, Nephi, saw that he was lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world" (1 Nephi 11:32–33). When Pilate declares to the crowd "Behold the man" (John 19:5), he presents Jesus as a spectacle, and those who witness his crucifixion thereafter witness with their own eyes what many had already seen with eyes of faith.

43. 3 Nephi 27:27; John 17:1–26.
44. Cf. Psalm 82:6; Jacob 4:12–13.

The language in the accounts of Enoch's and Nephi's visions is similar to John 8:56–58, thus echoing Genesis 22 and Abraham's sacrifice of will as well as the true atoning sacrifice that he foresaw with an eye of faith. And just as Jesus appeared in theophany at first as the pre-mortal Jehovah[45] and then as the transfigured[46] and later crucified Christ, he would also appear as the resurrected Lord to whom all "power [authority] in heaven and earth" is given (Matthew 28:18), first at Jerusalem and then to sheep of other folds.

Theophany at the Temple in Bountiful

In prefacing his account of Jesus's ministry among "the Nephites and those who had been called Lamanites," Mormon emphasizes that "He [Jesus] did truly manifest himself unto them—**Showing his body unto them**, and ministering unto them." (3 Nephi 10:18–19). The specific praxis of (i.e., how one implements)[47] the Lord's eternal law of sacrifice was changed at that time as he himself makes clear: "And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings" (3 Nephi 9:19). The sacramental overtones evident in this injunction are clearer in what follows: "[But] ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost (3 Nephi 9:20).

45. E.g., Genesis 12:7; 17:1; 18:1; 26:2, 12; Exodus 3:2, 16; 1 Kings 3:5; 9:2; 11:9; Ether 3:13.

46. Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2.

47. See, e.g., Dana M. Pike, "3 Nephi 9:19–20: The Offering of a Broken Heart," in *Third Nephi: An Incomparable Scripture*, ed. Andrew C. Skinner and Gaye Strathearn (Salt Lake City, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute and Deseret Book, 2012), 35–56.

The sacrifice that involved the "contrite" or "broken heart" (see Psalm 51:17)[48] was then key not only to the Lord's "acceptance" of the individual worshiper but also to the collective repentance and the gathering of Israel (see especially 3 Nephi 10:6). As the "faith" in the hearts of the Nephite and Lamanite survivors (Ether 12:7) began to be "sufficient" (3 Nephi 17:8) and they "c[a]me unto [Jesus] with a broken heart and a contrite spirit" (12:19 and with "full purpose of heart (12:24; cf. 10:6), the Savior began to heal them by first appearing to them at "the temple which was in the land Bountiful" (3 Nephi 11:1).

When Jesus appears to the Nephites, the voice of God the Father introduces him three times, but only the third time do they "open their ears to hear it" (3 Nephi 11:5). Once they have "ears to hear,"[49] they are prepared for theophany:

> And behold, **they saw a Man descending out of heaven**; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them; and **the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him**, and they durst not open their mouths, even one to another, and wist not what it meant, for **they thought it was an angel that had appeared unto them** (3 Nephi 11:8).

Additional, sacred confirmation of Jesus's identity comes by way of personal invitation (11:14–15). The theophany at the temple in Bountiful not only involved "a multitude" of "two thousand and five hundred souls" (3 Nephi 17:25) seeing and hearing the Lord, but also their experiencing him by *feeling*

48. Besides Psalm 51:17, several other OT passages indicate that animal sacrifice *per se* was never the end that the Lord had in view: 1 Samuel 15:22; Isaiah 1:11–17; Amos 5:21–24; Hosea 6:6 (cf. Matt 9:3; 12:27). Ritual sacrifice divorced from obedience, mercy, and care for society's weakest (e.g., the widow and the orphan) was, in the Lord's view, unethical in the extreme.

49. Deuteronomy 29:4; Matthew 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9, 23; 76; Luke 8:8; 14:35; cf. Isaiah 6:9–10; Ezekiel 12:2.

("and [they] did feel") the sure signs (the "surety," 11:14–15) of an earlier sacrifice—his atoning sacrifice on their behalf.

As John W. Welch has noted, the subsequent institution of the sacrament is done "in remembrance not of the broken body or of the suffering of the Lord, but of the unforgettably glorified body"[50] with which Jesus appeared to them: "And this shall ye do in remembrance of **my body**, **which I have shown unto you** [i.e., my body, which I have caused you to see]. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you" (3 Nephi 18:7). The sacrament was instituted among the Nephites in remembrance of Jesus's atoning sacrifice, *but also his theophany at the temple*, a theophany that fit the pattern of Jesus's pre-mortal ministration to the brother of Jared and his "flesh and blood" ministry among his people (Ether 3:16–18; John 1:14).

"Sacrifice Brings Forth the Blessings of Heaven": Sacrifice, Theophany, and the Latter-day Temple

The foundations of the Latter-day Saint temple are also grounded in theophany and sacrifice. As noted above, the Lord's revelations to the Prophet Joseph Smith regarding the latter-day temple begin in late 1830 with the promise of a temple theophany: "wherefore, gird up your loins and I will suddenly come to my temple" (D&C 38:6).[51] Subsequent revelations in 1831 reiterate this promise (see D&C 42:36; 133:2; cf. 31:8). At the same time, the prophet learned that the time prior

50. John W. Welch, "Seeing 3 Nephi as the Holy of Holies of the Book of Mormon," in *Third Nephi: An Incomparable Scripture*, ed. Andrew C. Skinner and Gaye Strathearn (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute and Deseret Book, 2012), 21.

51. The revelation uses the language of Malachi 3:1, a text given to the Nephites by Jesus when he "came suddenly" to their temple in Bountiful (see 3 Nephi 24:1).

to the Lord's Second Coming was "a **day of sacrifice** and a day for the tithing of my people" (D&C 64:23).

A September 1832 revelation on the temple envisioned latter-day "sons of Moses" and "sons of Aaron" offering "an acceptable offering and sacrifice in the house of the Lord which house shall be built unto the Lord in this generation" (D&C 84:31). The temple spoken of was to be built in Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, a site later identified by Brigham Young with the Garden of Eden, the first "temple."[52]

Although the commanded temple in Independence did not materialize, revelations and commandments on the temple kept coming to the Prophet. In an August 1833 revelation, the Lord declared that those "who know their hearts are honest, and are broken, and their spirits are contrite, and are willing to observe their covenants by sacrifice—yea, every sacrifice which I the Lord, shall command—they are accepted of me" (D&C 97:8). The Lord's words have indirect reference to Abraham, who did observe every sacrifice which the Lord commanded. The sacrifice the Lord was commanding that would enable them to become like Abraham was (and is) the building of the temple:

> Behold, this is the tithing and **the sacrifice** which I, the Lord, require at their hands, **that there may be a house built unto me for the salvation of Zion** … And in as much as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it; yea, and **my presence shall be there for I will**

52. Brigham Young: "You have been both to Jerusalem and Zion, and seen both. I have not seen either, for I have never been in Jackson County. Now it is a pleasant thing to think of and to know where the Garden of Eden was. Did you ever think of it? I do not think many do, for in Jackson County was the Garden of Eden. Joseph has declared this, and I am as much bound to believe that as to believe that Joseph was a prophet of God" (Journal History, March 15, 1857).

come into it and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God (D&C 97:12, 15–16).

As the Prophet Joseph Smith and the saints learned, the building of a temple was itself a sacrifice that created the appropriate conditions necessary for *ongoing* theophanies (D&C 110:7) to restore priesthood keys, as on the "Mount of Transfiguration" (Matthew 17:1–13; Mark 9:2–10). D&C 110 records that the building of the Kirtland temple was finally answered with the theophany promised in D&C 36:8. It was a theophany like the one experienced by the elders of Israel at Mount Sinai: "The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened. We **saw** the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber" (D&C 110:1–2). The "paved work of pure gold . . . like amber" under the Savior's feet recalls the "paved work of a sapphire stone" under the feet of the God of Israel at the theophany in Exodus 24:10. The visions and blessings of old had indeed returned.

The appearance of the Savior indicated that the Saints' sacrifices had been accepted (D&C 110:7) and the "law" on which the blessings of such a theophany were predicated had been obeyed (D&C 130:20–21). The Kirtland theophanies, however, were but a prelude to something greater that God already "provided" (see Hebrews 11:40), namely vicarious ordinance work for the dead (D&C 128:15, 18) that would provide a "welding link" back to those who had been made fit for heaven (i.e., "initiated" *teleiōthōsin*, Hebrews 11:40) through sacrificial "sufferings" (JST Hebrews 11:40). Vicarious ordinance work for the dead, including the performance of sealing ordinances, constitutes the Latter-day equivalent of the "sacrifices of righteousness"[53] offered at the Jerusalem temple—sacrifices that prepare not only our kindred dead but also prepare *us* to "see" the God

53. Deuteronomy 33:19; Psalm 4:5; Isaiah 51:19.

who promises to "unveil his face unto" all the pure in heart "in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will" (D&C 88:68; 97:16).

Conclusion: To "See" the Lord is to Partake of His Atoning Sacrifice

On a mountain temple, Moses, who learned that fallen man was nothing, also learned that he was able to "behold" God because God's glory had come upon him, i.e., he was transfigured (Moses 1:2, 11) and "cleansed" (cf. 3 Nephi 28:37). Isaiah, similarly overwhelmed by feelings of inadequacy as "a man of unclean lips in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5), had his iniquity "purged" (*tĕkuppār*, atoned) so that he could be in the Lord's presence (in the temple!) and participate in the divine council (Isaiah 6:7–8). For both prophets, not the blood of a sacrificial animal but rather of the Lord himself enabled them to remain in his presence: the Lord would "provide" himself in the mountain.

If our eyes could be "opened" like Adam's and Eve's (Moses 5:10–11), and if we could "see" with "purer eyes" (D&C 131:7) like Abraham, we would better appreciate that the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ is not only at the heart of the temple—both in its concept and in its ordinances—but that the temple *is* the Savior's Atonement. That Atonement is gradually but surely exerting its intended effect upon the family of Adam and Eve through the temple (see Jacob 5:75). May the Lord "open [our] eyes" that we "may see"[54] our promised redemption and "rejoice" with Adam and Eve, Enoch, Abraham,

54. Notably, Elisha's prayer "open his eyes **that he may see** [*wĕ-yirʾeh*]" (2 Kings 6:17) includes the word *yirʾeh*, recalling the Genesis 22 story, Abraham's ability to "see" and the Lord's "providing."

Sarah, our kindred dead, and all saints of ages past (cf. D&C 138:11–19).[55]

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