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Irony in the Book of Mormon

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Abstract   The Book of Mormon appears replete with examples of verbal and dramatic irony, something unlikely to have been produced intentionally by Joseph Smith with his level of rhetorical and expressive skills. Dramatic irony occurs when an "exceeding young" Nephi, who is "large in stature," admires the exquisite sword of Laban and then grapples with the distasteful command to kill Laban with that sword. Having passsed the test, Nephi has matured into a man "large in stature." Dramatic irony also occurs in Abinadi's experience with King Noah and in the similar experiences of Alma and Korihor with the power of speech and silence. Verbal irony is apparent in Lehi's expectations for Laman to be like a river, "continually running into the fountain of all righteousness," and for Lemuel to be like a valley, "firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord." Nephi also refutes his older brothers' false knowledge by reminding them of what they already *know*.
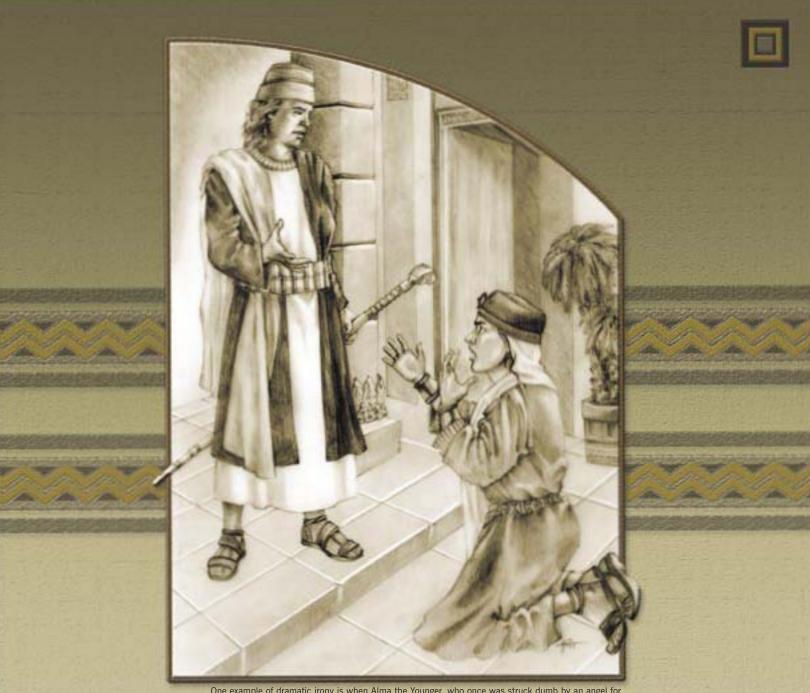
IRONY

IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

— ROBERT A. REES —

One example of dramatic irony is when Alma the Younger, who once was struck dumb by an angel for antagonizing the church (left), desires to "speak with the trump of God" and soon after must strike Korihor dumb with that very power (right). *The Convincing Power of God,* by Heather McClellan.

Questions about the authorship of the Book of Mormon have occupied both naturalist and apologist critics since its publication in 1830. Various theorists have marshaled evidence to prove either that Joseph Smith or some other 19th-century American wrote the Book of Mormon or that it is an authentic ancient record. Discussions of authorship have focused on a number of issues—geography, philology, archaeology, anthropology, history, culture, literature, and theology. In an article entitled "Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon and the American Renaissance," I compare Joseph Smith's literary capabilities with those of his illustrative contemporary authors—Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman.[1] There is a dramatic contrast between the rich intellectual and cultural milieu of these major American writers and the rather backwater, provincial frontier in which Joseph Smith came of age. In comparison to Joseph Smith, all of these major American writers had rich educations, exposure to established literary traditions, supportive environments, and long literary apprenticeships in which to develop their talents.

We cannot use language maturely
until we are spontaneously at home in irony.
—Kenneth Burke

Every good reader must be . . . sensitive
in detecting and reconstructing ironic meanings.
—Wayne Booth²

....

According to those who knew him best, Joseph Smith, at the time the Book of Mormon was published, had little formal education, was not deeply nor widely read, showed no proclivity for imaginative composition, and lacked the knowledge base, sophistication, and talent to produce a book as large and complex as the Book of Mormon. Further, when one considers the short time in which the book was produced and the difficulties in Joseph's personal life during this period, it is simply incomprehensible to claim that he was the book's author. As the interfaith scholar Marcus Bach observed many years ago, the Book of Mormon is as "solemn and ponderous and heavy as the plates on which it was inscribed. No Vermont schoolboy wrote this, and no Presbyterian preacher [Solomon Spaulding] tinkered with these pages."³ Moreover, as I state in my aforementioned article,

> I contend that not only was the composition of the Book of Mormon far beyond Joseph Smith's capabilities, but that he was, in fact, unaware of the subtleties and complexities of the text. There is surely no evidence that he knew anything about writing intricate parallel literary structures or creating a wide range of characters, a complicated fictional plot, or a variety of styles. . . . There are simply too many things in the book that neither Joseph Smith nor any of his contemporaries could possibly have known; too many complexities, subtleties, and intricacies in the text that were beyond his or any of his contemporaries' capabilities; too many examples of spiritual depth and profound expression that were certainly beyond his cognitive or expressive abilities when the Book of Mormon was produced.⁴

Irony is a characteristic of the Book of Mormon that adds a further dimension of complexity to the narrative structure of the text. I view its subtle presence therein as one more clue among many others that Joseph Smith did not write the book. By all accounts, he was unlettered and thus incapable of authoring a narrative so rich, varied, and complex as the Book of Mormon. In this article I analyze several passages in terms of irony. But first some important background information and definitions are in order.

The Elusive Nature of Irony

Irony has been an indelible part of Western literature and culture from ancient times to the present. Irony abounds in the Bible and was one of the main characteristics of Greek drama, from which it derives its name (*eiron,* "dissembler"). It is a feature not only of our literature but also of our lives. Indeed, in many ways we live in an ironical age, something that the young critic Jedediah Purdy laments in his recent book, *For Common Things: Irony, Trust, and Commitment in America Today.*⁵

Defining irony is a complex matter. In his *Glossary of Literary Terms,* M. H. Abrams lists nine categories and subcategories of irony, and the *New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* identifies six categories of irony, the first of which has ten subcategories.⁶ For purposes of the overall discussion, however, we will focus on the two general kinds of literary irony: verbal and dramatic.

Both kinds of irony have largely defied simple definition or easy categorization. The late literary critic D. J. Enright observed, "It is unfortunate, it is even ironical, that for so ubiquitous and multifari-

ous and, some say, alluring a phenomenon there should be but one word."[7] In a similar vein, another authority, D. C. Muecke, noted, "Getting to grips with irony seems to have something in common with gathering the mist."[8]

But since "gathering the mist" has never deterred literary critics, a number of them have attempted to define this elusive literary device. Suffice it to say, most literary critics agree that verbal irony has to do with levels of ambiguity and discrepancy, between what is said on the surface and what is meant below it. One dictionary defines it as involving a "perception of inconsistency, in which an apparently straightforward statement or event is undermined by its context so as to give it a very different significance."[9] The eminent literary critic Northrup Frye defines verbal irony as a "pattern of words that turns away from direct statement or its own obvious meaning."[10] *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* describes it as a form of speech in which "one meaning is stated and a different, usually antithetical, meaning is intended."[11] Karl A. Plank summarizes "several recurring features" of verbal irony:

> First, irony occurs through an indirect use of language and expresses a covert meaning. The meaning of ironic language lacks self-evidence and must be reconstructed by the reader. Second, the indirect use of language reflects a contrast between appearance and reality. In the ironic text things are not simply as they appear to be. Third, irony works through the introduction or implications of a second perspective from which the text's "obvious meaning" can be reinterpreted. . . . Irony typically functions not to undermine a text's meaningfulness, but to give access to it by indicating the vantage point from which the text's full meaning can be perceived.[12]

As with verbal irony, dramatic irony defies simple definition or explanation. Dramatic irony takes place within the action and character development of the narrative. Like verbal irony, it deals with indirection, contrast between appearance and reality, and tension between surface and subsurface levels of narrative action. Dramatic irony also involves the reader in sharing with the author certain information, knowledge, or a point of view of which the character(s) may be unaware or ignorant. In dramatic irony, "the audience knows more about a character's situation than the character does, foreseeing an outcome contrary to the character's expectations, and thus ascribing a sharply different sense to some of the character's own statements."[13] For purposes of this discussion, I will use Muecke's explanation of the "three essential elements" in dramatic irony:

> In the first place irony is a double-layered or two-storey phenomenon.
> In the second place there is always some kind of opposition between the two levels, an opposition that may take the form of contradiction, incongruity, or incompatibility.
> In the third place there is in irony an element of "innocence"; either a victim is confidently unaware of the very possibility of there being an upper level or point of view that invalidates his own, or an ironist pretends not to be aware of it.[14]

Both verbal and dramatic irony abound in the Book of Mormon. In some instances both exist in the same narrative episode. The presence of dramatic and verbal irony in the Book of Mormon is reflective of biblical irony.[15]

Irony in the Bible

A familiar kind of dramatic irony in the Bible is the presentation of a person who is first shown to be weak or foolish and then, after being touched by God, is transformed into an extraordinary person. An example of this from the Old Testament is Abraham, who in Genesis 17 does not simply find amusing God's declaration that he and Sarah shall have a child, but he is so incredulous that he falls "upon his face" and laughs (Genesis 17:17). Later, after his son Isaac is miraculously born, God tests Abraham's faith by asking him to sacrifice his child on an altar. This request is made all the more challenging and ironic by the fact that earlier God had (1) commanded Abraham to leave his father's people because they were sacrificing children and even threatening to sacrifice Abraham himself and (2) promised Abraham numerous posterity through Isaac (see Abraham 1:5–16; Genesis 17:15–16).

Ironies abound in this story. He who lacked the faith to believe that God could bless Sarah to bear a son becomes known as "the father of the

faithful"; he who laughed at God becomes God's trusted friend and chosen prophet; he who could not conceive of God's blessing him with offspring is promised that through his seed "shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"; and he who was willing to sacrifice his only son becomes known as the father of nations and is promised that through his lineage God's only begotten son (who would himself be sacrificed for the sins of the world) would be born and that his (Abraham's) seed would be as numerous "as the stars in the heavens, and the sand which is upon the sea shore" (Genesis 22:17–18).

An example of dramatic and verbal irony in the New Testament is the story of Peter's denial of Jesus. Just before they go to Gethsemane, Christ tells Peter, "This night before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Peter swears to Christ, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. . . . Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee" (Matthew 26:33–35). The ironic ending of the drama is established first by Christ's predicting that before this very night is over, Peter will deny him not once but three times, and second by Peter's avowing that even though everyone in the world should deny Christ, he would never deny the Savior, even if it costs him his life.

A few short hours later, on three successive occasions, the last spoken with curses and swearing, Peter denies any knowledge of Christ and disavows any association with him ("I know not the man," Matthew 26:74). Immediately thereafter Peter hears the crowing of the cock (a symbol of vigilance, illumination, and resurrection) and is stunned by the dramatic discrepancy between his boasting of complete fidelity to Christ and his betrayal of him. It is ironic that this same inconstant, impetuous fisherman, who in this moment of danger chooses self-preservation over loyalty to his Lord, becomes Christ's chief apostle, stands in Christ's stead as the head of the church, and, according to Christian tradition, is crucified upside down in Rome when things fall apart and anarchy is unloosed upon the kingdom. Ironically, Peter's last act is indeed a fulfillment of his promise not to deny Christ, though it cost him his life.

Dramatic Irony in the Book of Mormon

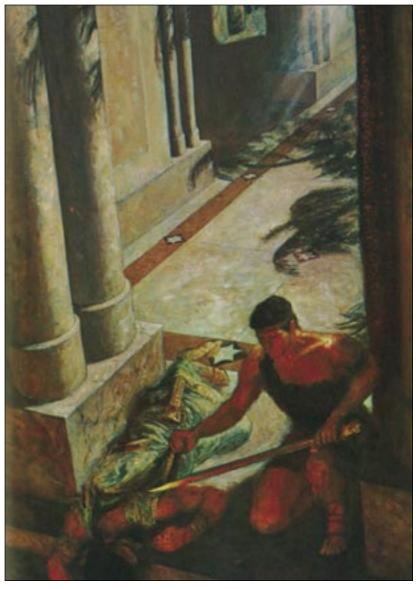There are vivid examples of this kind of dramatic irony in the Book of Mormon. In fact, the story of Nephi, the first major Book of Mormon character, epitomizes biblical irony.[16]

Nephi: From Youth to Manhood

It is significant that when we first meet Nephi he tells us that although he is "large in stature," he is "exceeding young" (1 Nephi 2:16). His being not just young but *exceeding* young suggests, among other things, that he is immature. At the beginning of the narrative, Nephi seems like the archetypal super-righteous younger brother. He is quick to show his older brothers as rebellious and lazy while presenting himself as having "great desires to know of the mysteries of God" and as one who "did not rebel against [his father] like unto [his] brothers" (v. 16). In these opening chapters we might be tempted to ask, "Are Laman and Lemuel really that bad, and is Nephi really that good?" At the very least, we may sympathize a little with Laman and Lemuel in having to contend with such a younger brother.

Nephi is then presented with a defining challenge, one that marks his transition from boyhood to manhood—the trip to Jerusalem to retrieve the brass plates. To this point we have been told only by Nephi of differences between the two older brothers and their younger sibling Sam. Now we see those differences played out in dramatic fashion. Laman and Lemuel do not want to undertake this mission and throughout the episode are basically hindrances to it. Nephi must continually encourage them. One of the results of the trip to Jerusalem is that whatever sympathy we may have felt for Laman and Lemuel up to this point (and I think we are intended to feel some) melts in the face of their continual resistance and negativity and their refusal to show any courage, faith, or leadership.

Nephi, on the other hand, goes forth in faith to do what his father has asked. "Not knowing beforehand" exactly what steps he should take to obtain the plates, Nephi is guided by the Spirit (1 Nephi 4:6). When he comes upon the drunken Laban, what seems to immediately seize his attention is not that this is the very means of fulfilling his mission, but what no typical Hebrew teenager could have failed to miss: "I beheld his sword." And he doesn't just behold it: "I drew it forth from the sheath thereof; and the hilt thereof was of pure gold, and the workmanship thereof was exceeding fine, and I saw that the blade thereof was of the most precious

Nephi first had to resolve the incongruity of the command to slay Laban before he could proceed on his errand to obtain the brass plates. *Laban Slain by His Own Sword,* by Ronald K. Crosby.

This is the most difficult challenge Nephi ever faces, and it changes him and, I believe, changes the way we are expected to see him. It is perhaps impossible for modern readers, who live in a world where murder and violence are so prevalent, to comprehend the magnitude of what Nephi is commanded to do. The law that Moses brought down from the mountain was unequivocal: "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). To take another's life was among the most serious of transgressions in Hebrew culture. Nephi says, "Never at any time have I shed the blood of man. And I shrunk and would that I might not slay him" (1 Nephi 4:10).

The Spirit tries to persuade Nephi that "the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands." Nephi begins trying to talk himself into committing the deed, building up arguments gradually as he gains courage: "Yea, and I also knew that he had sought to take away mine own life; yea, and he would not hearken unto the commandments of the Lord; and he also had taken away our property" (v. 11). The Spirit seems to become impatient with Nephi's reluctance and demands outright, "Slay him!" Nephi continues to multiply the reasons why he should obey and finally reports that he "took Laban by the hair of his head, and . . . smote off his head with his own sword" (v. 18). This episode accomplishes exactly what Edwin M. Good, in his *Irony in the Old Testament,* speaks of as the point of irony: clarifying "with extreme sharpness the incongruity involved in a matter of great moment."[17]

Having passed this test, Nephi records, "And now I, Nephi, *being a man* large in stature, and also having received much strength of the Lord . . ." (v. 31). The irony of Nephi's going so quickly from being "exceeding young, . . . large in stature" to "being a man large in stature" would not have been lost on ancient readers of this text. The repetition of the phrase *large in stature* in those passages highlights the irony.

steel" (v. 9). In other words, having described himself as "exceeding young," Nephi now acts the part. Every teenage boy of his time dreamed of holding such a sword. The detail he reveals in recounting the experience many years later shows how fresh the image of that sword still is.

That this scene is deliberately chosen to highlight irony is seen by what immediately follows. While Nephi is still holding the sword, the Spirit commands him to slay Laban, the keeper of the sacred records and, not incidentally, his kinsman.

Abinadi: Foreshadowing King Noah's Demise

We encounter a similar kind of dramatic irony in the story of Abinadi. We are introduced to Abinadi in the 11th chapter of Mosiah where he calls King Noah and his corrupt priests to repentance: "There was a man among them whose name was Abinadi; and he went forth among them, and began to prophesy" (v. 20). Like Jeremiah who resisted his calling (see Jeremiah 1:6), Abinadi seems to be a reluctant prophet; at least he makes clear to his hearers that calling them to repentance is not his idea, but God's. Note the apparent anxiety in his words as reflected in the triple repetition of "thus saith the Lord," making it clear to his hearers that all the responsibility for this unpopular task falls on the Lord, not Abinadi: "Behold, thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me, saying, Go forth, and say unto this people, thus saith the Lord . . . ; and thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me" (vv. 20, 25).

King Noah responds with the kind of hubris that is often a prelude to irony in both Hebrew scripture and Greek drama: "Who is Abinadi, that I and my people should be judged of him, or who is the Lord, that shall bring upon my people such great affliction?" (v. 27). Such pride is almost always an ironic foreshadowing of dramatic downfall, and its presentation early in the story prepares us for the reversal of fortune that King Noah and his retainers will undergo later in the narrative. The irony of King Noah's prideful downfall is heightened in the narra-
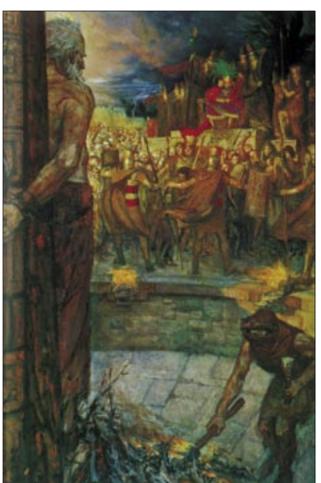
tive by our being told that he has built "elegant and spacious buildings" (v. 8) like those that Lehi saw the wicked inhabiting in his dream; that he has built "a very high tower, even so high that he could stand upon the top thereof and overlook . . . all the land round about" (v. 12); and that he boasts, "Behold, we are strong, we shall not come into bondage, or be taken captive by our enemies" (12:15).

Offended by Abinadi's words, King Noah calls for his death: "I command you to bring Abinadi hither, that I may slay him" (11:28). Learning of Noah's intention, Abinadi apparently flees for his life, and "the Lord delivered him out of their hands" (v. 26). Again suggesting his reluctance to take on his prophetic calling, he stays away for two years, enough time for him to disguise himself so he will not be recognized: "And it came to pass that after the space of two years that Abinadi came among them in disguise, that they knew him not" (12:1). Then, again in a manner typical of Hebrew drama, the writer reveals Abinadi's foolishness, for no sooner does he open his mouth than he gives away his disguise: "Thus has the Lord commanded me, saying— Abinadi . . ." (v. 1).

Having disclosed his identity, Abinadi proceeds to preach the same message of doom and destruction as he had two years before, only this time he prophesies Noah's death: "And it shall come to pass that the life of king Noah shall be valued even as a garment in a hot furnace; for he shall know that I am the Lord" (v. 3). This prophecy is ironic because it answers the king's question, "Who is the Lord?" and foreshadows the death of the king

In executing Abinadi, King Noah defied God's authority and displayed a hubris that ironically foreshadowed his own dramatic downfall. *Abinadi Seals His Testimony,* by Ronald K. Crosby.

and his priests by fire. Not surprisingly, Abinadi's preaching produces the same result as before: "They were angry with him; and they took him and carried him bound before the king" (v. 9).

King Noah asks his priests to advise him on what he should do with Abinadi. Seeking grounds for an accusation, they begin "to question [Abinadi], that they might cross him, that thereby they might have wherewith to accuse him" (v. 19). During their interrogation, the priests confront Abinadi with a difficult scripture from Isaiah, asking him to tell them what it means. Instead of answering them, however, he turns the tables on them and asks, "Are you priests, and pretend to teach this people, and to understand the spirit of prophesying, and yet desire to know of me what these things are?" (v. 25).

When the priests declare that they teach the law of Moses, Abinadi challenges their obedience to the Ten Commandments. After reciting only two commandments, he asks, "Have ye done *all* this?" (v. 37). It is interesting to note that while there is no evidence that Noah and his followers were making graven images, they were clearly guilty of breaking other of the Ten Commandments, which Abinadi does not cite on this occasion. Thus, it is difficult not to see irony in his question ("Have ye done *all* this?), especially since later Abinadi somehow gets a copy of the Ten Commandments and says, "Now I *read* unto you the remainder of the commandments of God" (13:11).[18]

Having shown us a prophet who is reluctant to fulfill his calling, who readily gives away his disguise, and who apparently cannot remember the Ten Commandments, the author next shows Abinadi as a man of great courage and integrity who is willing to give his life in God's service. When the priests attempt to take him to be killed, he addresses them with dignity and majesty: "Touch me not, for God shall smite you if ye lay your hands upon me" (v. 3). From this point on, Abinadi fully assumes the mantle of divinely appointed prophet. He preaches a powerful jeremiad to Noah and his corrupt priests. He confronts them about their lack of adherence to the law of Moses, quotes Isaiah to them, tells them the meaning of the scripture with which they had tried to confound him earlier, prophesies of Christ, teaches them the plan of salvation, and foretells their destruction—declaring that they will suffer the same death that they will cause him to suffer. "And now when the flames began to scorch him, he cried unto them, saying: Behold,

even as ye have done unto me, . . . ye shall suffer, as I suffer, the pains of death by fire" (17:14–15, 18). Ironically, this is exactly what happens to Noah and his priests (see Alma 25:7–11).

An additional irony in the story of Abinadi, and one that seems to me to be intentional, is that as a reluctant spokesman for God, at times seemingly limited in judgment, Abinadi's preaching, as far as the record tells us, converts only one person to the gospel. Yet that one person, Alma, turns out to be a man of great intellect and wisdom who is instrumental in turning the tide of Nephite history. Thus, in the hands of God, Abinadi fulfills his divinely appointed mission and at the apex of his prophetic calling is transformed: "his face [shines] with exceeding luster, even as Moses' did while in the mount of Sinai" (Mosiah 13:5), and he preaches the gospel with power and clarity, revealing that even in chains he is more powerful than the king and all of his priests. This is exactly the kind of irony that one finds throughout the Hebrew scriptures, and its dramatic structure and exposition of character required a level of narrative artistry and rhetorical skill that Joseph Smith lacked at the time the Book of Mormon was produced and that is absent from any of his own later writings.

Alma the Younger and Korihor: The Power of Speech and Silence

Another example of dramatic irony is found in the story of Alma the Younger and Korihor. This dramatic episode is about two protagonists who are both gifted with persuasive speech and struck dumb when they set out to destroy the church. When we first meet Alma and Korihor (respectively, in Mosiah 27:8 and Alma 30:6), they are vigorously engaged in using their intellectual and verbal skills to undermine the work of God. We are told that Alma "was a man of many words, and did speak much flattery to the people; therefore he led many of the people to do after the manner of his iniquities." When an angel appears to him and rebukes him with a voice of "thunder, which shook the earth," Alma is struck "dumb that he could not open his mouth" (Mosiah 27:18, 19). After a harrowing darkness of soul that lasts for three days and three nights, Alma recovers and immediately begins to build up the kingdom with the same powers of eloquence and rhetoric that he once used to destroy it,

albeit they are now magnified by the Spirit so that he "speaks with the tongues of angels."

Alma meets Korihor 16 years after this experience. It is ironic that his encounter with Korihor is immediately preceded by his wish to have the same power of language and speech of the angel who had called him to repentance: "O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people! Yea, I would declare unto every soul, as with the voice of thunder, repentance and the plan of redemption" (Alma 29:1–2). Alma's use of identical language and imagery to describe the person he would like to be and to describe the angel who rebuked him so many years before ("voice of thunder," "shake the earth") seems intentional. The narrator signals with this repetition his design to link the two experiences and to prepare the reader for the narrative of Korihor that immediately follows. Alma wishes for an angelic voice not for his own glory but so that he "may be an instrument in the hands of God to bring some soul to repentance" (Alma 30:9). Ironically, no sooner has he spoken these words than he becomes this instrument in countering a man who, as Alma once had done, uses his voice for his own gain and glory. The seemingly intentional shift from Alma's previous wish to "cry repentance unto *every* people" to his present wish to "bring *some soul* to repentance" prepares us for his encounter with Korihor.

The record tells us that Korihor was "Anti-Christ, for he began to preach unto the people against the prophecies which had been spoken by the prophets, concerning the coming of Christ" (v. 6). One can imagine that the sophisticated arguments that Korihor crafts to persuade people to disbelieve were similar to those used by Alma as he went about attempting to destroy the church. Korihor defends his atheistic philosophy with smooth rhetorical arguments and "great swelling words" (v. 31): "God [is] a being who never has been seen or known, who never was nor ever will be" (v. 28).

When Korihor is brought before Alma, who is now the retired chief judge, Alma confronts him with his hypocrisy: "Behold, I know that thou believest [in God and that Christ shall come], but thou art possessed with a lying spirit, and ye have put off the Spirit of God that it may have no place in you" (v. 42).

Korihor declares he will not believe unless Alma shows him a sign. After trying fruitlessly to persuade Korihor to accept the signs that have already been shown him (for Alma has his own vivid memory of the cost of receiving such a sign!), Alma uses the very sign that had been shown him when he was rebellious: "This will I give unto thee for a sign, that thou shalt be struck dumb, according to my words; . . . that ye shall no more have utterance" (v. 49). It is ironic that Alma, who was once rendered powerless by this sign, now has the power to invoke it: "I say, that in the name of God, ye shall be struck dumb, that ye shall no more have utterance" (v. 49).

Ironically, as he once led people away from the church by his words, Korihor now inadvertently leads them back by his silence. When all the people "who had believed in the words of Korihor" (v. 57) see him wordless in Zarahemla, "they [are] all converted again unto the Lord" (v. 58). The irony is compounded when Korihor, a once-powerful man who earned his living by sophistry and flattery, is reduced to begging: "Korihor . . . went about from house to house begging for his food" (v. 56). An ironic twist, and again one that is characteristic of biblical irony, is the suggestion that Korihor's death comes as a result of his having no voice to cry out when a mob or a carriage approached, for he was "run upon and trodden down, even until he was dead" (v. 59).

A final irony is that Korihor was trodden down and killed while among the Zoramites—because, as Alma 31 shows, the Zoramites essentially were followers of Korihor who lived and believed what he had taught. Thus he was killed by one (or, by implication in the passage, a community) of his own. Notice the parallels here: Korihor reviled "against the priests and teachers, accusing them of leading away the people after the silly traditions of their fathers" (Alma 30:31), saying: "Ye also say that Christ shall come. But behold, I say that ye do not know that there shall

be a Christ. And ye say also that he shall be slain for the sins of the world—and thus ye lead away this people after the foolish traditions of your fathers" (vv. 26–27). These sentiments are repeated almost immediately in the standardized prayer of the Zoramites: "Holy God, . . . thou hast made it known unto us that there shall be no Christ. . . . We also thank thee that thou hast elected us, that we may not be led away after the foolish traditions of our brethren, which doth bind them down to a belief of Christ" (Alma 31:16–17). Of course, the isolation and intellectual elevation of the Zoramites on their Rameumptom tower (likely patterned after the "very high tower" that King Noah had built), which was "a place for standing, which was high above the head, and the top thereof would only admit one person" (v. 13), is a powerful way of symbolizing hubris.[19]

As with similar incidents in the Old Testament, the message is driven home with a final homiletic: "Thus we see the end of him [Korihor] who perverteth the ways of the Lord; and thus we see that the devil will not support his children at the last day, but doth speedily drag them down to hell" (Alma 30:60).

Verbal Irony in the Book of Mormon

In terms of verbal irony, the Nephite text contains examples of most forms of verbal irony distinguished by classical rhetoricians, as outlined in the *New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics,* including—"meiosis and litotes (understatement), hyperbole (overstatement), antiphrasis (contrast), . . . chleuasm (mockery); mycterism (the sneer); and mimesis (imitation, especially for the sake of ridicule)."[20]

Nephi: Fulfilling Lehi's Hopes for Laman and Lemuel

We encounter verbal irony very early in the Nephite narrative when Lehi's family, after having left Jerusalem, is camped in a fertile valley. Here Lehi expresses his hope that Laman will be like a river, "continually running into the fountain of

all righteousness," and Lemuel like a valley, "firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord" (1 Nephi 2:9–10). Since the record of the group's Arabian desert crossing was made later by Nephi, he would have known that these descriptions did not fit his older brothers; but the first-time reader does not yet have enough information to see that such associations are ironic. Thus Nephi sets up an expectation that his narrative will soon overturn.

Indeed, as the narrative unfolds, we see that Laman seems to be continually running *away* from "the fountain of all righteousness," and Lemuel is so inconstant in "keeping the commandments of the Lord" that he is more like a shifting sand dune than a steadfast valley. The irony is deepened when we realize that Laman and Lemuel begin acting contrary to their father's counsel even before they leave this river valley that he hopes will symbolically guide their behavior. A further ironic element is that as the narrative unfolds, it is Nephi (the younger brother who apparently is left out of his father's symbolic invocations) who becomes as constant as a flowing river and as steadfast and immovable as a valley. Thus Nephi, as a conscious narrator, uses verbal irony in these initial episodes to establish the dramatic conflict between him and his brothers that will dominate his people's history.

Nephi and His Elder Brothers: Knowledge versus False Knowledge

As this example illustrates, verbal irony consists of at least two levels of meaning, one of which is antithetical or contradictory to the first. With verbal irony, the meaning of a word can change from its initial meaning to a new, even opposite meaning later on. An example of this is found in 1 Nephi 16 and 17, where the sibling rivalry between Nephi and his two older brothers reaches one of its many dramatic climaxes. Like earlier and later episodes of fraternal conflict in the book, this one is about power, but it is also about epistemology, about what one knows and doesn't know. The irony one finds in this episode is actually set up earlier with the emphasis

on the word *know.* In 1 Nephi 3:17, Nephi tells us that his father, Lehi, "*knew* that Jerusalem must be destroyed." In 1 Nephi 4:3, Nephi tries to inspire Laman and Lemuel to go up to Jerusalem and get the brass plates by invoking the story of Moses' delivering the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage through the Red Sea: "Now behold *ye know* that this is true; and *ye also know* that an angel hath spoken unto you; wherefore can ye doubt?"

Knowing how much their hearts are set upon the riches the family left in Jerusalem, Nephi testifies to his brothers of the destruction of the city: "And *ye shall know* at some future period that the word of the Lord shall be fulfilled concerning the destruction of Jerusalem" (1 Nephi 7:13). All this is a prelude to the episode in chapters 16 and 17 where the words *knew* and *know* are repeated numerous times. In 1 Nephi 16:38, Laman and Lemuel state declaratively of Nephi's claims that the Lord has spoken to him, "*We know* that he lies." Later, when Nephi tries to engage their help in building a ship, they verbally attack him by saying, "*We knew* that you could not construct a ship, for *we knew* that ye were lacking in judgment" (1 Nephi 17:19). Laman and Lemuel blame Nephi for their suffering in the wilderness and complain that had they stayed in Jerusalem, "we might have enjoyed our possessions and the land of our inheritance; yea, and we might have been happy" (v. 21).

The older brothers next state as knowledge something they know is false: "And *we know* that the people who were in the land of Jerusalem were a righteous people; for they kept the statutes and judgments of the Lord, and all his commandments, according to the law of Moses; wherefore, *we know* that they are a righteous people" (v. 22). Since they have invoked the name of Israel's great leader, Nephi recounts the story of Moses and the exodus from Egypt to confront them with their mistaken "knowledge." He does this with a highly sophisticated use of verbal irony. That is, he states what he knows they cannot deny in order to show that what they say they know is false:

> Now *ye know* that the children of Israel were in bondage; and *ye know* that they were laden with tasks, which were grievous to be borne; wherefore, *ye know* that it must needs be a good thing for them, that they should be brought out of bondage. Now *ye know* that Moses was com-

manded of the Lord to do that great work; and *ye know* that by his word the waters of the Red Sea were divided hither and thither, and they passed through on dry ground. But *ye know* that the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea, who were the armies of Pharaoh. And *ye also know* that they were fed with manna in the wilderness. Yea, and *ye also know* that Moses, by his word according to the power of God which was in him, smote the rock, and there came forth water, that the children of Israel might quench their thirst. . . . And they did harden their hearts from time to time, and they did revile against Moses, and also against God; nevertheless, *ye know* that they were led forth by his matchless power into the land of promise. . . . And *ye also know* that by the power of his almighty word he can cause the earth that it shall pass away; yea, and *ye know* that by his word he can cause the rough places to be made smooth, and smooth places shall be broken up. O, then, why is it, that ye can be so hard in your hearts? (1 Nephi 17:25–29, 42, 46)

In this short compass, Nephi repeats the word *know* 11 times. With wonderful irony, he uses the word *know* with regard to himself only twice, in the middle of his rejoinder: "And now, after all these things, the time has come that they [the Jews at Jerusalem] have become wicked, yea, nearly unto ripeness; and *I know not* but they are at this day about to be destroyed; for *I know* that the day must surely come that they must be destroyed" (v. 43). Note that Nephi states the negative before the positive, showing that, unlike his brothers, he does not claim knowledge that he does not possess, but also that the knowledge he does have is based on revelation. In this same episode, the Lord tells Nephi that he "shall know" things that God promises will happen. Later, Nephi learns from his father's vision that Jerusalem has indeed been destroyed (2 Nephi 1:4).

This episode ends on another point of irony. For a brief period, Nephi has such great power that his brothers realize he could kill them merely by touching them. The Lord then commands Nephi to stretch forth his hand and shock them. Laman and Lemuel then use the word *know* honestly for the first time: "*We know* of a surety that the Lord is with thee, for *we know* that it is the power of the Lord that has shaken us" (1 Nephi 17:55).

What Nephi is doing, of course, is confronting his brothers with truth that no Israelite could deny: the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, their rebellion against God, and their eventual arrival in the promised land. He then uses this great defining moment in Israelite history to parallel the Nephites' sojourn in the Arabian desert and their voyage to their own promised land. By employing the words *know/knew* 22 times in this short passage, Nephi dramatically demonstrates the difference between the ways that he and his brothers operate in the world (they are dishonest or, at best, manipulative, while he always acts with integrity) and also helps the reader see that this small episode is in reality a microcosm of the entire Book of Mormon narrative. This episode foreshadows several later accounts of contests between a righteous man who testifies of what he truly knows and a false testifier who says he knows things that he does not know (see especially the conflicts between Gideon and Nehor, Alma and Korihor, Amulek and Zeezrom, and Alma and Amlici—all in the book of Alma).

The Question of Intentional Irony

I contend that such writing as a whole is neither accidental nor subconscious but rather the product of a highly sophisticated, creative, organizing intelligence, one steeped not only in the literature and history of the ancient Hebrews but also in their cultural psychology as well. In the above scene, Nephi knows exactly how to position himself. As he did when he and his brothers first returned to Jerusalem to obtain the brass plates, in this scene he invokes Moses and the exodus from Egypt. By so doing, he completely neutralizes his brothers' assertions of what they "know." They could not have failed to get the message that the Jews at Jerusalem, like the Egyptians, would be destroyed, just as Laman and Lemuel would be if they continued in their rebellious ways; that Nephi was another Moses; and that the God who delivered their ancestors through the perils of the Red Sea and carried them over the River Jordan would take them down to the sea in a ship of their own building and take them to their own land of promise.

As pointed out earlier, the Book of Mormon is replete with both verbal and dramatic irony. What is the source of all this irony? As I said in the be-

ginning, there is little evidence that Joseph Smith was an ironist; certainly there is no evidence that he had the rhetorical or expressive skills necessary to produce the rich variety of irony one finds in the book he claims to have translated. D. C. Muecke observed, "An ironist, therefore, is not just *like* an artist, but *is* an artist, governed by the artist's need for perfection of form and expression and all 'the nameless graces which no methods teach.'"[21] I contend that this kind of irony cannot be explained as the result of unconscious genius, absorption of biblical texts, or automatic writing. The most logical explanation is that the ancient writers of the Book of Mormon were writing in an ironic tradition that was part of their literary heritage. That they produced such wonderful examples of biblical irony should not be surprising. For Joseph Smith to have written these narratives, especially from unrehearsed and unrevised oral dictation, is simply beyond credibility. In fact, it is ironic that someone as unlettered and unsophisticated as Joseph Smith was when the Book of Mormon was published could be credited with being a superb ironist!

As someone who has studied, written about, and taught ironic texts for the past 35 years, I am aware that when we discuss irony we are necessarily dealing with matters of perception and interpretation. And yet I cannot escape the fact that the elements of irony I have discussed in the Book of Mormon are at least plausibly imbedded in the text. It is always possible to read too much or too little into a text, and certainly critics may disagree about what a particular text means. Nevertheless, the evidence is for me overwhelming that someone made a number of deliberate, highly sophisticated decisions in arranging the detail and structure of these narratives. How can one account for their presence in the text? Of the various possible explanations, both naturalistic and supernaturalistic, the most plausible for me is not that they that were written by Joseph Smith or one of his contemporaries, not that they are the freely composed oral dictations of some "inglorious Milton" living on the edge of the American frontier, but rather that they are what they claim to be—authentic ancient stories written in the manner and style reflective of Hebrew and other Near Eastern influences. ▨

Univ. of California Press, 1993), appendix A, "Brief Sketch of Mormon History," Twain takes on Brigham Young, who, in the "steady progress of his official grandeur, . . . modestly . . . proclaimed himself a God!" (p. 547); in appendix B, "The Mountain Meadows Massacre," Twain admits his heavy reliance on "Mrs. C. V. Waite's entertaining book, 'The Mormon Prophet'" (p. 550).

45. Cracroft, "Gentle Blasphemer," 132.

46. Twain, *Roughing It,* 107.

47. Jeffrey R. Holland (now an LDS apostle) looks closely at Twain's treatment of the Book of Mormon in his Yale Ph.D. dissertation, "Mark Twain's Religious Sense: The Viable Years—1835–1883" (1973).

48. Twain, *Roughing It,* 108–9.

49. Twain, *Roughing It,* 107.

50. Twain, *Roughing It,* 115.

51. Eduard Meyer, *The Origin and History of the Mormons, with Reflections on the Beginnings of Islam and Christianity,* trans. Heinz F. Rahde and Eugene Seaich (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1961).

52. Quoted in Hugh Nibley, "Joseph Smith and the Critics," in *Abraham in Egypt,* ed. Gary P. Gillum (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1981), 137.

53. James K. Lyon, "Mormon and Islam through the Eyes of a 'Universal Historian' [Eduard Meyer]," *BYU Studies* 40/4 (2001): 226.

54. Lyon, "Universal Historian," 229–30.

55. The Mormon sections of *Monsieur Violet* are "almost identical to sections in John C. Bennett's *History of the Saints* (New York, 1842)," which is a reprint of *Mormonism Portrayed* (1841), allegedly written by Thomas Sharp, a bitter anti-Mormon (Leonard J. Arrington, "Mormonism: Views from Without and Within," *BYU Studies* 14/2 [1974]: 141).

56. See Givens, *Viper on the Hearth,* 109–10.

57. Quoted in Arrington, "Views," 145.

58. Robert A. Rees, "Melville's Alma and *The Book of Mormon*," *Emerson Society Quarterly,* no. 43 (circa 1971), 45.

59. See Rees, "Melville's Alma," 41–42.

60. Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet,* in *Complete Sherlock Holmes* (Garden City, NY: Garden City Publishing, 1927).

61. Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet,* 53. Doyle, after visiting Utah in 1922, "freely admitted that his earlier portrayal of Mormonism had given an 'overcoloured picture' of the Latter-day Saints" (quoted in Michael Austin, "Troped by the Mormons: The Persistence of 19th-Century Mormon Stereotypes in Contemporary Detective Fiction," *Sunstone,* August 1998, 5).

62. Austin, "Troped by the Mormons," 51.

63. Gary Topping, "Zane Grey in Zion: An Examination of His Supposed Anti-Mormonism," *BYU Studies* 18/4 (1978): 8, 13, 10.

64. Quoted in Gary L. Bunker and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Graphic Image, 1834–1914: Cartoons, Caricatures, and Illustrations* (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1983), 58–59.

65. See Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1985); Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2000); Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992); Bloom, *Omens of Millennium: The Gnosis of Angels, Dreams, and Resurrection* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1996); Paul C. Gutjahr, *An American Bible: A History of the Good Book in the United States, 1777–1880* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1999); Gutjahr, "The Golden Bible in the Bible's Golden Age: *The Book of Mormon* and Antebellum Print Culture," *ATQ: 19th C. American Literature and Culture*, n.s., 12/4 (1998): 275–93; Gutjahr, "The State of the Discipline: Sacred Texts in the United States," in *Book History* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2001), 4:335–70; and Mark Thomas, *Digging in Cumorah: Reclaiming Book of Mormon Narratives* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999).

66. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History.*

67. Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1957).

68. Robert V. Remini, *Joseph Smith* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 2002).

69. Remini, *Joseph Smith,* 71, 72–73, 74.

70. Kirkham's *A New Witness for Christ in America*, vol. 2 (1952),

was written in direct response to Brodie's book.

71. *No, Ma'am, That's Not History,* reprinted in *Tinkling Cymbals and Sounding Brass* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), has become "the most famous of all Mormon Church-sanctioned publications refuting Brodie's biography" (Newell G. Bringhurst, *Fawn McKay Brodie: A Biographer's Life* [Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1999], 111).

72. See also, among others, Nibley's *Since Cumorah: The Book of Mormon in the Modern World* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1967); *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1978); "Joseph Smith and the Critics," in *Abraham in Egypt,* ed. Gary P. Gillum (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1981), 127–62; John W. Welch, ed., *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989); and Nibley, *Tinkling Cymbals.*

73. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon,* 124.

74. See John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10/1 (1969): 69–84; see also his *Chiasmus in Antiquity* (1981; reprint, Provo, Utah: Research Press, 1999), which compares Book of Mormon chiasmus with chiasmus in a range of ancient literatures.

75. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon,* 126.

76. FARMS has published, among other books, Donald W. Parry, Jeannette W. Miller, and Sandra A. Thorne, eds., *A Comprehensive Annotated Book of Mormon Bibliography* (1996); John L. Sorenson's *An Ancient Setting for the Book of Mormon* (1985); Sorenson and Martin H. Raish, *Pre-Columbian Contact with the Americas across the Oceans: An Annotated Bibliography*, 2 vols. (1990, 1996); Sorenson, *Images of Ancient America: Visualizing Book of Mormon Life* (1998); John W. Welch, *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount* (1990); Welch and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., *King Benjamin's Speech: "That Ye May Learn Wisdom"* (1998); and Richard Dilworth Rust, *Feasting on the Word: The Literary Testimony of the Book of Mormon* (1997).

77. Bushman, *Beginnings of Mormonism,* 128.

78. Bushman, *Beginnings of Mormonism,* 131.

79. Bushman, *Beginnings of Mormonism,* 136.

80. Jana Riess, "Book of Mormon Stories" (reviews of Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon,* and Thomas, *Digging in Cumorah*), *Dialogue* 35/3 (2002): 242.

81. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon,* 221.

82. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon,* 226, 224.

Irony in the Book of Mormon
Robert A. Rees

1. Robert A. Rees, "Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and the American Renaissance," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35/3 (2002): 83–112. This article is a slightly revised version of a paper that I originally presented at the 1999 California and Salt Lake Sunstone symposia.

2. The quotations of Burke and Booth both come from Booth's *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1975), xvi, 1.

3. Marcus Bach, *Faith and My Friends* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1951), 255.

4. Rees, "Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and the American Renaissance," 91, 107.

5. Jedediah Purdy, *For Common Things: Irony, Trust, and Commitment in America Today* (New York: Knopf, 1999).

6. M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms,* 7th ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999), s.v. "irony"; and Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan, eds., *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994), s.v. "irony."

7. D. J. Enright, *The Alluring Problem: An Essay on Irony* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), 7.

8. D. C. Muecke, *The Compass of Irony* (London: Methuen & Co., 1969), 1.

9. Chris Baldick, *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), 130.

10. Northrup Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, Princeton Univ. Press, 1957), 40.

11. *New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics,* 635.

12. Karl A. Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 37.

13. Baldick, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms,* 130.
14. Muecke, *Compass of Irony,* 19–20.
15. For more on biblical irony, see Edwin M. Good, *Irony in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965); Lillian R. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges* (Sheffield, England: Almond Press, 1988); and Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction.*
16. I was first introduced to irony in the Book of Mormon more than 40 years ago at Brigham Young University in Robert K. Thomas's class on the Book of Mormon as literature. Thomas was a brilliant critic and teacher and the first to see examples of biblical parallelism and irony in Book of Mormon narratives. His A.B. thesis at Reed College, "A Literary Analysis of the Book of Mormon," prefigured a good deal of later critical analysis. For a number of insights in the present paper, I am happy to acknowledge Thomas's pioneering work.
17. *Irony in the Old Testament* (Sheffield, England: Almond Press, 1981), 24.
18. Richard Rust does not agree with my interpretation here. He observes that Abinadi's "subsequent purpose in reading the Ten Commandments is not that he needs to read them in order to get them right. Quite the contrary: He takes (I'm presuming this) the written commandments that are available to these corrupt priests and reads them (to the condemnation of the priests) because, he says, 'I perceive that they are not written in your hearts.' By contrast, Abinadi is one who has the ten commandments written in his heart. He also has Isaiah (lots of Isaiah) written in his heart" (personal correspondence, 3 August 2001). John W. Welch, Gordon C. Thomasson, and Robert F. Smith argue that Abinadi read the Ten Commandments to King Noah's priests during what would have been Passover in the New World: "At precisely the time when Noah's priests would have been hypocritically pledging allegiance to the Ten Commandments (and indeed they professed to teach the law of Moses; see Mosiah 12:27), Abinadi rehearsed to them those very commandments (see Mosiah 12:33). On any other day this might have seemed a strange defense for a man on trial for his life, but not on Pentecost—the day on which the Ten Commandments were on center stage!" ("Abinadi and Pentecost," in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon,* ed. John W. Welch [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992], 136).
19. I am indebted to Richard Rust for this last observation.
20. *New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics,* 634.
21. *Compass of Irony*, 15.

Word Pairs and Distinctive Combinations in the Book of Mormon
James T. Duke

1. Ethelbert W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1968). This work was originally published in 1898.
2. See, for example, Donald W. Parry, *The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1992); Hugh W. Pinnock, *Finding Biblical Hebrew and Other Ancient Literary Forms in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999); John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne, eds., *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999); John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992); and John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne, eds., *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991).
3. For an extensive discussion of the history of the study of word pairs, see Yitzhak Avishur, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures* (Verlag Butzon Bercker Kavelaer, 1984), 1–52.
4. Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry* (Sheffield, England: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series 26, 1984), 128–44. See scattered references to word pairs in Watson's later work, *Traditional Techniques in Classical Hebrew Verse* (Sheffield, England: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series 170, 1994).
5. Avishur, *Stylistic Studies,* 1.
6. Avishur, *Stylistic Studies,* 1–47. See also the excellent discussion in Kevin L. Barney, "Poetic Diction and Parallel Word Pairs in the Book of Mormon," *JBMS* 4/2 (1995): 15–23.
7. See Bullinger, *Figures of Speech,* 657–72, for a discussion of a figure of speech called "hendiadys," which involves two words expressing a single thought. These two words are always the same parts of speech and are always joined with the conjunction *and.* For a discussion of ancient Canaanite languages, see Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugarit and Minoan Crete: The Bearing of Their Texts on the Origins of Western Culture* (New York: Norton, 1966); N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit,* 2nd ed. rev. (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Stanislav Serert, *A Basic Grammar of the Ugaritic Language* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1984); and Mark S. Smith, *Untold Stories: The Bible and Ugaritic Studies in the Twentieth Century* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001).
8. See Mitchell Dahood, "Ugaritic-Hebrew Parallel Pairs," in *Ras Shamra Parallels: The Texts from Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible,* ed. Loren R. Fisher (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1972), 1:71–382. See also articles by the same title and author in volumes 2 (1975, 1–33) and 3 (1981, 1–178). In response to critics, Dahood acknowledged that some of the so-called pairs are not strictly pairs because they are identical words, such as *father/father* (see vol. 4, p. 4).
9. Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1985), 65–66. Berlin also noted that "a word may elicit a number of different associations. Linguists usually rank them statistically, from the most common to the least. For example, *man* will usually elicit *woman,* but it will elicit *boy* in a smaller number of cases" (71).
10. Berlin, *Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism,* 65.
11. Avishur, *Stylistic Studies,* 6–43.
12. Calvert Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), 9.
13. See Watkins, *Aspects of Indo-European Poetics,* 9.
14. Watkins, *Aspects of Indo-European Poetics,* 10.
15. Inna Koskenniemi, *Repetitive Word Pairs in Old and Early Middle English Prose* (Turku, Finland: Turun Yliopisto, 1968), 11. In the index, Koskenniemi has listed several hundred word pairs encompassing 42 pages (see pp. 120–62).
16. Barney, "Poetic Diction," 26–27.
17. See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry,* 128–44.
18. See John M. Jeep, *Alliterating Word-Pairs in Old High German* (Bochum: Universitatsverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer, 1995); and, generally, Avishur, *Stylistic Studies.*
19. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry,* 136–38.
20. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry,* 128.
21. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry,* 128. For example, conjoined pairs are not discussed by Watson, a foremost authority on word pairs.
22. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry,* 131–35. Watson also discusses augmented word-pairs, epithetic word-pairs, identical or repetitive pairs, fixed and variant pairs, distant word-pairs, reversed word-pairs, and numerical word-pairs.
23. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry,* 131. While the usage of the word *synonym* has become standard in both biblical and Book of Mormon literary analysis, I prefer the term *complementary,* because many of the pairs labeled as synonyms would not appear in lists of synonyms in a thesaurus.
24. Watson uses the word *autonymic* here.
25. I admit that I find the categories "synonymous" and "correlative" difficult to distinguish in practice.
26. See Avishur, *Stylistic Studies,* 626–33. See also John A. Tvedtnes, "Word Groups in the Book of Mormon," *JBMS* 6/2 (1997): 263–68.
27. See Avishur, *Stylistic Studies,* 629.
28. Inna Koskenniemi, *Repetitive Word Pairs,* 12. See also Calvert Watkins's discussion of "indexical lists," *Aspects of Indo-European Poetics,* 46.
29. See also Tvedtnes, "Word Groups in the Book of Mormon," 263ff.
30. See Parry, *Book of Mormon Text,* iii–ix.
31. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry,* 33.
32. For expressions using "great and _____" see Dana M. Pike, "'The Great and Dreadful Day