

YEA, YEA  NAY, NAY

DETERMINING WHAT IS “REAL”

By Kevin Christensen

THE MOMENT I became a published author, I became fair game for criticism. So Dan Vogel decides to challenge my views in his March 2005 SUNSTONE essay, “Is a ‘Paradigm Shift’ in Book of Mormon Studies Possible?”¹ Welcome to the arena.

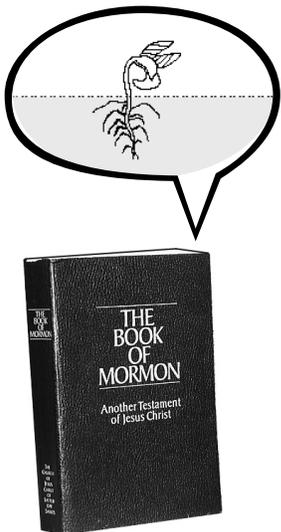
Vogel claims that “controversy rages between Book of Mormon apologists and critics mainly because both are seeking the unconditional acquiescence of the other.” Indeed? All of the apologists I know are very much aware that a “So what?” is sufficient to brush off our best arguments. To cite Nibley:

When is a thing proven? When you personally think so and that’s all you can do. . . . Then you have your testimony, and all you can do is bear your testimony and point to the evidence. That’s all you can do. But you can’t impose your testimony on another. And you can’t make the other person see the evidence as you do.²

Similar perspectives regarding the role of scholarship have been repeatedly affirmed, lately by John W. Welch³ and by LDS Apostle Dallin H. Oaks. Oaks specifically said:

In fact, it is our position that secular evidence can neither prove nor disprove the Book of Mormon. Its authenticity depends, as it says, on a witness of the Holy Spirit. Our side will settle for a draw, but those who deny the historicity of the Book of Mormon cannot settle for a draw.⁴

In this recent go-round, Vogel attacks my



use of Thomas Kuhn’s insights about the nature of scientific “paradigm shifts” in Book of Mormon apologetics.⁵ He claims that my motive “seems to be to create a space for . . . apologetic claims by arguing that if science is actually a subjective enterprise, then believing that the Book of Mormon is historical is neither more nor less ‘scientific’ than not believing” (Vogel, 69). I have never made the argument that Vogel describes here for the simple reason that I find it silly.

I have it on good authority what my actual motives are for using Kuhn’s insights. While serving my mission, I wanted to understand what I saw happening every day: Why is it that different people can look at the same things and have such different experiences? Why do the things I find exciting and compelling not touch others the same way? Why do things that others find devastating and shattering not bother me at all?

I began looking in the Bible and LDS scriptures, examining the many different ways people responded to prophets anciently and comparing that with my own experiences. It became clear to me that believers and skeptics notice different things about Jesus and the prophets and make their judgments from different criteria. At times they interpret the same words in different ways. Hence, the profound observation that Jesus made in explaining the key significance of the Parable of the Sower. “Know ye not this parable? *How then will ye know all parables?*” (Mark 4:13, emphasis mine.)

The Parable of the Sower provides both an epistemological key and an ontological key—that is, both a key to knowing and a

key to the nature of reality. The same words may have a very different yield depending on where you plant them and the care you take of them. Joseph Smith is notable for figuring this out at the beginning of his prophetic career: “The different teachers of religion understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible” (Joseph Smith—History 1:12). This is the postmodern dilemma, the uncertain relationship between the signs of language and the signified beyond language.

When I explained what I was finding in my studies to my then sister-in-law, she recommended that I read Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. I took her advice and soon read, and loved, the book. And I continue to use it because I love his insight and clarity of thought and expression. I later chanced upon Ian Barbour’s wonderful 1974 book, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms: A Comparative Study of Science and Religion*, and I continue to use and recommend it as well.⁶

I remain impressed that Alma 32 and Kuhn describe the same epistemology for paradigm decisions, the same values that provide rational constraints on meaning. That is, Kuhn explains that there are no rules that determine paradigm choice, there are constraining values independent of particular paradigms. One can give rational reasons for a paradigm choice—for preferring Copernicus to Ptolemy, or Einstein to Newton—based on values like accuracy of key predictions, comprehensiveness and coherence, simplicity and aesthetics, fruitfulness and future promise.⁷ Just so, Alma 32 describes faith decisions in terms of the success of key experiments, mind-expanding enlightenment, the delicious appeal of ideas, fruitfulness and future promise.⁸ I cannot, however, recommend Vogel’s brief summary and paraphrase of my arguments. I have published several long articles on the topic, and presented on the theme of “Paradigm Debate in Mormon Studies” at the 2004 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium.⁹

VOGEL claims that apologists (and especially me) misuse Kuhn “to justify mixing religious values with scientific criteria, privileging positive over negative evidence, creating *ad hoc* question-begging responses to counter evidence and, ironically, resisting paradigm shift” (p. 69). Indeed?

In a previous online response to me, Vogel kindly explains the true order of things with respect to valuing negative evidence:

Christensen should keep in mind



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that no matter how many correlations one perceives in a text, one negative evidence cancels them all. In other words, it is the apologists who are obliged to answer every negative evidence, while those who doubt only need present evidence for rejecting Book of Mormon historicity.¹⁰

I find this a most enlightening statement. Vogel is free to value evidence as he sees fit. So are we all. So it is worth my asking: Should a single negative experience be grounds for leaving the Church, dropping my belief in the historicity of Book of Mormon, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the existence of God? Or is a much broader perspective called for?

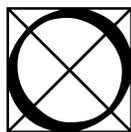
On many occasions, I have found that when viewed from another perspective, a seemingly powerful, decisive, and final “negative evidence” becomes very powerful positive evidence. Let me cite one example.

In an essay published in 1993, David P. Wright, an eminent critic of Book of Mormon historicity, argues that the Melchizedek material in Alma 13 is anachronistically derived from Hebrews in the New Testament, thus negating the claim that Joseph was translating from a record that pre-dated the formation of the biblical canon:

Scholarship recognizes that Hebrews does not create all of its argument by itself but relies on tradition and perhaps even on some unknown written sources (in addition to the Bible) in some of the places where we have seen the epistle parallel elements in Alma 12–13. But these traditions and sources are in general relatively recent developments for the author of Hebrews, not traditions going back 700 years. Moreover, the traditions and sources founded or supposed by scholars for the passages in Hebrews relevant to Alma 12–13 are diverse. . . they are not likely to be found in one traditional source.¹¹

However, writing in England, Margaret Barker, an Old Testament scholar who is trying to understand the background of Christianity, observes:

Melchizedek was central to the old royal cult. We do not know what the name means, but it is quite clear that this priesthood operated within the mythology of the sons of Elyon, and the triumph of the royal son of God in Jerusalem. We should ex-



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pect later references to Melchizedek to retain some memory of the cult of Elyon. . . . This accounts for the Melchizedek material in Hebrews, and the early Church’s association of Melchizedek and the Messiah. The arguments of Hebrews presuppose a knowledge of the angel mythology which we no longer have.¹²

In contrast to Wright’s conclusion, Barker’s work connects the Melchizedek traditions to the First Temple, which not only moves them back 700 years from the writing of Hebrews but also argues that the source of the unity in the traditions that Hebrews relies on is the Temple.¹³

But suppose that when I read Wright’s essay in 1993 I had let Wright’s argument be the one negative evidence sufficient to cancel out all positive experiences in my faith?

- Then I would not have read the *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* in 1995 and seen the essays by Ross David Baron and Martin S. Tanner that each quoted an intriguing passage from Margaret Barker’s important 1992 book, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel’s Second God*.

- Then, early in 1999, I would not have had the recognition and interest during an impromptu visit to a half-price bookstore in Dallas to pick up *The Great Angel*, the only copy of any of Barker’s books I had ever seen. And upon reading *The Great Angel*, I would not have gotten excited enough to track down the rest of her books, including a library copy of the then out-of-print *The Older Testament* containing the passage I quoted above, and which, because of my familiarity with Wright’s argument, I immediately recognized as significant for Latter-day Saints.

- I would not have contacted Barker in September of 1999 nor delivered papers on her work at two Sunstone symposiums. Neither would I have written *Paradigms Regained: A Survey of Margaret Barker’s Scholarship and Its Significance for Mormon Studies*, which was published by FARMS in January of 2002.

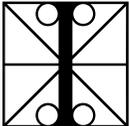
- Noel Reynolds, after reading *The Great*

Angel and Paradigms Regained in the Spring of 2002, would not have contacted me, and I would have not been in position to coordinate Reynolds’s visit with Barker during his trip to England that fall. Without me, he probably would have contacted her, and she would still have come to BYU for a May 2003 seminar and still presented memorably on the historicity of the Book of Mormon at the Joseph Smith Conference in Washington D.C. in May of 2005. I am convinced that these were meant to be. But I would have known nothing about it.

Knowing my personality, had I caved to Wright’s challenge rather than having put it on a back burner, I’d likely be off reading novels, playing computer games, and watching TV, not bothering with matters of faith. I would not even have known what I was missing. And that would have been thanks to what appeared to be “a single negative evidence” that is, from my current perspective, dead wrong.

Vogel opines, “If anachronisms and lack of evidence are not considered counter-evidence, what is? Isn’t there a point at which resistance becomes unreasonable and irrational” (p. 71). Surely. But as I have discovered, many of the critics’ favorite anachronisms aren’t what they appear at first, and a great many have been transformed into positive evidences.¹⁴ There may be a point at which resistance becomes unreasonable and irrational, but time is the ultimate arbiter of that—each individual is responsible for his or her own judgments, and appearances at any given time are subject to change without warning.

For an example, let’s turn to evidence Vogel himself uses in an essay on the Book of Mormon witnesses as victims of Joseph Smith’s hypothesized skill at hypnotism. Vogel cites as evidence an 1857 letter—found in the official Church archives and full of all sorts of details involving the correspondents—that contains a second-hand report of a rumor to the effect that Joseph Smith learned hypnotism “from a German peddler.”¹⁵ But why would Vogel, a rigorous and dedicated historian who has taken the

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trouble to gather five volumes of valuable early Mormon documents, even bother to cite a late rumor? Why notice and why value a rumor? I can only surmise he does it because the firsthand early accounts do not support his hypothesis about Smith being a skilled hypnotist while the late rumor does. Does the notice and value that Vogel assigns to these documents derive from the canons of the historian's trade—which favor firsthand, contemporary reports over second-hand accounts, and far less for late, un-pedigreed rumors—or from the demands of his hypothesis? Even more instructive is that in a previous footnote on the same page that Vogel quotes the 1857 letter, he cites a *BYU Studies* article on "Mormonism and Mesmerism" that quotes from an 1856 novel by Maria Ward that depicts Joseph Smith as having learned hypnotism from a German peddler.¹⁶ Vogel apparently fails to notice how the date and content of the 1856 novel should have crucial significance for the value

of the rumor in the 1857 letter. Not only does Vogel cite a late rumor as evidence, but in this case, without realizing it, he documents the fictive pedigree of the rumor. He makes a human mistake. Should one "negative evidence" cancel out Vogel's entire body of work? I think not.

Now let's consider the matter of paradigm shifts. Read how Vogel explains Kuhn:

Kuhn argues . . . that the historical progress of science is best understood as punctuated by mass conversions to new understandings, sudden "paradigm shifts." (p. 69)

It so happens that Kuhn never describes community paradigm shifts as either "sudden" or as "mass conversions." Instead of a single group conversion, what occurs is an "increasing shift in the distribution of professional allegiances."¹⁷ An individual may have a sudden change to a different perspective, but this is not typical. What Kuhn describes as a paradigm shift takes time and involves overcoming resistance for both individuals and paradigm communities:

Looking at a contour map, the student sees lines on paper, the cartographer a picture of a terrain. Looking at a bubble-chamber photograph, the student sees confused and broken lines, the physicist a record of familiar subnuclear events. Only after a number of such transformations of vision does the student become an inhabitant of the scientist's world, seeing what the scientist sees, and responding as the scientist does.¹⁸

Kuhn's observations about the time and processes involved in entering a paradigm is precisely akin to Nephi's observation that "there is none other people that understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews like unto them, save it be that they are taught

after the manner of the things of the Jews" (2 Nephi 25:5). We cannot see all at once but have to study things out in our minds, search diligently, prepare our minds, ponder, experiment, and nourish—all as part of an ongoing process.

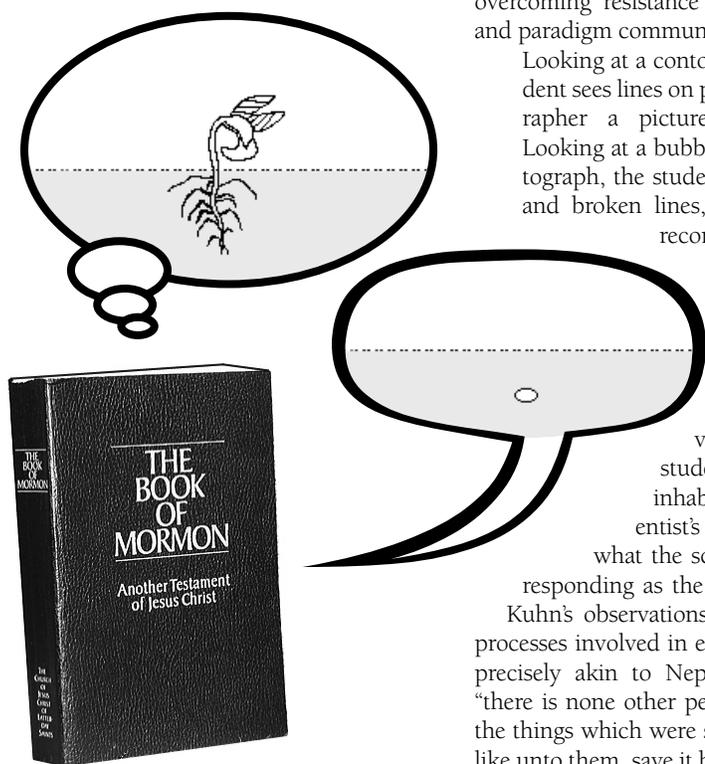
The section of Vogel's essay that attempts to define responsible Kuhn/irresponsible Kuhn is rhetorical sleight of hand. The issue ought to be my actual use of Kuhn and the content and structure of the actual arguments I make, regardless of who said it first, and regardless of the irresponsible use someone else might make in an unrelated debate. Only if my use corresponded to the hypothetical irresponsible Kuhn could the criticism apply. I have never used the three-step "fallacy from Kuhn" that Vogel identifies as common among some Creationists.

THE selection of any method presupposes a problem field and a standard of solution. So what should a Book of Mormon archaeologist or scholar look for, by what method, and with what acceptable standard of solution? When our standard examples and background assumptions differ, so do our methods, problem fields, and standards of solution. For example, Brent Metcalfe claims that:

Despite the popularity of their theories, Book of Mormon geographers have been unable to deliver a single archeological dig that can be verified by reputable Mesoamericanists as the ruins of an ancient Near Eastern culture, much less of Lehitites and Jaredites.¹⁹

This statement makes clear what Metcalfe demands—"the ruins of an ancient Near Eastern culture"—and to whom he will grant authority to dispense what Kuhn calls "a license for seeing": only "reputable Mesoamericanists." One would think, for instance, that he'd note a most obvious problem: that of looking for the ruins of an ancient Near Eastern culture in Mesoamerica given the conspicuous tendency of ancient Near Eastern cultures to occur in the ancient Near East.²⁰

Arguing similarly, Vogel claims that my appreciation for Brant Gardner's method of "looking for Mesoamerica in the Book of Mormon instead of the Book of Mormon in Mesoamerica" is misplaced, for Gardner's approach "looks only for similarities in the text, instead of comparing the text as a whole against what is known about Mesoamerica" with the effect that "historical anachronisms become invisible to researchers and falsifica-



tion becomes impossible” (71).

Here is what Gardner actually says he is doing, and he provides a powerful example of the difference that a change in perspective can bring to the questions one asks and the evidence, or lack thereof, that one finds:

The difference came when I started looking for Mesoamerica in the Book of Mormon instead of the Book of Mormon in Mesoamerica. Oddly enough, there is a huge difference, and the nature of the correlations and the quality of the correlations has changed with that single change in perspective.

When I started my examination, I had no expectation of what I would find. Some of the correlation I have found came not from attempting to find some specific thing, but in realizing that the text did not say what I had thought it said—and that it really didn’t make any sense until I saw it in the context of Mesoamerican culture.

When people ask for one thing that is the most important correlation, I have a hard time coming up with one, because it isn’t a single thing. It is that the entire text of the Book of Mormon works better in a Mesoamerican context. Speeches suddenly have a context that makes them relevant instead of just preachy. The pressures leading to wars are understandable. The wars themselves have an explanation for their peculiar features. All of those things happen with a single interpretive framework that is in the right place at the right time. Even the demise of the Nephites happens at “the right time.”²¹

Contrasting Metcalfe’s approach, Gardner re-defines the problem field, method, and standard of solution. Instead of looking for a conspicuously transplanted ancient Near Eastern culture in the Americas that accounts for the population and history of the entire hemisphere, he’s looking at a limited geography in Mesoamerica as a context against which to read the Book of Mormon. So has Gardner “verified” the Book of Mormon? To a degree, he has, but only tentatively, and in relation to the questions he asks and the approach he takes. And contrary to what Vogel writes about “looking only for similarities,” Gardner recognizes the need to balance his emerging correlations against currently unsolved puzzles:

Against these correspondences

[that is, with a range of Arabian and Mesoamerican cultural specifics], what do we have that might be counter-indications? We have the specific descriptive problems of swords, silk, horses, chariots, etc. I find those much easier to explain as labeling problems than I do finding an alternate explanation for the type of detailed correlation listed above.²²

Notice that Gardner openly notices and discusses potential “historical anachronisms,” demonstrating that Vogel’s charge that such things “become invisible” is false. And instead of making “falsification impossible,” as Vogel claims many Book of Mormon apologists do, Gardner is openly putting the text at risk via his methods—and openly stating his perspectives on the results.

HERE is the crux of my impasse with Vogel: I interpret the text differently, and I value the problems differently. In many cases, where Vogel sees problems, I see no problems at all.²³ Yes, I am aware of the kind of “Chicken Little” panic some of these problems have raised in various circles, and I acknowledge a number of unresolved issues that I keep on my back burners. Nevertheless I do, in fact, read the text differently on those very issues than Vogel reads it. I read with different contexts, different perspectives—and I come to different valuations. I plant the seed in different soil, and I nourish it differently, and I get a very different harvest. I do not say that my readings are the only ones possible, but I strive to show that they are plausible and, from my perspective, better and more promising.

But according to Vogel, “Christensen believes Kuhn’s thesis gives Mormon scholars permission to corrupt the scientific method with religious values” (71). Not surprisingly,

he does not quote me in support of this charge. I’ll just say, no, I don’t believe that.

He continues though, saying that “This allows . . . Christensen to arbitrarily assign greater significance to positive, rather than negative evidence” (70). Would it be more reasonable, scientific, scholarly, and objective to let Vogel assign the proper evidential significance for me? On this point, I think of John Clark’s presentation at the Joseph Smith Library of Congress seminar this past May in which he showed trends in evidence. He viewed the existence of sixty unresolved issues against the clear trend of a rising number of issues that are being resolved—changing from two or three in 1830 to fifty-eight percent by 2005. To this we could add the very successful Book of Mormon correlations with Jerusalem and 600 BCE and the Arabian journey that are just now being noted.²⁴ Such things *do* have implications for the possibilities of the New World portions of the Book of Mormon. As a critical incantation, “DNA!” does nothing to explain how Joseph Smith managed them. It is our perspective that helps us assign significance to correlations, puzzles, and counter-instances.

THE thing to do, Vogel tells us, is to adopt the paradigm of the Book of Mormon as a pious fraud and to see Joseph Smith as a liar who meant well (72–73). As I consider this solution, I imagine a new dialogue between Jesus and this kind of disciple in response to the Bread of Life sermon. The text notes that because of the doctrine Jesus taught, “Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, ‘This is an hard saying; who can hear it?’” (John 6: 60). Jesus then offers other sayings which are even harder, and, as a consequence, “many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him” (John 6:66).

Jesus then says to the twelve, “Will ye also

THE FLOCK



go away?" The disciples of modernity answer him: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the most inspiring lies. Of course we don't literally believe that Son of God business. We're not stupid. After all, such claims are extraordinary and are not verifiable or reproducible scientifically."

I have previously discussed the inspired-fiction paradigm as a potentially viable approach for some but not for me, nor do I believe for the community as a whole.²⁵ I have never yet seen it presented in an inspiring way. Rather, what we get is what I identified in a *Dialogue* essay as "spiritual masochism," a substitute for religious experience where one publicly demonstrates one's capacity to face the abyss without flinching. It's an exercise in disillusion masked in pride. Public dissection and commentary on a cadaver instead of feasting on the words of life.

Joseph Campbell once explained that Buddhist temples are guarded by two figures that represent Fear (what we think) and Desire (what we want). To enter into the Real, we have to be willing to leave what we think and what we want, what we fear, and what we desire.²⁶ In my mission studies of the accounts of people who reject Jesus or the prophets, I found more than seventy arguments that all boil down to these same two forces.

Entering the Real is not about what I think or what I want. To enter the Real, we must be willing to put our wants and desires at risk, to be willing to sacrifice them for something of greater worth and lasting value. This is the precise meaning of the sacrifice of a broken heart (our desires) and a contrite spirit (our



A FLIGHT OF GEESE

The most reluctant leaves have let go,
rattle on the roof like crabs
and lose color in the gutter.
A shed, tin-clad, gives in the wind,
relaxes south toward mouths of rust.
Light at the earth's edge disappears,
rain is falling and there's rain coming.

Into gray afternoon I walk,
not sent out, but restless and hurting
for a letter, blue sky or anything green.
I walk though there's no place to go,
looking for some sign there was
summer,
looking for any sign at all.

—MARCIA BUFFINGTON

preconceptions). These sacrifices are required of the listeners in 3 Nephi 8:20 to prepare them for moving to the next stage of the Temple experience described in 3 Nephi 11.

We experiment and consider the real results: the mind-expanding enlightenment, the delicious taste, the fruitfulness, and the future promise. "Is this not real?" Alma asks (Alma 32:35). My answer is yes. ☺



NOTES

1 "Dan Vogel, "Is a Paradigm Shift in Book of Mormon Studies Possible?," *SUNSTONE* March 2005, 69–74.

2. Hugh Nibley, in *Of All Things: Classic Quotations from Hugh Nibley*, Gary Gillum, ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1993), 14–15.

3. John W. Welch, "The Power of Evidence in Nurturing Faith" in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch, eds. (Provo: FARMS, 2002) 17–55.

4. Dallin H. Oaks, "The Historicity of the Book of Mormon" in *Historicity and the Latter-Day Saint Scriptures*, Paul Y. Hoskisson, ed. (Provo: Religious Studies Center, 2001), 239.

5. See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

6. Ian G. Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

7. See Kuhn, 185–86, 199–200; also Barbour, 110–11.

8. See my "Paradigms Crossed," in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1995): 161–87.

9. See Kevin Christensen, review of Dan Vogel, *Indian Origins and the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake: Signature Books, 1986) in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 2 (1990): 214–57; Kevin Christensen, "New Wine and New Bottles: Scriptural Scholarship as Sacrament" in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, vol. 24, no. 3, (Fall 1991): 121–29; Kevin Christensen, "A Response to David Wright on Historical Criticism" in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 74–93; Kevin Christensen, "Truth and Method: Reflections on Dan Vogel's Approach to the Book of Mormon" in *FARMS Review*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2004): 287–354; and Kevin Christensen, "Paradigms Crossed," 144–218. At the Salt Lake City 2004 Sunstone Symposium, I presented on "Paradigm Debate in Mormon Studies: A Brief Guide for the Perplexed" (Tape SL04–252).

10. See response at <http://www.xmission.com/~research/central/reply.htm> (accessed 6 November 2005).

11. David P. Wright, "In Plain Terms That We May Understand: Joseph Smith's Transformation of Hebrews in Alma 12–13," in *New Approaches to the*

Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology, Brent Lee Metcalfe, ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 205.

12. Margaret Barker, *The Older Testament: The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Jerusalem and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1987), 257. This volume was reprinted by Sheffield Phoenix Press in 2005.

13. See the discussion of First Temple themes in Alma 13 in my "Paradigms Regained: A Survey of Margaret Barker's Scholarship and Its Significance for Mormon Studies" *FARMS Occasional Papers*, no. 2, (Provo: FARMS, November 2001) 54–56.

14. See for example, Kevin Christensen, "The Deuteronomist De-Christianizing of the Old Testament" in *FARMS Review* 16, no. 2 (2004): 59–90. This paper responds to charges that the Book of Mormon is too Christian for something purportedly written before Christ. It draws on First Temple teachings that come from Jerusalem in 600 BCE.

15. Dan Vogel, "The Validity of the Witnesses Testimonies" in Dan Vogel and Brent Metcalfe, *American Apocrypha* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), page 115, note 50.

16. Gary L. Bunker and Davis Bitton, "Mesmerism and Mormonism," *BYU Studies* 15 (Winter 1975): 146–61.

17. Kuhn, 158.

18. *Ibid.*, 111.

19. Brent Lee Metcalfe, "Apologetic and Critical Assumptions," citing Deanne G. Matheny, "Does the Shoe Fit? A Critique of the Limited Tehuantepec Geography," in *New Approaches to Book of Mormon Study*, 158, note 19, and Glenna Nielson, "The Material Culture of the Book of Mormon," May 1992 Sunstone Book of Mormon Lecture.

20. It happens that certain ancient Near Eastern ruins dating to 600 B.C. and found in the Arabian Peninsula in 1998 include inscriptions in the proper location to be relevant to the Nahom story in the Book of Mormon. See Warren P. Aston, "Newly Found Altars from Nahom," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10, no. 2 (2001): 56–61.

21. Brant Gardner, quoted in Kevin Christensen, "Truth and Method: Reflections on Dan Vogel's Approach to the Book of Mormon," 309–312. See the essay for the full quotation.

22. Brant Gardner, as quoted at <http://pub26.ezboard.com/bpacumenispages> (accessed 8 June 2002). Notice that Gardner deals with "puzzles" the way Kuhn would, assessing them in a network of assumptions and evidences and not in Vogel's positivist/empiricist manner. Gardner reports that "As I have noted before, the important facet of all of these touchpoints is that they all stem from a single explanatory model. Each of them is dependent upon a single geographic area, and a particular time period."

23. A few of the problems Vogel identifies are the "narrow neck" passages, the issue of directions, DNA, and "First Reader" authority. See Vogel, "Is a Paradigm Shift in Book of Mormon Studies Possible?," 67; also Vogel and Metcalfe, *American Apocrypha*, viii–xiii.

24. See note 20.

25. See my "Paradigms Crossed," 212–14; also Kevin Christensen, "Wagging the Dog," *SUNSTONE*, May 2004, 8.

26. Joseph Campbell, *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: Metaphor as Myth and as Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986) 79–81; also Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth* (New York: Doubleday, 1988) 107.