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The Lost Prologue: Reading Moses Chapter One as an Ancient Text

Mark J. Johnson

Abstract: *The character and complexion of the Prophet Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible (JST) is often a puzzle to students and scholars. One text in particular, the first chapter of the Book of Moses, claims that its very words would be lost and later restored to the believing. As this bold claim has not yet been verified by the discovery of an ancient copy of this text, clues to the antiquity of this document will need to be discovered within the text itself. This study investigates Moses 1 with the tools of biblical and literary criticism to discover if the text has the characteristics and content of an ancient religious document.*

As part of his calling, the Prophet Joseph Smith revised and "re-translated" the text of the King James Version of the Bible. This was not a translation in the typical, scholarly sense of the word but a whole new reworking of the text. Joseph's process appears to restore lost writings, to bring clarity to certain passages, and to correct perceived errors in the Biblical text. Among the material created for the JST is a prologue to the beginning of the book of Genesis. This account reiterates Moses's prophetic call (giving him and his book authoritative legitimacy), relates an epic confrontation with Satan, and establishes Moses's commission to write about the creation of the world and history of Israel. This revelation became the first chapter of the Book of Moses.

A curiosity of Moses 1 is its assertion that the text itself would be lost and restored at a later date. The text placing itself in antiquity is a bold claim. This claim has not been confirmed by archeological methods; manuscript fragments of these texts have yet to be excavated from the dust of millennia. However, this claim does put Moses 1 in company with the Book of Mormon. Aside from the gold plates from which the

Book of Mormon was translated, ancient copies of any Nephite records have yet to be unearthed. In spite of this, the Book of Mormon has shown innumerable characteristics of an authentic record written by ancient Israelites. With Book of Mormon scholarship having blazed the way, Moses 1 can be treated with the same scholarly scrutiny.

The narrative of Moses 1 flows into the Prophet's reworking of the book of Genesis. As such, it invites the same methods of analysis for this chapter that are used by biblical scholars to examine the Hebrew bible.

Robert J. Matthews advocates this type of scholarly examination by asking, "Does the JST offer any substantial evidence that would indicate a restoration of original material? Indeed it does! It is found in the literary style of the JST. It is significant to notice not only *what* is said in the JST, but *how* it is said, and *where* it is said."[1]

Taking our cue from Matthews, this approach will examine the words of Moses 1 to note not only what is portrayed in the text, but also how the narrator presents characters, plot, and dialogue to influence the reader in discovering the author's intents.

Methodology

This approach to Moses 1 will predominantly feature an examination of literary elements to see if the chapter has the characteristics of an ancient document. This literary assessment aims to show "how to read and appreciate the Bible itself by training attention on its artfulness — how it orchestrates sound, repetition, dialogue, allusion, and ambiguity to generate meaning and effect."[2] Because of the complex nature of biblical narration, the message of the scriptural text must be sought in how the text builds its story, in specific forms and structures that guide the narrative, and in how the narrator seeks to evoke thought and feeling rather than pontificating directly to the reader.

Note that my use of a literary critical method will be a broad approach closer in spirit to the foundational studies of Robert Alter, Northrup Frye, Meir Sternberg, and others. Alter explains his intentions: "By literary analysis I mean the manifold varieties of minutely discriminating attention to the

1. Robert J. Matthews, "The Role of the JST in the Restoration," in *Plain and Precious Truths Restored: The Doctrinal and Historical Significance of the Joseph Smith Translation*, ed. Robert L. Millet and Robert J. Matthews (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995), 47. Emphasis in the original.

2. Steven Weitzman, "Before and After The Art of Biblical Narrative," *Prooftexts*, 27 (2007): 191.

artful use of language."[3] This literary awareness will be used in conjunction with the methods of rhetorical criticism and form criticism.

Form Criticism is the study of forms, both written and oral. The form-critical method seeks to understand the text by its basic elements: structure, genre, setting, and intention. According to Martin Buss, form criticism "brings patterns of speech into full reflective awareness. Since these patterns embody significant structures of one's own as well as of other cultures, the study of literary forms lays bare and clarifies major movements of human life."[4] As different forms of text are examined, scholars seek to find the roots of the text, whether they be narrative, poetry, lamentation, allegory, etc., and thereby discover how these texts were then used and understood by their intended audience.

Rhetorical Criticism "concerns itself with the way the language of texts is deployed to convey meaning. Its interests are in the devices of writing, in metaphor and parallelism, in narrative and poetic structures, and in stylistic figures."[5] Richard N. Soulen explains that "whereas Form Criticism, traditionally defined, seeks the typical and representative, [Rhetorical Criticism] … seeks the unique and the personal in order to trace the movement of the writer's thought."[6] James Muilenburg, the founder of modern rhetorical criticism, sets the standard for this type of analysis:

> What I am interested in, above all, is in understanding the nature of the Hebrew literary composition, in exhibiting the structural patterns that are employed for the fashioning of a literary unit, whether in poetry or in prose, and in discerning the many and various devices by which the predications are formulated and ordered into a unified whole.[7]

The rhetorical critical method performs its functions on the final form of the text. Examining the received version of the text will show its texture in the form of literary units that might otherwise go unnoticed by other reconstructive methods. Studying the text as it stands is especially crucial because "the literary unit is in any event an indissoluble whole, an artistic

3. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 12.

4. Martin J. Buss, *Biblical Form Criticism in its Context* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 18.

5. *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. J. Cheryl Exum and David J. A. Clines (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), 16.

6. Richard N. Soulen, s.v. "Rhetorical Criticism," *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 169.

7. James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 8.

and creative unity, a unique formulation."[8] Francis I. Anderson clarifies the point by noting, "If the text is left as it is, and its grammatical structure is taken seriously as serving artistic purposes, more positive conclusions about the integrity of a passage and the solemnity of its style are possible."[9]

By studying the unique features of the text, we hope to see the motive of the biblical authors as well as to unearth subtleties of their writings. George Kennedy explains that "if fundamental and universal features of rhetoric are kept in mind … rather than simply quarrying a text for examples of classical figures, we can significantly enhance our appreciation of its meaning without violence to the author's intent."[10]

As this is an examination of the scriptural narrative, this study is mindful of exploring traces of lexes, patterns, and forms that might indicate a Hebrew original.

This approach of seeing hints of the Hebrew language in the background of Moses 1 will be similar to the work of Matthew L. Bowen, who has been highly successful in discerning sophisticated wordplay in the onomasticon of the Book of Mormon. Bowen explains his method:

> We can use our knowledge of the languages [of the scriptures] to posit reasonable suppositions about what they contain. Biblical scholars engage in this type of activity (i.e., textual criticism) when they analyze the non-Hebrew witnesses to the text (e.g., the Greek Septuagint [LXX], the Syriac Peshitta, the Old Latin, etc.). Using a knowledge of these other biblical languages can help us arrive at what the Hebrew *Vorlagen* of those text may have looked like (vis-à-vis the Hebrew Masoretic text), pending further evidence.[11]

In following this pattern, attention will be given to possible Hebrew features that may be discerned through what would be a translucent layer of translation, assuming the existence of a lost ancient original version.

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8. Ibid., 9.

9. Francis I. Anderson, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (The Hague, NL: Mouton, 1974), 40.

10. George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 12.

11. Matthew L. Bowen, *Name as Key-Word: Collected Essays on Onomastic Wordplay and the Temple in Mormon Scripture* (Salt Lake City: The Interpreter Foundation, 2018), 18–19.

Authorship and Narrative

Much ink has been spilled in the pursuit of the biblical authors. Discussions have ranged from Moses being the principal author of the Pentateuch, to the biblical text having been adapted from old myths and stories. Other scholars have suggested that various parts of the Pentateuch were created to accompany important events in Israel's history, such as the reforms of King Hezekiah and King Josiah, or to having portions of the Pentateuch created after the Babylonian exile to supply the returning people of Israel a founding mythology.

In this quest to find the original authors, Richard Elliott Friedman counsels that "if one is interested in the historicity of the biblical accounts, then one must inquire into when the writer lived. Was the writer a witness to the events he described? If not, what were his sources?"[12] He further asks, "Did the author of a particular biblical story live in the eighth century BC or the fifth? — and thus when the author uses a particular expression do we understand it according to what it meant in the eighth century or the fifth?"[13]

While these are seemingly important questions, the answers are not as easily found as some would have us assume. For example, R. Norman Whybray notes, regarding the dating of the biblical documents, that "there is at the present moment no consensus whatever about when, why, how, and through whom the Pentateuch reached its present form, and opinions about the dates of composition of its various parts differ by more than five hundred years."[14] Sternberg summarizes the situation: "When all is said and done, the independent knowledge we possess of the 'real world' behind the Bible remains absurdly meager, almost non-existent."[15] This leads us to note that the so-called search for the original authors is less concerned with *who* wrote the biblical histories, but rather *when* they were written.

If the authors of the biblical text are out of reach, a fair question to ask is if knowing the author is actually necessary to understand the text.[16]

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12. Richard Elliott Freidman, *Who Wrote the Bible? Second Edition* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997), 23.

13. Ibid., 16–17.

14. R. Norman Whybray, *Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 12–13.

15. Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), 16.

16. This aspect of authorship is different from that of the Book of Mormon. As far as its authorship goes, the Book of Mormon has an unbroken provenance of its

Perhaps not. The search for the author actually might be an impediment and distraction to sufficiently grasp of the meaning of the text.

If the actual author is unavailable, we instead look to the narrator for guidance along our way. "In story-telling, the real author creates a narrator who has the role of the storyteller. This creates an additional layer of interaction, represented by the relation narrator-narratee: the persons who are supposedly telling and listening to the story."[17] Yair Mazor elaborates on this point:

> The text is the only reliable medium a scholar has, and a skilled scholar should be able to detect aesthetic devices, ideas, and interpretations without outside help. Thus, the biographical author must remain outside the picture when it comes to analysis of a text. … The narrator is only a rhetorical function that mediates between the text.[18]

This is vital for the reader to remember, for the narrator controls the presentation of the plot and all of its features, including its participants. "To define the narrator as a fictional construct is to put the narrator into a category similar to that of the characters. Indeed, it might be helpful sometimes to think of the narrator as a character, distinct from the other characters. The narrator is a character who tells the story while the other characters enact it."[19]

The stories of the Pentateuch give us Adam, Abraham, Moses, and a host of other figures. But the narrator cannot give the reader the actual Adam, Abraham, etc., so he provides us with the versions of these characters that he needs to tell his stories. In other words, the biblical author presents his message through the creation of biblical literature. Sternberg, therefore, advises that the reader "must take into account that every item of reality given in the text may have been stylized by conventions and for purposes alien to historical science."[20]

So while some scholars hold that discovering the authorship of the text is tantamount to comprehending the scriptural word, we have seen

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sources, while there are significant gaps in the lineage of biblical text where the manuscripts have spent centuries in the dark.

17. Jean-Marc Heimerdinger, *Topic, Focus and Foreground in Ancient Hebrew Narratives* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 46.

18. Yair Mazor, *Who Wrought the Bible? Unveiling the Bible's Aesthetic Secrets* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 27.

19. David M. Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1993), 53.

20. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 16.

that the identity of the biblical authors must remain in the background while the narration takes center stage as the key to understanding.

Narrative Form and Structure

Shimon Bar-Efrat correctly surmises that the narratives of the Hebrew bible "are of the highest artistic quality, ranked among the foremost literary treasures of the world."[21] The prose of the Hebrew bible has a beauty and logic quite different from that of modern literary masterpieces. Many differences are due to different tactics employed for the power of persuasion. Noel B. Reynolds explains the differences between Western and Hebrew rhetoric:

> Commentators have noted that the rhetoric we have learned in the Western tradition is *hypotactic* in that it is direct, open, linear, and logical. Hebrew rhetoric, in contrast, is *paratactic* in that it tends to be indirect, making important points both through its structure and through words that may have their full meaning developed and adjusted gradually throughout the text.[22]

Robert Alter has noted that the parataxis of the biblical narrative serves as a template by which biblical prose was composed. This paratactic prose was manifest in a deliberate syntax. He observes that "parataxis is the essential literary vehicle of biblical narrative: it is the way the ancient Hebrew writers saw the world, linked events in it, artfully ordered it, and narrated it, and one gets a very different world if their syntax is jettisoned."[23] The syntax of biblical prose is dominated in form by parallel clauses chained together with the particle *waw* (which is translated as "and"), which serves as a prefix attached to the first word of the clause.

Another step in our literary analysis is recognizing that Hebrew thought sought beauty and balance in writings by the use of repetition. While western poetry is largely based on rhyming of sounds, the prose and poetry of the biblical text finds greater value in what one might call the *rhyming of ideas*. In other words, poetic verse and narrative structure were built on the foundation of repetition. Jack R. Lundbom emphasizes that:

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21. Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 9.

22. Noel B. Reynolds, "Rethinking Alma 36," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 34 (2020): 283.

23. Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), xvii.

> repetition is the single most important feature of ancient Hebrew rhetoric, being used for emphasis, wordplays, expressing the superlative, creating pathos, and structuring both parts and wholes of prophetic discourse. Its importance can hardly be overestimated. Repetitions can be sequential or placed in strategic collocations to provide balance. … [They] can form a tie-in between the beginning and the end.[24]

Repetition in the Hebrew bible was a technique of presentation manifest at all levels of the author's composition. Forms of repetition can be visible from the minute level of strophes and stanzas in poetry, to multiline units such as poems, speeches, and oracles. The principles of repetition are also seen in the structuring of character arcs and even as the backbone of whole books. This type of repetition is frequently called *parallelism*.

Because of the differing size and scope of repetition as well as their presence in both poetry and prose, scholars have differing opinions about what can be truly classified as parallelism.[25] Donald W. Parry's perspective positions parallelism equally with poetry and prose, noting that "not all parallelistic forms are poetic, for parallelism serves in a variety of rhetorical and literary functions."[26]

Generally, this parallel-style of repetition is expressed in a linear (AB/AB) or a coaxal (AB/BA) form. For the purposes of this study, I will primarily examine larger parallel structures that are used for the framework of a narrative. These longer forms of parallelism will be referred to in this study as parallel paneling (the repetition being ABCD/ABCD and the like) and chiasmus (where the repetition is inverted, i.e., ABCD/DCBA).

Sean McEvenue notes that *parallel panels* are two or more instances told in the same form. "This technique of structure we shall call 'panel writing.' … The literary delight is partially the repetition, and partially the logical play of putting different materials in identical forms."[27]

As an example, Yair Zakovich has noted that the book of Genesis is largely compiled of matching (as well as often contrasting) stories placed

24. Jack R. Lundbom, *Biblical Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015), 167–68.

25. For a useful discussion, see Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism, Revised and Expanded edition* (Grand Rapids, MI; William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 1–7.

26. Donald W. Parry, *Poetic Parallelisms in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2007), xi.

27. Sean McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer* (Rome, IT: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1971), 15.

side-by-side as parallel panels. These structures can display an amplification of ideas, a second panel building upon the first. Zakovich explains:

> Much material that is embedded in the biblical text is itself exegetical material, constituting "inner-biblical interpretation": one verse or story intended to influence our reading of another, either to solve a problem in that text, or to adapt it to the interpreter's own beliefs and ideas. One type of inner-biblical interpretation is achieved through the juxtaposition of two units: the placement of two texts one after another, one or both of which is meant to affect our reading of the other.[28]

Lundbom emphasizes the same idea: juxtaposition is "a way for theological statements to be made without so much as a word being said."[29] He demonstrates with the examples of Jeremiah chapters 34 and 35. These chapters are out of chronological sequence, but their pairing together shows a stark difference between obedience and disobedience.

Similarly, *chiasmus,* a poetic, structural, and rhetorical device, can be "an inversion of words, word cognates, fixed pairs, syntactic units, and even sounds in the bicolon, the verse, and the larger composition."[30] As a rhetorical device, chiasmus not only highlights the beginning and the end of the pericope, it can also supply closure to the story. It is a way for authors to make a strong emphasis on their own priorities by putting the point of importance at the center of the structure. The chiastic pattern also can rhetorically reflect the narrative direction of the unit. This boomerang of a form is appropriate when the plot rises and falls, when the first shall be last and the last shall be first, and when things lost are to be restored.

Before we look behind the scaffolding of Moses 1, it would be beneficial to exhibit some of the narrative potentials elsewhere in Genesis. A ready example is found in the short story of the Tower of Babel. The story of the tower in Genesis 11 has long been known as

28. Yair Zakovich, "Juxtaposition in the Abraham Cycle," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish and Near Eastern Ritual, Law and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, eds. David P. Wright, David Noel Freedman and Avi Hurvitz (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 510.

29. Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), xxxvii.

30. Lundbom, *Biblical Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism,* 174.

a sophisticated model of Hebrew narrative styling despite its brevity.[31] While an English translation presents a fairly straightforward story, the Hebrew original contains many complexities. Consider the word-play present in the Hebrew transliteration of verse three:

Come let us make bricks	*hā-b̲āh nil-bĕ-nāh lĕ-b̲ê-nîm*
And bake [them] thoroughly	*wĕ-niś-rĕ-p̄āh liś-rê-p̄āh*
And they had brick for stone	*wat-tĕ-hî la-hem hal-lĕ-b̲ê-nāh lĕ-'ā-b̲en*
And asphalt they had for mortar.	*wĕ-ha-ḥê-mār hā-yāh la-hem la-ḥō-mer*

The author of the Babel segment has made the story of the confounding of languages into a literal tongue-twister with vigorous repetition of consonantal sounds *h*, *b*, and *l*. In addition to the repeated sounds of the story, the author also extracts meaning from his writings by his use of narrative structure. Here the author uses specific words and phrases and then inverts their order while proceeding through the text.

A "all the earth one language" (11:1a)
B they settled "there" (11:2b)
C "each one [said] to his neighbor" (11:3a)
D "Come on, let's make bricks (*hābāh nilbĕnāh*)" (11:3b)
E "let's build for ourselves" (11:4a)
F " … a city and tower" (11:4a)
G "and Yhwh came down" (11:4b)
F′ "the city and the tower" (11:5a)
E′ "which the humans had built" (11:5b)
D′ "Come on, … let's confuse (*hābāh … wĕnābĕnāh*)" (11:7a)
C′ "each one [will not hear] his neighbor's speech" (11:7b)
B′ Yhwh dispersed them "from there" (11:8)
A′ "language of all the earth" (11:9a) [32]

This chiastic structure is fitting for the rise and fall of the city and the tower. It also is appropriate with Yhwh coming down to dispense a reversal of fortune.[33] The people begin by mixing mortar, and they

31. Jan Fokkelman devotes an entire chapter to the Babel narrative. See J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis, Second Edition* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1991), 11–45. See also Isaac M. Kikawada, "The Shape of Genesis 11:1–9," in *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenberg*, ed. Jared J. Jackson and Martin Kessler (Pittsburg: The Pickwick Press, 1974), 18–32.

32. Jerome T. Walsh, *Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 94. I have modified Walsh's arrangement to include the center element.

33. For the sake of clarity and continuity, I will use the Tetragammatron (Yhwh), the four-letter name of God of the Hebrew Scriptures, to refer to the God of Israel, otherwise known as Jehovah or Yahweh.

are answered with the Lord's mixing their language. The appearance of Yhwh is the natural turning point and center focus of the story. McEvenue notes that the form both repeats and interlocks the doings of the people with the purposes of Yhwh.[34]

As impressive as the inversion is, it is also possible to see the structure of the narrative as a set of matching parallel panels. These two panels concern themselves with the plot of the story. The first half of the story is the plans and progress of the people, while the second is the crumbling of the plans and the people's confounding and consequent scattering.

A The whole earth has the same language
B and the same speech.
C The people build a city and a tower
D the people desire to make them a name
E lest they be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth
A′ The people are the same
B′ They all have the same language
C′ They begin to build the tower
D′ The Lord names the people and the tower Babel
E′ The Lord scatters them abroad

Concerning these structures, Wenham notes that the "simultaneous use of parallel panels and palistrophe [extended chiasmus] is remarkable and unusual."[35] As an artistic technique, the use of both types of structures at work in the same text shows great compositional skills. Jan Fokkelman finds that this dual technique of chiasmus co-mingled with parallel paneling is also present in 2 Kings 4:1–7, where Elisha blesses an unnamed widow. He notes that "we are justified in observing a certain simplicity here, but this proves to be the result of the total and flexible mastery of form, and much more is going on in the text than the simple message to be read on the surface."[36] Fokkelman's observation of this small episode in chapter 4 equally applies to Genesis 11 and, as we shall see, Moses 1.

The placement of Moses 1 adjacent to the extant biblical text sets an expectation for the Moses 1 narrative to follow suit in showing a complexity that might not be apparent at first glance.

34. McEvenue, *Priestly Writer*, 113.

35. Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1–15* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 236.

36. Jan P. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 18.

The Shape and Structure of Moses 1

Having overviewed literary method and technique, we are prepared to take a much closer look at the features of Moses 1 with the methods of biblical criticism. The first step in this rhetorical-critical analysis is the discovery of the boundaries and framework of the text. This allows the scholar to examine all related parts of the pericope in order to witness the movement within the narrative. This, together with a careful study of poetic and stylistic features, reveals the motives of the author.

The beginning and end (boundaries) of biblical literary units are frequently marked by an *inclusio*, which consists of matching or similar key-words that signal the beginning and the end of the section. It is "repeated or balanced vocabulary or else a clear return of thought that brings about closure."[37] The inclusio is a common form used by the biblical authors to frame their written words.[38]

Moses 1 consists of three scenes arranged in a concentric pattern. The episodes of ascent form an obvious frame for the chapter.

A 1st Ascent to the presence of God
B Confrontation between Moses and Satan
A′ 2nd Ascent to the presence of God

Looking at the boundaries of the unit, the beginning is already set, as it is the start of the narrative. The corresponding inclusio comes at the beginning of the next chapter in the Book of Moses:

> The words of *God*, which he *spake unto Moses* at a time when Moses was caught up into an *exceedingly high mountain*. (Moses 1:1)

> And it came to pass that the *Lord spake unto Moses*, saying: Behold, I reveal unto you concerning this *heaven*, and this *earth*; write the words which I speak. (Moses 2:1a)

The inclusio is based on synonymous terms. The names *God* and *Lord* are equivalent in these verses. The exceedingly high mountain is a medium locus that connects the heaven and the earth.

Comparison of the two ascents shows a doubling in the sequence of the story, which serves to shape the narrative. These are presented as two

37. Lundbom, *Biblical Rhetoric*, 29.

38. It might be worth noting that Radday has sees an inclusio-type link between Genesis chapters 1 and 49. Because Moses 1 and JST Genesis 50 both mention Moses's being called to deliver Israel as well as a future coming forth of the word of God, a connection may also be drawn between these two texts. *See* Yehuda T. Radday, "Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, ed. John W. Welch (Hildesheim, DEU: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1981), 97–98.

parallel panels so the end of the story mirrors the beginning. The parallel panels unfold like this:

Moses 1:1–41
A Moses is caught up to see God (1)
B God declares himself as the Almighty (3)
C God is without beginning of days or end of years (3)
D Moses beholds the world (7)
E Moses beholds the children of men (8)
F Moses sees the face of God (11)
G Moses is to worship the Only Begotten (17)
H Moses bore record of this, but due to wickedness, it shall not be had among the children of men (23)
A′ Moses beholds God's glory (24–5)
B′ God declares himself the as Almighty (25)
C′ God will be with Moses until the end of his days (26)
D′ Moses beholds the earth (27)
E′ Moses beholds the earth's inhabitants (28)
F′ Moses sees the face of God (31)
G′ Creation is through the Only Begotten (33)
H′ Moses is to write the words of God, but they shall be taken away (41)

The text of Moses 1 is an intricate and carefully planned episode. The chapter is crafted so that ideas that appear in the first half of the chapter are repeated and expanded in the second half. The beginning has Moses experiencing a Heavenly Ascent in which he is caught up to God's Presence in the same fashion as other prophets. He sees God, and talks to Him face-to-face. Only after the confrontation does Moses defeat Satan in a spiritual face-off, prove himself loyal to God, and is returned to his presence.

The two halves of this chapter act independently, each using a unique vocabulary.[39] This form is used so that when the latter panel is read, it brings to mind the first panel, and the reader can compare and contrast the two. Without the first half of the story, the second half would lack its force and power. On the other hand, without the second part of the story, the narrative comes to a halt and wouldn't give the upcoming story of the creation in its proper setting and context.

The contest against Satan completes a tripartite structure folded between the ascent accounts. Satan's sudden arrival, his temptation of Moses, and his expulsion are a natural hinge for the following concentric arrangement:

39. Compare, for instance, "the children of men" in verse 8 with the "inhabitants of the earth" in 28–36.

Moses 1:1–2:1

A The word of God, which he spoke unto Moses upon an exceeding high mountain (1)
B Endless is God's name (3)
C God's work is his glory (4)
D The Lord has a work for Moses
E Moses is in the similitude of the Only Begotten (6)
F Moses beholds the world and the ends thereof (7–8)
G The presence of God withdraws from Moses (9)
H Man, in his natural strength, is nothing (10)
I Moses beheld God with his spiritual eyes (11)
J Satan came tempting him (12)
K Moses' responded to Satan (13–15)
L Moses commanded Satan to depart (16–18)
M Satan ranted upon the earth (19)
N Moses began to fear
O Moses called upon God
N′ Moses received strength (20)
M′ Satan began to tremble and the earth shook
L′ Moses cast Satan out in the name of the Only Begotten (21)
K′ Satan cried with weeping and wailing
J′ Satan departed from Moses (22)
I′ Moses lifts up his eyes unto heaven (23–14)
H′ Moses is made stronger than many waters
G′ Moses beholds God's glory again (25)
F′ Moses is shown the heavens and the earth (27–31)
E′ Creation is by the Only Begotten (32–33)
B′ God's works and words are endless (38)
C′ God's work is his glory (39)
D′ Moses is to write the words of God (40–41)
A′ The Lord speaks unto Moses concerning the heaven and earth (Moses 2:1/JST Genesis 1:1)

The structure of the chapter dictates that the second half of the chapter is very closely related to the first half. The parallels are striking. The two divine encounters of the author tightly frame this epic battle, with Satan at the center of the chiasm and the turning point of the

story being Moses calling upon God and being strengthened. One of Nils Lund's laws of chiasmus demonstrates that the center of the chiasm often has a parallel theme in the outer portion of the arrangement as well.[40] The center of the arrangement has Moses strengthened. This theme of strength occurs in verse 10 and later in verse 25. Perhaps the most interesting parallel is the pairing with the oft-quoted Moses 1:39, where God's work and glory is explained, with its counterpart in verse 5. Verse 39, when seen as an expansion of verse 5, gives God's work and glory a cosmic context that places humankind as a higher priority than all the rest of creation.

The center of the pericope appropriately focuses on the Only Begotten and Moses being in His similitude. Moses's understanding of being in the similitude of the Only Begotten will be key in the next scene of the story. Dan Belnap elaborates: "The differences between the two encounters will reflect the new understandings of the vision Moses gains through his confrontation with the adversary."[41]

The use of both parallel paneling and interwoven chiasmus shows not only a textual harmony but also extraordinary literary skill. Nibley has correctly referred to Moses 1 as a "literary tour de force."[42]

We need to consider another structural configuration in the narrative. This arrangement serves as the backbone to the confrontation between Moses and Satan. We have seen in the above chiastic-chapter outline that this middle episode is arranged concentrically, the turning point being Moses calling upon God for strength. In stark relief to the chiasm, this episode can also be seen as roughly plotted parallel paneling.

Each panel begins with a repetition of "when Moses had said these words" as keywords. This introductory formula is followed by Moses's direct interaction with Satan. Both panels feature Satan commanding Moses to worship him, which is countered with Moses commanding Satan to depart. The differences in these panels is that the first panel is filled with a lengthy monologue by Moses, whereas the second panel contains action and drama of spiritual warfare.

The common elements between the panels can be charted as follows:

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40. Nils W. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 42.

41. Daniel Belnap, "'Where Is Thy Glory?' Moses 1, the Nature of Truth, and the Plan of Salvation," *Religious Educator* 10, no. 2 (2009): 167.

42. Hugh W. Nibley, "To Open the Last Dispensation," *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1978), 6.

Introduction:	"when Moses had said these words" (12/19)
Enticement:	"Satan came tempting him, saying: Moses, son of man worship me" (12)
	"Satan cried with a loud voice … saying, I am the Only Begotten, worship me" (19)
Rejoinder:	Moses is commanded to "call upon God" (17)
	Moses calls upon God for strength (20)
Counter-action:	Moses tells Satan to "depart hence" (18)
	Moses cases out Satan "in the name of the Only Begotten, depart hence" (21)

Notice that while these parallel elements cover the same verses as the chapter's center chiasm, the turning point of the chiasm and the starting point of the second parallel panel are in different places of the text. The center of the chiasm is placed in the story when Moses calls upon the name of the Only Begotten for strength (Moses 1:17), while the hinge of the parallel panels begins with the repetition of identical keywords (Moses 1:19). The overlay of chiasmus with parallel panels shows the author has a profound mastery of his material.

One last structural device warrants our attention. The end of Moses 1 contains an injunction from the Lord to Moses to write his words, which is carried through to Moses 2. Kent Jackson notes that in the transition between chapters "[the words of Moses 2] do not give the impression of having been written to stand at the head of a new document, but to continue the texts that precede them."[43] This flow of the words invites a look for literary features. Here we find a connecting link between these two separate revelations in the form of a small chiasm. The earlier revelation of Moses 1 is presented in regular type, while the subsequent revelation (Moses 2) is in italics.

Moses 1:40–2:1

a … this earth upon which thou standest
b write the words which I shall speak. (40)
c And in a day when the children of men
d shall esteem my words as naught
e and take many of them from the book,
f behold, I will raise up another
f′ like unto thee
e′ and they shall be had again
c′ among the children of men

43. Kent P. Jackson, "The Vision of Moses and Joseph Smith's Bible Translation," in *"To Seek The Law Of The Lord": Essays in Honor of John W. Welch,* ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson and Daniel C. Peterson (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation, 2017), 163–64.

d′ as many as shall believe. (41)
b′ … *write the words which I speak*
a′ … *and the earth upon which thou standest.* (2:1)

The chiastic structure is well suited to report the loss of the words of the Lord and then to have the words restored as the structure swings back around.[44] Note that verse 42 has been left out of the arrangement because it is a parenthetical aside from the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith and is not part of the vision itself.[45] The presence of chiasmus in these verses links these two revelations together, suggesting a deliberate textual unit. The words "earth upon which thou standest" act as an inclusio demarcating the limits of the segment.

If a narrative structure contains elements from both the JST and the extant biblical text, it strongly suggests a textual unity between the two. Lundbom asserts, "In discerning the structure of discourse, rhetorical criticism can isolate added material in the text and material that appears to have fallen out."[46] The implications for the study of the JST should be obvious. The fact that this textual unit is formatted as a narrative structure demonstrates that the text should be treated as a whole literary unit. If the additions by the JST are found embedded in such structures, it is reasonable to view those as a restoration of a preexisting text.

Literary Technique in Moses 1

Having seen the structure and delimitations of Moses 1, we turn to examine the literary features of the chapter. The Hebrew Bible as well as the New Testament call upon specific authorial techniques to bring out the power of persuasion in the text. One would expect Moses 1 to use the same techniques if it hails from the same ancient Israelite environment.

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44. Note that a similar arrangement has been presented by Matthew Bowen. *See* Matthew L. Bowen, "'And They Shall Be Had Again': Onomastic Allusions to Joseph in Moses 1:41 in View of the So-called Canon Formula," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 32 (2019): 301.

45. David Calabro has argued otherwise — that verse 42 was also part of the original narrative. While his reasoning has merit, I see the flow of the text without verse 42 as evidence that these last instructions were an addition for the instruction of the Prophet Joseph. *See* David M. Calabro, "Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis," in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored,* ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Interpreter, 2016), 169.

46. Lundbom, *Biblical Rhetoric,* 31.

Narration and Dialogue

We have stated that a rhetorical or stylistic analysis of a text needs to begin with a focus on the narrator. Mazor shows that the narrator is the foundation of any meaning conveyed by the text:

> The rhetorical layer of the biblical text primarily consists of the narrator, his point of view, and the aesthetic devices he enlists to communicate with the reader. The narrator of a literary text is a rhetorical figure, a device embedded in the text. … The narrator who takes no part in the plot, yet who is still part of the literary text, is an external narrator, one who reports on the action and the evolving events from a distance, as an observer. That the external narrator is *not* part of the plot and has no role in it confers more objectivity in narration.[47]

The narrator of Moses 1 is not visible in the story. The distance at which he remains allows him a certain omniscience to present his story on large and small scales, although he positions himself close to Moses, allowing the reader to see what Moses sees and to feel what he feels. As is typical of biblical authors, the narrator remains anonymous in identity and purpose. And while Moses is commanded to write the dictated word of God, the narrator is silent in his motives for his own created chronicle.

The text of Moses 1 is dialogue-bound narrative. The narrator of Moses 1 carefully selected what information to present about the characters of the chapter and the presentation of the plot. The story is told in the third person, and the narrator describes the events of the action while letting the characters (God, Moses, and Satan) introduce ideas and doctrinal concepts through their dialogues with each other. Verses 10 and 11 seem to be the exception: Moses speaks to himself so as to recap the previous ascent and transfiguration for the audience.

Shimon Bar-Efrat observes that "conversation is the principal, often the sole component of biblical scenes, which present a specific event occurring at a defined time and place. … The scenes do not give the reader an outline of what has happened, but rather create the impression that the events are taking place before the reader's very eyes."[48] This is also the preferred type of storytelling in Moses 1; the account moves forward through conversation.

The dialogue style is distinctively biblical. The author does not distinguish between the characters in the narrative by providing them a unique style and vocabulary. Old Testament characters rarely have

47. Mazor, *Who Wrought the Bible?*, 100.
48. Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 149–50.

voices that are different from the voice of the narrator.[49] The dialogue in the chapter follows Alter's observations that "the biblical scene, in other words, is conceived almost entirely as verbal intercourse, with the assumption that what is significant about a character, at least for a particular narrative juncture, can be manifested almost entirely in the character's speech."[50] The story of Moses 1 follows the same rule: the participants in the chapter speak of their own glory and power or lack of glory, and these descriptions are not supplied by the narrator.

The biblical authors also exploit what can be called *contrastive dialogue*. Here the writer will "juxtapose some form of very brief statement with some form of verbosity."[51] For example, Potiphar's wife spoke just the small phrase "Lie with me" (Genesis 39:7, 12) to Joseph of Egypt. Joseph retorted with a lengthy discourse rejecting "such great wickedness." The differences in the amount of dialogue invite the reader to view Joseph and Potiphar's wife at the opposite ends of a spectrum. Indeed, "the use of dialogue enhances the depth of characterization. Dialogue weakens characters with silence or minimizes the role of other characters with limited discourse."[52] Moses 1 contains this same technique: Satan tempts Moses with only a few words, while Moses's rebuttal is quite lengthy by comparison. Moses declares that Satan is limited in his glory compared to the glory of God; the length of dialogue further illuminates the distance between the two. This technique is also present in the dialogue between Moses and God. God's abundance of discourse sets him apart from Moses, who, by comparison, asks only a small number of questions.

The narrative style of biblical prose is neither flowery nor descriptive. The narrator keeps his words to a very minimum and chooses the words that would provide the maximum impact upon the audience. The reticent narrator "frequently disappears into the background. The biblical narrator supplies sparse details and recounts events without giving commentary or telling the reader how to interpret the story."[53] Alter describes this as the "famous laconic quality of biblical narrative." He continues:

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49. Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 65.
50. Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 70.
51. Ibid., 72–73.
52. Adam P. Hock, "Narrating the Scriptures: Using a Literary Approach to Enhance Scripture Teaching," *Religious Educator* 17, no. 3 (2016): 38.
53. Ibid., 30.

> There is never leisurely description for its own sake; scene setting is accomplished with the barest economy of means; characters are sped over a span of years with a simple summary notation until we reach a portentous conjunction rendered in dialogue; and, in keeping with all of this, analysis and assessment of character are very rare, and then very brief.[54]

The narrative of Moses's experiences is composed with carefully weighted words, so every word needs to be considered carefully.

It should also be noted that the syntax of Moses 1 follows the same format as other biblical prose. Consider Moses 1:28–29:

> And he beheld also the inhabitants thereof,
> and there was not a soul which he beheld not;
> and he discerned them by the Spirit of God;
> and their numbers were great,
> even numberless as the sand upon the sea shore.
> And he beheld many lands;
> and each land was called earth,
> and there were inhabitants on the face thereof.

Multiple clauses linked together through the particle "and" are representative of proper biblical Hebrew syntax.

The pace of the action is also an important tool to guide the audience. The cadence of the narrative is frequently employed in the biblical authors' use of time. Time is manifest in the scriptures in the duration of events, in the sequence of particular events, and in the time when the event specifically happened. The biblical author shows no reservation in juxtaposing events for effect (even if it means his presentation is out of chronological order) in casting events for a specific duration of time for numeric symbolism or even collapsing years of history to bring an earlier and a later event together. The use of time as a narrative tool is clarified by Richards and O'Brien:

> The biblical authors *were* intentional about the sequence in which they presented events, even if they weren't preoccupied with historical, chronological order. We Westerners can focus

54. Robert Alter, "Introduction," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible,* eds., Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 22.

> so much on the *time* (chronology) that we miss the *timing* (the meaning of the sequence) in a biblical passage.[55]

The presentation of events by the narrator indicates his purpose and priority, particularly if the timing or duration of event is manifestly contrived. As an example, when we are presented with two paired stories of creation (Moses 2–3), it is tempting to recast them into a spiritual followed by a physical creation, thereby becoming chronologically satisfactory, but this might be at the expense of the intended purpose of the author. The narrator's use of time and pacing in Moses 1 will be shown in the next section.

Another tool used by the biblical authors is *motif*, a recurring image, pattern or design that emerges during the narrative of a character. Alter describes it as

> a concrete image, sensory quality, action, or object recurs through a particular narrative. … It has no meaning in itself without the defining context of the narrative; it may be incipiently symbolic or instead primarily a means of giving formal coherence to a narrative.[56]

Motifs act as contributory elements which subtly stitch points in the narrative together. Understanding the use of motif in the text adds nuance and shading to a story-arc where it might otherwise be missed.

Moses is associated with the motif of water. This motif often uses water in conjunction with deliverance, whether deliverance from the Egyptians by way of crossing the Red Sea or being saved by the gushing of water from a rock in the wilderness. Even Moses's own name is defined in terms of deliverance from water. Regarding this nomenclative art, Nathan Arp aptly notes, "The Hebrew and Egyptian etymologies come together in the idea of pulling from water — whether that be amniotic water or baptismal water."[57] Indeed, he correctly observes that "Moses's name is not an auxiliary ornament of rhetoric, but a guiding component to the story of the Exodus."[58] Moses made stronger than many waters is not only a prophetic statement, but also another accurate echo of his

55. E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 149.

56. Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 95.

57. Nathan J. Arp, "Joseph Knew First: Moses, the Egyptian Son," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 32 (2019): 187–98.

58. Ibid., 192.

motif. Being made stronger than many waters also puts Moses in the similitude of God, God's throne being on many waters (Psalms 29:3, 10).

A Stylistic Reading

Continuing our examination of literary functions, I will demonstrate how a close reading of the text with an eye for stylistics can reveal an extra layer of meaning that otherwise might be missed. This brief exploration of the text is by no means exhaustive but is intended to demonstrate some possibilities that can be found in a close reading.

Most of Moses 1 consists of the ascent form, so the narrator, needing to distinguish between the two occurrences, carefully controls the content and pace of the first ascent so the second will have a greater impact in the mind of the reader. The first ascent of Moses feels hurried and incomplete. Note that in the first verse, Moses was said to have talked to God face-to-face at the beginning of the episode. However, the narrator shelves any speech by Moses and instead lets the Lord do all the talking. The Lord then promises to show Moses only one thing, which leaves both Moses and the audience hungry for more. Then, just as quickly as it began, the lights turn off, the curtain falls, and Moses is back on earth. The ending in verse nine mirrors the introduction in verses 1–2. This gives the audience an abrupt ending to the ascent, almost as if the reader tripped and fell down these steps, not unlike Moses falling to the earth:

> Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain.
> Moses saw God face to face, and he talked with him.
> The glory of God was upon Moses.
> Moses could endure his presence. (Moses 1:1–2)
> The presence of God withdrew from Moses.
> God's glory was not upon Moses.
> Moses was left unto himself.
> Moses fell to the earth. (Moses 1:9)

Moses is back on solid ground. The narrator is carefully mindful of the directional dimensions of his story. Moses isn't described as standing up if he had in fact fallen down. Any indication of upward movement is reserved for the next ascension establishing an acute awareness of spatial stratum.

Looking back, Moses is intensely aware of the magnitude of this ascent and vision. It has caused him to marvel and wonder (1:8) at the vastness of the Earth. As is typical for the narrator, this is accomplished through internal monologue or narrated summation of thoughts. This

type of brief look into the emotions of the character or even through the character's eyes allows the narrator to inject a moment of characterization into the story with the briefest of words. Adele Berlin makes note of this type of presentation:

> [This] way of showing a character's point of view is by informing the reader what he thought, felt, feared, etc. — in other words, by portraying the inner life of the character. This lets the reader know how the character perceives the events of the story, how he is affected and how he is likely to react.[59]

In these verses, the readers, along with Moses, see the created world and the children of men. We also experience the marvel and wonder by this glance into Moses's inner life.

Verse 10 also presents a glimpse into Moses's feelings by the use of a figure of speech common to the Bible. Called *litotes,* this idiom is appropriate when something is dramatically understated to enhance or elevate something else. This is apparent in Moses 1:10, where Moses declares he is nothing in comparison to the glory and power of the Almighty and Endless God. Compare this statement alongside Abraham's discussion with the Lord in Genesis: "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which *am but* dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27). Both Moses and Abraham debase themselves to magnify the holiness of the Lord.

Richards and O'Brien note another item, that "God said that it was not good for man to be alone (Gen 2:18). In fact, the Bible frequently uses 'alone' as a negative term."[60] Here in these verses, we may be tempted to see Moses enjoying a moment of serenity, but we are casting our ideas on his situation. Solitude leads one to be vulnerable to attack.

No sooner than Moses begins to collect himself, Satan appears as a new character in the narrative. As he begins this new episode in the story-arc, the narrator chooses a new method of working the pace of the story. We have seen that verses 12–23 are roughly plotted with parallel paneling. The narrator takes advantage of the panels to form a contrast to increase the tension and pace of the narrative. This is accomplished as the lengthy sections of dialogue in the first panel that give way to a flurry of action words that accelerates the pacing of the story. The narrator presents an urgency in the text by having Moses first defend himself with dialogue; and after a signal with the use of a key-word (the

59. Adele Berlin, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 61.

60. Richards and O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture*, 78–79.

repeated "when Moses had said these words"), the story turns to action and emotion, and the dialogue remains minimal.

Note that items in the first panel are reflected and intensified in the second. The temptation of verse 12 turns into the tumult of verse 19. The apparent glory of darkness becomes the bitterness of hell in verse 20. The twice repeated admonition to call upon the name of God in 17 and 18 gave Moses strength in 20 and 21. Lastly, the urgency increases as each attempt to cast out Satan is met with greater intensity.

Notice also that the narrator returns us to the *inner life* point of view, where again we see what Moses saw and especially note that he felt fear in the moment.

Satan's words "Moses, son of man, worship me" are curious in a number of aspects. As he begins, Satan uses the incorrect title for Moses by calling him "*the son*." Stephen O. Smoot notes that when Moses was caught up into the presence of God, Moses was made a member of the heavenly court (or divine council), by bestowing the title the "son of God." Smoot explains:

> When viewed within the context of the divine council, this dialogue between Satan and Moses takes upon itself a new meaning. Satan's tactic was to bring Moses down to a level of mere humanity by calling him a "son of man." ... However, since Moses was designated a "son of God" by God himself, he was much more than merely a "son of man." His deification into the divine council put him far above the status of a groveling human. Satan wished to strip Moses of his prophetic legitimacy by denying his association in the divine council as a "son of God."[61]

While we are dealing with names and titles in these verses, we would be remiss not to recall the importance of names and titles in antiquity. It must be remembered that "in most civilizations of the past, a very high value was placed upon having one's name live on after one's death."[62] The blessing of having one's name written in the book of life is to perpetuate one's name beyond death; likewise, having one's name blotted out can mean either a premature temporal death or a spiritual punishment and damnation.

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61. Stephen O. Smoot, "I Am a Son of God": Moses' Ascension into the Divine Council" in *2012 BYU Religious Education Student Symposium* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 2012), 136.

62. Alonzo L. Gaskill, *The Lost Language of Symbolism* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 220.

When Moses notes Satan's appearance with "Who art thou?" Satan is denied a name/title that would rightfully and properly belong to a god. Here, the lack of a name was equivalent to having one's name blotted out. To be denied a name is also perhaps an ironic item. One of the names and titles of Yhwh in the scriptures is "I Am," which could be described as the ultimate identity.

The narrator ends this episode with an aside that effectually gives Moses and the reader a chance to catch our breaths and to prepare for the next segment. The mention that Moses bore record of these things, only to have them removed by wicked men, returns us to the writer's table, and we are reminded of the narrator's presence. This type of narrative aside isn't uncommon in the Hebrew Bible. The biblical author occasionally reveals the status of his subject at the time of his writing. This can be compared to examples such as 1 Samuel 30:25, where the narrator explains rules for dividing war spoils which had originated in King David's time and are still in effect "unto this day." The authorial aside gives a small glimpse into the time of the narrator.

Now that evil has been cast out, Moses is ready to receive additional light and knowledge from the Lord. This second ascent expands the contents of the first ascent and shows Moses and the audience an increase of God's creation.

The second ascent with its accompanying visions provides us with a glimpse into the narrator's use of numbers and scale. We might imagine that the second vision would showcase an expansive universe of grandeur, somewhat like what Terryl Givens has called "a panoramic vision of the cosmos,"[63] but this is not the style of the narrator. In Moses 1, God's glory and his creations are presented not as a three-dimensional Technicolor tour of the galaxy but rather in more linear terms of number and quantity. This type of presentation is expressed through the descriptive "many" (25, 29, 34, 35, and 37). The souls Moses saw were as "numberless as the sands upon the sea shore." The Lord's creations are worlds without number, and they are innumerable unto man.[64] The Lord himself describes his glory in terms of *endless* and *eternal*.

63. Terryl Givens with Brian Hauglid, *The Pearl of Greatest Price: Mormonism's Most Controversial Scripture* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019), 37.

64. It should also be noted, based on our observations of number and increase, that the astronomy of the Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham are presented differently. The order of heavens and planets in the Book of Moses is cardinal, while the Book of Abraham presents them as ordinal.

The author of Moses 1 has shaped his text with the use of description, dialogue, motif, wordplay, figures of speech, pacing, direction and structure to guide the reader/listener to his messages.

Form/Genre

A central tenet of form criticism aims to understand the *gattung* (genre) of a text and the *sitz im leben* (the social setting) that lies behind the genre. But note that the form critical approach to genre, according to Buss, "is best viewed as an open or virtual class which describes a possibility, rather than as a class of actual objects which meet a certain description."[65] Genre is best understood as describing events and actions in human life as conforming to an expectation of the reader.

The text of Moses 1 is composed of two different genres. The first and last part of the chapter are from the apocalypse genre, while the middle of the chapter is a prophetic lawsuit. Examples of these genres are also found somewhat frequently in the ancient Near East, the Bible, and the Book of Mormon.

The Heavenly Ascent

The first type of genre manifest in Moses 1 is that of apocalypse. While the term *apocalypse* often evokes imagery of cataclysmic cacophony, the meaning of the Greek word (ἀποκάλυψις) is "uncovered" or "revealed." Things apocalyptic are God's revealed word to mankind. John C. Collins defines the apocalypse genre thus:

> Apocalypse may be defined as a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another supernatural world.[66]

Collins notes that this genre is manifest as many subsets. These may include Epiphanies, Visions, Theophanies, Heavenly Book(s),

65. Martin Buss, ed., *Encounter with the Text: Form and History in the Hebrew Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), quoted in Soulen, s.v. "*Gemeindeordnungen, Gemeinderegeln*," *Handbook*, 76.

66. John C. Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," *Semeia* 14 (1979), 9, quoted in Blake T. Ostler, "The Throne-Theophany and Prophetic Commission in 1 Nephi: A Form-Critical Analysis," *BYU Studies* 26, no. 4 (1986): 88.

and Ascents.[67] This ascent subgenre is the form for much of Moses 1. Bradshaw explains the significance of the ascent experience:

> The overall narrative structure and literary details of Moses 1 place it squarely in the genre of the ancient heavenly ascent literature. Although stories of heavenly ascent bear important similarities to ancient and modern temple liturgy, they make the claim of being something more. Whereas temple rituals dramatically depict a *figurative* journey into the presence of God, the heavenly ascent literature contains stories of exceptional individuals who experienced *actual* encounters with Deity within the *heavenly* temple — the "completion or fulfillment" of the "types and images" found in earthly ordinances. In such encounters, individuals may experience a vision of eternity, participate in worship with the angels, and have certain blessings conferred upon them that are "made sure" by the voice of God Himself. They may also acquire membership and a mission as a member of the divine council.[68]

Because the Heavenly Ascent pattern of Moses 1 has been thoroughly researched by other authors, I refer the reader to research by Bradshaw and Larson,[69] as well as Smoot, for further details.

Rîb disputation pattern or Prophetic Lawsuit

The *rîb* (ריב) disputation pattern is a well-documented formula used by biblical Israel and her neighbors. The Hebrew word *rîb* signifies a contest or dispute, and the KJV often translates this word as "controversy." It is a "[technical term] in OT studies for the complaint which one member of the covenant (usually Yahweh or his prophet) issues against the offending member."[70] The term *lawsuit* is a bit misrepresentative in that it implies a formal legal setting whereas this was often not the case.[71] For our purposes, it is sufficient to know that this form was used as a vehicle

67. Ibid.

68. Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, David J. Larsen, and Stephen T. Whitlock, "The Heavenly Ascent of Moses 1 as a Prelude to a Temple Text: New Light from the *Apocalypse of Abraham*" (unpublished manuscript, 2019), 2–3.

69. Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Book of Moses* (West Valley City, UT: Eborn Books, 2010), 13–50.

70. Soulen, s.v. "*Rîb* Pattern," *Handbook*, 170.

71. See John W. Welch, "King Benjamin's Speech as a Prophetic Lawsuit," in *King Benjamin's Speech: That Ye May Learn Wisdom*, eds. John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998), 225–32.

for delivering a rebuke or a call to repentance from the Lord through his prophets to Israel in times of their infidelity. Examples of this pattern can be found in Isaiah 1:2–9, Jeremiah 2:4–13 and Hosea 4:1–10.

The four parts of a prophetic lawsuit can occur with some variation, depending on the violation or just the biblical author's preferences. The *rîb* pattern typically begins with a summons or an introduction to the participants. The next step provides the "charges" against the offender, while the third step delineates the innocence of the offended. The last step involves a proposition for the end of the conflict, in which the offender either turns away from his or her wrongs or receives punishment according to the stipulations of the covenant. Richard M. Davidson clarifies the significance of this genre:

> I suggest that the covenant lawsuit is not only a (sub)genre, with a specific literary form and/or technical terminology … but constitutes a motif that suffuses the entire warp and woof of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. … The ריב pattern is part of the Hebrew mentality, part and parcel of the way that God is depicted in Scripture.[72]

He further notes that "the 'covenant lawsuit' structure forms a virtual mirror image of Israel's covenant-making pattern."[73] The accusations against the covenant breaker are in similitude of the very covenant being broken. This pattern therefore reminds the audience of the initial covenant and tells of the penalties of mocking God by breaking the covenant.

Consider the following consolidation of details frequently featured in the *rîb* pattern.[74] This listing is from instances in the Bible as well as other contemporary ancient eastern cultures. Instances of the pattern follow the four-part outline and can include the subunits listed here in one form or another.

I. Summons to dispute
   - Call of covenant witnesses
   - Call to attention of accused

II. Accusation against the offender
   - Declaration of obligations/interrogation
   - Declaration of violations

72. Richard M. Davidson, "The Divine Covenant Lawsuit Motif in Canonical Perspective," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 21, no. 1–2 (2010): 70.

73. Ibid., 64.

74. Robert H. O'Connell, *Concentricity and Continuity: The Literary Structure of Isaiah* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 42.

Declaration of culpability
Rejection of ritual compensation
III. Exoneration of the offended
A. Covenant innocence
1. Voluntary initiation of the covenant
2. Loyalty to the covenant
Recount of past benefits
Present offer of reinstatement
B. Right to vindication
Trial by combat
IV. Ultimatum
A. Threat
Repeal of covenant benefits
Continued/partial/total destruction
B. Appeal
1. Appeal proper
2. Motivation
Description of present distresses
Renewal of Covenant benefits
3. Condition
Terms of reinstatement/reparations

Micah 6:1–8 serves as an example the *rîb* pattern in the oracles of the prophets. In these verses, the prophet Micah requests the tribunal on behalf of the Lord. Note the manifestation of the four elements of the lawsuit described below:

> In this passage, the prophet utilizes a legal model and legal terminology in order to underscore his message of justice. The word *rîb* is repeated three times, as the mountains and hills are called forward as judges: there can be no mistaking the courtroom setting and trial language in these first few verses [1–2]. As with most prophetic poetry, however, there is a twist: rather than hearing Yhwh's accusation, as we hear in many other *rîb* oracles, we realize that Yhwh has convened the court in order to challenge Israel to lay her charge against *him* [3–5]. And then, instead of prosecuting God, Israel wants to reconcile — a model, perhaps, of restorative justice rather than an adversarial process. But Israel seeks cultic means to solve a juridical problem, and that will not suffice [6–7]; according

> to the last verse, it is only just action toward other people, and loyalty to Yhwh, that can resolve this dispute [8].[75]

Turning to Moses 1, we find the elements of the prophetic lawsuit in Moses's confrontation with Satan. This instance has Moses acting in place (or in similitude) of the Only Begotten in delivering the *Gerichtsrede* to the accuser. The twice repeated line of "I can judge between … " is a legal formula used elsewhere in the Hebrew bible.[76] The Hebrew word *shaphat* is behind the word *judge* in the King James Version and is instructive for understanding these verses. The same Hebrew word is also used in Exodus 18:13–23, where Moses sits in judgment of the people of Israel before installing lesser judges at the counsel of his father-in-law. Haim Shipira explains Moses's role as judge: "In the original more primitive system described here, Moses acts as a judge-prophet, whose function was to decide various disputes according to the word of God. … Under this system, the prophet serves as a judge who implements 'the Divine judgment.'"[77]

This is the same situation in Moses 1, with Moses handing down the "Divine judgment." So while Satan desperately claims to be the Only Begotten, Moses has already put on the mantle and sits in judgment. The notion of Moses as judge in Moses 1 is entirely in keeping with his role as prophet and the presentation of that role by the biblical author.

As we work our way through the narrative, we see the narrator take Moses through all four stages of the *rîb* pattern:

1. ***Summons to dispute***. The controversy begins with Satan appearing to tempt Moses. The word *tempt* in Hebrew (*nâsâh*) is also defined as "test" or "trial," which has overtones of a legal setting.

2. ***Accusation.*** However, Moses quickly turns the tables on Satan and puts him under interrogation. In doing this, Moses formalizes the legal proceedings. This exordium accuses Satan of blasphemy (contempt of the Only Begotten) and temptation to worship a false god. Moses uses the glory of God as his platform to build his case.

- Moses declares Satan to have no glory, in direct contrast to the Only Begotten, who is full of glory.

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75. Chaya Halberstam, "Law in Biblical Israel," in *The Cambridge Companion to Judaism and Law,* ed. Christine Hayes (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 60–61.

76. Other instances of this formula include Genesis 16:5, Exodus 18:16, Numbers 35:24, 1 Samuel 24:12 and Ezekiel 34:17.

77. Haim Shapira, "'For The Judgment Is God's': Human Judgment And Divine Justice In The Hebrew Bible And In Jewish Tradition" *Journal of Law and Religion* 27, no. 2 (2011), 285.

- Moses declares that Satan is different from Yhwh. Satan can be seen while "in the natural man," while God may not be seen without His intercession.
- Satan's glory is like darkness.

These accusations challenge Satan's assertions for worship. Moses declares Satan to be without glory and therefore unworthy and undeserving of worship. Moses notes that even if Satan had glory, Moses wouldn't be able to look upon Satan without being in a state of transfiguration. As he continues to lay out his case, Moses says he can look upon Satan with his "natural" eyes. Further, Moses still has the spirit of God and discernment, even though he had just declared that he himself was nothing (1:10). Contrast this with Satan, who has less than the empty canvas of nothing. Satan's glory is like darkness.

Moses now closes the accusation portion of the lawsuit with the formula "And I can judge between thee and God" (1:15).

3. ***Exoneration of the offended***. Moses details his covenant innocence with a list of his righteous qualifications:

- Moses is in the similitude of the Only Begotten.
- Moses will not cease to call upon God.
- Moses notes that he has been the beneficiary of past blessings from the Lord, when he was visited by the Lord at the burning bush.
- Moses has experienced God's glory.

Moses concludes his defense argument with the formula "wherefore, I can judge between him and thee" (1:18).

Note the inversion of the formula in verse 15 with its usage in verse 18. Verse 15 lists Satan first and then, by way of contrast, God. This acts as a concluding statement, that Moses has completed judging Satan against the superior example of God. In verse 18, we find the reverse. Moses, having noted the goodness of God, declares that he can judge between the righteousness of God and the works of Satan.

Verse 18 also marks a transition to the Ultimatum in the use of the word *wherefore*, which acts as a statement of conclusion that now leads to the next phase of the lawsuit. M. O'Rourke Boyle shows that the *rîb* pattern of Amos 3 uses "wherefore/therefore" as a characteristic introduction to the pending punishments or reconciliations.[78]

The Exoneration shifts over to a *trial by combat*, in which Moses attempts to cast out Satan, but Satan resists (1:20). This can be viewed as

78. Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle. "The Covenant Lawsuit of the Prophet Amos: III 1 - IV 13" *Vetus Testamentum* 21, no. 3 (1971): 356.

a *theomachy*, which is defined as a battle among the gods. As a member of the divine council, Moses has the credentials to participate in this type of genre.

4. ***Ultimatum.*** This ultimatum is different from other examples of the *rîb* pattern, as there is no olive branch extended to Satan. Satan's destiny is to be cast out; opportunities to make reparations have long past. The narrator also makes note of Moses's present distresses, which are epitomized by Moses seeing the very bitterness of hell. Moses, finally successful, casts Satan out in the name of the Only Begotten (1:21).

Boyle insightfully notes that at the end of the dispute in Amos 3, the name of the Lord is invoked to act as a seal of authority.[79] This is also resonant of Moses 1, where the dispute pattern ends with Moses using the name of the Only Begotten to successfully cast out Satan. The name of the Only Begotten brings the disputation to a close.

Narrative Themes

The central or dominating idea of a work of literature is its theme. The intent of the biblical narratives can often be found in the narrator's use of a repeated key-word or theme. These repetitions are significant mileposts along the narrative as they direct the reader to see the author's priorities in his written word.

The Glory of God

One such key-word in Moses 1 is the word *glory*. As a central theme in the chapter, it is used 14 times, including one instance in the original manuscripts that isn't in our published version.

> Moses saith I will not cease to call upon God I have other
> things to inquire of him for his glory has been upon me & it
> is glory unto me wherefore [80]
> (OT1, page 1, lines 41–42.)

The predominance of the word warrants a closer look at its place in the chapter and its place in the larger theology of the Pentateuch. The glory of God is commonly referred to as the *Shekinah* by commentators of the Hebrew Bible, even though the word doesn't appear in the Bible itself. The *Shekinah* (*šekīnah*, meaning "dwelling" or "settling") can be

79. Ibid., 361.

80. Kent P. Jackson, *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2005), 146.

described as "the nimbus or halo of light … experienced in the presence of God."[81] The idea of glory "settling" is in fact a good fit with Moses 1, where God's glory came upon Moses as he entered God's presence.

Dan Belknap elaborates that "God's glory includes both the physical light represented by the Shekinah-type experience and also truth, the conscious awareness of the way things really are, the latter [referring] especially to Moses in this chapter."[82]

When we see Moses 1 as a lost prologue, the text serves as an introduction to the Book of Genesis as well as the rest of the Pentateuch. What might be overlooked is that this chapter is also an introduction to God and to his Only Begotten. As such, it is singularly focused on glory. The certainty of Yhwh is attested because of this glory. It is glory that sets Yhwh apart from Ra, Horus, Enlil, Marduk, or any of the gods of Canaan.

The emphasis on glory is also abundant in Moses's confrontation with Satan. The binary choice between glory and no glory reflects the ancient doctrine of the Two Ways, where men and women must daily choose between following the way of darkness or the way of light.[83]

Glory is also an important component of entering into the presence of God. Margaret Barker notes:

> Beyond the veil was the glory. This was described as "the presence" or "the face" of the Lord. … The glory came to the tabernacle when it was consecrated. The cloud covered the tent, "the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:34). … To see the glory of the Lord's presence — to see beyond the veil — was the greatest blessing.[84]

Note, however, that the notion of glory isn't as cut-and-dry as might be expected. Kerry Muhlestein notes:

> The power of the Lord seems to have been particularly hard for the biblical writers to convey. This difficulty may account for the ambiguous use of the term *kâbôd*. As has been noted, this term usually conveys the meaning of weight, or heaviness.

81. Belnap, "Where Is Thy Glory?" 164.

82. Ibid., 163–80.

83. Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *In God's Image and Likeness: Ancient and Modern Perspectives on the Book of Moses* (West Valley City, UT: Eborn Books, 2010), 328–29.

84. Margaret Barker, *Christmas: The Original Story* (London: SPCK, 2008), 14.

> However, it sometimes is associated with light, and this is frequently the case in theophanic accounts.[85]

While it is likely true that the biblical writers had difficulty conveying God's glory, it is also true that readers share the same difficulty. "Words fall short, but not without reason. God's glory is too active to fall into a simplified man-made compartmentalization of the subject."[86]

One of the difficulties faced by interpreters is that *glory* in the English translations is often one of half-a-dozen different Hebrew words used within the biblical text. Philippe Paul-Luc Vigulier tells that *kâbôd* is the predominant word for *glory* in the Hebrew bible, but numerous secondary words are used as well. A variety of Hebrew terms are used to translate *glory* in the King James Version that can help inform our understanding of glory in Moses 1. Hebrew words such as *kâbôd*, as well as *'âdar* (to be majestic, to be exalted) or *pâ'ar* (to adorn, beautify), have all been translated as "glory" in the King James Version. It doesn't seem unreasonable that one word in the revealed translation might represent a number of different words in the original.[87]

Due to the multiple possibilities for glory in Moses 1, some of our observations of the English text remain limited. As an example, Moses notes that he was transfigured before the Lord. Was this event similar to when he returned down from Sinai, when his face shone and he had to veil his face?

The predominance and preeminence of the word *glory* reveals Moses 1 to be doxological, that is, being a witness and praise to God's glory.

Strength

Another theme of Moses 1 is the word *strength*, which can be seen as another key word that functions in the text. There are three instances of strength as a factor in the narrative. The first instance is Moses possessing

85. Kerry Muhlestein, "Darkness, Light, and the Lord: Elements of Israelite Theophanies," in *Ascending the Mountain of the Lord: Temple, Praise, and Worship in the Old Testament*, eds. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Matthew J. Grey, and David Rolph Seely (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2013), 249.

86. Philippe Paul-Luc Vigulier, "A Biblical Theology of the Glory of God," (master's thesis, The Master's Seminary, 2012), 2.

87. The King James translators of First Corinthians have done this in 14:20 with the word *children*. Paul uses the word παιδίον ("a young child, an infant") in the beginning of this verse, while the second instance of *children* is the verb νηπιάζετε ("to be childish, infantile"). Here, the choice of the translators obscures Paul's original meaning.

"natural strength like unto man." This state of strength appears to be adequate for the natural man, but Moses soon finds it wholly inadequate to deal with Satan's wrath and fury. As fear flooded his heart, Moses called upon God and received additional strength, which enabled him to overcome his fears and triumph over the evil one. In the third instance, the strengthened Moses is promised additional strength which would be greater than many waters. This would endow Moses with powers to be in similitude of Yhwh, to divide the waters from the waters (similar to Genesis 1:6) at the shores of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21).

There is a significance in this three-tiered leveling of personal strength and spirituality. The narrator, with his awareness of space, describes strength in patterns reminiscent of sacred geography, each tier bringing Moses closer to God.

Narrative and Temple Texts

The tabernacle and later temples were the center of biblical Israel's worship, so it should not be surprising that the ordinances and themes of the temple saturate the biblical text. As the biblical authors were writing from a temple-centered environment, their writings can be better understood when viewed with the workings and doctrines of the ancient temple in mind. The presence and presentation of temple-related themes are relevant to our study, as these themes are factors that inform the words of the narrative.

Such texts that contain reference to the teachings and ordinances of the temple are called *temple texts*. They are "a symbolic narrative of the 'mystery' of how God's plan of salvation will work out according to his will in the end." [88] John W. Welch elaborates:

> A text can be seen as a temple text if it is obviously connected with the temple or with temple functions. Some texts … are temple texts as they comprise the historical, theological, or covenantal underpinnings of the ceremonies, symbols, and purposes behind the construction and ceremonies of the temple. … Any number of clues may signal to readers that a text has temple connections. These clues include background contexts, coded vocabulary, or holy pronouncements, but most indicative of all are references to encounters with the divine presence.[89]

88. Matthew L. Bowen, "'I Have Done According to thy Will,' Reading Jacob 5 as a Temple Text," in *The Temple: Ancient & Restored*, 235.

89. John W. Welch, "Experiencing the Presence of the Lord: The Temple Program of Leviticus," in *The Temple: Ancient & Restored*, 273.

Most of Moses 1 consists of Moses in the presence of God, which, in a temple setting, is a function reserved for the high priest in the Holy of Holies. Thus I would argue that the temple covenant-making themes in former times influenced both the structure and the content of the material included in the Book of Moses.

Throughout the text of the Book of Moses, its author stops the historic portions of the story and weaves into the narrative framework ritual acts, such as sacrifice and sacrament ordinances such as baptism, washings, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and oaths and covenants, such as obedience to marital obligations and oaths of property consecration. These items can rightly be viewed in a temple-worship framework within the Book of Moses, thus conforming to the themes of a temple text.

The manifestation of temple texts in the Bible have led some scholars to construct a *hypothetical* platform wherein these texts could have been used in liturgical functions. These scholars place these supposed ritual performances in conjunction with the ancient Israelite festivals, such as the Feast of Tabernacles. One such (re)construction shows selections from the Psalms as the libretti of a sacred processional drama.[90] The substance of this reconstructed ritual is outlined by Allan Petersen,

> In these psalms Yahweh is depicted as a mighty king who reigns over the entire world (47.3, 8, 9, 10). He subdues foreign nations under Israel (47.4). Israel rejoices, sings and bows down before Yahweh (95.1, 2, 6; 97.8) and so do the nations (47.2, 7, 8; 97.1; 98.4–6; 99.3; 100.1–2). The peoples enter the courts of Yahweh with songs of praise and offerings and prostrate themselves before him (96.7–9). With joyous song and the sound of a shofar, Yahweh ascends (47.6). He seats himself on his holy throne (47.9), the throne that was established long ago (93.2). An important expression in these descriptions is יהוה מָלָךְ (93.1; 96.10; 97.1; 99.1), [which may be translated] as "Yahweh has become king."[91]

In addition to the Psalms, other scholars have found temple themes in the early chapters of Genesis. Stephen D. Ricks notes that the first 34 verses of Genesis were used in a temple setting for liturgical use in the

90. Janet Ewell, "Seeing Psalms as the Libretti of a Holy Drama," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 31 (2019): 259–76. See also Legrand L. Baker and Stephen D. Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord?* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2010), 74.

91. Allan Rosengren Petersen, *The Royal God: Enthronement Festivals in Ancient Israel and Ugarit?* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 15.

Second Temple Period and were likely used in pre-exilic Israel for that purpose as well.[92] The historical contents of the Book of Moses also fit this scenario of temple worship. David M. Calabro notes,

> Foundational religious narratives (like the Genesis account) become "mythological precedents" for rituals, adding authority to the ritual by showing that it had a powerful and ancient origin. … When one participates in a ritual that has a mythological precedent, the frame of the original narrative and the frame of the ritual overlap. A number of passages in Moses 1–7 could be viewed as mythological precedents, for instance Adam's offering of sacrifice, his baptism, and the ascent of Enoch. If Moses 1–7 is viewed as a ritual text, these passages could be understood as episodes narrated by a ritual leader in order to lend authority to similar actions performed in the ritual. [93]

By placing the passages of the Pentateuch in a temple setting, we can visualize the creation enacted or the high priest and the priests acting as the Lord and his angels performing atoning acts, bringing order to creation and being admitted into the presence of God. As this history was recited, acts, ordinances, and ceremonies would have been performed. For instance, during the story of Enoch and his city of Zion, members of the attending congregation could have been put under oath to be a chosen, covenant people and to keep all things in common, with all their property belonging to the Lord.[94]

Calabro notes that the Book of Moses narrator seems to "turn aside" during his narration and directly address the audience. This type of narrative movement is called *lamination* and is indicative of a ritual context.[95] Reading the Book of Moses while mindful of this type of narration highlights passages that may be seen as stage directions in a drama.

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92. Stephen D. Ricks, "Liturgy and Cosmogony: The Ritual Use of Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East," in *Temples of the Ancient World,: Ritual and Symbolism*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 118–23.

93. Calabro, "Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis," in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored*, 167.

94. *See* Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "The LDS Story of Enoch as the Culminating Episode of a Temple Text," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (2014): 39–73 for a further treatment of this theme.

95. Calabro, "Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis," in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored*, 168.

As an example of this technique, Calabro cites Moses 6:68. This verse explains how Adam became qualified as a son of God, after which the narrator turns to address the audience, instructing them that they "may all become the sons of God." The idea of narrative lamination could inform our reading of Moses 1 and reveal the intent of the author. An example of this might be demonstrated in Moses 1:7, where the Lord shows Moses the created world. This verse reads like stage directions, where the doubling of the statement of showing the world to Moses suggests extending the presentation to a listening audience.

A Note on the JST

It has been noted above that the JST is a puzzle of sorts to many scholars and students. Haley Wilson and Thomas A. Wayment correctly report that "characterizing the overall intent and purpose of Smith's retranslation of the Bible has been a somewhat elusive endeavor."[96] Recent research has shown that Joseph Smith used a contemporary biblical commentary by Adam Clarke as the basis for many of the small, miscellaneous changes to the Bible text. This has challenged many of the current assumptions about the nature of the JST.[97]

The recent trend in JST research has been on determining 19th- century sway on the Prophet's method. The connections with the Clarke commentary certainly show the utility of this type of approach. In the same vein, another recent study by Wayment explored Moses 1 in its 19th-century surroundings, concluding that it was likely a product of antebellum America. Wayment posits that Moses 1 was a reflection of theological discussion in early 1830 and "representing, perhaps, Smith's personal contemplations or prayers."[98] This is part of a larger picture of how the JST began its formation. He explains:

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96. Haley Wilson and Thomas A. Wayment, "A Recently Recovered Source: Rethinking Joseph Smith's Bible Translation," *Journal of Undergraduate Research* (2017), http://jur.byu.edu/?p=21296.

97. Thomas A. Wayment, "10 questions with Thomas Wayment," interview by Kurt Manwaring, *From The Desk* (blog), January 2, 2019, https://www.fromthedesk.org/10-questions-thomas-wayment/. See also Kevin Barney's helpful assessment of the discovery, "The JST and the Adam Clarke Commentary," *By Common Consent* (blog), August 15, 2019, https://bycommonconsent.com/2019/08/15/the-jst-and-the-adam-clarke-commentary/.

98. Thomas A. Wayment, "Intertextuality and the Purpose of Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible" in *Foundational Texts of Mormonism: Examining Major Early Sources,* eds. Mark Ashurst-McGee, Robin Scott Jensen, and Sharalyn D. Howcroft (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 86. To be fair,

> It is at least possible that the Bible revision was, in its infancy, a kind of editing project to bring existing canonical texts into harmony with newly given revelatory texts. … Seeing Moses 1 as a document that was added to the Bible revision project provides an important piece of evidence to understanding the origins and initial interests of the JST.[99]

The motive for the Bible revisions then seems to have been to bring the Bible into harmony with Smith's revelations.[100]

The difficulty of this approach is that it refuses to take the text on its own terms, instead opting to exclusively entertain an environmental influence in the production of the text. Kathleen Flake has noted how this approach "explains Smith's approach to the text largely in terms of contemporary practices that did not distinguish authors from editors," arguing that Smith used these conventions "creatively" and consistent with "prophetic writers of ancient times," She continues,

> My differences with this argument are slight and result primarily from my emphasis on those sections of the JST that are not merely editorial, but radical reformulations of the biblical narrative. I believe these additions are too extensive to be rationalized by nineteenth-century editorial conventions, especially given the Bible's near-fetishistic canonical status during this period.[101]

The large additions to the biblical text are different from the types of changes Joseph Smith made later in the project. Flake further notes, "It can be said that, notwithstanding its English source, the JST asks to be understood as a translation, because it does not arise out of the infinite variations available to fiction but, rather, within the limits of an existing narrative of past events."[102] The Book of Moses arrives as a narrative history and so must be read first and foremost as such.

The viewpoint that the Book of Moses (or the Book of Mormon, for that matter) is merely the product of 19th-century practices may have

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Wayment was writing for a non-Latter-day Saint audience as well as for Oxford, which is by in large not interested in publishing devotional items in its academic works. Wayment's carefully worded placement of Moses 1 in the 19th century might not be a firm as it appears.

99. Ibid., 88.

100. Ibid., 95.

101. Kathleen Flake, "Translating Time: The Nature and Function of Joseph Smith's Narrative Canon," *The Journal of Religion*, 87, no. 3 (October 2007): 508n37.

102. Ibid., 508.

some traction when examined as an item of circumstantial evidence, but this type of examination is tenable only from outside the text. Following a similar model of Book of Mormon research, I posit that due to its external parallels with other ancient manuscripts as well as its intricate and authentic internal narrative,[103] no one in the 19th century could have written Moses 1, let alone anyone who was following contemporary exegetical practices.

The JST was a complicated and varied project. The additions by the JST differ among themselves in size, purpose, style and method of production. This has led some to see the JST to be a restoration of an original text, others pointing out portions that seemed to provide inspired prophetic clarifications. Others have shown other portions to be correction of doctrinal errors, harmonization of supposed contradictions; others note changes that seek to improve and modernize the text. These categories of changes cover a wide swath of territory due to the varied nature of the final product.

The entire JST was not produced in one sitting, with the Prophet Joseph dictating the additions and changes to his scribes. Understanding that the Prophet used more than a singular method to produce his "new translation" should encourage scholars to be open to multiple categories of changes and corrections under a broader banner. We should resist the notion that the gist of the JST is just one thing. There is room in the marketplace of ideas to view portions of the JST to be a restoration of a once original text.

Conclusions

Stephen Smoot concludes that "this remarkable narrative [of Moses 1] is compelling evidence for the authenticity of Joseph Smith's revelation concerning Moses. It roots the narrative of the Book of Moses in the world of the ancient Near East."[104] The aggregate of evidences presented in this study place Moses 1 comfortably at home in antiquity.

The present study has demonstrated that this chapter has the lineament of a lost and restored text, just as it claims. The tools of biblical criticism spotlight Moses 1 as a literary masterwork, fit to coexist alongside other texts of the Bible. Moses 1 follows the procedures of biblical composition with precision.

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103. For additional examples of ancient features in Moses 1, see Mark J. Johnson, "Scriptures through the Jeweler's Lens," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 36 (2020): 101–102.

104. Smoot, "I Am a Son of God," 130.

I also hope to have highlighted the rewards of reading with attention to literary strategies. Adam Hock encourages the benefit of this type of reading in our classrooms, noting, "Literary analysis allows a class to explore the nuances of a text and identify authorial intent of the scripture while encouraging students to see a complex, beautiful narrative."[105] Following a literary approach will lead students of the Book of Moses to see a transcendent yet elaborate narrative work that will reward their reading with beauty and truth. I have shown that a close reading of the text with an eye keen to literary and rhetorical method will help the reader enchant the fire and force from the written word.

Lastly, David Noel Freedman elucidates on an oft-overlooked aspect of examining literary form and features that I hope will be adopted by Latter-day Saint students of the scriptures. He speaks specifically of parallelism, but his words can be applied to the other types of devices in the text, saying, "I am confident that the reader will readily agree … that the study of parallelism is, above all else, fun."[106]

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105. Hock, "Narrating the Scriptures," 29.

106. David Noel Freedman, foreword to *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism — Revised Edition*, by Adele Berlin (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), xi.