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### Dan Vogel, *Origins and the Book of Mormon*

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**Title**

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**Abstract** Review of *Origins and the Book of Mormon* (1986), by Dan Vogel.

Dan Vogel, *Indian Origins and the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986. 154 pp., with bibliography and index. \$8.95.

Reviewed by Kevin Christensen

"Paradigms provide scientists not only with a map but also with some of the directions essential for map-making."<sup>1</sup>

T. Kuhn

At the outset of his book, Dan Vogel states his intention "to outline the broad contours of public discussion about the ancient inhabitants of America" up to 1830 and to "determine the extent to which the Book of Mormon may have been a part of that discussion" (p. 5). As such, Vogel provides a timely survey and a useful bibliography, especially for those interested in B. H. Roberts's *Studies of the Book of Mormon*,<sup>2</sup> but who may feel that the older book represents an incomplete survey, one scholar wide and fifty years deep.

Vogel goes on to argue against the historicity of the Book of Mormon, contending that contemporary sources provide "plentiful and striking" (p. 71) cultural and literary influences for Joseph Smith. He asserts that "some of the major features of the Book of Mormon's history of ancient America originated centuries before in religiously motivated minds and subsequently proved inaccurate" (p. 72). He concludes that scholars seeking to understand the Book of Mormon should focus on the pre-1830 environment and make useful investigations "instead of promulgating illusory and emotional speculations concerning the unknown" (p. 73).

For three reasons, I feel these conclusions are weak. First, Vogel fails to address the question of adequacy during paradigm debates as spelled out in Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Second, Vogel's approach to the Book of Mormon text rests on questionable assumptions. Third, Vogel's prodigious research on the pre-1830 environment sharply contrasts with the superficiality of his grasp of the Book of Mormon.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 109.

<sup>2</sup> B. H. Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

### Adequacy and Paradigm Debates

Regardless of how one chooses to view the Book of Mormon personally, as historic, pseudepigraphic expansion, inspired fiction, or humbug, Thomas Kuhn's ideas about scientific paradigms are relevant to understanding the mechanics and the arts of disagreement among scholars and laypersons alike.

Paradigms are the theoretical frameworks and underlying assumptions that structure our approach to the world, whether in a religious, scientific, scholarly, or practical sense. Paradigm assumptions decisively influence just how scholars spend their time, where they direct their attention, how they subjectively evaluate the significance of their observations, and the context in which they make comparisons and interpretations.

Paradigm debates occur when competing interpretive frameworks attempt to win the allegiance of a scientific or scholarly community. A scientific revolution occurs when the inadequacies of a dominant paradigm precipitate a crisis that leads to the development and adoption of another paradigm. The best-known examples of scientific revolutions are when heliocentric astronomy supplanted geocentric astronomy and when Einsteinian physics supplanted Newtonian physics.

No paradigm solves all the problems it defines and no two paradigms leave all the same problems unsolved. "The proponents of competing paradigms are always at least slightly at cross-purposes. Neither side will grant all the non-empirical assumptions that the other needs in order to make its case."<sup>3</sup>

This means that paradigm debates always involve deciding which problems are more important to have solved. The real issue, according to Kuhn, is

which paradigm should in the future guide research on problems . . . which neither competitor can yet claim to resolve completely. A decision between alternate ways of practicing science is called for, and in the circumstances that decision must be based less on past achievement

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<sup>3</sup> Kuhn, *Scientific Revolutions*, 148.

than on future promise. . . . A decision of that kind can only be made on faith.<sup>4</sup>

Paradigms cannot be verified because (1) future discoveries may conflict with present theory, (2) another theory may explain present evidence equally well. Paradigms resist falsification because "a network of theories and observations is always tested together. Any particular hypothesis can be maintained by rejecting or adjusting other auxiliary hypotheses."<sup>5</sup>

Ultimately there are no rules for paradigm choice, but there are criteria commonly agreed upon by which paradigms can be assessed:<sup>6</sup>

Accuracy of predictions  
Comprehensiveness and coherence  
Emergence of novel phenomena  
Simplicity and aesthetics  
Future promise

Each scientist must make his own assessment, weighing each criterion subjectively. The element of subjectivity acts to randomize conclusions, but accumulated knowledge constrains them. The constrained randomness produces a valuable distribution of risks that suggests current chaos theory.<sup>7</sup>

At the present time no single paradigm prevails in Book of Mormon studies. We have competing theories of historicity, geography, and translation factors. The Book of Mormon fully endorses paradigm comparisons. Alma 32 neatly anticipates and dovetails with Kuhn's ideas for paradigm evaluation. In a striking parallel to Kuhn, Alma asks his investigators to assess his message and to find "cause to believe" in terms of:

Experiment and discernibility (Alma 32:27, 35)  
Mind-expanding enlightenment (Alma 32:34)  
Fruitfulness (Alma 32:33, 42)  
Aesthetics ("the seed is good," Alma 32:33)

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 157-58. Cf. Vogel, *Indian Origins*, 73.

<sup>5</sup> Ian Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 99.

<sup>6</sup> Kuhn, *Scientific Revolutions*, 153-59.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (New York: Penguin Books, 1987).

## Future promise (Alma 32:41-43)

Considering the importance of Kuhn's work, the appearance of this epistemology in the Book of Mormon impresses me more than I can possibly say. Like Kuhn, Alma is skeptical both of the notion of final proof and of whether such a thing is even desirable. Alma's contrast between those who simply and finally "know" and those who "have cause to believe" suggests to my mind the closed certainty of the positivist/empiricist/fundamentalist mind-sets, and the contrast with what Ian Barbour calls critical realism.

Empiricist/Positivist

Science starts from publicly observable data which can be described in pure observation language independent of any theoretical assumptions.

Theories can be verified or falsified by comparison with this fixed experimental data.

The choice between theories is rational, objective, and in accordance with specifiable criteria.<sup>8</sup>

Fundamentalist

God said it.

I believe it.

That settles it.

The problem with positivism, empiricism, and fundamentalism is that they fail to consider that all human activity is limited in terms of temporality (3 Nephi 14:2-3), selectivity (1 Nephi 15:27), subjectivity (2 Nephi 19:6), and context (2 Nephi 25:1, 4-5). Critical realism recognizes these limitations.

Critical Realism

(1) Theory influences observation with the result that all data are to some degree theory-laden. Although proponents of rival theories inevitably talk through each other to a degree, adherents "of rival theories can seek a common core of overlap . . . to which both can retreat."

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<sup>8</sup> Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms*, 3.

(2) Comprehensive theories are highly resistant to falsification, but observation exerts some control over them.

(3) There are no rules for choice between paradigms but there are criteria of assessment independent of particular paradigms.<sup>9</sup>

Gospel-related questions occasionally lead to what Kuhn calls a paradigm shift. This follows from the specific activities and attitudes the scriptures define as required for seeing truth. One does science in a way that includes a spiritual dimension (see, for example, 2 Peter 1:5-9, Matthew 7, and Alma 32). Christ's parable of the wine bottles can be understood as describing paradigm conflicts and paradigm shifts.

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth the new: for he saith, The old is better. (Luke 5:37-39)

Paul also speaks of the need to be able to make fundamental changes in perspective. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11).

Vogel remarks that the "same statement may have different meanings when considered within dissimilar environments" (p. 6). The wine which may burst one wine bottle might fit nicely in another one. Vogel considers this an important point, noting that Jonathan Swift's apparent prediction of two moons for Mars in *Gulliver's Travels* was based on a forgotten, but erroneous astronomical assumption of his day. Therefore the question of adequacy should compel Mr. Vogel to show that his assumptions and explanations lead to a better understanding of the Book of Mormon than the assumptions and explanations of the defenders.

But after raising the question of adequacy in terms of Swift, Vogel ignores the issue for the rest of his book, except in his discussion of tales of metal plates and stone boxes, lost Indian books, and knowledge of Mesoamerican ruins. In these matters, some defenders have claimed too much. However, since the idea of a gold Bible has often been a point of ridicule, defenders have been correct to point out examples of the practice

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 113-15.

in the lands and times associated with the ancient context. As to Vogel's other points, such as the problem of producing the contents of a lost Indian book, Vogel begs the question of adequacy. The material that Vogel presents may indeed seem "plentiful" and "striking" compared to nothing (p. 71), but is it adequate compared to the Book of Mormon text?

Vogel also fails to confront the problem of whether the material he presents as "striking and plentiful" might also be expected in an authentic historic text. For example, Vogel's discussion and repeated descriptions of fortifications and burial mounds (pp. 21-33) should be assessed alongside John Sorenson's article, "Digging into the Book of Mormon,"<sup>10</sup> which includes photographs and a discussion of similar Mesoamerican fortifications dating to Book of Mormon times, and Sorenson's paper, "Fortifications in the Book of Mormon Account Compared with Mesoamerican Fortifications."<sup>11</sup>

Vogel further avoids the issue of adequacy by ignoring issues which are difficult to explain in the pre-1830 context. Authors that Vogel cites have raised many interesting problems, and he should assume that a major portion of his audience has some familiarity with the issues. Yet, in Vogel's discussion, Hugh Nibley is notable only for claiming too much for the metal plates and for providing a response to B. H. Roberts's study that has "weakness" (pp. 71 and 101, nn. 3 and 5). Richard Bushman's work is described as "apologetic" (p. 76 n. 7). Blake Ostler's theory, in Vogel's view, is noteworthy for including "early nineteenth-century elements, including Joseph's own inspired additions to the text" (p. 5), but Ostler's evidences of ancient origin are ignored. John Welch and F.A.R.M.S. do not exist for Vogel.

### Vogel's Nonempirical Assumptions

Vogel makes several assumptions in the course of his work that define his paradigm. First, Vogel justifies a strictly environmental approach to Book of Mormon historicity by

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<sup>10</sup> John L. Sorenson, "Digging into the Book of Mormon: Our Changing Understanding of Ancient America and Its Scripture," *Ensign* 14 (September 1984): 26-37, and (October 1984): 12-23.

<sup>11</sup> John L. Sorenson, "Fortifications in the Book of Mormon Account Compared with Mesoamerican Fortifications," in Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin, eds., *Warfare in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1990), 425-44.



quoting 2 Nephi 25:8: "I know that they shall be of great worth unto them in the last days; for in that day [presumably 1829] shall they understand them" (p. 5). The Book of Mormon actually goes further than Vogel, insisting that understanding the scriptures requires searching, pondering, knowing the appropriate cultural backgrounds and typologies, paradigm assessment, personal experiment, and the spirit of prophecy.

*Assumption #1: A closed system: Environment + Imagination = Everything.* The environmental research that Vogel provides does serve as an essential check on claims by some defenders that "there were no sources at all from which Joseph Smith might have taken his ideas" (p. 71). However, Vogel takes for granted the question of adequacy by presenting closed system comparisons in which the pre-1830 influences *must* be adequate. Vogel's method could never uncover unauthentic historical details which challenge the adequacy of his claims. Such details have been discussed at length in works that Vogel cites and are a central concern in the science of textual criticism.<sup>12</sup> Kuhn shows that the emergence of such novel details often counts heavily in paradigm choice.

Since Vogel admits that archaeology and anthropology were in their infancy in the pre-1830s (p. 7), he should not claim adequate contemporary sources for the Book of Mormon's Mesoamerican claims (pp. 21-33, 71) without demonstrating a comprehensive adequacy for such details as the 93 Mesoamerican cultural traits cited in John L. Sorenson's paper, "The Book of Mormon as a Mesoamerican Codex."<sup>13</sup> Quoting Sorenson:

Scholars like Albright have shown that the Old Testament fits into the stylistic and cultural context of the Ancient Near East in the same fashion I here propose for the Book of Mormon in relation to Mesoamerica. In both cases the casual reader does

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<sup>12</sup> See Hugh Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, vol. 8 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1989), 54-72, for a discussion and sources.

<sup>13</sup> John L. Sorenson, "The Book of Mormon as a Mesoamerican Codex," *Newsletter and Proceedings of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology* 139 (December 1976): 1-9, available as a F.A.R.M.S. reprint.

not detect this contextual fit, but the study in depth shows the degree of fit convincingly.<sup>14</sup>

Vogel also ignores the Old World context of the Book of Mormon completely. For example, consider the context in which Vogel discusses the Liahona. "Debates about such ocean crossings often turned on the question about navigation. Many argued against migration by sea since the ancients had no knowledge of the mariner's compass" (p. 45). For Vogel, the Liahona is best explained as an anachronistic response to local debate.

Although the mariner's compass had not yet been invented, the Lord provided Lehi with a compass-like instrument, described as a "round [brass] ball of curious workmanship." Inside the ball were "two spindles," one of which "pointed the way whither we should go into the wilderness." (p. 51)

Where Vogel sees a magnetic mariner's compass, Hugh Nibley approaches the text against the purported context and provides an alternate picture.

The Liahona was a hollow bronze sphere in which were mounted two pointers, headless arrows that bore mysterious inscriptions and pointed the way that Lehi's party should travel in the desert. Besides pointing the direction, the arrows and the inscriptions also provided special instructions for the journey. They only worked during the expedition to the New World, after which they ceased to function.<sup>15</sup>

Nibley then compares the Liahona to belomancy in the ancient Near East:

A recent study by an Arabic scholar has called attention to the long-forgotten custom of the ancient Arabs and Hebrews of consulting two headless arrows whenever they were about to undertake a journey; the usual thing was to consult the things at a special shrine, though it was common also to take such divination arrows along on the trip in a special

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<sup>14</sup> Sorenson, "The Book of Mormon as a Mesoamerican Codex," 4.

container. The message of the arrows, which were mere sticks without heads or feathers, was conveyed by their pointing and especially by the inscriptions that were on them, giving detailed directions as to the journey.<sup>16</sup>

Vogel mentions aspects of the Liahona that he can relate to the pre-1830 discussion, the round shape, and the pointing spindles, but ignores the odd name, the writing on the pointers, the writing that occasionally appeared on the ball, the fact that the Liahona only worked when Lehi's people were obedient and stopped working after the voyage, and so on. By Kuhn's standard, Nibley's description of the Liahona is more accurate than Vogel's, more coherent and comprehensive. It introduces novel phenomena, and is, in my view, more aesthetically pleasing and promising. Vogel's description of the Liahona highlights superficial similarities to a mariner's compass and ignores profound differences. Such divergent perceptions of the Book of Mormon led Richard Bushman to comment that "Only limited portions [of the Book of Mormon] were intelligible as expressions of American culture."<sup>17</sup> Similar problems of perception and adequacy occur throughout Vogel's work due to his strict environmental method.

For example, Vogel sees anti-Masonry in the Book of Mormon secret societies but does not respond to work by John Welch, Richard Bushman, Blake Ostler, Daniel Peterson, and John Sorenson that points out contrasts with contemporary writings, ancient parallels to Near Eastern robber bands and Mesoamerican secret societies, and unaccounted complexities such as the occurrence of five separate Gadianton groups within the Book of Mormon.<sup>18</sup> Vogel does not explain why an anti-

<sup>15</sup> Hugh Nibley, "Howlers in the Book of Mormon," in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, 244.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 244-45. See also Hugh Nibley, "Some Fairly Foolproof Tests," in *Since Cumorah*, vol. 7 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988), 251-63.

<sup>17</sup> Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 131. Vogel dismisses Bushman as "apologetic," 76 n. 7.

<sup>18</sup> John W. Welch, "Theft and Robbery in the Book of Mormon and in Ancient Near Eastern Law," F.A.R.M.S. preliminary report, 1985. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 128-31; Blake

Masonic Joseph Smith would join the Masons and borrow Masonic symbolism for parts of the temple rites.

Vogel sees anti-Catholicism in 1 Nephi 13-14 where Stephen E. Robinson argues that "Roman Catholicism as we know it did not yet exist when the crimes described by Nephi [and John in Revelation] were being committed."<sup>19</sup> Vogel does not explain why an anti-Catholic Joseph Smith would remark, "The old Catholic church traditions are worth more than all you have said. . . . The character of the old churches have [*sic*] always been slandered by all apostates since the world began."<sup>20</sup>

Vogel claims that Universalists would recognize themselves as those vain and foolish people who taught that "God will beat us with a few stripes and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God" (p. 6). I doubt that many Universalist sermons followed the complete text of 2 Nephi 28:8, saying, "Lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor." Vogel's claim that Corianton was a believer in universal salvation seems unsupported by the text. Corianton was skeptical of foreknowledge of Christ's coming (Alma 39:17), worried concerning the resurrection (Alma 40:1), and concerned as to God's justice of restoration for good and evil acts (Alma 41:1; 42:1, 30). His concerns justified his leaving his Zoramite ministry for Isabel, a harlot with many followers, likely a hierodule or priestess in a Great Mother cult in Siron by the borders of the Lamanites.<sup>21</sup>

Compared to Vogel's strict environmental approach, Blake Ostler's "expansion" hypothesis seems to me to be a model of comprehensiveness. Although it is certainly not the final word

Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of An Ancient Source," *Dialogue* 20 (Spring 1987): 73-76; John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 305-9; Daniel C. Peterson, "The Gadianton Robbers as Guerrilla Warriors," in Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin, eds., *Warfare in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1990), 146-73; and Daniel C. Peterson, "Notes on 'Gadianton Masonry,'" in *Warfare in the Book of Mormon*, 174-224.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen E. Robinson, "Early Christianity and 1 Nephi 13-14," in Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds., *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, the Doctrinal Foundation* (Provo: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1988), 185.

<sup>20</sup> *HC* 6:478.

<sup>21</sup> See Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, 542.

on the subject,<sup>22</sup> it does nonetheless try to address the Book of Mormon's claims to antiquity, its modern context, the complexity of the text itself, and the breadth of previous Book of Mormon scholarship.

*Assumption #2: The Nephites are Mound Builders revisited.* Vogel spends most of his time on the rise and demise of the Mound Builder myth and portrays the Book of Mormon as a response to that myth.<sup>23</sup> The Mound Builder myth resolved the seeming contrast between the primitive lifestyle of the native populations and the more sophisticated one which the impressive mounds along the Ohio River valley implied for their vanished creators—to say nothing of the even more complex ruins in Central and South America. Some speculated that a white-skinned civilized group had built the mounds and then been destroyed by dark-skinned savages. Vogel points up details of controversies such as tales of lost books on metal plates, elephants, comparisons of Mesoamerican script with Egyptian, and attempts to describe various native words and customs as Hebrew. Various authors suggested pre-Adamites, a lost ten tribes origin, a Babel origin, or both, and debated the merits of sea migrations or Bering Strait crossings. Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* and Solomon Spaulding's *Manuscript Found* both arose in response to the Mound Builder controversies. But this assumption seems inadequately grounded, and those familiar with the contents of Smith's *View of the Hebrews* and Spaulding's *Manuscript Found* will detect a retroactive selectivity in Vogel's descriptions of their contents. Vogel also ignores the implications of Abner Cole's 1830 "Book of Pukei" satire, which are somewhat worrisome for his thesis. As Richard Bushman has pointed out, Cole added "commonplace symbols of the Indians—the bark canoes, the blankets and

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22 Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion," 66-121. See Bruce Pritchett, "Lehi's Theology of the Fall in a Pre-Exilic Context," F.A.R.M.S. paper, 1989, and Stephen E. Robinson, "The 'Expanded' Book of Mormon," in Nyman and Tate, eds., *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi: The Doctrinal Structure*, 391-414, and Robinson, "Early Christianity and 1 Nephi 13-14," 177-91.

23 Robert Silverberg's book, *The Mound Builders of Ancient America: The Archaeology of a Myth* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1986), offers a more detailed treatment, and concludes with a chapter on Mormonism called "The Triumph of the Myth." Silverberg follows Brodie closely in his interpretation, but, as an outsider, can be excused for ignoring the complexities of the Book of Mormon.

moccasins, decimation by smallpox—[that] should have been in the story but for some reason were not. In their absence Cole fabricated them himself. He had the Nephites descend from the lost ten tribes. . . . Cole made the book comprehensible by adding all the elements Palmyra readers expected and were disappointed to find missing.”<sup>24</sup>

*Assumption #3: The Wentworth letter is an accurate guide to the text.* Vogel does show that “the compelling questions for Joseph’s contemporaries were very similar to those addressed by the Book of Mormon” (p. 8) as outlined in Joseph Smith’s letter to Wentworth, a portion of which he quotes. Taking the Wentworth summary as representative of the text, Vogel concludes that “major features of the Book of Mormon’s history of ancient America originated centuries before in religiously motivated minds and subsequently proved inaccurate” (p. 72) and that this circumstance seems to favor a modern origin for the text. I’ve numbered these major features as they appear in the Wentworth letter.

In this important and interesting book the [1] history of ancient America is unfolded, from its [2] first settlement by a colony that came from the tower of Babel, at the [3] confusion of languages to the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era. We are informed by these records that America in ancient times has been inhabited by [4] two distinct races of people. The first were called Jaredites and came directly from the tower of Babel. The second race came directly from the city of Jerusalem, about six hundred years before Christ. They were principally Israelites, of the descendants of Joseph. The Jaredites were [5] destroyed about the time that the Israelites came from Jerusalem, who succeeded them in the inheritance of the country. The principal nation of the second race fell in battle towards the close of the fourth century. The [6] remnants are the Indians that now inhabit this country.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 120.

<sup>25</sup> *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, vol. 1, *Autobiographical and Historical Writings*, Dean C. Jessee, ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 431-32.

Vogel does show that "each of the elements of the letter . . . had been discussed in some form during the ongoing debate" (p. 8), but he fails to consider whether the letter accurately describes the contents of the Book of Mormon. Can we assume that Joseph Smith was an expert on the Book of Mormon? While we can safely assume that someone who fabricated the text in response to his context would be an expert, a text translator might be naive in some respects. Emma Smith gave the following recollection from the translation.

One time while he was translating [Joseph] stopped suddenly, pale as a sheet, and said, "Emma, did Jerusalem have walls around it?" When I answered, "Yes," he replied "Oh! I was afraid I had been deceived." He had such a limited knowledge of history at the time that he did not even know that Jerusalem was surrounded by walls.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, even if we allow for the possibility that "the ongoing debate" affected the contents of the Wentworth letter, it is by no means clear that we commit ourselves thereby to believing that the contents of the Book of Mormon itself were so affected. Isn't it possible, indeed likely, that Joseph saw these things in the Book of Mormon and covered them in his letter to Wentworth, knowing that these very points would be of special interest to the general populace? All of this should lead us to ask, then, how authoritative a guide is the Wentworth letter to the text of the Book of Mormon on the points I've numbered, and therefore, how adequate a response does Vogel's research provide compared to the actual text?

Wentworth (1): Is the Book of Mormon a conventional history? John Sorenson argues that the Book of Mormon is a lineage history, selectively concerned with events of interest to a particular line.<sup>27</sup> The limited scope and narrow perspective make a great difference in the generalizations we can make.

Wentworth (2): Were the Jaredites the first settlers of America? Vogel claims that Ether tells how life was transplanted, Noah-fashion, by the Jaredites who came from the

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted in John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Basic Historical Information," F.A.R.M.S. preliminary report, 1986, 8.

<sup>27</sup> Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 50-56.

confusion of languages to an uninhabited world that had been swept clean by the flood (pp. 49-50).

Yet Ether says nothing about the New World being uninhabited, let alone barren of life. Vogel sees Ether 13:2 as supporting the "notion of a universal flood" (p. 49). "After the waters had receded from off the face of this land [America], it became a choice land above all other lands" (ibid.). But are these waters from the Noah flood or from the creation? (see Genesis 1:7; Moses 2:6-10; Abraham 4:9). Ether is ambiguous. Nowhere does Ether describe the animals on the Jaredite barges as necessary for repopulating an uninhabited world. Vogel cites a claim by W. W. Phelps that Ether's "deseret" answered the debate over the origin of the honeybee in America (p. 93 n. 94). Yet Vogel should know that all seven references to bees or honey in the Book of Mormon occur in the Old World.<sup>28</sup> Moses 7:52 (translated in 1830) described how Enoch received a promise "that a *remnant* of his seed should always be found among all nations." Noah was a descendant of Enoch. A remnant would hardly be described as "found among all nations" if the remnant comprised all nations. At the very least, the Moses text removes any requirement that the New World be unpopulated after the flood. Vogel acknowledges in a footnote that the Ether 2:5 reference to "that quarter where there never had man been" can be understood as referring to an Old World location (p. 93 n. 94). Nothing in the text rules out the presence of other inhabitants in the New World. The silence of the text regarding non-Jaredite populations must be balanced against its brevity and the possibilities suggested by Enoch's blessing and must be acknowledged as ambiguous.

Wentworth (3): The people of Jared did not come from the *confusion* of tongues at the Tower, but from the *confounding* of their languages.

That "confound" as used in the book of Ether is meant to have its true and proper meaning of "to pour together," "to mix up together" is clear from the prophecy in 13:8, that "the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built upon this land . . . and they shall

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<sup>28</sup> See Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, the World of the Jaredites, and There Were Jaredites*, vol. 5 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988), 189-94. See also Hugh Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981),



no more be confounded," the word here meaning mixed up with other people culturally, linguistically, and otherwise.<sup>29</sup>

Wentworth (4): Does the Book of Mormon specify only "two distinct races of people" for the New World?

The Book of Mormon describes three migrations to the New World and leaves open the possibility for others. Neither the Wentworth letter nor Vogel mentions the Mulekites, who were more numerous than the people of Nephi (Mosiah 25:2). Were they exclusively Hebrew or of mixed ethnic background? At the very least, on textual and linguistic grounds, we know they mixed with the Jaredite remnants. John Tvedtnes has shown that the Mulekites maintained a separate ethnic identity throughout the Book of Mormon.<sup>30</sup> Some Phoenician names in the Book of Mormon have led to suggestions that the Mulekites sailed with the Phoenicians. (For example, Sidon brings to mind the Near Eastern seaport, and Isabel is the name of the Patroness of Harlots in the Goddess religion of the Phoenicians.)<sup>31</sup> The Zoramites maintained a distinct identity throughout the Book of Mormon. What was Zoram's ethnic background? Greek perhaps? What can we say about the Ishmaelites? Did Ishmael's sons and daughters all marry Hebrews? D&C 3:17-18 speaks of seven lineages who would gain knowledge of the Savior—Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Zoramites. (Mention of the Nephites here requires us to consider at least some Nephites as survivors of Cumorah.) And who were the unnamed "many inhabitants who had before inherited the land" (Helaman 3:5-6)? Must we assume Jaredites when they were not named and were not necessarily in the same location? What about those "many nations" that would overrun the land after the Nephite fall (2 Nephi 1:8)? John Sorenson suggests these could include nearby

232: "Hence, incidentally, the prominence of the bee in Mayan migration legends suggests Mediterranean rather than Asiatic origins."

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, 173.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. John Tvedtnes, "Book of Mormon Tribal Affiliation and Military Castes," in Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin, *Warfare in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1990), 296-326.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, 542.

American populations, rather than exclusively referring to European "Gentiles."<sup>32</sup>

Wentworth (5): Nibley, John Sorenson, and recently John Tvedtnes have discussed textual evidences of Jaredite contributions to the Nephite story, that the remnants of the Jaredites (Mosiah 8:12) were not of Coriantumr's house and therefore not subject to the prophecy that every soul should be destroyed.<sup>33</sup> Sorenson correlates the Jaredite influence with the known Olmec influence on the Pre-Classic Maya.

Wentworth (6): Vogel says, "My own discussion of the 'Indian' thus ignores the multiplicity of ethnic groups, languages, and lifestyles because most such discussions in the nineteenth century and earlier ignored such distinctions" (p. 9). He could say the same of his discussion of Nephite and Lamanite groups. Evidence for distinct ethnic groups, languages, and lifestyles exists in the Book of Mormon and checks much of what can and cannot be weighed for and against its claims in an anthropological context.

Vogel tries to link Ethan Smith and the Book of Mormon by stating that "The theory that the Indians were degenerates who destroyed their more civilized brethren rather than the prevalent theory of two distinct races constitutes, so far as can be determined, an original idea with Ethan Smith" (pp. 98-99 n. 90). This is an example of Vogel's preference for "broad contours." Even if we dismissed the difference between Ethan Smith's lost ten tribes (one migration), and Joseph's seven lineages, Mulekites, Jaredite remnants, unspecified former inhabitants, independent robber bands, and unspecified "many nations" waiting to overrun the land (multiple migrations), the Nephites were not civilized when they were destroyed.

*Assumption #4: Mongolian ancestry refutes Mediterranean migrations.* Vogel asserts that evidence of predominant Mongolian ancestry for Native American populations contradicts the claims of the text. This claim depends on the validity of the "two distinct races" restriction, the totality of the Jaredite and Nephite destructions, and the validity of Vogel's geography. His presentation of the evidence of Mongolian ancestry is just as instructive as his treatment of the "two races" problem.

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<sup>32</sup> Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 83-84.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Nibley, *The World of the Jaredites*, 240, Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 119-20, and Tvedtnes, "Book of Mormon Tribal Affiliation and Military Castes."

It is now generally accepted that the American Indians are of Mongolian extraction, representing several different physical types probably originating in northern, central, and eastern Asia. They are thought to have migrated across the Bering Strait sometime between 12,000 and 30,000 years ago. The biological linkage of the Indians to Asia is based on common features such as the characteristic eyefold, the pigmented spot which appears at the base of the spine of infants, and the shovel shape of the incisor. These traits have been found in varying proportions among every Indian group studied. (pp. 51-52)

The "varying proportions" is interesting. Sorenson's discussion follows:

Such Asiatic features as the characteristic eyefold, the pigmented spot at the base of the spine of infants, and a special shape of incisor are found in varying proportions among every Amerindian group studied.<sup>34</sup>

I'll leave the puzzle of similar wording to a footnote.<sup>35</sup> I find it more interesting that Sorenson goes on where Vogel stops, discussing evidence that a major part of Native American characteristics comes from adaptation to the environment and that some groups are much less Mongoloid than others. "That raises the question whether at some time in the past, certain peoples in America might have been totally non-Mongoloid."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 87; cf. 87-91.

<sup>35</sup> Sorenson cites Carleton S. Coon, *The Living Races of Man* (New York: Knopf, 1965), 152-54 and plates 17-29. Vogel cites Paul S. Martin et al., *Indians Before Columbus: Twenty Thousand Years of North American History Revealed by Archaeology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947); Diamond Jenness, ed., *The American Aborigines, Their Origin and Antiquity, a Collection of Papers by Ten Authors* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1972); and D'Arcy McNickle, *They Came Here First: The Epic of the American Indian* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1949).

Incidentally, my wife has worked in labor and delivery and as an Intensive Care Nursery RN, and tells me that the pigmented spot at the base of the spine of infants is also a Mediterranean feature.

<sup>36</sup> Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 88.

Sorenson quotes several authorities who present evidence of influence from Semitic, Chinese, and black sources as well as from Western Mediterranean migrants.<sup>37</sup> The Mongoloid strain, like the language problem, only creates conflicts when the Book of Mormon is presented as describing exclusive, homogeneous populations.

*Assumption #5: Latter-day Saint traditions for geography take priority.* Just how much did Joseph know about Book of Mormon geography? How did he arrive at his opinions? Could the local controversies have colored opinions? Vogel's research could suggest that the Wentworth letter demonstrates that local controversies unduly colored Joseph's perception of the text. (How could they not?) In this case, how much authority should we give his opinions on this subject? Was he consistent or flexible and, therefore, speculative? Joseph himself said, "A prophet was a prophet only when he was acting as such."<sup>38</sup> The Book of Mormon itself argues that on some matters a prophet might suppose he understood, and not ask, and therefore not receive revelation (see 3 Nephi 15:15-23 on the matter of other sheep). Even revelation may not be all-encompassing. Nephi says of Lehi's experience of a vision, "so much was his mind swallowed up in other things that he beheld not the filthiness of the water" (1 Nephi 15:27). Nephi writes of himself "And now, if I do err, even they did err of old" (1 Nephi 19:6).

Alma is especially instructive on the nature and extent and sources for prophetic knowledge:

Now as to this thing I do not know. . . . But behold, the Spirit hath said this much unto me. (Alma 7:8-9)

Now I unfold unto you a mystery; nevertheless, there are many mysteries which are kept, that no one knoweth them save God himself. But I show unto you one thing which I have inquired diligently of God that I might know. . . . Now when this time cometh no one knows. . . . Now, whether there shall be one time, or a second time, or a third time, . . . it mattereth not; for God knoweth all things; and it sufficeth me to know in this case . . . what becometh of the souls of men is the thing which I have inquired

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 88-89.

<sup>38</sup> HC 5:265.

diligently to know; and this is the thing of which I do know. . . . Behold it has been made known unto me by an angel. . . . Now, whether . . . I do not say; let it suffice, that . . . I do not say that . . . but behold, I give it as my opinion." (Alma 40:3-5, 9, 11, 19-20)

How much did Joseph really know? Vogel's efforts to tie his geography to Joseph Smith are pointless unless he can also demonstrate that his geography is accurate. Vogel's association of the Book of Mormon with the Mound Builder myth depends heavily on the validity of his own geography.

*Assumption #6: A total hemisphere geography.* For Vogel, the Book of Mormon describes "three areas of settlement which correspond to the three areas of archaeological discovery known commonly in the nineteenth century." Vogel depicts the land southward (Mormon 2:29) as South America, the narrow neck as the Isthmus of Panama (Alma 22:32; 50:34; 52:9), but sees the Isthmus as encompassing all of Central America, and the land northward, a region of "large bodies of water and many rivers" (Helaman 3:4) as the Great Lakes region.<sup>39</sup> The prairies were seen as the "land of Desolation" (Alma 22:30-31; Helaman 3:3-6; Ether 7:6). Vogel associates the New York Cumorah with the purported demise of the Mound Builders in the Great Lakes region.

Vogel shows no evidence of having worked out a consistent internal Book of Mormon geography along the lines of Sorenson's work or John Clark's "Key for Evaluating Nephi Geographies."<sup>40</sup> He simply cites the geography of the Mound Builder myth, and overlays the Book of Mormon, drawing support from the Zelph story,<sup>41</sup> the Frederick G. Williams claim

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. Nibley, "The Book of Mormon and the Ruins: The Main Issues," F.A.R.M.S. preliminary report, 1983, 2: "The Central Highland of Mexico is described . . . as a land of many waters. Indeed, Edward Seler . . . maintains that the name usually translated as "Highlands," Anauac, really meant land of many waters. . . . The complete deforestation of the land does not suit the vast forests of the north but was a very serious problem in ancient Mesoamerica."

<sup>40</sup> John Clark, "A Key for Evaluating Nephite Geographies," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 1 (1989): 20-70.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Kenneth A. Godfrey, "The Zelph Story," *BYU Studies* 29 (Spring 1989): 31-56, also a F.A.R.M.S. paper, 1989, 96 pp. Godfrey examines all the primary sources and concludes that "those who try to support a particular historical or geographical point of view about the Book of Mormon by citing the Zelph story are on inconclusive grounds," p. 23.

that Lehi landed in Chile<sup>42</sup> (adding in the same sentence a contradictory notice from the *Times and Seasons* that Lehi landed just south of Darien, 3,000 miles north of Chile), an 1834 letter from Joseph to Emma which referred to Illinois as "the plains of the Nephites," and an 1835 Oliver Cowdery letter that the New York Cumorah was the final battlefield of the Nephites and Jaredites.

Acceptance of Vogel's geography depends upon the acceptance of three assumptions, none of which is obvious. First, one must see Alma 22:32 as describing all of Mexico and Central America as the narrow neck. Second, one must accept the accuracy and priority of early Latter-day Saint traditions on Book of Mormon geography. And, third, one must see in Vogel's geographical notions accuracy, comprehensiveness, simplicity, and coherence, as well as greater fruitfulness and future promise than other views can offer.

For the first point, Vogel is aware of the problems that long-distance travel poses for historicity in this geography, but defers to B. H. Roberts. (An implausible geography would strengthen Vogel's case against historicity.) Roberts objected to a limited geography for reasons of silence, the mention in Ether 2:5 of a quarter where man had never been (likely an Old World location), and population statistics and traditions for a New York Cumorah. John Welch has shown that none of Roberts's arguments is compelling.<sup>43</sup> The Book of Mormon is not completely silent as to outsiders, nor, as a lineage history, need it be especially concerned with them.

Vogel ignores the textual requirement for Cumorah to be near the narrow neck, as discussed by Sorenson, Clark, Palmer, and Sperry. He also ignores the internal travel times that require a limited-region theory.

For the second point, there is no reason to give the Latter-day Saint traditions for geography priority over the requirements of the text regardless of whether or not such beliefs originated with Joseph Smith.

For the third point, Vogel's treatment of geography does not seem to be accurate, comprehensive or coherent, nor,

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Frederick G. Williams, III, "Did Lehi Land in Chile? An Assessment of the Frederick G. Williams Statement," F.A.R.M.S. paper, 1988, 21 pp.

<sup>43</sup> John Welch, "Finding Answers to B. H. Roberts' Questions and 'An Unparallel'," F.A.R.M.S. paper, 1985, 41 pp.

compared to the rash of studies coming out from F.A.R.M.S., does it seem particularly challenging or fruitful.

Vogel rejects Sorenson's *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, contending that:

First, Sorenson has been unable to overcome Mormon traditions regarding Book of Mormon events outside his limited area. Second, he has unnecessarily distorted Book of Mormon passages which do not fit his theory (e.g., Alma 22:32). Third, he has excused, minimized, or ignored contradictory evidence. (p. 85 n. 68)

The third objection may come back to haunt Mr. Vogel.

On the second objection, John Clark's analysis of Alma 22:32 improves on Sorenson's reading and supports the plausibility of his overall geography. Vogel cites an unpublished study of his own critiquing Sorenson (p. 85 n. 68).<sup>44</sup> I presume his objections focus on the priority of Mormon tradition to text and what he sees as "distortion of the text." The key traditions have been scrutinized by F.A.R.M.S., and I would contend that they are secondary to the text in any case. The narrow-neck problem has been clarified by John Clark. Before making accusations of distortion, Vogel should consider Thomas Kuhn's remark that "Paradigms provide scientists not only with a map but also with some of the directions essential for map-making"<sup>45</sup> and that, when paradigms change, the world in which scientists work changes as well. One man's distortion is another's paradigm.

*Assumption #7: Homogeneity of text.* Vogel assumes homogeneity of the text. Every description of civilization, engineering, population, race, and technology is taken to apply across the entire time scale, culture, and geography.

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<sup>44</sup> See Frank R. Zindler, "East Is East, Except When North," *American Atheist* (February 1988): 29-33, 40. Other published critiques that I've seen in the *Zarahemla Record* and *American Atheist*, as well as George D. Smith's article, "Is There Any Way to Escape These Difficulties?" *The Book of Mormon Studies* of B. H. Roberts," *Dialogue* 17 (Summer 1984): 94-111, focus on the old traditions, the narrow-neck problem, the question of directions, interpretive quibbles, and minor technical points.

<sup>45</sup> Kuhn, *Scientific Revolutions*, 109.

If Enos describes Lamanites as savage, naked, blood-thirsty warriors, as hunters, as filthy, idle, idolatrous, and as living in tents, then Vogel would have us believe that all Lamanites of all periods and lineages and political affiliations fit that description. When the sons of Mosiah propose to go among the Lamanites, they are met with an incredulous response that suggests extreme prejudice on the part of the Nephites (Alma 26:24). John Sorenson has discussed how the epithets applied to the Lamanites sound like Near Eastern epithets and "probably should be considered a literary formula rather than an objective description."<sup>46</sup>

When the sons of Mosiah actually travel among the Lamanites, they find governments, cities, temples, synagogues, houses, prisons, flocks, and converts who became more industrious and more righteous than any of the Nephites. Helaman records how at various times the Lamanites sent missionaries among the Nephites, the most notable being Samuel.

The Nephites, according to Vogel, are uniformly civilized, industrious, and peaceful, building cities, working metal, keeping records, tilling the earth, managing flocks, and wearing clothing. This is in keeping with the Mound Builder myth. Vogel assures us that the Book of Mormon has the degenerate group wiping out the civilized group. Yet the Nephites, according to the Book of Mormon, include those who are lazy, hunters, blood-thirsty, more savage than the Lamanites, idolatrous, ignorant, and brutal. The Nephites also occasionally dwelt in tents. Significantly, at their cultural demise, the Nephites were worse than the Lamanites.

*Assumption #8: Pre-1830 discussions of Hebrew and Egyptian as adequate.* Vogel describes discussions of Hebrew and Egyptian similarities to Native American languages (pp. 58-59). Does pre-1830 speculation about Hebrew and Egyptian influence on Indian customs and language adequately explain the text?

Is the mention of Egyptian hieroglyphics sufficient to explain the mention of "reformed Egyptian" in the Book of Mormon? Vogel does not mention the Egypticity of names like Paanchi, Korihor, Ammon, or the Egyptian literary forms found in the text, such as the colophons.

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46 Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 90.



He treats the pre-1830 discussion of Hebrew origins for native populations, but ignores the Hebrew names, festival customs, legal practices, and literary forms, such as chiasmus, prophetic lawsuits, and testaments that appear in the text. John Welch shows that none of Ethan Smith's proofs of Hebrew origin appear in the Book of Mormon.<sup>47</sup> Why not, if Joseph was simply tapping into the environment?

We should also mention Carl Jones's 1970 paper, "The Anthon Transcript and Two Mesoamerican Cylinder Seals"; Allen Christenson's 1988 paper on "The Use of Chiasmus in Ancient Mesoamerica"; and Brian Stubbs's recent work comparing Hebrew and Uto-Aztec languages. Such studies indicate that an historic Book of Mormon text is entitled to claim Hebrew origins.<sup>48</sup>

*Assumption #9: Mechanical translation.* Vogel prefers a mechanical translation model. This is not because mechanical translation explains the text, or because it follows from either the contemporary dictionary definitions,<sup>49</sup> or the prophet's use of the term,<sup>50</sup> the realities of the translation problem,<sup>51</sup> the implications of D&C 1:24 and 9:7, or 2 Nephi 31:2, or even because Vogel takes seriously the idea that Joseph actually translated anything, but because it presents an easier target. Vogel insists on the priority of witnesses who described the translation as mechanical and literal.<sup>52</sup> To his credit, on this point, Vogel does provide due reference to authors claiming

47 Welch, "Finding Answers to B. H. Roberts's Questions," 21-41.

48 Carl H. Jones, "The Anthon Transcript and Two Mesoamerican Cylinder Seals," F.A.R.M.S. paper, 1970; Allen J. Christenson, "The Use of Chiasmus in Ancient Mesoamerica," F.A.R.M.S. paper, 1988; Brian Stubbs, "Elements of Hebrew in Uto-Aztec: A Summary of the Data," F.A.R.M.S. paper, 1988.

49 See D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 151.

50 See, for example, Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975), 47-48.

51 See Hugh Nibley, "The Way of the Church," in *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, vol. 4 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1987), 209-322, for a lively discussion.

52 My personal feeling is that the views of David Whitmer and Emma Smith were unduly weighted by Joseph's practice of spelling out the names. Translating a name quite likely involved a different process than translating text, since the idea is to convey phonetics rather than meaning.

other views (p. 75 n. 5). On the other hand, Vogel fails to reference studies on chiasmus by John Welch, on wordprints by John Hilton, or on the nature of the Isaiah variants in the Book of Mormon by John Tvedtnes, all of which have been used to support the notion of a very literal translation.

*Assumption #10: Anachronisms.* Vogel treats the issue of anachronisms as though it were settled and final (p. 5). However, the once notorious "land of no return" and "faith, hope, and charity" passages have been found to be formulaic expressions with deep roots.<sup>53</sup> They put the shoe on the other foot, since in both cases one can ask, "How did Joseph know such verses were older than *Hamlet* or the New Testament?" They demonstrate that the *identification* of anachronism in a formulaic literature depends on the assumption of adequate research sources. The *significance* of anachronism depends on assumptions about translation factors (including the legitimacy of what Ostler calls prophetic expansion). All conclusions regarding anachronism in the Book of Mormon must stand on the validity of both assumptions. If either leg fails, the conclusions cannot stand.

The George D. Smith *Sunstone* article,<sup>54</sup> which Vogel cites (p. 76 n. 16), is severely flawed in this respect. For example, Smith includes a listing of purportedly anachronistic Book of Mormon scriptures next to New Testament verses. The second item on Mr. Smith's list (2 Peter 2:22), if quoted in full,<sup>55</sup> would include Peter's words, "It is . . . unto them according to the true proverb." The missing words illustrate that at least one supposed anachronism was already old enough to be proverbial. Others on the same list have close parallels in the Ethiopian book of *Enoch*, showing that nonbiblical sources might lie behind some of the constructions.

But wo unto the rich.  
(2 Nephi 9:30)

But woe unto you that  
are rich. (Luke 6:24)

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Robert F. Smith, "Shakespeare and the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. preliminary report, 1980, 8 pp. Also cf. Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, 88-91.

<sup>54</sup> George D. Smith, Jr., "Defending the Keystone: Book of Mormon Difficulties," *Sunstone* 6 (May-June 1981): 45-50.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

But woe unto the rich, for ye have trusted in your riches, and from you your riches shall depart. (*I Enoch* 94:8)

In considering the possibility of anachronism to the "one fold one shepherd" idea (1 Nephi 13:42; John 10:16), remember that long before the New Testament, David (in Psalm 23), Ezekiel (in chapter 34), and *I Enoch* all used shepherd imagery for God's dealings with men.<sup>56</sup>

Mr. Smith's showpiece is when the Book of Mormon has "Christ quoting the words of Peter, before Peter spoke them" (p. 48). This statement contains several unquestioned assumptions, most notably that Peter's words were original. In all the years Mr. Smith has brandished this paradox, he has never troubled to ask whether any evidence could make plausible the case that in Acts, Peter was quoting the words of Christ, after Christ spoke them.

(1) Peter was called as an emissary, a sent one, told that the spirit would "bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

(2) Peter's writings include quotations and paraphrases from earlier writings, including "It is unto them according to the true proverb." Some of these quotations and paraphrases do not come from known Old Testament writings, but from recently rediscovered writings such as the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>57</sup>

(3) The verses to which Mr. Smith refers, including those he quotes (Acts 3:26 and 3 Nephi 20:26), show evidence of formulaic constructions (deliberately unoriginal), rather than just an exclusive dependence on Deuteronomy 18:15-19.

Unto you first God,  
having raised up his Son  
Jesus, sent him to bless  
you, in turning away  
every one of you from his  
iniquities. (Acts 3:26)

The Father having raised me  
up unto you first, and sent  
me to bless you in turning  
away every one of you from  
his iniquities. (3 Nephi  
20:26)

<sup>56</sup> Even apart from the Book of Mormon, a story of Enoch's ascension told in *I Enoch* closely parallels a story of Quetzalcoatl's ascension. See Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechund, *Hamlet's Mill* (Boston: Godine, 1977), 77.

<sup>57</sup> See Theodore H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, 3d rev. and enl. ed. (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1976), 580.

I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers. (Jeremiah 35:15)

That they may return from their evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. (Jeremiah 36:3)

Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. (Ezekiel 18:30)

Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. (Acts 3:24)

Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. (2 Kings 17:13)

Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and he answered them. (Psalm 99:6)

Cf. Zechariah 1:3-6, Jeremiah 25:4-5; 26:3-5; 29:19; 44:4; Isaiah 55:7; Ezekiel 3:17-18; 33:11; 2 Chronicles 36:15-16.

(4) The New Testament contains almost nothing of the Forty-Day Teachings in which Peter was a participant. Yet the noncanonical Forty-Day documents all have recurrent themes that suggest a common source.<sup>58</sup> Again we are *not* privy to all conversation between Peter and the Lord.

(5) Third Nephi as a whole shows characteristics of typical Forty-Day documents.<sup>59</sup> Peter in Acts may simply be quoting words taught during the Forty-Days in the Old World. Why strain at a gnat when the larger context shows all the characteristics of an authentic camel known to attract such gnats?

(6) Third Nephi contrasts with the typical characteristics of various medieval and recent forgeries.<sup>60</sup>

In comparing theories, we are evaluating explanatory power according to Kuhn's criteria for evaluating paradigms. Some of Mr. Smith's predictions regarding anachronism are demonstrably false. Other alleged anachronisms are open to question. He ignores the problems arising when Book of Mormon passages provide close parallel phrasings to ancient writings unknown in Joseph's day.<sup>61</sup> In arguing that Joseph Smith "could have written the Book of Mormon" based on a "vivid and creative imagination" added to the "common knowledge" of the times, Mr. Smith fails to predict (and makes no attempt to explain) such novel features as the Forty-Day themes found by Nibley or the contrasts with imitation gospels found by Richard L. Anderson.<sup>62</sup> His presentation falls far

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. Hugh Nibley, "Evangelium Quadraginta Dierum: The Forty-Day Mission of Christ—The Forgotten Heritage," in *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 10-44.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, 407-34.

<sup>60</sup> See Richard L. Anderson, "Imitation Gospels and Christ's Book of Mormon Ministry," in C. Wilfred Griggs, ed., *Apocryphal Writings and the Latter-day Saints* (Provo: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1986), 53-107.

<sup>61</sup> See, for example, Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 163-64; and John Welch, "The Narrative of Zosimus and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 22 (Summer 1982): 311-32.

<sup>62</sup> Anderson's "Imitation Gospels," and Nibley's "Evangelium Quadraginta Dierum," are especially relevant to the explanatory power of

short of defining the problem, let alone justifying his conclusions.

Even Blake Ostler, whom Vogel also cites (p. 5), slips up in his presentation of potential anachronisms. Ostler quotes 2 Nephi 9:12-18 alongside various New Testament scriptures, as though "Jacob's speech reinterprets the KJV snippets into a new synthesis."<sup>63</sup> In accordance with this approach, he declares: "It is conceivable that the phrases approximate the meaning of an original text, and the intricate structure of the passage, known to scholars as ascending synthetic inclusion, seems to require such an original."<sup>64</sup>

While I applaud an approach to translation that acknowledges the legitimate possibility of translator anachronism, Ostler's presentation here neglects the second leg of a viable approach—adequate research and sources. Why look first in the New Testament for the snippets?

Among the Scrolls is a great "Hymn of Thanksgiving," a literary composition of real merit yet one which contains hardly a single original line! "These songs are as if woven from quotations from the Old Testament. . . . The style closely imitates that of the Psalms and other poetic writings of the Old Testament. Biblical reminiscences abound, . . . quotations shine out at every moment." . . . If the Book of Mormon actually comes from the Old World religious milieu with which it identifies itself, it should also resort often to set and accepted forms of expression, and the last thing we should expect to find in it would be gropings for original means of expression."<sup>65</sup>

What happens when we follow this hint and examine older writings in comparison to 2 Nephi 9:12-18?

Wherefore, death and hell  
must deliver up their dead,      Thy dead men shall live,

Vogel's assertion that "The Book of Mormon solves the problem of how the gospel came to America" (p. 67).

<sup>63</sup> Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion," 77.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, 87.

and hell must deliver up its captive spirits,  
and the grave must deliver up its captive bodies,  
and the bodies and the spirits of men will be restored one to the other. . . .

And . . . when all men shall have passed from . . . death unto life, . . .

they must appear before

the judgment-seat of the Holy One of Israel;

and then cometh the judgment, and then must they be judged according to the holy judgment of God.

And assuredly, as the Lord

together with my dead body shall they arise.

Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: . . .  
and the earth shall cast out the dead. (Isaiah 26:19)

I will open your graves, and cause you to come out of your graves . . . And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live. (Ezekiel 37:12, 14)

Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself. (Job 19:26-27)

For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness. (Psalm 96:13)

Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne. (Psalm 89:14)

The Lord shall judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness. (Psalm 7:8)

In those days shall the earth deliver up from her womb, and hell deliver up from hers, that which was received, and destruction shall restore that which it owes. He shall select the righteous and holy from among them. (*1 Enoch* 1)

The Lord liveth. (Psalm

liveth, for the Lord God hath  
spoken it, and it is his

eternal word, which cannot  
pass away,

that they who are righteous  
shall be righteous still,  
and they who are filthy  
shall be filthy still;  
[This also appears on  
George D. Smith's list.]

18:46)

And the Lord said unto  
Moses,

Is the Lord's hand waxed  
short? thou shalt see now  
whether my word shall come  
to pass unto thee or not.  
(Numbers 11:23)

The Lord of hosts hath  
sworn, saying, Surely as I  
have thought, so shall it come  
to pass; and as I have  
purposed, so shall it stand.  
(Isaiah 14:24)

And many of them that sleep  
in the dust of the earth shall  
awake, some to everlasting  
life, and some to shame and  
everlasting contempt. (Daniel  
12:2)

And unto this people thou  
shalt say, Thus saith the Lord;  
Behold, I set before you the  
way of life, and the way of  
death. (Jeremiah 21:8)

Behold, I set before you this  
day a blessing and a curse; A  
blessing, if ye obey the  
commandments of the Lord  
your God, which I command  
you this day; And a curse, if  
ye will not obey the  
commandments of the Lord  
your God. (Deuteronomy  
11:26-28)

For all his judgments were  
before me, and I did not put  
away his statutes from me.



wherefore, they who are filthy are the devil and his angels and they shall go away into everlasting fire, prepared for them; and their torment

is as a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever and has no end. . . .

. . . Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me. (Psalm 18:22, 24)

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning. . . . Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. (Isaiah 14:12, 15)

I was set up from everlasting. (Proverbs 8:23)

And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison. (Isaiah 24:22)

And there ye shall remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed. . . . Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, . . . the flaming flame shall not be quenched. (Ezekiel 20:43, 47)

How long, Lord? wilt thou hide thyself forever? shall thy wrath burn like fire? (Psalm 89:46)

I beheld that valley in which arose a strong smell of sulphur which became mixed with the waters. . . . Through that valley also rivers of fire

- were flowing, to which the angels shall be condemned, which seduced the inhabitants of the earth. (*1 Enoch* 66:5-8)
- But, behold, the righteous, O Lord God of Israel, Thou art righteous. (*Ezra* 9:15)
- the saints of the Holy One of Israel, they who have believed in Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. (*Psalms* 50:5)
- thy Holy One of Israel, thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel (*Isaiah* 54:5)
- they who have endured the crosses of the world, Still he holdeth fast his integrity. (*Job* 2:3)
- and despised the shame of it, He is despised and rejected. (*Isaiah* 53:3)
- they shall inherit the kingdom of God, For thou shalt not be put to shame. (*Isaiah* 54:5)
- A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary. (*Jeremiah* 17:12)
- And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue. (*Isaiah* 22:23-24)
- which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and their joy shall be full forever. where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . When . . . all the sons of God shouted for joy? (*Job*

(2 Nephi 9:12, 15-16, 18) 38:4, 7)

Hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? (Isaiah 40:21)

Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, . . . Ask me of things to come concerning my sons. . . . I have made the earth. (Isaiah 45:11-12)

These Old Testament and Enoch phrasings and imagery support Jacob's formulaic "ascending synthetic allusion" as well as or better than most of Ostler's New Testament references, fit Lehi's context, and are more comprehensive. The line—"endured the crosses of the world and despised the shame" (2 Nephi 9:18) may indeed be translator-dependent on the wording of Hebrews 12:2, depending on how complete our knowledge is of influences on the author of Hebrews and Jacob's sources. Influence from such passages might be a legitimate translator resource, as Ostler argues. But in emphasizing possible translator resources, Ostler did not adequately examine the ancient context. The ancient context must be the first resource if we are to assess the significance and extent of any modern influences through Joseph's "language and understanding."

*Assumption #11: Investigation of historicity is useless, and the findings of such investigations are illusory* (p. 73). Vogel never clearly states his own position, although he refers to various Latter-day Saints who doubt the historicity of the Book of Mormon, but accept its inspiration. Still, his depiction of the Noah Flood, the Tower, and Adam as the first man, all in fundamentalist terms, in contrast to the date for the Bering Strait migrations of 30,000 to 12,000 years ago, *may* indicate another priority that weights his assumptions regarding adequacy. Has contemporary science disproved religion and thereby rendered the whole questions of Book of Mormon historicity moot?

As we've seen in discussing the Tower and Flood, Vogel neglects implications of Joseph's revelations that may reconcile traditional science vs. religion tensions at many points. Vogel always resolves ambiguity on the side of scientific

implausibility. Contemporary science is notable for clashing with traditional fundamentalist readings of the scriptures. But fundamentalist readings may owe more to the mindset of the readers than to the text. Wine bottles are one thing, and reality is another.

A naturalistic universe presupposes an environmental Book of Mormon. Vogel may be looking at the Book of Mormon as a puzzle to solve within a naturalistic paradigm, rather than as a challenge to the assumptions of a naturalistic view, and an invitation to assess Alma's paradigm in Alma 32 towards a theistic faith.

### Mastery of the Text

Regarding my assertion that Vogel shows a superficial grasp of the Book of Mormon, one passage deserves special mention. "The Book of Mormon actually gives few details of the observance of the law.<sup>66</sup> It mentions temples but not the ceremonies, priests but not their robes or temple duties" (p. 67). As to the temple in the Book of Mormon, we need to ask whether we would recognize a temple ceremony if we saw one.<sup>67</sup> Vogel should consider how Mormon transmitted the notion that "the Lord doth grant unto all nations . . . all that he seeth fit that they should have" (Alma 29:8) and that "all things

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<sup>66</sup> As to the details of the law in the Book of Mormon, see F.A.R.M.S. papers by John Welch, "Theft and Robbery in the Book of Mormon," "Ancient Near Eastern Law and the Book of Mormon," and "King Benjamin's Speech in the Context of Ancient Israelite Festivals." See also John W. Welch, *The Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon at the Temple* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1990), and John A. Tvedtnes, "King Benjamin and the Feast of Tabernacles," in John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1990), 2:197-237.

<sup>67</sup> Articles by John Welch, "Study and Faith in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Today* (September 1988): 18-24, and F.A.R.M.S. Update, "The Sermon at the Temple," March 1988; and Hugh Nibley, "The Meaning of the Atonement," F.A.R.M.S. paper, 1989, and "The Book of Mormon: Forty Years After," in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, 533-69, have begun to illuminate just how much we've been missing in 3 Nephi. For the pre-1830 context, see also Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, and for the post-1830 scheme, see David J. Buerger, "The Development of the Mormon Temple Endowment Ceremony," *Dialogue* 20 (Winter 1987): 33-76.

which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of [Christ]" (2 Nephi 11:4). With this, Mormon is inviting us into the realm of comparative world religion. The implications are far reaching.

*The Temple Context of 3 Nephi 11-29.* In 3 Nephi 11:1, we have a multitude gathered at the temple. According to Mircea Eliade,<sup>68</sup> the three parts of the temple at Jerusalem correspond to the three cosmic regions. The lower court represents the lower regions ("Sheol," the abode of the dead), the Holy Place the earth, and the Holy of Holies heaven. The temple is always the meeting point of heaven, earth, and hell (Sheol). Considering 3 Nephi as a whole, we find three distinct levels of sacredness.

Darkness/Separation: 3 Nephi 8-10

Preparation/Initiation: 3 Nephi 11:1-17:23; 18:1-37; 19:13; 20:1-28:12

Apotheosis: 3 Nephi 11:15; 17:24; 18:36-39; 19:14, 25-31; 28:10-18

*The Rites of the New Year.* The destructions described in 3 Nephi become especially striking, not just as perils,<sup>69</sup> but as potent symbols when considered against the pattern of the New Year Temple rites current throughout the ancient world. Mormon tells us that this all happens "in the *ending* of the thirty and fourth year." Eliade informs us that . . . in the *expectation* of the New Year there is a repetition of the mythical moment of passage from chaos to cosmos."<sup>70</sup>

#### *Regression to Chaos.*

The first act of the ceremony . . . marks a regression into the mythical period before the Creation; all forms are supposed to be confounded in the marine abyss of the beginning, . . . overturning of the entire social order. . . . Every feature suggests

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<sup>68</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), 77.

<sup>69</sup> For their technical accuracy, see Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 231-38. For their historicity, see Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 318-23.

<sup>70</sup> Eliade, *Cosmos and History*, 54 (italics added).

universal confusion, the abolition of order and hierarchy, "orgy," chaos. We witness, one might say, a "deluge" that annihilates all humanity in order to prepare the way for a new and regenerated human species.<sup>71</sup>

There arose a great storm . . . also a great and terrible tempest; and there was terrible thunder, insomuch that it did shake the whole earth as if it was about to divide asunder. . . . The city of Moroni did sink into the depths of the sea. (3 Nephi 8:5-6, 9)

*The Perilous Passage.* Every temple, according to Eliade, symbolizes the Center, the zone of the sacred. The road to the center is

fraught with perils, because it is in fact, a rite of passage from the profane to the sacred, from the ephemeral and illusory to reality and eternity, from death to life, from man to the divinity. Attaining the center is equivalent to a consecration, an initiation.<sup>72</sup>

O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they, will ye not now repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you? . . . Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you. . . . As many as have received me, to them have I given to become the sons of God. (3 Nephi 9:13-14, 17)

*The Suspension of Time.*

The dead can come back now, for all barriers between the dead and the living are broken (is not primordial chaos reactualized?), and they will come back because at this paradoxical instant time will be suspended, hence they can again be contemporaries of the living. Moreover, since a new Creation is then in preparation, they can hope for a return to a life that will be enduring and concrete.<sup>73</sup>

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71 Ibid., 57.

72 Ibid., 18.

73 Ibid., 62.

And many graves shall be opened, and shall yield up many of their dead; and many saints shall appear unto many. (Helaman 14:25, and cf. 3 Nephi 23:9-13; 26:15)

*Three Days of Darkness.*

The death of the individual and the *periodic* death of humanity are necessary, even as the three days of darkness preceding the "rebirth."<sup>74</sup>

And then behold, there was darkness upon the face of the land. And it came to pass that there was thick darkness upon all the face of the land, insomuch that the inhabitants thereof . . . could feel the vapor of darkness; And there could be no light, because of the darkness, neither candles, neither torches; neither could there be fire kindled. . . . And there was not any light seen, neither fire, nor glimmer, neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars. . . . And it came to pass that it did last for the space of three days. (3 Nephi 8:19-23)

*Humiliation of the King and the Role of the Scapegoat.*

To Marduk's descent into hell . . . there corresponded a period of mourning and fasting for the whole community and of "humiliation" for the king. . . . At this same period . . . the expulsion of evils and sins took place by means of a scapegoat.<sup>75</sup>

I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the father in taking upon me the sins of the world. (3 Nephi 11:11)

*The Sacred Combat.*

The ritual combats between two groups of actors reactualize the cosmogonic moment of the fight between the god and the primordial dragon . . . for the combat . . . presupposes the reactualization of

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 56.

primordial chaos, while the victory . . . can only signify . . . the Creation.<sup>76</sup>

That great city Zarahemla have I burned. . . .  
That great city Moroni have I caused to be sunk in the depths of the sea. . . . And many great destructions have I caused to come upon this land, and upon this people, because of their wickedness and abominations. (3 Nephi 9:3-4, 12)

*The Symbolism of Light Coming into Darkness.*

Renewal of the world through rekindling of the fire, . . . a renewal that is equivalent to a new creation. . . . It is at this period that fires are extinguished and rekindled; and finally, this is the moment of initiations, one of whose essential elements is precisely this extinction and rekindling of fire.<sup>77</sup>

I am the light and the life of the world. . . . The light of the body is the eye; if, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. (3 Nephi 9:18; 13:22-23)

*Coronation.*

This triumph was followed by the enthronement of Yahweh as king and the repetition of the cosmogonic act.<sup>78</sup>

They did cry out with one accord, saying: Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him. (3 Nephi 11:16-17)

*Sacraments.*

This periodic "salvation" of man finds an immediate counterpart in the guarantee of food.<sup>79</sup>

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76 Ibid., 69, 60.

77 Ibid., 67.

78 Ibid., 60.

79 Cf. *ibid.*



Now, there had been no bread, neither wine, brought by the disciples, neither by the multitude; But he truly gave unto them bread to eat, and also wine to drink. And he said unto them: He that eateth this bread eateth of my body to his soul; and he that drinketh of this wine drinketh of my blood to his soul; and his soul shall never hunger nor thirst, but shall be filled. (3 Nephi 20:6-8)

### *Baptism.*

Baptism is equivalent to the ritual death of the old man followed by a new birth. On the cosmic level it is equivalent to the deluge: abolition of contours, fusion of all forms, return to the formless.<sup>80</sup>

Behold, ye shall go down and stand in the water, and in my name ye shall baptize them. . . . And then ye shall immerse them in the water, and come forth out of the water. (3 Nephi 11:23, 26)

### *Opposition in All Things.*

The ambivalence and polarity of these episodes (fasting and excess, grief and joy, despair and orgy) only confirm their complementary function in the frame of the same system.<sup>81</sup>

For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. (2 Nephi 2:11; cf. 2 Nephi 2:10-27, implied in 3 Nephi 14:13-14)

### *Recital of the Creation Story.*

To listen to the recital of the birth of the world is to become the contemporary of the creative act *par excellence*, the cosmogony.<sup>82</sup>

And he did expound all things, even from the beginning. (3 Nephi 26:3)

### *At-one-ment.*

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 61-62.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 83.

Sacrifice is intended "to restore the primordial unity."<sup>83</sup>

And now, Father, I pray unto thee for them, and also for all those who shall believe on their words, that they may believe in me, that I may be in them, as thou Father, art in me, that we may be one. (3 Nephi 19:23)

#### *Initiation.*

Any ritual whatever . . . unfolds not only in a consecrated space . . . but also in a "sacred time," "once upon a time" (*in illo tempore, ab origine*), that is, when the ritual was performed for the first time by a god, an ancestor, or a hero. Every ritual has a divine model, an archetype. . . . Not only do rituals have their mythical model but any human act whatever acquires effectiveness to the extent to which it exactly *repeats* an act performed at the beginning of time by a god, a hero, or an ancestor. . . . Insofar as he repeats the archetypal sacrifice, the sacrificer, in full ceremonial action, abandons the profane world of mortals and introduces himself into the divine world of the immortals.<sup>84</sup>

For the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do. . . . And ye shall sit down in the kingdom of my Father; . . . ye shall be even as I am, and I am even as the Father; and the Father and I are one. (3 Nephi 27:21; 28:10)

The 3 Nephi experience follows the pattern of Old World Forty-Day writings, a distinguishing feature of which is an organic structure of rites and ordinances. The original sense of "perfect - *telios*" as in "Be ye therefore perfect (Matthew 5:48 and 3 Nephi 12:48), "has long been associated with becoming initiated into the great mysteries."<sup>85</sup> The Nephites were gathered at the temple in a covenantal context.

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-22, 36.

<sup>85</sup> F.A.R.M.S. Update, "The Sermon at the Temple," March 1988. The analysis and references immediately following draw upon research done

Thou . . . shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths; But verily, verily, I say unto you, swear not at all. . . . But let your communication be yea, yea, Nay, nay. (3 Nephi 12:33-34, 37)

Some aspects of the Nephite experience are shrouded in secrecy.

And it was forbidden them that they should utter; neither was it given unto them power that they could utter the things which they saw and heard. (3 Nephi 28:14)

Worthiness was very important.

And it was the more righteous part of the people who were saved. (3 Nephi 10:12)

Ye shall not suffer any one knowingly to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily. (3 Nephi 18:28)

This is all a very solemn and holy occasion with somber responsibilities:

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. (3 Nephi 14:6)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the salt of the earth; but if the salt shall lose its savor wherewith shall the earth be salted? The salt shall be thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men. (3 Nephi 12:13)

The Nephites were charged to keep several commandments:

Sacrifice of a broken heart and contrite spirit (3 Nephi 9:20)

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by John W. Welch, which appears in *The Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon at the Temple* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1990).

Obedience (3 Nephi 12:20)

Gospel (3 Nephi 12:31-34; 14:12)

Charge to avoid evil speaking (3 Nephi 12:22)

Chastity (3 Nephi 12:27-32)

Consecration (3 Nephi 13:33; 3 Nephi 26:19; 4 Nephi 1:3)

The Nephite initiation included two levels of priesthood ordinations.

And the Lord said unto him: I give unto you power that ye shall baptize this people. . . . And again the Lord called others, and said unto them likewise; and he gave unto them power to baptize. (3 Nephi 11:21-22)

The disciples bare record that he gave them power to give the Holy Ghost. (3 Nephi 18:37)

The Nephites are warned against Satan:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always, lest ye be tempted by the devil, and ye be led away captive by him. (3 Nephi 18:15; also 2 Nephi 2:29)

There are warnings against false prophets (3 Nephi 14:15-23; also consider Korihor, Sherem, Nehor, Isabel, Gadianton, and Zeezrom as *types*).

#### *Prayers and Prayer Circles.*

After this manner therefore pray ye. (3 Nephi 13:9)

Jesus stood in the *midst*. . . . Angels descend[ed] out of heaven . . . and *encircled* those little ones about, . . . and the angels did minister unto them.<sup>86</sup> (3 Nephi 17:12, 24)

The climax and purpose of the rites point to deification.

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<sup>86</sup> See also 3 Nephi 19:4-35 for prayer circles on three levels of sacredness, and Nibley, "The Early Christian Prayer Circle," in *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 45-99, and "Christ among the Ruins," in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, 407-34.

And ye shall sit down in the kingdom of my Father; yea, and your joy shall be full, even as the Father has given me fulness of joy; *and ye shall be even as I am* [perhaps I AM], and I am even as the Father; and the Father and I are one. (3 Nephi 28:10)

By this time the Latter-day Saint reader of 3 Nephi may also begin to see increased significance in the frequent mention of white robes and garments throughout 3 Nephi (11:8; 19:25; 27:19), as well as the Lord's invitation to "thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, *that ye may know that I am the God of Israel* [i.e., a true messenger]" (3 Nephi 11:14), or when "he touched with his hand the disciples whom he had chosen, one by one, . . . and he spake unto them as he touched them" (3 Nephi 18:36) or when the Lord's voice was heard to say, "Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you" (3 Nephi 9:14).

Therefore, ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for he that asketh receiveth; and unto him that knocketh, it shall be opened. (3 Nephi 27:29)

I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality, and I shall stand before him; then shall I see his face with pleasure, and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed. There is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father. (Enos 1:27)

In approaching the Book of Mormon through a narrow contextual frame, as though the book simply "solves the problem of how the gospel came to ancient America" (p. 67), Dan Vogel overlooks many aspects of the text that emerge only through broader-based comparisons, appearing only for those with eyes to see and ears to hear.

### Conclusions

*Indian Origins and the Book of Mormon* provides new and interesting information on the pre-1830 environment of the Book of Mormon, especially concerning knowledge of Mesoamerican antiquities. Vogel's first chapter is marred by the presence of Hoffman materials and the absence of any discussion of such

topics as the witnesses or the reasons for the early collapse of the environmental theory.<sup>87</sup> Vogel also illustrates, however unintentionally, that a strict environmental approach cannot answer questions of historicity, though it must provide the context for such questions. Studies assuming historicity seriously challenge the *comprehensive* validity of Vogel's conclusion that "The better one understands the pre-1830 environment of Joseph Smith, the better he or she will understand the Book of Mormon" (p. 73), as well as his dismissal of historic approaches as "illusory." Consider the number of significant studies that F.A.R.M.S. has issued since the 1986 publication of Vogel's book, not to mention similar studies from other sources. Would we really have been closer to a proper understanding of the Book of Mormon had such works never appeared?

Vogel is a talented and energetic scholar and the world of Mormon letters is bound to be stimulated by his contributions. Book of Mormon scholarship can only benefit from diverse approaches. If some cannot accept a historic view, let them draw benefit in whatever way they can. Ultimately, paradigms and creeds will burst as truth cuts its own way.

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87 Cf. Francis Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America* (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing, 1959), 254-61, and Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*.