Historical Narrative, Literary Narrative— Expelling Poetics from the Republic of History

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'Tis the good reader that makes a good book.
<div align="right">Emerson</div>

Abstract: Postivist historiography has always maintained an impermeable boundary between history and literature. But positivism is itself a historical sediment whose time is now past. Recent literary theory and historiography emphasize the continuities between history and literature. Under the domination of historiography by a positivist epistemology (from about 1880 to 1960), history attempted to free itself from its literary heritage; more recently theorists from a number of disciplines have recognized that history, both ancient and modern, has been informed by literary motifs, themes, and strategies. The repetition of the exodus literary pattern, for example, through the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and Christian history does nothing to bring into question the historical status of the events. The exodus patterns evident in Mosiah do not force the Book of Mormon to surrender historical claims just because they also happen to be literary.

It ought to be a cardinal rule of interpretation that a researcher's readerly incapacities ought not to work in favor of that reader's ideology. Since recent literary and narrative theory have compromised a simplistic relationship between historical language and the past, the notion that all reading is an ideological act

has dominated academic disciplines. Historical writing is itself a literary genre: that is, the moral of narrative theory. Narrative history threatens traditionalist conceptions of history, but the uninitiated might easily misrepresent the implications that follow.

Brent Metcalfe claims that the Book of Mormon isn't historical because it possesses "literary patterns." What seems obvious to Metcalfe (so obvious he advances the position without argumentation) is that literature and history are mutually exclusive, and he cites sources to support that position: "Recent literary theory focuses on the complex and attenuated relation between language and the 'real' world";[1] Metcalfe then cites fifteen sources from these fields, claiming the authority of recent literary and narrative theory. An examination of these theories and the writing of history should be fruitful. These fifteen sources radically undermine Metcalfe's claims, so when I cite Metcalfe's own authorities I will place the typographical symbol dagger (†) just before the footnote.

Metcalfe claims to read the Book of Mormon without ideological commitments, while opponents approach it with ideological preconceptions:

> Both apologetic and critical scholars are led by prior assumptions, but they differ fundamentally. Apologists assume that the Book of Mormon is historical and from this they develop methods to sustain authenticity. The critical scholar's interpretation depends not on a proposition made by a text or tradition but on a methodology for exploring the broader context which structures and authorizes such claims. Ideally, within the critical mode, methods lead to conclusions instead of conclusions leading to methods.[2]

This claim is worth testing. I will provide a discussion of the current state of literary and narrative theory (pointing out how it undermines rather than supports Metcalfe's fictions), briefly sketch how Metcalfe's claim that the Book of Mormon must be

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[1]   Brent Lee Metcalfe, "Apologetic and Critical Assumptions," *Dialogue* 26/3 (Fall 1993): 168 n. 48. I can cite only a few of Metcalfe's misrepresentations of these fifteen sources.

[2]   Ibid., 156.

fictional rather than historical would require the reader to reject the historicity of the Bible and numerous events nobody has ever questioned as historical (although I don't have the space here, this "hermeneutical principle" would also require the rejection of Herodotus, Thucydides, and virtually all history written in antiquity and classical antiquity (excepting perhaps only Polybius), and I will then apply a literary reading of the Zeniffite narrative in Mosiah pointing to its overwhelming use of exodus typology.

Literature and History: Two Fictive Projects

Not content just to write bad history, Metcalfe is also intent on expanding his range to include bad literary criticism. But major impediments obstruct this appropriation: literary theory and historiography. Metcalfe's ideology requires a stout wall between literature and history: for example, he claims that chiastic arrangement is a sign of literary structure, thus disqualifying the text as a historical document,

> Because Book of Mormon apologists say that chiasmus is an intentional literary device, they must conclude that chiasmus can arrange historical episodes. At a minimum this means that some historical details of the Lehite story may not have occurred in the order presented in the narrative. Apologists must also allow for the possibility that some historical incidents never actually happened but were fictions imposed on the text to complete a chiastic structure designed to convey a moralistic or theological teaching.[3]

This claim assumes a series of implicit and uncritical ideological positions. Fortunately, narrative theory, literary theory, and historiography have critically analyzed these very claims.

Claiming that history and fiction are distinct enterprises (not overlapping categories) requires engaging a range of historians and literary critics; it entails addressing the dominant contemporary position in historiography, not just assuming the dominant position from three decades ago. Insisting that a narrative can't be

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3   Ibid., 168.

historical because it exhibits literary patterns requires attention to these theorists because they claim that all history contains literary patterns. History and fiction belong to a family of narratives, all possessing "literary" structure through imposing conventional patterns on time; therefore, one can't distinguish between history and literature solely on the basis of traditional motifs or formal structure.

That Metcalfe would attempt vicariously to baptize these literary and critical theorists into his Church of Humanity is an implausible compliment to literary theory. Literary theory is unlike most other disciplines, in which overt positivist claims are still often heard thirty years after those claims became untenable. To see Kermode, White, Jameson, Eagleton, feminist critics, and others impressed into Metcalfe's navy is an acute irony. Since Metcalfe attempts to align narrative theory with his own positivism, let me sketch a better picture of narrative theory.

In American historiography a thin outer crust of very bright historians, well informed about theoretical concerns, rejects positivist truth claims. But the mass of practitioners is not only theoretically uninformed, but positively antitheoretical, viewing theory as an obstacle to creating history rather than as an asset. In unguarded moments they express their positivist epistemology, usually in two situations: (1) when explaining why you should believe her or his explanation rather than a rival's or (2) when attempting to describe the nature of historical understanding. So why would positivists such as Metcalfe draw on the authority of literary criticism?

Oddly, literary theory has become central for all the social disciplines, largely because of the linguistic turn. Literary critics developed sophisticated models of language use. Thirty years ago, all disciplines borrowed models and methods from the sciences; now leading theorists in other disciplines are borrowing models from literary theory and linguistics. Historiographical debate has moved away from being modeled on the sciences and toward linguistics and literary criticism, away from explanation and toward textuality.[4] But once researchers realized that language controls its

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[4] Jane Caplan, "Postmodernism, Poststructuralism, and Deconstruction: Notes for Historians," *Central European History* 22 (September–December 1989): 260–61.

users as much as its users control language, they realized that translation, metaphor, fiction, literary influence, and the referential claims of language were problematical for their research also. The transparency between language and the world could no longer be taken for granted:

> In the first half of the century, English and American philosophers tried to develop theories of knowledge that would serve as a bedrock foundation for the truths discovered in the natural sciences. For this endeavor, they needed a well-developed logic and an explanation of how, relying on sense data, words can be accurately linked to the world. "Fiction," in this context, meant a false connection between words and things, or reference to something that doesn't exist. Because of technical difficulties that arose in the development of this theory, more recent philosophers have conceived of truth not as a relationship between statements and reality but as an offshoot of the conventions involved in language use. Stating a true proposition is, after all, only one use of words.†[5]

This linguistic turn takes a particularly heavy toll on historians who require a simple relationship between the world and their representations of it:

> The silent shared conspiracy of all historians (who otherwise agree on nothing these days) is to talk about the past as though it were really "there." The whole of historical discourse is calculated to induce a sense of referential reality in a conceptual field with no external reference at all.
>
> History is meaning imposed on time by means of language: history imposes syntax on time. As the form of writing whose central purpose is to affirm our consciousness of a shared experience over generations of one external and real world, history has a great investment in mimesis—the ability of language to imitate

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5   Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 182.

reality. Here, of course, is where historians balk, for, alas, the mimetic abilities of prose are common to fiction and history without distinction. Fiction's persuasive force, its "sense of reality," results from an author's ability to offer the reader a suggestive array of fictional elements that satisfy the requirements of possible reality in the shared world of writer and reader. The historian, using techniques that differ only a little from those of a novelist, has to persuade the reader not only of the *possible* reality of his array of verbal elements, but that those on display in the text are "guaranteed" by their relation (reference, logical inference) to things outside the text, and thus the result is a real mimesis.[6]

One ought not to sharpen the enemy's weapons on the enemy's wheel and then impale oneself on them.

Narrative and language are the new compass points in historiography rather than method and science. The narrative turn coincides with the failure of scientism in the human studies. "Mimesis and narration have returned from their marginal status as aspects of 'fiction' to inhabit the very center of other disciplines."†[7] Representational problems have shattered simplistic mimetic models. Historians add too much to the record in selection, ordering, plotting, and tone to be thought of as uninvolved, neutral, and unbiased. History also went through a scientistic period: "History stopped telling stories and aspired to science. Romanticism was elbowed aside by positivism: the certainty of an ultimately observable, empirically verifiable truth."[8] History is complex and inseparable from ideological and presentist concerns. Schama tells stories which, while admitting the existence of a boundary between history and fiction, recognize that the boundary is variable, ragged:

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6   Nancy F. Partner, "Making Up Lost Time: Writing on the Writing of History," *Speculum* 61 (1986): 97.

7   Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative*, 7.

8   Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties (Unwarranted Speculations)* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 306.

Though these stories may at times appear to observe the discursive conventions of history, they are in fact historical novellas, since some passages (the soldier with Wolfe's army, for example) are pure inventions, based, however, on what documents suggest. This is not to say, I should emphasise, that I scorn the boundary between fact and fiction. It is merely to imply that even in the most austere scholarly report from the archives, the inventive faculty—selecting, pruning, editing, commenting, interpreting, delivering judgements—is in full play. This is not a naïvely relativist position that insists that the lived past is *nothing* more than an artificially designed text. (Despite the criticism of dug-in positivists, I know of no thoughtful commentator on historical narrative who seriously advances this view.) But it does accept the rather banal axiom that claims for historical knowledge must always be fatally circumscribed by the character and prejudices of its narrator.[9]

The imaginative, ideological, and mimetic faculties of the historian deeply impact historical narrative; the ideological purposes of historical narrative are often accomplished through the imaginative. The difference between novels and histories is that histories are tremendously over-plotted, leaving nothing to chance: "No amount of pontificating about facts and evidence, research, archives, or scientific methods can get around the central fictionality of history, which is its unrelenting meaningfulness. Nothing could be more unreal, more flagrantly fictional, or more necessary."[10]

Metcalfe fails to inform his readers that this conjunction of historical and literary narrative has shifted the historiographical center of gravity a continent away: toward the idea that historical narrative is fictive narrative. Historians invent, are poets in the more fundamental form of *poiesis*—they create.[11] When

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[9]   Ibid., 322.

[10]   Partner, "Making Up Lost Time," 102.

[11]   Jörn Rüsen, "Historical Narration: Foundation, Types, Reason," *History and Theory* Beiheft 26 (1987): 87.

researchers claim that historians engage in science, relying solely on empirical reality, such claims are positivistic:

> The traditional argument would be to differentiate between factual and fictional narrations. Historical narration is usually defined as dealing only with facts and not with fictions. This differentiation is very problematical, and finally not convincing, because the all-important sense of history lies beyond the distinction between fiction and fact. In fact it is absolutely misleading—and arises from a good deal of hidden and suppressed positivism—to call everything in historiography fiction which is not a fact in the sense of a hard datum.[12]

Under the heading "Narrative Conventions in History,"†[13] Martin deals with this problem. Until the eighteenth century history was a branch of literature. But by the nineteenth century, historians had abandoned rhetoric to claim scientific status. But recent explorations by Danto and Hayden White show how similar fictional and historical narratives are. "Louis Mink remarks that at present we have no standards or even suggestions for determining how the connections between events in fictional narratives might differ from those in history."†[14] The strategies of narration are the same for fiction and history: "In history, Hayden White says, the tail wags the dog; the conventions of narration determine whether or not an event under a description will be a 'fact.'" †[15] The return of literature directly challenges conceptions of history as science:

> There was a time when historians thought they had escaped the "merely literary," when they thought they had established historical studies on the solid foundation of objective method and rational argument. But recent developments in literary criticism and the philosophy of language have undermined that confidence.

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12 Ibid., 89.
13 Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative*, 71–75.
14 Ibid., 73.
15 Ibid., 74.

> Now, after a hundred-year absence, literature has returned to history, unfurling her circus silks of metaphor and allegory, misprision and aporia, trace and sign, demanding that historians accept her mocking presence right at the heart of what they had once insisted was their own autonomous and truly scientific discipline.[16]

An acute epistemological crisis has resulted. Orr modifies Stephen Dedalus's comment that "History . . . is the nightmare from which I am trying to awake!" to "literature is the nightmare from which history is continually trying to awake!"[17] History's mimetic double is fiction. In the nineteenth century, upon history's discovery of its similarity to fiction, it attempted to be more like science,[18] originating positivistic history.[19] But fiction keeps returning to haunt the language and house of history. Recent cultural history has been dominated by literary criticism.[20] This influence doesn't turn history into a version of fiction, but requires the abandonment of simplistic representational claims:

> The fictive, imaginary dimension in all accounts of events does not mean that the events did not actually happen, but it does mean that any attempt to *describe* events (even as they are occurring) must rely on various forms of imagination. Furthermore, all accounts of historical realities must inevitably rely on a philosophy of history. In other words, one cannot write history without both philosophy and fictional narratives, and one cannot simply affirm the disciplinary distinction

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[16] David Harlan, "Intellectual History and the Return of Literature," *American Historical Review* 94 (1989): 581.

[17] Linda Orr, "The Revenge of Literature: A History of History," *New Literary History* 18 (1986): 1–2.

[18] Ibid., 3.

[19] Ibid., 5.

[20] Lloyd S. Kramer, "Literature, Criticism, and Historical Imagination: The Literary Challenge of Hayden White and Dominick LaCapra," in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 97–98.

that historians use to separate themselves from philosophers and literary authors.[21]

Histories are as conventionally ordered as are fictional narratives, using the same conventions.

Critics of the narrative turn tend to see opposing positions reductively; I am not collapsing history and fiction into each other. Are there reasons for preferring one historical account to another? Yes, but those reasons are always tentative, historical, contextual, and ideological. Ideology is inescapable, but we have traditions of evaluation, providing some critical tools in evaluating arguments. History is rhetorical. We come to complex mixtures of agreement and conflict over matters historical, but resolution must come from within the conversation: no outside notion such as objectivity, realism, or method will resolve our conflicts. The reasons for preferring one interpretation over another are also pragmatic: what are the results of choosing a particular interpretation? All history is presentist, but some more so. Martin is right that the following stance is extreme:

> In their emphasis on the conventional nature of realism, some recent theorists seem to imply that there is no reason to consider one fictional narrative more realistic than another, since we have no absolute standard that would enable us to assess the accuracy of different conventions. Likewise, since history and biography are always narrated from one or another ideological perspective, it can be argued that what they present as reality is in fact an arbitrary (conventional) view of it.†[22]

The adoption of an "absolute standard" is the key notion here. Why draw a positivist notion into the argument and then go to the opposite extreme of relativism? The lack of absolute standards doesn't entail the absence of standards.

This strong family resemblance between fiction and literature is threatening only if the historian keeps "rigidly defining history according to the nineteenth-century scientific theory that posits a

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[21] Ibid., 101–2.
[22] Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative*, 79.

radical distinction between fact and philosophy or between fact and fiction."[23] These insights from the way historical language works reject positivism:

> History, of course, cannot simply emulate fiction, because historians must deal with what actually happened in the past. According to White and LaCapra, however, the contemporary representation of that past can and should transgress the methodological borders that our positivistic ancestors have bequeathed to the historical profession.[24]

Recent literary theory does attenuate the relationship between language and the " 'real' world," but not in the way Metcalfe requires. Metcalfe claims a distinction between the way "apologists" and "critical" researchers read that is undermined by the way he reads. Everyone works from assumptions—ideological assumptions—to conclusions; Metcalfe's naive Baconian inductivism isn't supported by his sources. Metcalfe's movement from ideology, to sources, to conclusion is illustrated by his (mis)appropriation of literary theory.

Metcalfe notes, correctly, that "recent literary theory focuses on the complex and attenuated relation between language and the 'real' world."[25] Both recent literary theory *and* recent historical theory attenuate the relationship between language and the "real" world. Most egregious of his recommendations is that readers peruse Hayden White. Metcalfe holds to a view of "critical" history that only those who believe in religion bring ideologies to their interpretation; "critical" commentators bring presuppositions but no ideologies and then apply neutral methods. But Metcalfe's sources claim the *historian's* language has a problematical relationship to reality. Positivist historians often believe in the neutral application of methods, without preconceived ideas or ideological contamination. The distinction between "true or empirical" narratives and "fictional" ones can't be upheld by

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23 Kramer, "Literature, Criticism, and Historical Imagination," 102.
24 Ibid., 107.
25 Metcalfe, "Apologetic and Critical Assumptions," 168 n. 48.

narrative theory. Historical narrative is fictive; fictional narrative is historical:

> So if we wish to demonstrate that the narrative genre as a whole refers to historicity as a whole, it is necessary to shatter the appearance of asymmetry between true narrative and fictional narrative at the level of reference. In other words, it must be shown that all narratives make, in a certain sense, a referential claim.
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> The argument divides into three steps. (1) It is necessary to establish that there is more *fiction in history* than the positivist conception of history admits. (2) Then it must be shown that fiction in general, and narrative fiction in particular, are more *mimetic* than the same positivism allows. (3) These two prior points being granted, I shall suggest that the references of empirical narrative and fictional narrative *cross upon* what I provisionally called historicity or the historical condition of man.[26]

The most important and inescapable consequence of narrative theory is its application to the historian's own position. The historian imaginatively reconstructs the record:

> For positivism, the task of history is to uncover the facts which are, as it were, buried in documents, just like, as Leibniz would have said, the statue of Hercules was lying dormant in the veins of marble. Against the positivist conception of the historical fact, more recent epistemology emphasises the "imaginative reconstruction" which characterises the work of the historian.[27]

Metcalfe also recommends Auerbach and Hayden White. The following are conclusions inescapable from these theorists:

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[26] Paul Ricoeur, "The Narrative Function," in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 289.
[27] Ibid.

However, the decisive step was taken when categories stemming from literary criticism, and more precisely from the semiotics of the narrative, were transferred to the field of history. History could then be explicitly treated as a "literary artefact," and the writing of history began to be reinterpreted according to categories which were variously called "semiotic," "symbolic" and "poetic." In this respect, the most influential works were Auerbach's *Mimesis*, Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* and Kenneth Burke's *A Grammar of Motives*, to which we may add the critique of the visual arts in Gombrich's *Art and Illusion* and the general theory of symbolic representation in Nelson Goodman's *Languages of Art*. These works have given rise to a general concept of the *fictional representation of reality*, the horizon of which is sufficiently broad to encompass both the writing of history and fiction, whether the latter be literary, pictorial or plastic.

We find in the work of Hayden White a good illustration of this "poetic" approach to the writing of history. . . . It would remain to be shown that contemporary historians, whose university status makes them more concerned to present themselves as "scientific" rather than "literary," lend themselves to the same analysis. Nevertheless, what seems to me to be of general significance in White's study is his attempt to establish, initially at the level of plot, the correlation between works of fiction and works of history.[28]

Metcalfe's misprision of narrative theory undermines the notion that "critical" historians begin from neutral assumptions and apply neutral methods. More accurately, narrative theory claims that all human historicity is narrative and all narrative ideological:

There does, in fact, appear to be an irreducible ideological component in every historical account of reality. That is to say, simply because history is *not* a

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[28]   Ibid., 290.

> science, or is at best a protoscience with specifically determinable nonscientific elements in its constitution, the very claim to have discerned some kind of formal coherence in the historical record brings with it theories of the nature of the historical world and of historical knowledge itself which have ideological implications for attempts to understand "the present," however this "present" is defined.†[29]

All history is ideological and that ideology is revealed as you analyze the historian's metaphorics and rhetoric.

Part of Metcalfe's rhetoric is the notion that "apologists" inject ideology from the beginning then find a method to support that position; ironically, this is Metcalfe's approach in his (mis)use of literary theory.

> All historical and social practices that seemed so natural are now understood for what they are: not expressions of nature but expressions of history. Some recent rhetorical analyses of the tropes employed in the writing of history suggest, in effect, that history and fiction are interchangeable genres.[30]

Metcalfe claims that two Book of Mormon narratives are sufficiently similar to negates historicity of the book. For Metcalfe, the representation of two kings, Noah and Riplakish, is so similar that they must be the same character invented by the same mind: "Everything we know about the Jaredite ruler bears an analogue to the corrupt Nephite king. These mirrorings suggest that one narrative may depend on the other, and that only one, or perhaps neither, represents a factual account of historical events."[31] If one uses "literary devices," one isn't writing history in this positivist scheme: "Still, allowing for a literary device, questions regarding historicity remain since it is possible that Noah and Riplakish were actually monogamists but were portrayed as polygamists to

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[29] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 21.

[30] David Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 36.

[31] Metcalfe, "Apologetic and Critical Assumptions," 170.

accentuate their debauchery. If Noah and Riplakish existed anciently, the historicity of every detail of their biographical sketches is nonetheless uncertain."[32] Here is the positivist claim that historians don't add anything to accounts they write, only novelists do.

> It is as risky for apologists to stake claims of Book of Mormon historicity on evidence from literary studies as it is on evidence from theories of geography. In fact, emphasis on literary phenomena may be even more precarious, since careful attention to literary features underscores the complicated relation between language and reality. Even if one could plausibly argue for the antiquity of the Book of Mormon within this context, the historicity of every Book of Mormon person and event would be suspect. Apologists must delineate why sacred fiction has greater religious merit when written by ancient prophets than a nineteenth-century prophet.[33]

This last statement is a classical formulation of the positivist division of history and literature. For a positivist, the patterns in history are inherent in the events themselves rather than part of the productive contribution of the historian. But this position can no longer be argued from contemporary historiography.

Metcalfe's sign of the literary/fictional nature of the Book of Mormon is in narrative theory a sign of all historical writing. White is the primary expositor of the idea that writing history is a poetic act that shapes and defines the narrative, inevitably: he emphasizes how the historian's consciousness shapes the material to ends the historian may or may not be aware of:

> On this level, I believe, the historian performs an essentially *poetic* act, in which he *pre*figures the historical field and constitutes it as a domain upon which to bring

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[32] Ibid., 170–71.

[33] Ibid., 171.

to bear the specific theories he will use to explain "what was *really* happening" in it.†[34]

White isn't alone in undermining boundaries between fiction and history: "Ricoeur does not erase the distinction between literary fiction and historiography, as I have been accused of doing, but he does scumble the line between them by insisting that both belong to the category of symbolic discourse and share a single 'ultimate referent.'" †[35] That ultimate referent is a symbolic transformation of temporality. But whether by historian or novelist,

> narrative discourse does not simply reflect or passively register a world already made; it works up the material given in perception and reflection, fashions it, and creates something new, in precisely the same way that human agents by their actions fashion distinctive forms of historical life out of the world they inherit as their past.†[36]

Ricoeur attacks the positivist separation of historical from fictive narrative.

> A robust conviction animates historians. Whatever may be said about the selective aspect of the gathering, conserving, and consulting of documents, or about their relationship to the questions historians put to them, or even about the ideological implications of all these maneuvers, the recourse to documents does indicate a dividing line between history and fiction. Unlike novels, historians' constructions do aim at being *recon-structions* of the past. Through their critical examinations of documents, historians are subject to what once was.[37]

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[34] White, *Metahistory*, x.

[35] Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 175.

[36] Ibid., 178.

[37] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David

Ricoeur undermines this notion: "White's recourse to tropology runs the risk of wiping out the boundary between fiction and history."[38]

White is aware of the problem but emphasizes the historian's imagination, the historian's creative and poetic act:

> With this declaration, White is not very far from what I shall consider below as the interweaving reference of fiction and history. But since he hardly shows us what is realistic in all fiction, only the fictional side of the purported realistic representation of the world is accentuated.[39]

Look at Ricoeur reading White on literature and history:

> But what history borrows from literature can by no means be limited to the level of composition, hence to the moment of configuration. What is borrowed also involves the representative function of the historical imagination. We learn to see a given series of events *as* tragic, *as* comic, and so on. What it is, precisely, that makes for the perenniality of certain great historical works, whose scientific reliability has been eroded by documentary progress, is the appropriateness of their poetic art and their rhetoric with respect to their way of "seeing" the past.[40]

Narrative theory doesn't deny historical reference; it does, however, problematize it. How we conceive narrative is partly a function of the ideological presuppositions we bring to stories. In a similar manner, literature can have an impact on the world; literature is doubly ideological and this is the dialectic in which we must see narrative:

> We might try to deny the problem, and take the question of the impact of literature on everyday experience as not pertinent. But then we paradoxically

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Pellauer, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984–88), 3:142–43.

38 Ibid., 154.
39 Ibid., 311 n. 39.
40 Ibid., 185–86.

ratify the positivism we generally fight against, namely, the prejudice that only a datum that is given in such a way that it can be empirically observed and scientifically described is real. We also enclose literature with a world of its own and break off the subversive point it turns against the moral and social orders.[41]

This narrative understanding undermines positivist positions requiring a radical break between literature and history. Positivism claims that historians don't truck in fiction and that fiction is radically distinct from history. But for Ricoeur, and narrative theory generally, fiction and history are referential in complex and interrelated ways:

> In this sense, fiction would borrow as much from history as history borrows from fiction. It is this reciprocal borrowing that authorizes my posing the problem of the *interweaving* reference between history and narrative fiction. This problem can be avoided only by a positivist conception of history that would not recognize the aspect of fiction in its reference through traces, and by an antireferential conception of literature that would not recognize the importance of the metaphorical reference in all poetry.[42]

The strong division between history and literature, in which the former simply reports the facts without embellishment and the latter is all invention, is a form of positivism. This claim is essential to Metcalfe's discussion of the Book of Mormon:

> Source-oriented [biblical] critics often imply that they deal in hard facts and consign "aesthetic" analysis to its fate at the none too reliable hands of the literary coterie. If seriously entertained, this is a delusion, bearing the name of positivism with none of its excuses and facilities. There is simply nothing here to be positive about—no, or almost no, facts concerning the

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[41] Ibid., 1:79.
[42] Ibid., 82.

sources of the Bible apart from those we ourselves make by inference from the Bible as source. The movement from text to reality cannot but pass through interpretation.†[43]

Sternberg devotes a long section entitled "Fiction and History" to Metcalfe's position, what Sternberg labels "positivism,"†[44] noting that fiction and history are always intermingled.†[45] The historian engages in a fictive task, which is not to say that history and fiction are the same. For Sternberg "there are simply no universals of historical vs. fictive form": "Nothing on the surface, that is, infallibly marks off the two genres. As modes of discourse, history and fiction make *functional* categories that may remain constant under the most assorted *formal* variations and are distinguishable only by their overall sense of purpose."†[46]

Alter too radically undermines the notion that literary and historical prose are two distinctively different approaches to writing: "history is far more intimately related to fiction than we have been accustomed to assume."†[47] It is too simplistic either to collapse history into fiction or insist on a radical disjunction. To make the narrative turn you must recognize a profound fictive element in history, in science, in lived experience. So when Alter calls the Bible "historicized prose fiction," this isn't a simplistic reduction of biblical writing to novelist creation.†[48] An implication of Alter's narrative theory is that history is also historicized prose fiction.

Narrative theory has become deeply imbedded in historiography. We all are born into the world and inherit narratives. Some of us just make distinctions among those narratives—labeling historical narratives as fundamentally different from mythical, legen-

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[43] Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 16.

[44] Ibid., 23–35.

[45] Ibid., 26–28.

[46] Ibid., 30.

[47] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic, 1981), 24.

[48] Ibid., 24.

dary, or fictional narratives. Recently the New Testament has passed in some people's minds from history to myth. Until recently, those espousing distinctions between types of stories (separating historical narratives from others based on fidelity to external reality) actually thought the nature of the world justified such distinctions. But recently, doubt has been cast on whether historical narratives are more rational or truthful than other narratives.[49] While historians are trained to remind readers of the provisional nature of the historical record, they haven't been trained to remind themselves or their readers of the fictive nature of historical writing:

> In general there has been a reluctance to consider historical narratives as what they most manifestly are: verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much *invented* as *found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences.†[50]

The constructed nature of historical narrative works is similar to the constructed narratives of the fiction writer:

> It is sometimes said that the aim of the historian is to explain the past by "finding," "identifying," or "uncovering" the "stories" that lie buried in chronicles"; and that the difference between "history" and "fiction" resides in the fact that the historian "finds" his stories, whereas the fiction writer "invents" his. This conception of the historian's task, however, obscures the extent to which "invention" also plays a part in the historian's operations.†[51]

Metcalfe's ideological position deconstructs because, "History and fiction have always been notoriously porous genres, of course."[52] Metcalfe's own sources have pioneered the destruction

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[49] John Passmore, "Narratives and Events," *History and Theory* Beiheft 26 (1987): 69.

[50] Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 82.

[51] White, *Metahistory*, 6–7.

[52] Linda Hutcheon, "'The Pasttime of Past Time': Fiction, History, Histo-

of this distinction. Hayden White presents a radical challenge to positivists who claim method as a historical approach free of ideology, who claim a history distinct from fiction:

> If the distinction between history and philosophy of history had been basic to historians, the most sacred boundary of all was that between history and fiction, and nothing outraged historians more than White's blurring of that dividing line. White did not deny that the historian dealt with events which were, in principle, observable, and which had a specific location in time and space, while imaginative writers were not so restricted. But for him the differences between a work of history and a novel were both less interesting and less significant than the similarities. They resembled each other not just in form, but in aim as well.[53]

Metcalfe doesn't inform his readers because his ideology refuses to recognize that narrativist approaches seriously threaten his own metaphysics of history: "Historians as well as philosophers came to realize that for those committed to the defense of historical objectivity, a literary or narrativist orientation was dangerous."[54]

This narrativist historiography concludes that the ideological and the fictive contributions of the historian are closely related. White's idea that fiction and history share so much that any attempt to drive them apart will result in failure is one resisted by most historians. Theoretically sophisticated historians have come to agree with him on this point since he made it in 1974:

> I know that this insistence on the fictive element in all historical narratives is certain to arouse the ire of historians who believe that they are doing something fundamentally different from the novelist, by virtue of

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riographic Metafiction," in *Postmodern Genres*, ed. Marjorie Perloff (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 56.

53   Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 600.

54   Ibid., 624.

the fact that they deal with "real," while the novelist deals with "imagined," events.†[55]

This notion is an antidote to the simplistic idea that historians are ideology free. "It may be observed that if historians were to recognize the fictive element in their narratives, this would not mean the degradation of historiography to the status of ideology or propaganda. In fact, this recognition would serve as a potent antidote to the tendency of historians to become captive of ideological preconceptions which they do not recognize as such but honor as the 'correct' perception of 'the way things *really* are.'" Instead, recognizing the fictive element in history would permit the historian to be more self-conscious about the imaginative and symbolic he or she imbues in historical writing.

> By drawing historiography nearer to its origins in literary sensibility, we should be able to identify the ideological, because it is the fictive, element in our own discourse. We are always able to see the fictive element in those historians with whose interpretations of a given set of events we disagree; we seldom perceive that element in our own prose. So, too, if we recognized the literary or fictive element in every historical account, we would be able to move the teaching of historiography onto a higher level of self-consciousness than it currently occupies.†[56]

For White, history is in a sorry state because it attempted to emulate science and forgot its roots in imagination and literature.

History's literary turn has been so dramatic over the past 30 years that Kermode's statement from 1966 is no longer true: "Nobody, so far as I know, has ever tried to relate the theory of literary fictions to the theory of fictions in general."†[57] Theorists have since related literary fictions to historical fictions, as Kermode anticipates:

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[55] White, *Tropics of Discourse*, 98.

[56] Ibid., 99.

[57] Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 36.

> But that there *is* a simple relation between literary and other fictions seems, if one attends to it, more obvious than has appeared. If we think first of modern fictions, it can hardly be an accident that ever since Nietzsche generalized and developed the Kantian insights, literature has increasingly asserted its right to an arbitrary and private choice of fictional norms, just as historiography has become a discipline more devious and dubious because of our recognition that its methods depend to an unsuspected degree on myths and fictions.†[58]

Recognition that historical narratives are fictive poses tremendous challenges to traditionalist history. Ignorance of the fictive nature of history results in myth. Historians subscribe to myths; the question is whether or not they will do so consciously and critically: "We have to distinguish between myths and fictions. Fictions can degenerate into myths whenever they are not consciously held to be fictive."†[59] Historians lapse into mythology in refusing to hold myths such as the history/literature dichotomy as fictive.

Kermode's position was prescient and anticipated much of what White, LaCapra, and Kellner say today; but it wasn't commonplace in the 1960s:

> The recognition, now commonplace, that the writing of history involves the use of regulative fictions, is part of the same process. World history, the imposition of a plot on time, is a substitute for myth. . . . The decline of paradigmatic history, and our growing consciousness of historiography's irreducible element of fiction, are, like the sophistication of literary plotting, contributions to what Wild called "the decay lying." We fall into "careless habits of accuracy."†[60]

Resorting to narrative is to complicate (not deny or denigrate) the concept of accuracy itself.

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[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., 39.
[60] Ibid., 43.

Recurrence in History

Metcalfe claims that thematic recurrence can mean a denial of historicity, but this non sequitur requires further examination. Lehi and his party leave Jerusalem and travel three days. The three day's journey is an exodus motif; consequently, the text surrenders referential claims for Metcalfe:

> The length of the journey (three days) seems to depend on a literary motif from Exodus. Given this dependence, one wonders how Sorenson can confidently identify the lengths of other Book of Mormon migrations, which may also be motific or symbolic rather than literal, especially when points of departure and arrival are not known. In other words, the specific details of a history are at worst compromised by, and at best are always filtered through, literary forms and conventions as well as linguistic structures.[61]

All history is in question if literary forms, conventions, and linguistic structures are fictional signs. The unstated assumption is that conventionality mitigates the historical claims of a narrative:

> Why should the presence of convention preclude reference to reality? The truth is almost exactly converse. All reference to reality (including pointing with the finger) is conventionally ordered. Language is an immensely rich system of conventions and is the best means we have of referring to the real.[62]

This statement is representative of a broad challenge to simplistic mimetic principles. Alter develops a framework for understanding allusion, the tradition, and the conventions by which reality is shaped by heritage. The Bible is a most allusive text and this allusiveness explains the resort to exodus terminology.

> Such promiscuous borrowing occurs again and again in literary history not because of any poverty of imagi-

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[61] Metcalfe, "Apologetic and Critical Assumptions," 161–62.

[62] Robert Alter, *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age* (New York: Touchstone, 1989), 54, citing A. D. Nutall's *The New Mimesis*.

nation but rather because the language in which the literary imagination speaks is constituted by all the antecedent literary works available to the writer.[63]

How one reads that tradition is crucial to understanding predecession, the anxiety of influence, canon.

For Alter, Joshua's river crossing not only builds on the Reed Sea story, but also develops subtle allusion to other narratives: the hiding of Moses in the ark, the story of the spies. The complex allusive weave depends on readers being as culturally literate as the writer.[64] Metcalfe's "method" of interpreting repetition in narrative is not only contrary to current literary theory but is also just another regurgitation of the positivist claim that the historian reports events as they really happened.

I will raise the issue of recurrence using the exodus theme. Metcalfe doesn't tell his readers that if you accept his proposition, you would not only have to reject the historical claims of the Book of Mormon but also the Bible and virtually all other ancient writing. Metcalfe's principle is ethnocentric, anachronistic, and presentist by insisting that all narrative, ancient and modern, be governed by his own philosophy of history.

I will comment a little on the pervasiveness of the exodus theme in the Bible. If you take up Metcalfe's position, then you have to explain why you are applying these principles exclusively to the Book of Mormon. Just how recurrent is the exodus theme in the Bible?

> At one time I planned to write on Patterns of Deliverance in the Bible, believing that there must be several of about equal eminence. I soon discovered that there was none remotely comparable to the exodus. That epic stands out in imposing its presuppositions and categories on others. Of course, different patterns do exist, but they are very minor in comparison. At first sight one would think that such a general one as that dominant in the book of Judges must be independent: calamity befalls the children of Israel when they turn

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63 Ibid., 113.
64 Ibid., 116–19.

from God, but he relents when they "cry" to him. From that phraseology alone, however, it is obvious that even here the exodus is serving as model: God had been moved by the "cry" of those oppressed in Egypt.[65]

How many biblical stories would you brand as products of the same mind and fictional because they match the exodus pattern? (1) Abraham's departure from Mesopotamia, (2) Jacob's encounter with Laban, (3) the Philistine capture and return of the ark, (4) the series of oppressions and deliverances in Judges, (5) the return from Babylonian captivity, (6) Esther's near escape with her people from a pogrom, (7) Jesus' status as a new Moses, (8) Paul's portrayal of the Christian experience as a new exodus, with baptism representing the passage through the Red Sea, (9) the repetition of the exodus in the book of Hebrews. Dozens more are possible.

Biblical believers have seen exoduses being reenacted in their own lives: that is, until Christians and Jews were converted to a religion called modernity and then mistook these typological exercises to be mere literary tropes:

> In the Bible, however, the matrix for allusion is often a sense of absolute historical continuity and recurrence, or an assumption that earlier events and figures are timeless ideological models by which all that follows can be measured. Since many of the biblical writers saw history as a pattern of cyclical repetition of events, there are abundant instances of this first category of allusion.[66]

Alter focuses on the Joshua story as a repetition of the Israelites' passage from Egypt.[67] A sophisticated approach to the text sees in the narrative parallel an intentional, artful effect.[68]

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[65] David Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 11–12.

[66] Robert Alter, *The World of Biblical Literature* (New York: BasicBooks, 1992), 117.

[67] Ibid., 117–23.

[68] Ibid., 123–24.

Metcalfe dismisses the Book of Mormon for having a hermeneutic it must have if the writers were Hebraic. Metcalfe's gaffes about literary concerns are evident: "Attention to other literary forms and structures can be similarly problematic. One striking literary phenomenon in the Book of Mormon is the instance of narratives which mirror each other."[69] Metcalfe refers to the similarities between the Noah and Riplakish narratives:

> B. H. Roberts's contention that storyline repetitions may simply be evidence of Joseph Smith's "amateurishness" is too simplistic. The Book of Mormon and other Mormon scriptures espouse a radically cyclical view of history in which clandestine brotherhoods, theology, heresy, conversion, apostasy, ritual, socio-economics, politics, and so on are repeating facets of human existence. From this perspective the Book of Mormon accommodates nineteenth-century theology *precisely* because antebellum thought is seen as a reverberation of former ideas revealed by God, the devil, or humankind.[70]

By now, you are unlikely to take anything solely on Metcalfe's authority. You are hardly likely to accept Metcalfe's claims when appealing to authorities because he cites texts to support his position that more realistically have to be read in opposition.

So what do we do with Metcalfe's claim that the Book of Mormon *precisely* accommodates Joseph Smith's environment? What is the source of this cyclical view of history so prevalent in nineteenth-century America?

Biblical belief, like other belief systems (including positivism), imposes a particular epistemology and ontology on the believer (some epistemologies and ontologies are more flexible than others, but that seems a different essay). Biblical belief requires a typological commitment. Because the Bible overwhelmingly emphasizes repetition, Puritans, African slaves, Mormons, and many others saw history repeating itself in their own experi-

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69   Metcalfe, "Apologetic and Critical Assumptions," 169.
70   Ibid., 169 n. 51.

ences.[71] More important, Metcalfe surely can't be ignorant of the fact that recurrence dominates the biblical milieu. His sources emphasize this repetitive quality as do many of the studies Metcalfe criticizes.[72] Many sources affirm biblical repetition:

> The Deuteronomic history affords some pertinent examples of how given actions (usually taken to be of real significance) have been repeated later in the deeds of others. In Joshua, for instance, the Jordan crossing was consciously likened to the Exodus and the travers-ing of the Red Sea (Josh. iv 23, and see verses 6, 7, 21, cf. Deut. vi 20; Exod. xii 26–27), and Joshua came to possess the attributes of a "second Moses." We are meant to recognize, too, that the first crossing of the Jordan was later re-enacted by Elijah and Elisha, who both struck the water with a mantle (2 Kgs ii 8, 14). The interesting Captivity-Exodus motif also makes an appearance. This motif was present in prophetic works

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[71] I can easily recall a number of other groups who saw the exodus repeated in their lives: Dutch reformers under the control of Spain, French Huguenots during the wars of religion, Boer settlers in South Africa, liberation theologians.

[72] I provided bibliographic information for this position about the bibli-cal conception of history in my master's thesis (Alan Goff, "A Hermeneutic of Sacred Texts: Historicism, Revisionism, Positivism, and the Bible and the Book of Mormon" [master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1989], 171–87). Metcalfe has apparently read this thesis (Metcalfe, "Apologetic and Critical Assumptions" 155 n. 7) but chooses not to cite that rather large literature that would undermine his ideological point. In Michael Quinn's terminology, this would make Metcalfe a "dishonest apologist," for Quinn claims: "Contrary to Honey and Peterson, writers are certainly 'dishonest or bad historians' if they fail to acknowledge the existence of even one piece of evidence they know chal-lenges or contradicts the rest of their evidence. If this omission of relevant evi-dence is inadvertent, the author is careless. If the omission is an intentional effort to conceal or avoid presenting the reader with evidence that contradicts the preferred view of the writer, that is fraud whether by a scholar or a non-scholar, historian or other specialist. If authors write in a scholarly style, they are equally dishonest if they fail to acknowledge any significant work whose inter-pretations differ from their own." D. Michael Quinn, "Introduction," in D. Michael Quinn, ed., *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1992), xiii n. 5.

at the time of the Exile, when a disaster comparable to the Egyptian bondage had occurred.[73]

The cyclical quality of biblical historiography isn't restricted to just the Pentateuch.[74] Trompf notes the Chronicler's view of history as recurrent, and the positivist attitude proclaiming historians shouldn't be involved in the conceptual shaping of the material just doesn't apply to biblical writers:

> Thus when the Chronicler wished to suggest that older actions or activities were re-enacted in more recent times, and when he adjusted his description of older events to strengthen the desired impression, he was doing history as he understood it and his disclosure of significances in events was integral to his historiographical enterprise, and was not just passing theological reflection over and above his narrative.
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> Admittedly one should be cautious here. It is all very well to write off parallelisms, correspondences or even re-enactment in the Chronicler's history, but was he really concerned with historical recurrence? Were his chief concerns really rather different—to legitimate certain post-exilic cultic offices (von Rad), or to illustrate religious continuity between the monarchical and restoration periods (Ackroyd), or to write a series of *midrashim* on the Hexateuch (Gouldner)? Certainly his sense of precedence and continuity cannot be denied, but why should we suppose that such a sense automatically excludes notions of historical repetition? We moderns, of course, tend to treat parallelism, foreshadowing and the like as a rather anaemic variation on the recurrence idea, suggesting the loosest, least precise of repetitions. We may even want to argue that once we include parallelism under the umbrella of recurrence then the idea of recurrence has become too broad to be meaningful. But can we impose our logical distinctions

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[73]   G. W. Trompf, "Notions of Historical Recurrence in Classical Hebrew Historiography," in *Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament*, ed. J. A. Emerton (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 214.

[74]   Ibid., 215.

on archaic minds which share a different conceptual framework? The ancient historian usually worked out such correspondences, however allusively, with the utmost seriousness; they brought cohesion and deep significance to his narrative *qua* history.[75]

The repetitive quality of biblical narrative is most notable when two narratives are seemingly versions of the same event, Metcalfe's charge against the Book of Mormon:

> The two most distinctively biblical uses of repeated action are when we are given two versions of the same event when the same event, with minor variations, occurs at different junctures of the narrative, usually involving different characters or sets of characters. . . . The recurrence of the same event—the sameness being definable as a fixed sequence of narrative motifs which, however, may be presented in a variety of ways and sometimes with ingenious variations—is what I have called "type-scene," and it constitutes a central organizing convention of biblical narrative.†[76]

Zakovitch uses the same terminology as Metcalfe—mirrorings and repetitions—but to quite different effect, with a more sophisticated textual theory:

> I will examine the narrators' use of covert allusions to other narratives known to them and to their audience; specifically, instances where the biblical narrator shaped a character, or his or her actions, as the antithesis of a character in another narrative and that character's actions. The new creation awakens in the reader undeniable associations to the source story; the relationship between the new narrative and its source is like that between an image and its mirrored reflection: the reflection inverts the storyline of the original narrative. Thus, the discerning reader, considering the implicit relation between the two narratives—the original and its

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[75] Ibid., 218–19.
[76] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 181.

reflection—and observing how the new character behaves contrary to the character upon which he or she is modeled, will evaluate the new hero in light of the model, both with regard to the action and the lack of action. In addition, the comparison created between the two stories sheds new light on the source story and its protagonist.

I call these "inverted" stories reflection stories.[77]

Zakovitch concludes his examination of how some Genesis stories reverberate throughout the Bible by claiming that reading biblical literature with some canonical consciousness is essential; the stories are meant to refer to each other, and only the most inadequate readers assume a simplistic relationship between narrative analogies:

> In contrast to what we have been taught by biblical scholars in the past who isolated literary units and analyzed them with no interest in their canonical content, one realizes that the biblical narrators did not function in a cultural-literary vacuum but constructed their stories in dialogue with existing compositions known to their audience. The narrators propound a riddle to their readers, from whom they expect a high level of sophistication—a reader who absorbs the links and discerns the relationships between stories and their sources and who will take note of the contrasts between protagonists of the stories. The biblical narrator expects readers to become active partners, leaving to them the job of evaluating characters but equipping them with an important (though covert) tool: the reflection story. I invite all students of the Bible to place the phenomenon of reflection stories on their agendas.[78]

Metcalfe charges Joseph Smith with reflecting a biblical notion rather than a modern one and the presence of that biblical men-

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[77]   Yair Zakovitch, "Through the Looking Glass: Reflections/Inversions of Genesis Stories in the Bible," *Biblical Interpretation* 1/2 (July 1993): 139.

[78]   Ibid., 151–52.

tality in the Book of Mormon is evidence of the book's modern origin. It is a mind-boggling argument.

So if the idea of recurrence in antebellum America were adequately developed, we would say that antebellum Puritans, Mormons, and black slaves had a better understanding of the Bible and biblical ontology than does Metcalfe; just because events are related to traditional themes doesn't mean they are nonhistorical.

To argue that recurrence in the Book of Mormon could *only* come from antebellum America requires more discussion. Scholarship overwhelmingly contradicts his position. If "reverberations" in antebellum America derive from the Bible, then Metcalfe has a much more difficult task; if such recurrence exists in all cultures revering the Bible, how can Metcalfe single out one (antebellum America) as *the* source? Simply, Metcalfe commits himself to that position as an ideological presupposition and then casts about for a method to support that commitment.

We have finally agreed: a "radically cyclical view of history" was present in antebellum America. For Metcalfe, this can only mean that Joseph Smith absorbed it from his culture; a cyclical view of history is helpful to a novelist because you can recycle old plots. But must repetitions of the exodus pattern mean that the stories are fictional or the product of the same mind, as Metcalfe requires?

Think of some Americans who subscribed to typology. Puritans modeled their migration on the exodus.[79] The exodus theme was constant in their daily life.[80] Presumably, Puritans were fictional characters and their historical accounts in which they use exodus typology novelistic inventions.

Walzer notes a typological exodus reenactment in a 1960 sermon. The preacher "acted out" a type of the Hebrews in slavery, relating it to the congregation's own experience with American apartheid. He was at the time studying the exodus as a type in the Puritan Revolution. He cites Oliver Cromwell who called the exo-

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[79] Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 65–66.

[80] Ursula Brumm, *American Thought and Religious Typology* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 46–47.

dus "the only parallel of God's dealing with us that I know in the world." Cromwell also warned against the return to Egyptian slavery that would constitute a restoration of the monarchy.[81] Since that sermon, Walzer has "found the Exodus almost everywhere."[82]

If the Puritans had developed a different notion of typology (Luther's is the example Lowance gives) they would not have had the resources with which to develop a "sense of continuity between their own mission and Old Israel's Exodus from Egypt."[83] Since the reformation, Protestants were urged to view their lives as typological reenactments of biblical events.[84]

Metcalfe's principle would also turn the slavery of millions of Africans and their descendants into a mere novelistic plot structure. But their notion of recurrence resulted from a typological identification across time and culture with the Israelites.[85] The relationship between language and historical event is too complex for such principles.

Some spirituals were codes for black aspirations.[86] These slaves sang of Israel's exodus and put themselves in the place of the escaped slaves.[87] For the slaves,

> Songs based on Old Testament stories were not simply a source of comfort and identification; they were in fact spiritual vehicles by means of which enslaved Africans transported themselves into the actual experience of the Israelites in bondage, utilizing biblical accounts

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[81]   Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic, 1985), 3–4.

[82]   Ibid., 4.

[83]   Mason I. Lowance, Jr., *The Language of Canaan: Metaphor and Symbol in New England from the Puritans to the Transcendentalists* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 27.

[84]   Barbara K. Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 131.

[85]   James H. Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1972), 32–33.

[86]   Arthur C. Jones, *Wade in the Water: The Wisdom of the Spirituals* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 44.

[87]   Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 249.

of ultimate victory to sustain their parallel visions of victory in America.[88]

The exodus has a protean quality for all oppressed people, but the more similar the circumstances, the more effective the identification. It wasn't the Bible in general that the slaves typologically relived, but the exodus:

> But the preeminent relevance of the Old Testament for blacks, as many of the most famous spirituals bear witness, was found in the story of the Exodus. The Egyptian captivity of the people of Israel, their miraculous deliverance from the hands of the pharaohs, and their eventual possession of the land promised by God to their ancestors—this was the inspiration to which the black believer so often turned in the dark night of the soul.
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> Whenever the Judeo-Christian tradition is made known to an oppressed people, the scenario of election, captivity, and liberation in the Old Testament seems to have a special appeal. The story of the deliverance of Israel from slavery has always been understood as the prototype of racial and nationalistic redemption—the divine revelation of the transhistorical meaning of historical experience.[89]

These slaves relived the Israelite experience,[90] but nobody would consign that life to fictional status.

No historian would consign the lives of millions of slaves to fiction just because they thought typologically; if you dismissed events grounded in typology, you would dismiss as fictional virtually all history written before the eighteenth century.[91] You can disagree with the philosophy of history buttressing biblical

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[88] Jones, *Wade in the Water*, 42–43; cf. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 250.

[89] Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983), 37.

[90] Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 311.

[91] Norman F. Cantor and Richard I. Schneider, *How to Study History* (New York: Crowell, 1967), 58–60.

typology: but you would have put at risk your own historical presuppositions as products of particular historical circumstances.

Other Americans saw Old Testament history repeating itself in their own circumstances. The exodus archetype structured the Latter-day Saints' journey to the Great Basin.[92] A strong typological connection existed between biblical Israel's exodus and the Mormon exodus.[93] Recurrence, like the historically linear positivism of Metcalfe, is an idea the historian brings with him or her, a strategy of emplotment the historian uses to derive meaning from history. You can critique a typological view of history only from within some other view of history.

Exodus in Mosiah

Metcalfe selects only a few exodus elements from the Book of Mormon to support his position that any "literary" elements indicate a fictional text. Being selective has the advantage of not requiring a sophisticated reading. If the exodus elements in the Book of Mormon are pervasive, does that strengthen Metcalfe's case that the book is a novel? But any biblical milieu, any biblical ontology requires exodus patterns. Metcalfe places the Book of Mormon in a double-bind: (1) if the book demonstrates exodus patterns, it is fiction or (2) if the book doesn't exhibit exodus patterns, then it isn't genuinely Hebraic. But there are more sophisticated ways of reading complex texts:

> Whether viewed positivistically or seen as an inspired text, the Bible is the beginning of a trajectory leading toward full freedom and equality for all persons. This movement has its initial historical stimulus, perhaps, in the Exodus, the liberation of Hebrew slaves from Egyptian bondage. This event, which they saw as divinely caused, has served as a model for ancient Israel

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92   James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 223. Eugene England, *Brother Brigham* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 102–7.

93   Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 96. Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 81.

and its heirs, Judaism, Christianity and Islam—a model for interpreting subsequent events such as the repeated deliverances of Israel and of the Jewish people, the "exodus" of Jesus (for that is what Luke 9:31 calls his death) and the *hegira* of Muhammed. It has also served as a model of conduct: "You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 23:9).[94]

I will restrict my analysis to the Zeniff narrative. Nephi consciously reenacts the exodus in his departure from Jerusalem.[95] So too, when Zeniff leads Nephites into the wilderness reclaiming the land of Nephi, he overtly recalls the language of Nephi:

Nephi	**Zeniff**
I, Nephi,	I, Zeniff,
a. having been born of goodly parents,	a. having been taught in all THE LANGUAGE OF THE NEPHITES, and
b. therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and	a. having had a knowledge of the land of Nephi, or of the land of our fathers' first inheritance, and
a. having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless,	a. having been sent as a spy among the Lamanites that I might spy out their forces, that our army might come upon them and destroy them—but when I saw that which was good among them I was desirous that they should not be destroyed.
a. having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea,	
a. having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God,	
b. therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days.	b. Therefore, I contended with my brethern in the wilderness (Mosiah 9:1–2)
b. Yea, I make a record in THE LANGUAGE OF MY FATHER (1 Nephi 1:1–2)	

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94   Michael D. Coogan, "The Great Gulf between Scholars and the Pew," *Bible Review* 10 (June 1994): 48, 55.

95   Goff, "A Hermeneutic of Sacred Texts," 133–54.

This archaizing approach invokes Nephi's exodus as a frame for Zeniff's. Nephi's beautifully balanced first sentence set up by both pronoun and noun followed by four absolute clauses before the sentence hurries on to its conclusion is a gorgeously written periodic sentence in English. The three absolute clauses conclude with the sentence adverb *therefore*, adding emphasis to the three clauses individually and in parallel. Zeniff has constructed a similar sentence that through indirection in the third absolute clause gets lost in the wilderness of grammar as Zeniff does in the narrative (Mosiah 9:4). Moreover, Nephi uses his four absolute clauses to praise God, which naturally leads to the conclusion (*therefore*) that he should keep a record of God's saving acts.

Zeniff's record is deliberately archaizing, but so is the surrounding text. When Limhi hears from the Zarahemla colony, he invokes not only the Israelite exodus, but also the exodus of Nephi out of Jerusalem—as parallel cases of God's salvation, for God will do the same for them:

> Therefore, lift up your heads, and rejoice, and put your trust in God, in that God who was the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; and also, that God who brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, and caused that they should walk through the Red Sea on dry ground, and fed them with manna that they might not perish in the wilderness; and many more things did he do for them.
>
> And again, that same God has brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem, and has kept and preserved his people even until now; and behold, it is because of our iniquities and abominations that he has brought us into bondage. (Mosiah 7:19–20)

Zeniff's three absolute clauses move the narrative forward, but to violence and war; like Nephi, Zeniff ends up contending "with [his] brethren in the wilderness" (Mosiah 9:2).

While spy stories are common in the Deuteronomistic history (Judges 7:9–15; 18:1–10, 14, 17; Joshua 2:1–24; 6:25; 7:2; 2 Samuel 10:3), this spying out of the land evokes the twelve spies Moses sent to survey the land (Numbers 13). Moses enjoins his spies to discover if the land is "good or bad" (Numbers 13:19).

Zeniff wants to inhabit the land rather than destroy the current inhabitants because he "saw that which was good among them [and] I was desirous that they should not be destroyed" (Mosiah 9:1). God saw that which was good in the creation and saw in the new creation of a chosen people a new, but similar genesis: when Moses is born his mother looks on him and pronounces him good (Exodus 2:2). The connection between Moses' birth and the creation was seen by the rabbis long ago.[96] Documentary critics note the combination of the word *to see* and the pronouncement that the object seen is *good* is present in both passages: "in the spirit of good creation, the author of Exodus 2:10 borrows the words of Genesis."[97] Similarly in the Zeniff story, "when I *saw* that which was *good* among them [the Lamanites] I was desirous that they should not be destroyed" (Mosiah 9:1).

Seeing something good (*kî tôb*) occurs six times in the creation and again in the story of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:6), when the *nephilim* look on the daughters of men (*kî tôb*) (Genesis 6:2), when Moses' mother sees that he is good (*kî tôb*), and the phrase appears twice in Joseph story (Genesis 40:16 and 49:15). As you might expect with such parallels, Kikawada and Quinn see the Joseph story as parallel to the primeval history, particularly the Babel story; in both stories a "dispersion or exodus" results.[98] Already, the destiny of the Zeniff colony is foreshadowed.

Zeniff negotiates for possession of the land. They till the ground and "did begin to multiply and prosper in the land" (Mosiah 9:9), just as the children of Israel did in Egypt, for "the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them" (Exodus 1:7). This causes the Lamanite king to "grow uneasy" (Mosiah 9:11). Just as the new king of Egypt grows uneasy, saying, "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we" (Exodus 1:9).

Stratagem must be resorted to "*lest* by any means my people should wax strong in the land, and that they [the Lamanites] could not overpower them and bring them into bondage" (Mosiah

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96 Isaac M. Kikawada and Arthur Quinn, *Before Abraham Was: The Unity of Genesis 1–11* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 114–15.

97 Ibid., 115.

98 Ibid., 121.

9:11). So also with the Egyptian king, "let us deal wisely with them; *lest* they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies" (Exodus 1:10). The exodus story is connected to the Babel story. Pharaoh's deception is matched in the Zeniff story: "Come let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply." In Babel the people say "let us build a city and a tower whose top is in the sky, let us make a name, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth." Likewise, in Zeniff's story, the king of the Lamanites "began to grow uneasy, lest by any means my people should wax strong in the land" (Mosiah 9:11). "This particular grammatical structure—*habah* + cohortative + 'lest'—seems to occur only one other place in the whole Bible," in the Babel story.[99] So while Pharaoh "deals wisely" with the Israelites, the Lamanite king also has a plan to bring the Zeniffites into bondage (Mosiah 9:10).

The inevitable hostilities soon follow. Zeniff recounts the conflict in technical exodus terminology: "In the strength of the Lord did we go forth to battle against the Lamanites; for I and my people did cry mightily to the Lord that he would deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, for we were awakened to a remembrance of the deliverance of our fathers" (Mosiah 9:17). Their circumstances recall previous acts of deliverance. The people cry and the Lord "hears" (Mosiah 9:18). The pattern is an exodus pattern:

> And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.
>
> And God heard their groaning, and remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. (Exodus 2:23–24)

Sometimes the term *mosia*ʿis used ("but there is no *mosia*ʿ ") in the context of the cry for help. Sometimes it is used without the connection to the cry. Many times the cry is heard and the Lord sends a *mosia*ʿ.[100]

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99   Ibid., 117.

100   John Sawyer, "What Was a *Mosiaʿ*?" *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (1965):

This pattern of captivity/cry/deliverance reverberates through-out the Bible: "We often hear the 'cry' of the children of Israel. . . . It occurs in the story itself, in the references to the story and in other stories fashioned on the exodus."[101] When the Zeniffites are in peril, they cry, God hears, and God delivers.

The cry to Yahweh is also important to the Deuteronomist. In spite of Israel's sinning since the time of Joshua, their destruction could nevertheless be averted by the cry to Yahweh.[102] Judges 3:7–11 is paradigmatic of the Judges pattern. It introduces individual stories of deliverance:[103]

> And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgat the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves.
>
> Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years.
>
> And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. (Judges 3:7–9)

This time, the Zeniffites are delivered from captivity. But the Judges pattern is one of continuing cycles of wickedness and the need for further *mosiahs*. Following hard upon this deliverance, the circumstances change.

Just as the change from welcome aliens in Egypt to unwelcome strangers results in the state slavery of the Israelites, the Zeniffites too go from freedom to slavery. For 22 years peace persists. But conditions deteriorate with a change in kingship

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476–77.

[101] Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible*, 27.

[102] Hans W. Wolff, "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomic Historical Work," in *The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions*, ed. Walter Brueggemann and Hans Walter Wolff, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: Knox, 1982), 87.

[103] A. D. H. Mayes, "The Period of the Judges and the Rise of the Monarchy," in *Israelite and Judaean History*, ed. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 292.

(Mosiah 10:6). This situation is parallel to the arising of a "new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (Exodus 1:8).

The exodus pattern is also explicit in the penalties Abinadi pronounces. Just as the Philistines suffer plagues (1 Samuel 5:6–11; 6:4, 6), just as the Egyptians suffer plagues (Exodus 8–9), the Zeniffites too experience plagues (Mosiah 12:4–7). Some of these pestilences conjure exodus parallels.

The exodus typology of plagues and pestilence also prefigures events. Genesis 13:1–2 has Abram departing Egypt with cattle, gold, and silver. This occurs after God has sent a plague on Pharaoh's house, just as the Israelites departed Egypt with gold and silver jewelry after God sent a plague.[104] Plagues are necessary ingredients in departures from Egypt wherever they occur.

Abinadi also must reteach Noah and his priests the law of Moses because none knows or teaches it (Mosiah. 12:26–37). Abinadi is a new Moses come down to reassert the law of Moses in a crucial time in Nephite history. Nephi not only invokes Moses and the exodus (1 Nephi 17:40–42) and accuses his brothers of rebelling against him as the Israelites did against Moses; Abinadi does as well. Nephi, like Moses come from the mountain, is "filled with the power of God" (1 Nephi 17:48). His brothers retreat in fear. So too Abinadi invokes the Moses model and the contestants dare not touch him: "Now it came to pass after Abinadi had spoken these words that the people of king Noah durst not lay their hands on him, for the Spirit of the Lord was upon him; and his face shone with exceeding luster, even as Moses' did while in the mount of Sinai, while speaking with the Lord" (Mosiah 13:5).

Moses' glow was important in establishing him as God's ṣelem (Heb. "image") or agent. He glowed when his leadership was challenged or to provide testimony that God spoke through him (Exodus 34:31–35). "This act of removing his veil before God and the people must be understood as Moses' response to the crisis of leadership suffered by the Israelites."[105] Abinadi is, of course, executed after he delivers his message. Noah is willing to

104 Umberto Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), 79.

105 H. Hirsch Cohen, *The Drunkenness of Noah* (Mobile: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 74–75.

forgive any trespass against God, but not against Noah. The legal charge against Abinadi is that he claims God will come down among his people (Mosiah 17:8). Blasphemy is the crime, but Noah will let Abinadi off: Abinadi doesn't have to withdraw this "blasphemy" but does have to "recall all the words which thou hast spoken evil concerning me and my people" (Mosiah 17:8).

Abinadi's preaching seems to have no effect on Noah and his people. Abinadi seems to have made only one convert. Alma hears, believes, and repents. He flees into the wilderness and forms his own community. Alma's communal baptism is a type of the Red Sea crossing.[106]

Noah dies and Limhi is made king. His generation will pay for the sins of Noah: they are in bondage to the Lamanites having to pay half their possessions in tribute (Mosiah 19:26). This is slavery pure and simple.

Deliverance terminology occurs so often throughout the Book of Mormon that the attentive reader must address it. Slavery terminology had a heavy impact on Hebrew tradition. It isn't surprising, then, at the beginning of the Zeniff narrative to have Egyptian slavery, the Lehi group's escape from Jerusalem, and the Zeniff group's bondage typologically compressed into a unity:

> For behold,
> > a. we are in bondage
> > > b. to the Lamanites,
> > > > c. and are taxed
> > > > c. with *a tax which is grievous to be borne.*
> And now, behold,
> > a. our brethren will deliver us out of our bondage,
> > > b. or out of the hands of the Lamanites,
> > > > c. and we will be their slaves;
> > a. for it is better that we be slaves
> > > b. to the Nephites
> > > > c. than to pay tribute
> > > b. to the king of the Lamanites. (Mosiah 7:15)

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[106] George S. Tate, "The Typology of the Exodus Pattern in the Book of Mormon," in *Literature of Belief: Sacred Scripture and Religious Experience*, ed. Neal E. Lambert (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1981), 252–53.

This passage equates slavery and taxation. This isn't surprising considering the Israelite context had a fine distinction between the two. Tax levies could be paid off through forced labor—corvée. In fact, this verse should be juxtaposed to Benjamin's speech, proclaiming his prohibition of slavery and not burdening his people with taxes (Mosiah 2:13–14). Benjamin says he prevented slavery and worked with his hands so as not to impose taxes which would be "grievous to be borne" (Mosiah 2:14). The account later connects taxation and the people's labor (Mosiah 11:6).

Limhi continues this vein when he declares a few verses later that his people will soon "no longer be in subjection to our enemies" (Mosiah 7:18). He sees some analogy between their own circumstances and (1) the Israelites in Egypt as well as (2) the Lehites as they made their exodus from Jerusalem:

> Rejoice,
> a. and put your trust in God,
> a. in that God who was the God of Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob;
> a. and also, that God who
> > b. *brought the children of Israel out of* the land of Egypt
> > b. and caused that they should walk through the Red Sea on dry ground,
> > b. and fed them with manna that the might not perish in the wilderness;
> > b. and many more things did he do for them.
> And again
> a. that same God has
> > b. *brought our fathers out* of the land of Jerusalem,
> > b. and has kept and preserved his people even until now (Mosiah 7:19–20)

Lest we miss the message, Limhi tells us, using this technical word *brought*, that the king of the Lamanites has deceived them, "bringing this people into subjection or into bondage" (Mosiah 7:22), which bondage consists of the "tribute" paid to the Lamanites: which is "grievous to be borne" (Mosiah 7:23; cf. 1 Nephi 17:25).

The recitation of God's saving acts reminds us of Nephi's reference to the Israelites' being "brought out of bondage" (1 Nephi 17:25) followed by a recitation of the saving acts: Red Sea, manna, water. Nephi invokes Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the exodus (1 Nephi 17:40). Murmuring, the party refers to Nephi's having "brought them out of the land of Jerusalem" (1 Nephi 16:35) and desires to appoint a captain to return. The Lord himself is quoted using the same terminology because he did "bring you out of the land of Jerusalem" (1 Nephi 17:14). When Limhi explicitly uses this technical terminology, he combines both salvation and slavery terminology:

> Once the chains of captivity have been broken, the pilgrim God leads those he has redeemed along the road. He *brings them out* of Egypt and *brings them up* to a land promised to their ancestors. These two causative verbs of movement also become technical terms to describe the Exodus. "To bring out," also employed for the liberation of a slave or a prisoner, is a synonym for "to rescue, redeem"; it is found countless time in the account of the Exodus, often in legal formulas.[107]

The formula even precedes the exodus. It is applied in Genesis 15:7 to Abram's departure from Chaldea (see also Nehemiah 9:7). Weingreen connects the formula to the Decalogue, suggesting that rabbinic stories of Abraham's conflict with Nimrod may be based on ancient sources. This makes Abraham the prototype of Israelite heroes confronting heathen rulers.[108] Nimrod is then a Pharaoh-figure, just as Laban is, just as Pharaoh is, just as the king of Lamanites is, just as Amulon is, just as the Soviet Communist Party leader was.

Just as the Israelites are made to serve in "bitter" and "hard bondage" (Exodus 1:14), so too are the Zeniffites forced to endure "heavy burdens upon their backs" (Mosiah 21:3). You fill in the blanks:

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[107] Brother John of Taize, *The Pilgrim God* (Washington, DC: Pastoral, 1985), 32.

[108] J. Weingreen, "'Bringing Out' in Genesis 15:7," in *Words and Meanings*, ed. Peter R. Ackroyd and Barnabas Lindars (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 212–13.

And the _____s evil entreated us, and afflicted us,
and laid upon us hard bondage:

And when we cried unto the Lord God of our
fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our
affliction and our labour, and our oppression:

And the Lord brought us forth out of _____ with a
mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with
great terribleness, and with signs and wonders.
(Deuteronomy 26:6–8)

Until the people repent, the Lord is under no compulsion to
deliver them. Because the Zeniffites had been forewarned, "the
Lord was slow to hear their cry because of their iniquities"
(Mosiah 21:15). He does listen (just as 1 Samuel 8:18 says the
Lord will not listen to the people's cries when they are enslaved
by their king), after the lesson is learned.

The Lord hears the cry of the oppressed, finding a way to
"bring out" the enslaved. Exodus 6:2–8 and Genesis 17:1–8 are
closely connected with the emphasis on covenant. God "hears"
the cries which remind him of the covenant, just as in Genesis
9:14–16 God "sees" the rainbow which reminds him of the
covenant.[109] Limhi and his people "covenant with God to serve
him and keep his commandments" (Mosiah 21:31).

After the Zeniffites repent, the Lord lightens their burdens
(Mosiah 21:15). The deliverance must await a *mosiah*. Gideon, the
deliverer, proposes that he be the king's servant and "deliver this
people out of bondage" (Mosiah 22:4). The word *mosîaᶜ* was one
used in the Bible "invariably implying a champion of justice in a
situation of controversy, battle or oppression. In the legal lan-
guage of Deuteronomy it can be applied to anyone who happens
to be at hand" (cf. Deuteronomy 22:27).[110]

The Israelite request for a king parallels the exodus when
Yahweh virtually quotes himself: Saul is to "save *my people* out of
the hand of the Philistines" (1 Samuel 9:16), just as Moses deliv-
ered "my people" from the Egyptians (Exodus 3:7–10).[111]

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[109] Richard N. Boyce, *The Cry to God in the Old Testament* (Atlanta:
Scholars Press, 1988), 63.

[110] Sawyer, "What Was a *Mosia*?" 476.

[111] Lyle M. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1*

The Zeniffites are "in the yoke of bondage" and "burdened" (Mosiah 21:13) by their oppressors. They "cry unto their God that he would deliver them out of their afflictions" and they "cry mightily" for a deliverer (Mosiah 21:14). But the Lord is "slow to hear their cries because of their iniquities" (Mosiah 21:15), although by lightening their burdens he "did hear their cries and began to soften the hearts of the Lamanites" (Mosiah 21:15).

The oppression, cry to the Lord, deliverance from oppression pattern is continued from Judges into 1 Samuel. Hannah cries to the Lord, who hears and grants her petition (1 Samuel 1:10–11): her barrenness

> is a reflex of the bitterness of the Israelites because of the oppression of the Egyptians. They cry to God; he hears their cry and remembers his covenant. Moses is sent to bring them out of the house of slavery. The Lord remembers Hannah, and Samuel comes to relieve her misery, to blunt her rival's provocations.[112]

Samuel is the *mosiah* who delivers his people from bondage as well as the *mosiah* who delivers his mother from her afflictions. The word *mosia*ʿis often a verb with several synonyms: some that indicate deliverance from danger and some that indicate help *in* danger.[113] Many of these synonyms, however, do not carry the content of a savior who rights injustices.[114] This is different from *mosia*ʿ, which "appears most often, not in contexts of violence or physical danger, but in situations of injustice; that is he is always on the side of justice, and in this differs from all the synonyms; that when the subject is mentioned it is always God or His appointed hero; and finally that one occurrence in the language of the lawcourt suggests an original forensic meaning"; in 2 Kings 13:5 the people are endangered by the Syrians, the Lord gives them a *mosia*ʿ, they escape the danger. "The result of the coming of a *mosia*ʿon to the scene was escape from injustice, and

Samuel 1–12 (Sheffield: Almond, 1985), 306.

112 Peter D. Miscall, *1 Samuel: A Literary Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 11.

113 Sawyer, "What Was a *Mosia*ʿ?" 477 n. 7.

114 Ibid., 479.

a return to a state of justice where each man possesses his rightful property."[115] Knowing that the context of *moŝia^c* calls for a forensic cluster of meanings makes more poignant the fact that Noah is called an unjust king who dealt unjustly with Abinadi, that Noah confiscated property, that Noah oppressed through enslavement.

A savior/deliverer comes forward—Gideon (Mosiah 22:1–9) followed by a stealth-by-night escape. In the exodus, the Israelites despoil their hosts—a common motif in exoduses. Abraham is expelled by a Pharaoh afflicted by "great plagues" (Genesis 12:17), but not before acquiring animals and property (Genesis 12:16). So too in Gerar, Abimelech thrusts him out with a similar catalogue (Genesis 20:14). Isaac mirrors Abraham in Gerar: Isaac passes his wife off as his sister, Abimelech reproves him for the ruse, and he departs with great possessions (Genesis 26:13–14).

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are exemplars of the rabbinic rule, "what happens to the fathers is a sign to the sons." Jacob is portrayed as a slave to his uncle Laban; he serves seven years for Rachel and seven for Leah. Like the Israelites and Zeniff, Jacob is deceived by his uncle while in a foreign land (Genesis 29:25). As Moses says to Pharaoh, Jacob says to Laban: "Let me go" (Genesis 30:26); so they make a deal: Jacob gets all the speckled livestock. But cunningly, Laban removes all speckled and spotted animals to avoid their reproduction.

Jacob doesn't just serve the 14 years for his two wives—he serves 20. Why the extra six years? Laban is portrayed as a slave driver and later Hebrew law specified that slaves must be freed in the seventh or sabbath year: Laban is Pharaoh and Jacob is Israel. So what does Jacob do? He "stole away unawares" (Genesis 31:20). Jacob doesn't just flee empty-handed, but he fleeces Laban, taking the familiar goods (Genesis 31:17–18).

The Israelites also despoil their hosts of flocks, cattle, and jewels (Exodus 12:35, 38), for the Lord did not want the Israelites to go away bereft (Exodus 3:22; 11:2). The ark narrative also contains an exodus theme: the Philistines return the ark with gold presents.[116]

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115 Ibid., 480.
116 Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, 211.

So after getting the Lamanite guards drunk, the Zeniffites

> depart by night into the wilderness with their flocks and
> their herds. . . . And they had taken all their gold, and
> silver, and their precious things, which they could carry,
> and also their provisions with them, into the wilderness.
> (Mosiah 22:11–12)

The catalogue of possessions connects these Israelites with the other exoduses.[117]

Limhi escapes, rejoining the Zarahemla colony. The Lamanites following Limhi run across two other groups: the Amulonites and Alma's group. Even before being enslaved, Alma$_1$ portrays their situation under Noah in exodus terminology. When the people ask Alma to be their king, he responds much as Samuel did: the presence of kings invites bondage. The only way to be delivered from a wicked king is to follow the exodus pattern: "Remember the iniquity of king Noah and his priests. . . . And now I say unto you, ye have been oppressed by king Noah, and have been in bondage to him and his priests" (Mosiah 23:9, 12). But as Alma$_2$ will be raised up as a deliverer/*mosiah*, here Alma$_1$ says, "After much tribulation, the Lord did *hear* my *cries*, and did answer my prayers, and has made me *an instrument in his hands* in bringing so many of you to a knowledge of his truth" (Mosiah 23:10). More trials await this group, for

> they were brought into bondage, and none could
> deliver them but the Lord their God, yea even the God
> of Abraham and Isaac and of Jacob. And it came to
> pass that he did deliver them, and he did show forth his
> mighty power unto them" (Mosiah 23:23–24).

Although these priests of Amulon are charged with teaching the Mosaic law, Abinadi indicts them for not even knowing the law. While Noah asks, "Who is the Lord, that shall bring upon my people such great affliction?" (Mosiah 11:27), Pharaoh also asks "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go" (Exodus 5:2). Not

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[117] S. Kent Brown, "The Exodus Pattern in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 30/3 (1990): 114.

only is Noah like Pharaoh, these priests of Noah also "knew not God" (Mosiah 24:5) and taught the Lamanites nothing about God.

As the Israelites were forced into state slavery and had "*taskmasters* to *afflict* them with their *burdens*" (Exodus 1:11, italics added), the people of Alma are in bondage and "have tasks [put] upon them, and put *taskmasters* over them" (Mosiah 24:9) so that they suffered greatly, "so great were their *afflictions* that they began to *cry* mightily to God" (Mosiah 24:10). The Lord sees the afflictions of the Israelites and promises to deliver them (Exodus 3:7-8). The cry to the Lord is fundamental to the relationship between God and his chosen people in all times.[118] The pattern of oppression, cry, the Lord hearing and redeeming his people from slavery is common, both as the Israelites recounted the past and related that past to the present.

So too the Lord comforts Alma's people: "The voice of the Lord came to them in their afflictions, saying: Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage" (Mosiah 24:13). The actors are God and his people, not Moses or other intercessors.[119]

That the Lord remembers the covenant reminds us of the earlier exodus (Exodus 6:5). In what Sawyer calls the "situation-contexts" of the uses of *mošiaʿ*, oppression is assumed and then deliverance.[120] The Lord promises to *deliver* the Zeniffites from bondage (Mosiah 24:16-17). This time the Lord, not Alma, is the *mosiah* (Mosiah 24:21):

> When the Lord comes down, it is in order to *rescue.* Here we come upon a new element with respect to the patriarchs: the Israelites are trapped in a situation of oppression, and so God does not merely invite them to leave home; he comes to loose the chains that keep them captive. In the Exodus story the divine call takes the form of a *liberation*: God must intervene to van-

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[118] Boyce, *The Cry to God in the Old Testament,* 74–75.

[119] George W. Coats, *Moses: Heroic Man, Man of God* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988), 59–60.

[120] Sawyer, "What Was a *Mosiaʿ*?" 478.

quish a resistance, symbolized here by the quasi-divine figure of Pharaoh. God opens the doors of captivity that human strength is unable to unlock. The verbs "to rescue, deliver" (Ex. 5:23; 18:10, etc.) and—still more—"to redeem" (Ex. 15:13; Ps. 77:15, etc.) become almost technical terms to describe the action of God and the identity of his people. God is the rescuer, the Redeemer (Ps. 78:35; 19:14), and they as a result, "the redeemed of the Lord that he redeemed . . ." (Ps. 107:2).[121]

Alma then leads a stealthy escape from the taskmasters (Mosiah 24:18–20). The Israelites' escape by stealth and despoiling the Egyptians was an ancient "alternative climax for the Exodus theme," although the Passover climax later dominated the exodus story.[122]

The people of Alma escape, return to Zarahemla, and are assimilated by the larger group of Nephites. The narrative continues with Nephites repeating the pattern of wickedness, bondage or peril, repentance and cry to the Lord, a *mosiah* is sent from the Lord, the people enjoy prosperity, and fall into wickedness again. But before that cycle recurs, the Nephites fundamentally reflect on institutions of leadership. Like the Israelites in Judges, the Nephites must find a way to convey the saving acts of God from generation to generation, for "there were many of the rising generation that could not understand the words of king Benjamin, being little children at the time he spake unto his people; and they did not believe the tradition of their fathers" (Mosiah 26:1). So too among the Israelites, "there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10). So the Lord must continually raise up judges/*mosiah*s to deliver the people.

The pattern continues, only Mosiah's and Alma's sons are the greatest disturbers of peace (as Eli's and Samuel's sons are). So ironically, Alma$_2$ himself is the first judge who is also a *mosiah*. Alma$_1$ served two of the final Nephite kings: Alma$_2$ is the first

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[121] Taize, *The Pilgrim God*, 31.

[122] E. W. Nicholson, *Exodus and Sinai in History and Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1973), 55–56.

judge who "cries" to the Lord "that he would deliver them out of the hands of their enemies" (Alma 2:28). Alma then has a face-to-face battle in which he "cried" saying: "O Lord, have mercy and spare my life, that I may be an instrument in thy hands to save and preserve this people" (Alma 2:30). Samuel is a deliverer in line with the deliverance of the judges, which is built on the exodus pattern. Israel "cries" to the Lord (1 Samuel 7:8; Exodus 2:23; 3:7) which is followed by the Lord's "delivering them from the hands of their enemies." "It would appear that once again an ensuing battle is framed in terms of the exodus. The reader is led to interpret a victory on Israel's part as a new divine saving deed upon which a renewed covenant may be based."[123] The judges cycle follows the pattern of apostasy—oppression—cry for help. The two roles of the judge were (1) to ensure justice (Judges 4:5; 1 Samuel 7:15–17) and the term for this role is *sôpēt*, "judge" and (2) to deliver Israel from foreign domination, for which the term is *mošia‘*, "deliverer."[124]

The exodus motif predominates in the Bible and the Book of Mormon. Positivists who claim that literary repetition is the hallmark only of fiction, must reject both the Bible and the Book of Mormon as superficial, repetitive novels.

Conclusion

Modern thought has largely defined itself in opposition to religion, particularly Christian religion. Through the past three hundred years the Enlightenment, the major branch of modernity, dominated Western culture by gradually convincing religious adherents to see their own commitments less through biblical lenses and more through Enlightenment ones. The Enlightenment was a great cultural watershed, but its unreflective and dogmatic battle against religious belief has distorted its own better nature, especially under the dominant form of Enlightenment in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—positivism. Many elements of

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[123] Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, 239.

[124] Daniel I. Block, "The Period of the Judges: Religious Disintegration under Tribal Rule," in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 40.

the Enlightenment (its emphasis on emancipation and partly its emphasis on the individual) need to be refocused and reasserted.

We now stand at another similarly important cultural water-shed. It usually goes by the name of *postmodernism*, but I am uncomfortable with that designation because only part of the con-frontation with the Enlightenment is properly postmodernist. Various movements (hermeneutics, poststructuralism, analytic philosophy after the linguistic turn, literary and narrative theory, communitarianism) have combined to confront and at times undermine the Enlightenment.

Mormon intellectuals have gone about their business largely ignorant of the ongoing dramatic change in their intellectual dis-ciplines. This is particularly true of Mormon intellectuals defining themselves in opposition to Mormon teachings. Brent Metcalfe is the first of these writers to enlist the disciplines of narrative and literary theory. He doesn't consider that this literature (powerfully post- and antipositivist) is in opposition to his position; he instead wrenches these stances out of historical context to provide implau-sible rhetorical support. In historiography, these disciplinary revolutions have explicitly attacked the foundations of that old-thought and have so far undermined them as to make the move-ment in Mormon studies a relic, an irrelevancy, a dogmatic sect, a superstitious hangover from less enlightened times. This first (mis)appropriation of narrative and literary theory augurs badly for the Mormon intellectual community; Metcalfe's flotsam is better abandoned and new materials used in the construction of a sea-worthy vessel; while Mormon historians slept, every plank in the ship of historiography was switched from the decaying lumber of modernity to the new materials of postmodernity. This "postmodernism" has yet systematically to define itself in rela-tion to older positions such as religious belief. My guess is that it inherits too much of the Enlightenment it so often fights against to surrender its secularist tendencies. The past is always inhabited by the present: but we ought not to permit ill-, un-, and misin-formed versions of that present masquerading as neutral and objective history to succeed in their propagandistic aspirations, neither let them wear the regalia of scholarship just because they dress up in voices and footnotes. Historians and historical writers are ineluctably immersed in language and literary imagination.

They may say with Caliban, "The red-plague rid you for learning me your language"[125] and your narrative theory, but still they must face this brave new world bravely.

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[125] Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.2.363–64.