The Wrong Type of Book

The Wrong Type of Book

John Gee

Environmental explanations of the Book of Mormon have been popular among critics in the twentieth century as alternatives for Joseph Smith's explanation of the book's origins.[1] The environmentalists attempt to explain the Book of Mormon as a product of the cultural milieu of early-nineteenth-century America, a backdrop that presumably explains all the features of the book. They assume that Joseph Smith wanted to write a history of the ancient inhabitants of America. Although many people, including Latter-day Saints, have imprecisely described the Book of Mormon as a record of "the ancient inhabitants of the Americas,"[2] the book explains itself more narrowly—as "an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites" (Book of Mormon title page).

Even so, environmentalists choose to place the Book of Mormon in "the broad contours of public discussion about the ancient inhabitants of America which had taken place or was taking place by 1830 when the Book of Mormon

first appeared."[3] Presumably, for the environmentalists, the Book of Mormon was the sort of book that anyone in Joseph Smith's day could have or would have written as a history of the ancient inhabitants of the Americas. Unwittingly, these observers have provided good examples of exactly what the people of Joseph's day thought a "history" like the Book of Mormon should contain. Yet the book does not contain those things; it is simply not that sort of book. The environmentalists need to explain why, if the Book of Mormon is merely a typical product of Joseph Smith's environment, it differs so much—in subject matter, phraseology, and descriptions of particulars—from the kind of book that those who lived in Joseph's day expected.

Nineteenth-Century Expectations

DIVERGING
NINETEENTH-
CENTURY
EXPECTATIONS

We know exactly what kind of book Joseph Smith's contemporaries expected the Book of Mormon to be like because we have two other works from that same period that are said to be of the same general sort. Within months of the publication of the Book of Mormon, Abner Cole, under the name of Obadiah Dogberry, published a satire entitled "The Book of Pukei."[4] The other work was an unfinished novel by Reverend Solomon Spaulding entitled "Manuscript Story" but which others have called "Manuscript Found." Throughout the nineteenth century this novel was put forward as the original of the Book of Mormon, though the manuscript itself was carefully concealed because it was obvious to those who had read the work that it bore only casual resemblance to the Book of Mormon.[5] In fact, when the manuscript was discovered, the Mormons were the first to publish it as a means of putting the weary rumors to rest. Cole's and Spaulding's works fit

comfortably within their early-nineteenth-century milieu and provide a control against wild speculation about nineteenth-century origins for the Book of Mormon.

I will also discuss Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews*[6] because some people believe it inspired or influenced Joseph Smith in writing the Book of Mormon.[7] If people of the nineteenth century expected a record of the ancient inhabitants of the Americas to be a work like Ethan Smith's, it would be strange indeed, since Ethan Smith's work, unlike the Book of Mormon, is not a narrative but an essay. Environmentalists who argue that Joseph Smith somehow got the idea for the Book of Mormon by reading *View of the Hebrews* (there is no indication that Joseph had read that book) are no closer to explaining the Book of Mormon than if they were arguing that government technical manuals explain Tom Clancy's books.[8] This is because the germ of an idea is not the story or narrative itself, but merely the spark that can precede the tremendous creative effort that gives life to that idea through the writing process. Along these lines, one popular science fiction writer observed:

> It was a good idea. . . . But, having thought of [it], I hadn't the faintest idea of how to go about turning the idea into a story. It occurred to me then for the first time that the *idea* of the story is nothing compared to the importance of knowing how to find a character and a story to tell around that idea. Asimov, having had the idea of paralleling *The Decline and Fall,* still had no story; his genius—and the soul of the story—came when he personalized his history, making the psychohistorian Hari Seldon the god-figure, the planmaker, the apocalyptic prophet of the story. I had no such character, and no idea of how to make one.[9]

Beyond the issue of the unexplained narrative, environmentalists need to explain why Joseph Smith, if he had read Ethan Smith's work, got so many details wrong for his own day (as compared with Ethan Smith)—details that work out so well with the ancient setting of the Book of Mormon.

Subject Matter

Digging for Treasure

The Book of Pukei tells in a mocking fashion about the sort of things that Joseph's neighbors in Palmyra expected to find in the Book of Mormon. Thus, because Joseph had been hired to dig for treasure,[10] almost all of Cole's account deals with digging for treasure.[11] Cole talks about "where the Nephites hid their treasure,"[12] which treasure included "a box of gold watches."[13] Yet hiding treasures takes up no more than 20 out of 6,604 verses in a book of more than five hundred pages, yielding no more than 0.3 percent of the Book of Mormon (see Helaman 12:18–20; 13:17–23, 30–37; Mormon 1:18–19). Such sparse coverage about hiding treasures can hardly be called a major theme. Furthermore, most of the Book of Mormon references to hiding treasures are contained in prophecy, not historical accounts, the one historical account being a very generalized statement that "the inhabitants thereof began to hide up their treasures in the earth; and they became slippery" (Mormon 1:18). Digging for treasure is mentioned in only one verse of the Book of Mormon, and that type of digging was a regular mining operation "to get ore, of gold, and of silver, and of iron, and of copper" (Ether 10:23).

Reverend Spaulding's manuscript is mainly a romance, devoting more than a quarter of its pages to the themes of romance, courtship, and marriage.[14] This is not surprising

in a document written about the same time that Jane Austen's novels appeared. The subject matter of Spaulding's work, however, is foreign to the Book of Mormon. Courtship, of a sort, does show up in the Book of Mormon, but not in a recognizable form for the nineteenth or even the twentieth century. The courtship of Nephi and his brothers, who were sent to Ishmael by Lehi "that his sons should take daughters to wife" (1 Nephi 7:1), is described in the following way:

> We went up unto the house of Ishmael, and we did gain favor in the sight of Ishmael, insomuch that we did speak unto him the words of the Lord.
>
> And it came to pass that the Lord did soften the heart of Ishmael, and also his household, insomuch that they took their journey with us down into the wilderness to the tent of our father. (1 Nephi 7:4–5)

The marriages are recorded later in a matter-of-fact style:

> And it came to pass that I, Nephi, took one of the daughters of Ishmael to wife; and also, my brethren took of the daughters of Ishmael to wife; and also Zoram took the eldest daughter of Ishmael to wife. (1 Nephi 16:7)

Thus the courtship of Lehi's sons is distinctly different from the courtship of Miles Standish. The courtship of the priests of Noah is even more abrupt and foreign to nineteenth-century-American tastes:

> And having tarried in the wilderness, and having discovered the daughters of the Lamanites, they laid and watched them;
>
> And when there were but few of them gathered together to dance, they came forth out of their secret places and took them and carried them into the wilderness. (Mosiah 20:4–5)

COURTSHIP
AND ROMANCE

And what Jane Austen heroine, even the adulterous Lady Susan, would behave as did the daughter of Jared?

> Now the daughter of Jared was exceedingly fair. And it came to pass that she did talk with her father, and said unto him: Whereby hath my father so much sorrow?. . .
>
> . . . Let my father send for Akish, the son of Kimnor; and behold, I am fair, and I will dance before him, and I will please him, that he will desire me to wife; wherefore if he shall desire of thee that ye shall give unto him me to wife, then shall ye say: I will give her if ye will bring unto me the head of my father, the king. (Ether 8:9–10)

Nineteenth-century-American notions of romantic love are far removed from the patterns of Nephite and Jaredite courtships mentioned in the Book of Mormon, clearly separating the book in that regard from the cultural milieu of Joseph Smith's day.

Ethan Smith's work attempts to prove "that the American Indians are the ten tribes of Israel"[15] by various arguments and by citing several parallels between the ancient Israelites and the Native Americans. Rather than cite proofs or parallels, the Book of Mormon tells a long, involved story of Lehi's descendants. It asserts rather than argues the Israelite origin of some of the different peoples mentioned in the record. In opposition to the *View of the Hebrews,* it specifically claims that its peoples "are a remnant of the house of Joseph" (3 Nephi 15:12) and that "the other tribes of the house of Israel . . . are not of this land, neither of the land of Jerusalem, neither in any parts of that land round about" (3 Nephi 15:15–16:1).[16] Jesus tells the Nephites that he must leave them and go "also to show myself unto the lost tribes of Israel" (3 Nephi 17:4), which clearly means that the Nephites were not among those

Lost Tribes
of Israel

tribes. If Ethan Smith's work is any indication of nine-teenth-century expectations that Native Americans were the lost ten tribes, the Book of Mormon clearly contradicts that paradigm.

The Cultural Setting

The cultural setting of the Book of Mormon is mark-edly different from that of the Book of Pukei, the Spauld-ing manuscript, and *View of the Hebrews.* Of these four works, it is the Book of Mormon that does not reflect a nineteenth-century milieu.

The setting of both the Book of Pukei and "Manuscript Found" is a world dominated by the cultural heritage of the Roman Empire, while the setting of the Book of Mormon is dominated by the ancient Near Eastern and Mesoameri-can cultures. Thus when the Book of Pukei refers to "an old book in an unknown tongue," it turns out to be "Cicero's *Orations* in Latin."[17] Those orations constituted a common Latin school text in the nineteenth century, and mastery of it was required for university admission. Similarly, Rever-end Spaulding set his novel as coming from "twenty eight *sheets* of parchment . . . written in an eligant [*sic*] hand with Roman Letters & in the Latin Language."[18] This manuscript was supposed to have been written by one Fabius at the time of Constantine, who, with a group of Romans, was blown off course on a sea voyage to Britain.[19] The heavy Roman bias is typical of nineteenth-century America, where the Roman Republic was consciously imitated.
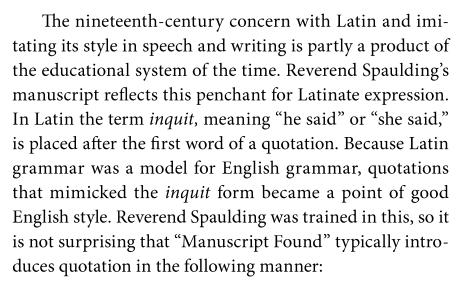
Even *View of the Hebrews* shows the influence of Latin, for it begins with a discussion of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem based on the Bible and supplemented by Greek (Josephus) and Latin sources (Tacitus, Suetonius),[20] and it

DIFFERENT
CULTURAL
SETTINGS

includes an appeal to Scaliger, the classical scholar.[21] The Book of Mormon, on the other hand, refers to the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem six hundred years earlier.[22]

In contrast, the original cultural setting of the Book of Mormon is described in quite different terms. For example, the language is a mixture of "the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians" (1 Nephi 1:2). We read, "I say Jew, because I mean them from whence I came" (2 Nephi 33:8). These Jews in Lehi's group became "a lonesome and a solemn people, wanderers, cast out from Jerusalem" (Jacob 7:26). After their arrival in the New World, they began to assimilate the local environment and customs, their previous cultural patterns having been "handed down and altered" (Mormon 9:30; compare Alma 49:11).

Stylistic Features

DISPARATE STYLISTIC FEATURES

The nineteenth-century concern with Latin and imitating its style in speech and writing is partly a product of the educational system of the time. Reverend Spaulding's manuscript reflects this penchant for Latinate expression. In Latin the term *inquit,* meaning "he said" or "she said," is placed after the first word of a quotation. Because Latin grammar was a model for English grammar, quotations that mimicked the *inquit* form became a point of good English style. Reverend Spaulding was trained in this, so it is not surprising that "Manuscript Found" typically introduces quotation in the following manner:

> "I am not[,] says he, my most excellent father, I am not mistaken."[23]

> "I am[,] quoth he to himself, honoured above all the other princes of the empire."[24]

The Book of Mormon, however, follows not the style esteemed in the nineteenth century but normal Hebrew syntax in introducing quotations. For example:

> And then Ammon said: Believest thou that there is a Great Spirit? (Alma 18:26)

It is remarkable that, even as a nineteenth-century translation, the Book of Mormon eschews certain syntactic features common in the language of Joseph Smith's day.

Like the Book of Mormon, *View of the Hebrews* contains some narrative portions with dialogue.[25] But any similarity between the two works in that regard ends on that general level. For example, while Ethan Smith did not use the *inquit* form as Spaulding did, he did follow Latin style by varying verbs when attributing quotations. Examples from *View of the Hebrews* include the following:

> Our Lord proceeds; "And ye shall hear of wars."[26]

> Our Saviour added; "And great earthquakes shall be in divers places."[27]

> "Pestilences" too, the Saviour adds.[28]

The Book of Mormon, however, never uses the verb *proceed* as a verb of speaking,[29] although to *proceed forth from the mouth* is used to refer to writing.[30] The verb *add* is used only five times in the Book of Mormon, but never as a verb of speaking.[31]

Another stylistic feature of the nineteenth century noticeably absent from the Book of Mormon is the penchant for pompous language. Spaulding's manuscript is replete with vocabulary without parallel in the Book of Mormon. A random sample of Reverend Spaulding's text shows that 10 percent of his vocabulary is foreign to the Book of Mormon.[32] Some of those words were commonly used

in the nineteenth century and are found in the Doctrine and Covenants. A random sample of the vocabulary from Ethan Smith's text shows that about 14 percent of his vocabulary is not found in the Book of Mormon.[33]

If the Book of Mormon were a nineteenth-century book, we would expect it to contain passages like the following: "Dearest Helaman, I hardly know what I would write, but I have bad news for you, and it cannot be delayed. Imprudent as a marriage between Isabel and our poor Corianton would be, we are now anxious to be assured it has taken place, for there is but too much reason to fear they are not gone to Mulek."[34] However, nothing of the sort appears.

Conspicuous stylistic features of the Book of Mormon, such as the ubiquitous *it came to pass,* while at home in ancient Hebrew literature, are notably absent from nineteenth-century literature,[35] including Spaulding's manuscript.[36] Statements like that of Henry Lake—"I well recollect telling Mr. Spaulding, that the so frequent use of the words 'And it came to pass,' 'Now it came to pass,' rendered it [Spaulding's manuscript] ridiculous"[37]—show that this stylistic feature was thought absurd in Joseph's day. (Incidentally, the complete absence of the phrase *it came to pass* from Spaulding's manuscript also shows that Mr. Lake was lying.)

This sampling of linguistic differences between the English of Joseph's day and the English translation of the Book of Mormon shows that the Book of Mormon is not the type of book one would expect to come from a nineteenth-century milieu.
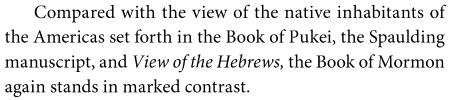
Writing Materials

The Book of Mormon describes its principal writing surface as being plates of metal, for "whatsoever things we write upon anything save it be upon plates must perish and vanish away" (Jacob 4:2). This is in direct contradiction to the view of Ethan Smith, who wrote that the Native Americans were "destitute of books and letters"[38] (probably an accurate assessment of the tribes in the area of New England and New York). The Reverend Spaulding, on the other hand, fancied, according to common nineteenth-century notions, that an ancient record would be written according to Western European conventions for Latin manuscripts upon "*sheets* of parchment."[39] Thus Spaulding's fictional Ohons tribe "generally wrote on parchment"[40] formed into "Roll[s]."[41]
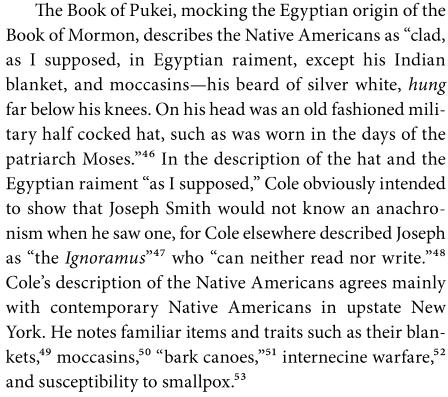
Like his contemporaries, Spaulding thought that an ancient manuscript from the Americas should be "written in an eligant [*sic*] hand with Roman Letters & in the Latin Language,"[42] while native languages were written with "characters which represent words—& all compound words had each part represented by its apropriate [*sic*] character. The variation of cases moods & tenses was designated by certain marks placed under the character."[43] The characters were written "beginning at the right . . . from the top to the botton [*sic*], placing each character directly under the preceding one."[44] The Book of Mormon, on the other hand, describes itself as being engraved on plates (see Jacob 4:1–3; Mormon 1:4) and written "in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian" (Mormon 9:32), although the language seems

PLATES VS. PARCHMENT

to have been based on Hebrew (see 1 Nephi 1:2; Mormon 9:33). Thus both the medium and the language of the Book of Mormon plates match the two earliest texts of biblical passages known, the oldest being written on metal plates and the next oldest being written in a form of the Egyptian script with the underlying language being Semitic.[45]

Describing the Natives

Compared with the view of the native inhabitants of the Americas set forth in the Book of Pukei, the Spaulding manuscript, and *View of the Hebrews,* the Book of Mormon again stands in marked contrast.

The Book of Pukei, mocking the Egyptian origin of the Book of Mormon, describes the Native Americans as "clad, as I supposed, in Egyptian raiment, except his Indian blanket, and moccasins—his beard of silver white, *hung* far below his knees. On his head was an old fashioned military half cocked hat, such as was worn in the days of the patriarch Moses."[46] In the description of the hat and the Egyptian raiment "as I supposed," Cole obviously intended to show that Joseph Smith would not know an anachronism when he saw one, for Cole elsewhere described Joseph as "the *Ignoramus*"[47] who "can neither read nor write."[48] Cole's description of the Native Americans agrees mainly with contemporary Native Americans in upstate New York. He notes familiar items and traits such as their blankets,[49] moccasins,[50] "bark canoes,"[51] internecine warfare,[52] and susceptibility to smallpox.[53]

With the exception of warfare, which is too ubiquitous among humans to serve as a cultural indicator, all of the other details that Cole mentions are absent from the Book of Mormon. The closest that the Book of Mormon comes to

VIEWS OF
THE NATIVES

blankets are generic references to cloth.[54] The only refer-
ences to any sort of footwear in that record pertain to the
Old World.[55] Beards are mentioned in the Book of Mormon
only in a quotation of Isaiah (2 Nephi 17:20). Boats in the
Book of Mormon are either barges,[56] vessels,[57] or ships.[58]
Far from being bark canoes designed for navigating rivers
and lakes, Book of Mormon ships are ocean-going vessels
made of unspecified materials. Diseases are mentioned in
the Book of Mormon[59] as things that Christ would cure[60]
or as a regular part of life,[61] being treatable with Nephite
plant lore[62] or power from on high.[63] There is no mention
of plagues of small pox or of any other disease that devas-
tates the population; wars and famines do that.

Solomon Spaulding's extensive description of the
Native Americans matches many of the characteristics
familiar to nineteenth-century Americans. [64] The natives
wear cotton garments,[65] headdresses "ornimented [*sic*]
with feathers,"[66] and "shoes and long stockings."[67] Their
buildings "exhibit no eligance [*sic*]—no appearans [*sic*] of
wealth and grandure [*sic*]—all is plain—& nothing super-
fluous."[68] He also described the natives as having "wig-
wams."[69] This all accords with Yankee experience with the
native peoples of North America in the 1800s.

Spaulding's descriptions stand in marked contrast to
the Book of Mormon. Headgear in the Book of Mormon
is limited to "head-plates,"[70] although headbands are men-
tioned in the book's biblical quotations.[71] Nothing is said
about feathers, which were a prominent feature of Native
American dress in the nineteenth century.[72] The same can
be said for footwear, which has already been discussed.
The Book of Mormon describes a variety of buildings,
and, as opposed to the aesthetic sensibilities of Reverend

Spaulding, some of them are expressly mentioned as being elaborately decorated: "And it came to pass that king Noah built many elegant and spacious buildings; and he ornamented them with fine work of wood, and of all manner of precious things" (Mosiah 11:8). These were definitely not the sort of buildings that Joseph Smith's neighbors would have expected Native Americans to have. In fact, David Whitmer recounted:

> When we were first told to publish our statement, we felt sure the people would not believe it, for the Book told of a people who were refined and dwelt in large cities; but the Lord told us that He would make it known to the people, and people should discover the ruins of the lost cities and abundant evidence of the truth of what is written in the Book.[73]

"Wigwams" are not mentioned in the Book of Mormon, although "tents" are mentioned in the contexts of pilgrimage[74] and military excursions,[75] the latter use being parallel to that mentioned in the Conquistadores' accounts of the inhabitants of Central America.[76] In sum, nothing out of Spaulding's imagination could have prepared him for the later discovery of extensive, impressive ruins in Central America that demonstrate an advanced level of civilization.[77]

Ethan Smith attempted to prove "that the American Indians are the ten tribes of Israel"[78] by means of various arguments in which he cited supposed parallels between the ancient Israelites and the Native Americans. For example, in *View of the Hebrews* he argued that (1) the American natives had one origin, (2) their language appears to have been Hebrew, (3) they had their imitation of ancient Israel's ark of the covenant, (4) they practiced circumcision, (5) they acknowledged only one God, (6) the

celebrated William Penn's accounts of the natives of Pennsylvania corroborate Ethan Smith's thesis, (7) the Indians had a tribe that answered in various respects to the tribe of Levi, (8) prophesied Hebrew character traits accurately apply to the aborigines of America, (9) the Indians belonged to tribes, each with its own name and leader, and (10) apparent parallels to the Israelites' ancient cities of refuge indicate the Indians' Israelite extraction.[79]

Each of Ethan Smith's ten claims deserves to be analyzed against any statements on the same subject from the Book of Mormon.

1. In opposition to Ethan Smith, the Book of Mormon does not claim that all the American natives had one origin. In fact, the Book of Mormon reports at least three different migrations from the Old World (Nephite, Mulekite, and Jaredite) and expressly allows that there were others "who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord" (2 Nephi 1:5). Additionally, a careful reading of the Book of Mormon indicates that there may have been other peoples present in the land when the Nephites arrived.[80]

2. Ethan Smith argues that the original Native American language appears to have been Hebrew. Although the Book of Mormon started out, Nephi reports, as "a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians" (1 Nephi 1:2), nearly a thousand years later, Moroni writes, "We have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us [the Nephites] the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech" (Mormon 9:32). Even though the language may have been based on Hebrew, Moroni acknowledges that "the Hebrew hath been altered by us also"

(Mormon 9:33). Book of Mormon writers also acknowledge, regarding other groups that presumably started out speaking Hebrew or a related language, that "their language had become corrupted; . . . and Mosiah, nor the people of Mosiah, could understand them" (Omni 1:17).

3. Although Ethan Smith claims that the Native Americans had an object resembling the ark of the covenant,[81] the Book of Mormon never mentions such a relic. The only ark mentioned in the Book of Mormon is the ark of Noah (see Ether 6:7).

4. Ethan Smith argues that circumcision was widespread among the Native Americans.[82] The Book of Mormon mentions it only once, in a letter of Mormon saying that the practice has been "done away" (Moroni 8:8).

5. Ethan Smith argues that the Native Americans were some sort of monotheists because "they have acknowledged one and only one God."[83] This trait is not diagnostic, because it has been argued that many disparate cultures are monotheistic (whether or not they technically are). Acknowledging one and only one God does not prove that Native Americans were part of the lost ten tribes any more than it proves that Muslims or Egypt under Akhenaten was part of the lost ten tribes.

6. The descriptions by William Penn that Ethan Smith refers to deal with "dress and trinkets" and ceremonies.[84] As we have seen, the Book of Mormon does not describe the dress, and ceremonies are mentioned only obliquely and without detail (see Mosiah 19:24).

7. Ethan Smith claims that the Native Americans had a tribe like the Levites, but the Book of Mormon has no such tribe. The only mention of the tribe of Levi in the Book of

Mormon is when Jesus quotes Malachi to the Nephites (see 3 Nephi 24:3).

8. What Ethan Smith means by seeing in the Native Americans "prophetic traits of character given of the Hebrews" is that the former were inclined to get drunk and they adorned themselves with "tinkling ornaments."[85] These two traits are too widespread to be diagnostic of any civilization.

9. Ethan Smith argues that the mention of various animals in Jacob's blessing of his sons (see Genesis 49) is a "trait of character . . . not wanting among the natives of this land."[86] The Book of Mormon, however, mentions no animals as "emblems of their tribes."[87]

10. Ethan Smith argues that the Native Americans had cities of refuge,[88] but such cities are not mentioned at all in the Book of Mormon.

Summary

Despite the efforts of critics to portray the Book of Mormon as a typical product of the nineteenth century, the book fails to conform to that mold. The easiest way to see the flaws in the environmentalist argument is to look at three clear products of the nineteenth century that were what folks of that period expected the Book of Mormon to be like: (1) the Book of Pukei, because as a satire of the Book of Mormon it exposes the elements that people of the nineteenth century thought would likely be included in the Book of Mormon; (2) Solomon Spaulding's "Manuscript Found," because many people in the nineteenth century, and even some today, claim it is the source of the Book of Mormon; and (3) Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews,* because many critics in the twentieth century have

argued that therein lies the origin of the Book of Mormon. All three accounts show bias towards Latin in phraseology and cultural background and discuss subjects that were common at the time: satire, romance, money digging, and speculation about the lost ten tribes. All three also depict the inhabitants of the New World as resembling the Native American tribes in the vicinity of New York and New England. As has been shown, the natives described in the Book of Mormon are not the Native Americans of the world of Joseph Smith. Further, the Book of Mormon scarcely mentions the major subjects of the Book of Pukei or "Manuscript Found," and it treats the subject of *View of the Hebrews* very differently. Moreover, rather than reflecting Latin influences, the Book of Mormon bears trademark features of having come from an ancient Near Eastern background—all the more remarkable because it was translated half a dozen years before Joseph Smith started studying Hebrew.[89]

Nineteenth-century accounts purported to be similar to the Book of Mormon all clearly betray their American cultural background in ways that significantly differ from what we find in the Book of Mormon. Why then, if the Book of Mormon is said to be a nineteenth-century book, does it not read like one?

Notes

1. For an overview, see Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 155–84; and Louis C. Midgley, "Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon? The Critics and Their Theories," in *Book of Mormon Authorship*

Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1997), 101–39. An earlier overview with the same conclusions is Hugh Nibley, "Just Another Book?" in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 148–69.

2. For example, see the introduction (written by Bruce R. McConkie) to the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon.

3. Dan Vogel, *Indian Origins and the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 5.

4. Obadiah Dogberry [Abner Cole], "The Book of Pukei, Chapter I," Palmyra *Reflector,* June 1830, in Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: The Book of Mormon,* 4th ed. (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Co., 1960), 1:273–75; and Obadiah Dogberry [Abner Cole], "The Book of Pukei, Chapter II," Palmyra *Reflector,* 7 July 1830, in Kirkham, *New Witness for Christ in America,* 1:275–77. See Andrew H. Hedges, "The Refractory Abner Cole," in *Revelation, Reason, and Faith,* ed. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2002), 447–75. For convenience, references to Cole's work will be "Book of Pukei," followed by chapter and verse.

5. See the introduction to Solomon Spaulding, *The "Manuscript Found." Manuscript Story* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, 1886), iii–iv. See also Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon,* 160–61.

6. Ethan Smith, *View of the Hebrews; or the Tribes of Israel in America* (Poultney, Vt.: Smith and Shute, 1825).

7. See Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon,* 161–62.

8. I have used this argument before in John Gee and Daniel C. Peterson, "Graft and Corruption: On Olives and Olive Culture in the Pre-Modern Mediterranean," in *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5,* ed. Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 224–25.

9. Orson Scott Card, introduction to *Ender's Game,* rev. ed. (New York: Tor, 1994), xv.

10. Joseph Smith—History 1:55–56.

11. "Book of Pukei" 1:1–2:8.

12. Ibid., 2:2.

13. Ibid., 2:7.

14. Spaulding, *"Manuscript Found,"* 8–10, 14–15, 49–52, 55–77, 86–87.

15. Smith, *View of the Hebrews,* 85.

16. "It should be pointed out that in contradistinction to the many preceding versions, the Book of Mormon maintains that its peoples descended from Manasseh and Judah, *not* the ten lost tribes" (Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon,* 161–62).

17. "Book of Pukei" 1:2.

18. Spaulding, *"Manuscript Found,"* 2.

19. Ibid., 4–5.

20. Smith, *View of the Hebrews,* 23–43.

21. Ibid., 26.

22. See 1 Nephi 1:4, 13, 18; 3:17; 5:4; 7:13–15; 10:3–4; 2 Nephi 1:4; 6:8; 25:14; Helaman 8:20–22.

23. Spaulding, *"Manuscript Found,"* 66.

24. Ibid., 67.

25. Smith, *View of the Hebrews,* 13–46.

26. Ibid., 21.

27. Ibid., 22.

28. Ibid., 23.

29. The verb *proceed* appears in an altogether different sense in 1 Nephi 10:1; 13:23–24, 38; 14:23; 19:5; 22:8, 11; 2 Nephi 3:21; 8:4; 25:7, 17; 27:14, 26; 29:1–2, 4; 33:14; Words of Mormon 1:9; Alma 20:28; Helaman 5:20; 3 Nephi 5:19; 26:12; Ether 1:1; 2:13; 6:1; 9:1; 13:1; and Moroni 7:25; 10:28.

30. See 1 Nephi 13:23–24, 38; 14:23; 2 Nephi 3:21; 29:2; 33:14; Moroni 7:25; 10:28.

31. See Mosiah 18:17; Alma 17:2; Helaman 15:6; 3 Nephi 13:27, 33.

32. I randomly analyzed p. 43 of Spaulding, *"Manuscript Found,"* and found 39 words of 375 that were never used in the Book of Mormon.

33. I randomly analyzed p. 113 of Smith, *View of the Hebrews,* and found 50 words of 352 that were never used in the Book of Mormon.

34. After Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice,* chap. 46.

35. A computerized search of several prominent nineteenth-century titles failed to detect a single instance of the phrase *and it came to pass.*

36. Since the Book of Pukei appeared after the Book of Mormon, imitating and mocking its style, it is not useful as a guide to early-nineteenth-century literary style.

37. Henry Lake, affidavit, September 1833, in E. D. Howe, *History of Mormonism* (Painseville, Ohio: E. D. Howe, 1840), 282.

38. Smith, *View of the Hebrews,* 113, emphasis in original.

39. Spaulding, *"Manuscript Found,"* 2.

40. Ibid., 25.

41. Ibid., 26.

42. Ibid., 2.

43. Ibid., 25.

44. Ibid., 25.

45. See John Gee and John A. Tvedtnes, "Ancient Manuscripts Fit Book of Mormon Pattern," *Insights* (February 1999): 3–4. (*Insights* is the newsletter of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies.)

46. "Book of Pukei" 2:4.

47. Ibid., 2:5.

48. Ibid., 2:8.

49. Ibid., 2:4.

50. Ibid., 2:4.

51. Ibid., 2:6.

52. Ibid., 2:6.

53. Ibid., 2:6.

54. See 1 Nephi 13:7–8; 2 Nephi 13:23; 14:1; Mosiah 10:5; Alma 1:6, 27, 29, 32; 4:6; 5:53; Helaman 6:13; 3 Nephi 13:28; 4 Nephi 1:24; Mormon 8:36; Ether 9:17; 10:24.

55. See 1 Nephi 10:8; 2 Nephi 15:27; 21:15.

56. See Ether 2:6, 16–18; 6:4.

57. See Mormon 5:18; Ether 2:2, 23; 3:1, 4; 6:2–7.

58. See 1 Nephi 17:8–9, 17–19, 49, 51; 18:1–22; 2 Nephi 12:16; Alma 63:5–10; Helaman 3:10–14.

59. See 1 Nephi 11:31; Mosiah 3:5; 17:16; Alma 9:22; 46:40.

60. See 1 Nephi 11:31; Mosiah 3:5; 3 Nephi 17:7–9; 26:15.

61. See Jacob 2:19; Mosiah 4:26; 17:16; Alma 1:27–30; 4:12; 9:22; 15:3–5; 34:28; 46:40; 3 Nephi 17:7–9; 26:15; Mormon 8:37–39; 9:24; Moroni 8:8.

62. See Alma 46:40.

63. See Alma 15:3–11.

64. See Spaulding, *"Manuscript Found,"* 20–31.

65. See ibid., 21.

66. Ibid., 21.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid., 23.

69. Ibid., 7.

70. See Alma 43:38, 44; 46:13; 49:24; Helaman 1:14; 3 Nephi 4:7; Ether 15:15.

71. See 2 Nephi 13:20, which quotes Isaiah 3:20.

72. As they were in Central American civilizations.

73. David Whitmer in James H. Hart interview, 21 August 1883, in *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness,* ed. Lyndon W. Cook (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1991), 96.

74. See Mosiah 2:6.

75. See Alma 51:34; 52:1; Ether 9:3.

76. Some of these have been gathered by John L. Sorenson, "Viva Zapato! Hurray for the Shoe!" *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 331–35.

77. In making this comparison I am not arguing for the identification of any Book of Mormon location with any specific ruin, site, or general area in Central America.

78. Smith, *View of the Hebrews,* 85.

79. See ibid., 85. Smith has an eleventh point, a hodgepodge about Native American traditions that I am deliberately omitting in the interest of space.

80. See John L. Sorenson, "When Lehi's Party Arrived in the Land, Did They Find Others There?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1/1 (1992): 1–34; and Brant A. Gardner, "The Other Stuff: Reading the Book of Mormon for Cultural Information," *FARMS Review of Books* 13/2 (2001): 29–37.

81. See Smith, *View of the Hebrews,* 95–96.

82. See ibid., 96–98.

83. Ibid., 85.

84. See ibid., 107–8.

85. See ibid., 109–11.

86. Ibid., 111–12.

87. Quotation from ibid., 111.

88. Smith, *View of the Hebrews,* 112–13.

89. See Joseph Smith, Ohio Journal 1835–1836, 20 November–7 December 1835, in *The Papers of Joseph Smith,* ed. Dean C. Jessee (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 2:87–97.