METHODOLOGY, SPEECH, SOCIETY

The Hebrew Bible

Yehoshua Gitay

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Preface

Introduction

The studies, which compose the present book, were written during my sojourn in South Africa as the Isidore and Theresa Cohen Chair of Hebrew Studies at the University of Cape Town and as an Extraordinary Professor at the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University. My work as a Biblical researcher in the South Africa of the post-apartheid era has not been isolated from the social and political powers that gave birth to the new democracy. The influence is reflected, I believe, in the choice of the subject matter of my research which implies, given the political-social context, a representation of relevant pragmatic topics of study. However, I pursued my study without compromising the methodological principles of scholarship.

Consequently, the opening chapter seeks to clarify the issue of scholarship versus public taste. We are inundated with articles and books which apply current political and social subjects to Biblical issues but which jeopardise true scholarship in an attempt to satisfy the audience's interest in political issues that relate to Biblical topics. Thus, we need to ask ourselves what true scholarship is – is it a discipline, a science? This issue is discussed in the opening essay, "Literary Criticism versus Public Criticism".

The present volume presents a number of my publications (many of which have appeared in leading South African journals on Biblical and Semitic studies) under three categories – Methodology, Speech and Society.[1] The reader will not be surprised that the study sets off with the issue of methodology since there is no meaningful scholarship without sound methodology. The question of Biblical hermeneutics is extremely important because the way we interpret the text as a set of philological literary rules affects our reading and teaching.

Thus, we must draw a distinction between lay reading and professional methodological study. Given this distinction, I argue that, as scholars, we must keep asking ourselves the basic question of why and how we scholars do what we do; how we study a specific text, a specific literary genre or a specific literary

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[1] Some parts of the chapters in this volume may differ slightly from the original articles because they have undergone certain changes in order to ensure coherence of the whole. The updates are editorial and stylistic in nature and do not affect the overall content or message of the original articles.

stratum; and how we deduce from the setting of the text, its meaning, and its literary structure. Those are crucial questions in my research. I constantly re-examine the foundation of our scholarly exploration, and I do not hesitate to doubt certain premises and to offer substitutes which in my investigation could respond better to the nature of given texts.

My goal is to understand the principles of Biblical hermeneutics – to clarify the assumptions of our methodology. As a rule, scholarship is shaped by specific paradigms that are considered sacred cows. But are we not worshipping the cows rather than scholarship itself? Are we listening to new discoveries that might provide a fresh look at and new insights into the material, thereby opening new avenues of scholarship? Are we not enslaved to the routine of the convenient? Are the linguistics and theoretical principles valid?

Scholarship is based on fixed paradigms. The main reason is that scholars are educated in terms of a given set of rules and assumptions which create a mindset that determines the ways and directions of the scholarship both in teaching and in publication. It is very seldom that Biblicists themselves create a paradigm shift. For instance, the recent shift in Biblical scholarship from the search for the original to the focus on the final product has shown that the so-called Redaction Criticism has been initiated not necessarily by Biblicists themselves. Rather, leading literary critics (such as Northop Frye, Frank Kermode and Robert Alter) who, given their reputation and high authority as literary-textual scholars, have affected the realm of Biblical scholarship. Obviously, the community of Biblical scholars has joined "the big names" that seek better communication with the community at large rather than confine itself to the small and closed circle of academic scholarship.

The African environment encourages us to look carefully at the tradition of oral presentation, the poetics of oral literature. I have discovered a minefield of data which stimulated me to call for a paradigm shift in aspects of Biblical scholarship such as narrative studies.

My research, which has been influenced to a certain degree by the African environment, has indicated that the poetics of oral literature characterises the Biblical discourse as well. Supplementing this finding by theories of narrative studies, I have reached the conclusion that the current paradigm of complex literature constructed by a chain of literary levels and pieces is questionable. The poetics of oral literature and narrative studies might indicate a mixture of genres, repetitions, grammatical and syntactical varieties which are considered the cornerstone of the paradigm of the critical-analytical studies of the Hebrew Bible

that lead to a mixed literature of actually artificial rules. Two studies, "A Call for a Paradigm Shift" and "The Promise: The Winding Road – Genesis 13-14 in Light of a Theory of Narrative", re-examine the current paradigm and offer an alternative critical approach which initiates a new paradigm that reconsiders the matter of the composition as the work of a single scribe.

This is just a beginning. Nevertheless, I have also presented this approach in my study of the poetics of the prophetic literature (Prophecy and Persuasion and Isaiah and His Audience).

The study of speech constitutes a major part of my research. Indeed, the core of my scholarship is rhetoric. I became interested in rhetoric as the art of argumentation, first, because of my love for oratory and, second, because rhetoric is the essence of human activity, given its communicative skills, and the Biblical authors sought to communicate with their audience.

Rhetoric, the art of argumentation and persuasion, is a method which is applied in almost every chapter in this volume. Indeed, I have adapted rhetoric, the art of persuasion and argumentation as a major instrument of introducing the Hebrew Bible because we are confronted with a lively Book that reflects disputes among people as well as ideologies that argue one against the other. Thus, the method that fits the study of the Hebrew Bible as a lively Book rather than a dry document is rhetoric, the art of argumentation and persuasion. Rhetoric enables us to penetrate the feelings of biblical characters and their ways of thinking. Rhetoric enables us to discover the debates and arguments that shape the culture of the Book and the conflicts that shaped ancient Israelite life through the writers and editors that formed this dynamic Book.

Thus, I became interested in the power of speech as an essential factor in the rise and fall of leadership, and I studied the phenomenon in the light of the Biblical account of the rise of Judah as his brothers' leader, based on his rhetorical skills. In addition, I have attempted to shed light on the issue of creating a dialogue between two opponents who debated crucial issues of justice and authority. The book of Job is instrumental to our understanding of the process of argumentation which ignores the human feelings on the account of the schematic paradigm on the one hand, and which longs for support for the misery of the suffering individual, on the other hand.

The Hebrew Bible deals with the issue in matters that seem to question God's justice when a human being feels that God acts against the principles of

righteousness. The study addresses the problem by examining certain Biblical figures that question God such as Abraham and Job who present their integrity and belief in justice before God, believing that the matter of justice is absolute even for God. How should human beings behave under such circumstances? Should they follow the conventional wisdom of God's justice or listen to their own heart? This Biblical attitude that regards justice as the absolute leading force of truth is the essence of human integrity as well as the core of true democracy – the right and justification to question even God's authority, given the human self-conviction of their own integrity.

Indeed, South Africa's multi-cultural arena calls attention to crucial questions regarding the meaning of democracy. What is the meaning of a dialogue? Do people listen to the other? And to whom should we listen – to the conventional public wisdom or to the voice of the individual victim? This is the essence of democracy, on the one hand, and the core of conflict resolution, on the other. Do we know how to handle our differences? Do we understand the depth of a sincere dialogue when discussing openly our disputes? The book of Job sheds light on the issues, and the subject is investigated in the present volume through a study which throws light on a crucial matter in our society – the conflict between religious thinking and humanistic modes of thinking.

Furthermore, the technological society has created a dilemma. Technology is so highly developed that only experts may understand its functions but the lay leaders must make crucial decisions on behalf of the people. This is a complex situation that creates problems for the decision makers. The book of Job is a point of reference for such a discussion. Job's friends operate on the basis of common wisdom while Job represents the dissident. To whom should the non-expert decision maker listen? The book of Job praises the individual who dares to question the common wisdom but points out as well that there is a limit to the individual human wisdom. Therefore, the book of Job provides a cognitive and moral lesson for one who takes the responsibility of asking questions but who should know as well the limitations of such responsibility.

South Africa is reshaping its collective memory; but how is such an important target taking place? How do people deal with the difficult reality and still create a narrative of hope and vision? Indeed, the question of collective memory is the subject matter of the essay "History, Memory and Literature" which discusses the issue of reshaping the national narrative through the problematic but dramatic period of Restoration that witnessed the rewriting of the narrative of Israel.

However, the work is yet to end and I would remind us of the words of the wise regarding unfinished tasks:

> The day is short, and the task is great, and the workmen are sluggish, and the reward is much, and the Master of the house is urgent ... It is not for thee to finish the work ... if you learn much Torah, they give thee much reward (Rabbi Tarpon in *Pirqe Aboth = Saying of the Jewish Fathers*, Chapter 2).

Yehoshua Gitay

METHODOLOGY

Literary Criticism versus Public Criticism

Further Thoughts on the Matter of Biblical Scholarship[2]

How to Read the Biblical Text — The Ongoing Debate between Scholars and Lay Readers

Since the end of the nineteenth century, Biblical criticism has distinguished itself through a strict methodological framework that focused on the history of the Biblical literature. The aim was to retrieve the origins of the historical settings of the atomic literary unit, assuming that the origin was a sporadic unit that has been developed gradually into the canon through a complex process of redaction. This method of Biblical analysis was applied not only to the Biblical narrative, but also to the study of the prophetic literature. The analytical method has depicted the narrative (specifically the Pentateuch) as a chain of isolated genres or tales and regarded the prophetic books as originally independent short utterances that are the kernels of this literary material. This critical-analytical method was clear and well defined from both the literary aspect and the philological criteria that determine the units (Gitay 2001a:101-128).

Thus, Biblical scholarship mapped the historicity of the given text and the outcome of this massive work can be seen in university libraries where shelves upon shelves of books and journals compose a gigantic research literature written in a strict technical-professional manner for a limited circle of experts. These experts engage with a tiring technical language that deals with complex issues that relate indirectly to the Bible itself, focusing on matters of composition and transmission. The result was that scholarship has deepened our knowledge of the process of the literary transmission of the Biblical canon from orality through the written scroll to the printed Book. However, the outcome of this massive scholarship has been problematic regarding the lay readers of the Bible and its pious students who are interested in the Bible itself, in its meaning and theological lesson, rather than in the actual history of the text.

A complex situation has been created. The circle of readers of the vast literature of careful philological and genetic investigation is confined to a close guild of professionals while the majority of the readers and the devoted students of the

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[2]   This chapter appeared originally as an article in *Old Testament Essays,* 19/2 (2006), pp. 633-649.

Scriptures – who search for the message and lesson – remain outside of the professional circle. These readers who are sincere learners of the Bible are mostly unfamiliar with the technical language and the terminology of analytical scholarship and have almost no interest in the literary problems revolving around the historicity of the literature. A gap between scholarship and readers of the religious schools, i.e. attendees of Churches or Synagogues, has been created.

Subsequently, current Biblical scholarship did not stay indifferent to the interests of the community of readers who read the Biblical books in their given shape. Biblical critics are shifting the focus of research from the investigation of the historical origins of the setting of the atomic units to the book as a whole, seeking to look at the literary thematic design of the books in their canonical shape. This scholarly endeavour to reach the general readers is altering the analytical orientation from the search for authorship to the focus on audience (for the development, see Gitay *ibid*). The outcome of this shift in the critics' focus has created a growing literature of synchronic studies of the Biblical literature affected by the community's interest to read the books in their canonical form, as they are, and to focus on the religious message as a manifestation of the whole rather than the sporadic fragmental literary units. In accordance, the strict professional technical language and terminology that characterised the earlier diachronic scholarship of the historicity of the literature has been replaced by a readable, non-technical and coherent style of writing.

Given this development in the direction of scholarship, a methodological session, presented at the 2000 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), has set out its goal to monitor – as a self-review – the methodological matter of this shift to the synchronic study. There has been a particular concern to assess the place of Form Criticism, the classical analytical method of investigation in the context of the diachronic study of the Biblical literature. It appears that the scholars who took part in the SBL meeting were determined to respond to the public interest in the canonical shape of the books and to update the form-critical diachronic study of the Biblical literature, freeing it from its literary-historical confines. This has been, in fact, the dramatic conclusion of Anthony F. Campbell in his article (which opens the volume following the editors' introduction): "Form Criticism Future" (2003:15-31). He writes as follows:

> The meaning of a text emerges from the text as a whole, not substantively from the fragments that can be found in it (p. 24) … Modern Form Criticism … has a future – if its past is allowed a decent burial (p. 31).

In short, we are experiencing a desperate call to shift the scholarly target from authorship to the readers: "The meaning of the text is dependent on the reader", claims Edgar Conrad (1996:325), tending therefore to transform the analytical-historical orientation to a syntactical (synchronic) presentation.

Isaiah as a Case Study – From Analysis to Synthesis

The study of Isaiah may demonstrate the switch that revolves around the changes that took place from the process of reading the individual unit to the book as a whole. Given the literary design of the book (the entire 66 chapters), the book of Isaiah has been a subject of form-critical investigation which divided the book into three major historical-literary parts each of which is separated into numerous literary units. The determination of these units is a subject of a complex technical philological analysis which is based on grammar, stylistic features and literary genres. Needless to say, this determination of the literary forms and their linguistic-stylistic characterisation – the subject matter of the scholarly endeavour – is far away from the general Church or Synagogue attendees who seek to read the prophetic message of Isaiah, as a whole, as a meaningful religious-theological manifestation of faith.

Scholars were not indifferent to public interest and responded to the theological concern, aiming their exegesis accordingly thus creating a dramatic shift in the scholarly orientation. In this regard, attention must be given to Peter Ackroyd's essay, "Isaiah 1-12: Presentation of a Prophet" (1987:79-104) which is a landmark in Canon criticism. This essay demonstrates the move from analysis to synthesis in the context of the study of Isaiah – from the literary fragments to the book as a whole, in order to provide a meaning for the compiler's readers. Ackroyd considers that the goal of the critic of Isaiah is to reveal

> the basis for the acceptance of the present application of what is associated with the prophet to lie in a view of his authoritative status ... the fulfilment of his [the prophet's] word in events, in the continued vitality of that word in new situations ... Authentication rests then ... in the continuing process by which prophetic word and receptive hearing interact (1987:103-104).

That is to say, the critic aims to provide the meaning of the prophetic word through the relationship between the word, the book and the readers. The prophetic book is presented now in relevance to the readers. In other words, the critic's new goal is to coordinate the work – the book of Isaiah – as a fulfilment of the prophetic word with an emphasis on the readers' (hearers') values. Thus,

Ackroyd seems to be mostly concerned with the process of the hearer's reception of the fulfilment of the prophetic word as a message of the whole. The readers' (hearers') interaction is the "real" matter of the critic's focus rather than the detailed search for the literary historicity of the prophetic material. The reader is the interpreter (Conrad 2003:1).

The perspective of the present, in the light of the focus on the past, determines the meaning of the work as a whole. We read, Conrad argues, according to our present – our theological construction guides us in the reading of the past. We are no longer interested in the literary history but in the present. Hence, our interpretation, according to Conrad, is the meta-historical meaning of the book as a whole, in its present shape.

Similarly, W. Brueggemann informs us, in his programmatic introduction to his commentary on Isaiah 1-39, that in his interpretive endeavour, he adapts the canonical approach, not just as a means to discover the design of the book, but:

> to understand the final form of the complex text as an integral statement, offered by the shapers of the book for the theological reasons ... The canonical approach draws upon historical-critical gains but moves beyond them toward theological interpretation. This later perspective is the one in which I have tried to work in this study (1998a:4-5).

That is to say, Brueggemann's interpretive intention does not aim to search for the historicity of the material. Rather, his aim is theology-meta-history – which is determined through the theological values of his contemporary readers (*ibid*, 6-7). He works therefore as an interpreter who introduces the message of the book – as it is – as a gospel, in terms of his readers' values. And the readers' values have nothing to do with the literary history of Isaiah. For this purpose Isaiah – in its present shape – is taken as a whole, as a book of prophetic lesson regarding the contemporary reader.

Indeed, for the general reader, the writings of such interpreters are fulfilling, responding to their interest. These writings are also less 'tiring' than the technical language employed by the professionals, and above all, this exegetical endeavour is relevant to the current readers which are given the message of the whole.

In short, the new trend in the study of Isaiah focuses on the book as a whole, as pointed out by Rolf Rendtorff: "Today scholars are beginning to move from analysis to synthesis in the interpretation of the book of Isaiah" (1997:109). The

critics' interpretive interest interacts with the readers' perception which is the book in its present shape.

However, this readers' values-oriented exegesis raises a fundamental concern regarding the meaning of scholarship. Is scholarship a response to the public concern, or does it result from a systematic investigation based on a theory of knowledge in its own right?

The Idea of Literary Criticism – Who Needs It?

A question might be asked: is the call for a theory of knowledge – divorced from the readers' interest – legitimised in the context of a sensitive literature? That is to say, the call for literary criticism as a discipline might sound too rigid in the context of the study of literature or arts, fitting better with the area of the natural sciences. At the end of the day, one might ask, why not read and interpret literature as it is, as we the readers perceive and feel it?

> Indeed, the leading literary essayist, the late Susan Sontag, was severely critical of literary criticism in her famous essay, *Against Interpretation* (1964:3-14). She forcefully stated that, "Interpretation takes the sensory experience of the work of art for granted, and proceeds from there" (1964:13). Sontag concluded her essay as follows: The aim of all commentary on art should be to make works of art more, rather than less, real to us. The function of criticism should be to show how it is what it is ... rather than to show what it means. In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotic of art (1964:14).

Sontag rejected the scholarly scientific approach to works of sensitive, emotional expressions. Instead, she searched for the feeling of the work (see also Alter 1998).

An analogy regarding Isaiah could be the critics' engagement with revealing the feelings and the taste of the readers of Isaiah, their religious-theological values as they experience them. Hence, the critic's goal would be – given Sontag's idea – to establish an intimate relationship between Isaiah and his (contemporary) readers. Therefore, in line with Sontag, a theory of literature in the course of the interpretive endeavour is an external artificial means that replaces the work itself, its Eros.

As a matter of fact, the reaction against literary criticism has prompted a number of Biblicists to question its merit. Edgar Conrad has confessed thus:

> For me, theory and method do not operate as canonical givens that dictate how I read (2002:239).

Enough is enough. There are no strict methodological rules which dictate the "reading"; rather, the claim is that the humanities intend to enjoy flexibility and freedom of reading and interpretation. Thus, the sophisticated scholars who arm themselves with methodology may not feel the text as the readers do. Subsequently, the employment of literary criticism connotes a sense that this disciplinary study is just a scholarly "game". In accordance with this trend, Conrad asserts that his work is not confined to theory and method, "as canonical givens". He notes that as an interpreter of ancient texts, he does "encounter those texts as a reader" (2002:239).

Indeed, this is the crux of the matter. At the end of the day, the argument is that the humanities is not a 'hard science', hence it is like an invitation for an open reading – you read and interpret.

The literary criticism disciplinary debate regarding the interpretation of a work reflects, as a matter of fact, an old tension between the study of the humanities and the natural sciences. The first, the creation of human spirit, is not always viewed with such rigidity as the natural sciences. The question is, why do intelligent readers need the commentators as mediators between them and the text; why do they need professionals to tell them how to read? Tzvetan Todorov sheds light on this question as he notes that, "a text can never state its whole truth" (1987:1). Consequently, we need the interpreter to bring "into the open what is simply unconscious practice elsewhere" (*ibid*). Todorov concludes that it is in our best interest that criticism professionalises interpretation. The matter is therefore professionalism; interpretation is a profession. As a result, interpretation is taught at universities and dissertations which interpret texts are written under the supervision of professionals and assessed by professionals.

What are these professionals of the humanities doing? The relationship between the study of the humanities and the sciences might hold some answer. Michael Bakhtin's remarks on the issue are helpful. He writes:

> Mathematical and natural sciences do not acknowledge discourse as an object of inquiry ... The entire methodological apparatus of the mathematical and natural sciences is directed toward mastery over reified objects that do not reveal themselves in discourse and communicate nothing of themselves (cited in Todorov 1984:15).

Something within the scientific objects must be made concrete by the scientists who develop their tools to communicate with the objects through their specific methodology. This may correspond with Aristotle's definition of the realm of rhetoric when he refers to the sciences (medicine and geometry in particular) as subjects which require "technical knowledge of any particular defined genus"

(*Rhetoric* 1355b). The issue is that each of the branches of the sciences that are studied and researched on the grounds of a specific technical knowledge requires a specific "language" (methodology of its own). Nevertheless, the "human sciences" discourse (as Bakhtin calls it) has its own research agenda. Bakhtin writes:

> In the human sciences, as distinct from the natural and mathematical sciences, there arise the specific problems of establishing, transmitting, and interpreting the discourse of others (*ibid*).

Literature as a science – is this serious? "Now, really, what a piece of extravagance all that is!" This is Matthew Arnold's ridiculing assessment of John Ruskin's scholarly investigation of Shakespeare's names (cited by Frye 1957:9).

In this matter, Northrop Frye's notion of literary criticism as expressed in his famous *Polemical Introduction* is illuminative:

> Criticism is a structure of thought and knowledge existing in its own right, with some measure of independence from the art it deals with ... The development of such a criticism would fulfill the systematic and progressive element in research by assimilating its work into a unified structure of knowledge, as other sciences do (1957:5, 11).

This concept of literary criticism is a fundamental concern for the interpreters who maintain that there must be some methodological criteria for interpreting the texts of others, as interpretation is not merely a spontaneous act of reading and feelings. It is not even a response to the readers' taste and values, but a science in terms of a unified structure of knowledge.

Indeed, "literary criticism", according to Peter Brooks in his introduction to Todorov's *Poetics* (1981:vii),

> has in our century become a professional activity as never before ... Literary criticism (and literary pedagogy) should not be simply the explication and interpretation of texts *in vacuo*, where the only common ground of critic and reader is their mutual interesting literature, *but rather a discipline in its own right, whose principles and organizing features can be discovered and systematically presented* (1981:viii, my emphasis).

The call by Frye and by Brooks for literary criticism as a structure of unified knowledge raises a fundamental question regarding Biblical literature. Is Biblical literature – as other literary works – a subject of literary criticism as a discipline in its own right or is Biblical literature an exception? Is Biblical criticism a kind of

literary art that seeks to absorb the literature into the community of readers? Or is it a discipline, that is, a theoretical structure of unified knowledge, "as other sciences"?

The matter is crucial to the study of Isaiah, given the new shift. The scholarly shift is based on the idea of the book as a whole, that is, as a self-contained work. However, this literary assumption is not self-evident with respect to literary criticism. For literary scholarship, the concept of a book as a whole is a matter of critical literary determination rather than literary instinct (cf. Gitay 2005b). Thus, the fundamental issue which lies behind this is whether there is any need to establish the idea of the book of Isaiah on the principles of literary theory, or whether it is preferable to take it "as it is".

Taking the concept of the canonical shape of the book, as it is, for the sake of revealing the message of the prophetic word, might imply that the interpreter perceives a literary situation in its religious-theological formation rather than monitoring the material from the literary-critical criteria of a book. Subsequently, the meaning of "synthesis" in the context of the study of Isaiah is a subject of a literary assessment. The question, in other words, is what is a book with regard to the sixty-six chapters of Isaiah – in terms of literary criticism? The tension between the "synthesis" and the "analytic" revolves therefore around a wider question which is concerned with the issue of the essence and, in fact, the significance of literary criticism and theory of literature to the scholarly interpretive endeavour of the material that maintains the sixty-six chapters of Isaiah.

The Concept of a Book – What is a Book?

The question – what is a book or what do critics mean by interpreting the sixty-six chapters of Isaiah as a book? – may be irrelevant as far as the feeling of the work is concerned. However, there is a concern that the question "what is a book" is not just a matter of literary instincts. Therefore, Foucault's concern about the idea of a work as a designated literary unity should not be dismissed with respect to Isaiah as well:

> The first is the idea of the work. It is a very familiar thesis that the task of criticism is not to bring out the work's relationships with the author, nor to reconstruct through the text a thought or experience, but rather to analyse the work through its structure, its architecture, its intrinsic form, and the play of its internal relationships (1984:103).

What is a work? Foucault introduces the question as follows:

> When undertaking the publication of Nietzsche's works, for example, where should one stop? Surely everything must be published, but what is 'everything'? ... And what about the rough drafts for his works? ... the deleted pages and the notes at the bottom of the page? (*ibid*).

This is the crux of the study of Isaiah. Are the "notes at the bottom of the page" an integral part of the work? Actually, the situation of the book of Isaiah is more complex. The notes are not placed at the bottom of the page anymore, but in the process of copying the manuscript, they were inserted into the page itself. This complex situation creates the tension between analytical study and synthesis in the investigation of Isaiah; a tension which might be resolved by establishing the idea of a book for the texts of Isaiah.

Theory and Instance

How do we work as literary critics? How can we, the critics of the humanities, interpret a text by others? The question is more problematic regarding ancient texts. As interpreters, are we able to enter the heart of the ancient discourse or should we give up and read such a text as a contemporary work, applying our contemporary reading? That, indeed, might be the case, for at the end of the day, one might say, ironically or not, that the reader is the only thing that is actually alive. In this regard, mention should be made of Terence Hawkes' (1986) analysis of the character and the background of a number of major critics of Shakespeare to show how their own political views came to be reflected in the "canonical" Shakespeare they created. This position leads to the modern shift of focus from the writer to the reader (cf. Gurr 1988:65).

The question regarding the study of Isaiah is, do we have a literary theory of the reading of Isaiah as a whole? Edgar Conrad is one of the few scholars who call for the reading of the whole, 'as it is', on certain literary assumptions which may represent a literary theory. Conrad comments on the position that, "the redactor is being presented by redaction critics as an author, and this undermines the whole notion of redaction" (2002:238). He demonstrates, through his criticism of Christopher Seitz's claim, that Isaiah 36-39 belongs essentially to First Isaiah. Since we have no data for determining the book of Isaiah's prehistory and know nothing about the history of its parts but only the final form of the text, then Seitz's question is ultimately unanswerable (2003).

Conrad's motivation for his interpretation of the total is based therefore on the projection of the presence, "as we see it", as the sole evidence. His call for the reading

of the whole is pursued on a theoretical claim that the touch of the final pen creates a work in itself. Consequently, Conrad concludes that we cannot speak about separate levels of redaction in Isaiah. He explains his approach as follows:

> ... Our ability to rewrite a pre-history of the text of Isaiah is becoming more and more unlikely. The creative use of sources by an 'author' underscores the difficulty in our determination, for example, of what might once have been the original editing of First Isaiah, or even whether there was First Isaiah. To be sure, the 'author' of Isaiah used sources, but they were creatively used to construct something new, making their recovery not only improbable but also the accomplishment of that goal increasingly unimportant ... What is available for study is not the history of a tradition nor the intention of an 'author-redactor' but the literary creation itself, the book of Isaiah (1996:309-310).

A new work has been created given the final touch. Consequently, the claim is that an analytical study of the authorship of the various parts of the book is worthless because, practically and theoretically, the material does not actually exist outside the present.

The theory dictated the interpretation. Indeed, this was the problem of Job's friends who adapted a theory of cause and effect in terms of God's retribution. Their fault was that they adapted the theory "as it is", and judged Job accordingly, declaring him as a sinner (Gitay 1999b:1-12). However, Job happened to be righteous while they, the devoted defenders of the theory, were condemned by the supposedly creator of the theory:

> Yahweh said to Eliphaz of Teman: I burn with anger against you and your two friends for not speaking truthfully about me as my servant Job has done (Job 42:7).

Nevertheless, in this particular context, the theory itself did not collapse because it was the wrong theory – the specific instance did not match the theory. Job suffered not because he committed a sin, but because he was being tested. As a matter of fact, he was rewarded based on his true and sincere utterances, as the epilogue indicates (42:7). Hence, the theory regarding God's retribution may still exist. The point is that theory must be considered in context and not disconnected from the instance.

With respect to the application to Isaiah, at the point that a theory is presented, the evidence (the instance) must be explored in its proper context to justify the particular implication. Otherwise, we would be dealing with metaphysics versus

reality, conjectures versus established evidence. In this regard, it is worthwhile to listen to Stanley Fish's remarks that:

> ... [T]hose who make fundamental arguments – arguments identifying general and universal standards of judgment and measurement – are inflexible, incapable of responding to or even registering the nuances of particular contexts, and committed to the maintenance of the status quo (2003:393).

The universal, the theory, must not be divorced from the particular context. Consequently, when a theory on Isaiah as a work is presented, the instance must not be excluded.

Accordingly, when applying a theory of the "last touch", it implies that the object does not exist, that is, there are no layers of authorships but the present which means that the "last touch" completely deletes the previous layers rather than covering them. Thus, the uncovered, which is the present text, is the only material that exists at all, and no "laboratory technology" will be useful in this context to convert the unseen into a concrete discourse.

However, the question is whether the proper theory is utilised in the context of Isaiah. That is to say, the problem which confronts the literary critic – in the study of Isaiah – is not just the matter of the relationship between "the last touch" and the different authorships, but rather the intrinsic design of the work. Hence, in this context it might be useful to remind ourselves again of Foucault's clarification of the fundamental task of literary criticism concerning the idea of a book:

> It is a very familiar thesis that the task of criticism is not to bring out the work's relationships with the author, nor to reconstruct through the text a thought or experience, but rather to analyse the work through its structure, its architecture, its intrinsic form, and the play of its internal relationships (1984:103).

When interpreting a text therefore the task of the human sciences (to borrow Bakhtin's terminology), should be to determine the work in line with Foucault's critical guidance on the concept of 'a work'. The text exists on the surface but, regarding Isaiah, the text does not cover its layers but its essence because the text could be mixed and subsequently undetermined as a literary work. It may also represent a chain of sporadic speeches with no concept of a book as a self-maintained work that has a "head, body and legs". Thus, without the idea of a piece of work, there may be no proper interpretation.

With regard to the study of Isaiah, the application of the claim, "we have what we have only", "the text as it is", should be that, after the publication of the whole, i.e. the text itself and the notes, scholarship must apply literary criticism as a discipline that systematically studies the structure of a given discourse, its formulation, its parts and the interplay of the parts into the whole, and vice versa. Thus, the question of literary criticism as a matter of unified knowledge is crucial for dealing with the problem of defining the work. The issue is that a piece of work, at the end of the day, is not a lawless accumulation of words. Rather, it is architectured through a specific harmonious, intrinsic design that might be revealed through the employment of a proper literary methodology for defining the work's structure and boundaries. And this act of determining the work is the critic's fundamental task.

Furthermore, the motivation for the study of the text as it is, the present, resembles New Criticism. New Criticism, as a literary method, claims that the work is all that we have and we do not need "archaeology" to penetrate the sub-layers which contribute nothing to the meaning of the work in its present form. This study of the whole is based on the theory that a literary work, specifically a poem, is analysed in terms of its parts which architecturally join together the whole work, and vice versa.

Terry Eagleton's assessment of New Criticism is in place here:

> New Criticism was the ideology of an uprooted, defensive intelligentsia who reinvented in literature what they could not locate in reality. Poetry was the new religion ... The poem itself was as opaque to rational enquiry as the Almighty himself: it existed as a self-enclosed object, mysteriously intact in its own unique being ... each of its parts was folded in on the others in a complex organic unity which it would be a kind of blasphemy to violate (1983:47).

The text, as it is, is "holy", and must be preserved as such without any literary "surgeries" or scholarly investigations of literary influences or literary genres. Nevertheless, there is a major problem when we apply the reading of the whole to Isaiah. New Criticism operates under the premise of a self-maintained poem as the objective of the study. A poem's size and design is controllable. However, the fundamental question for Isaiah scholarship is, what do we have here? Is Isaiah (as a whole) such a poem? What is it indeed – a unified work or an anthology of sporadic speeches? Can Isaiah scholarship ignore the questions and claim that the intervention of a new pen – which is also a problematic assumption given the claim

that we are unable to retrieve the pre-history of the book – has created in itself a piece of work; a book as a whole, in the light of the theory of the "last touch"? It appears here that there is a potential danger in adapting the theory as "the Almighty himself" without carefully studying the instance.

Nevertheless, the question remains – how does the position of the whole refer to Isaiah "as it is", that is, as a self-maintained book which is supposed to have its own body with "legs, head and hands" (cf. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451a), without establishing the idea of a prophetic book? In this regard, it must be pointed out that Canon Criticism, as referred to earlier, does not produce a methodology which is a literary discipline in its own right. There is a feeling that Form Criticism is not adequate but there is no critical proposal in terms of literary criticism that substitutes Form Criticism.

The Literary Critic versus The Public Critic

Nevertheless, Canon Criticism and the theological oriented studies of Isaiah are published. Hence, the relationship between the critical study of Isaiah and reader-oriented works must be re-established. The question is what is the debate about? Again, Frye clarifies the controversy by making a distinction between what he calls the "public critic" and the "scholar":

> The public critic [Frye lists distinguished critics such as Lamb, Hazlitt, Arnold or Sainte-Beuve] is to exemplify how people of taste use and evaluate literature and thus show how literature is to be absorbed into society ... his work is not a science, but another kind of literary art. He has picked up his ideas from a pragmatic study of literature, and does not try to create or enter into a theoretical structure (*ibid*, 8).

Public criticism is a field in its own right which aims to orient the readers' literary taste and values.

The work of scholars differs in its essence. Scholarship is the employment of literary criticism as a discipline in its own right which is based on a structure of unified knowledge that distances itself, for the sake of the readers, from the work itself and its practical lessons.

In relation to the study of Isaiah therefore, scholarship investigates the structure, the architecture, the intrinsic form, and the interplay of the internal relationships. It explores the question of whether Isaiah is a literary work of unity or a chain of

sporadic units which does not constitute a literary work of intrinsic literary design having a mutual relationship between the parts. This literary study is based on a theory of literary work and a methodology of research. Thus, the literary criteria regarding whether this is a work or not, should not be arbitrary, as they must be accepted by the community of literary researchers on the basis of a structure of unified knowledge. This is no longer a matter of a pragmatic presentation oriented to educate the readers' taste or values, but a systematic critical study which conceptualises into a theory, the literary criteria that establish a work.

Nevertheless, it must be clear that the focus of public criticism on the readers is an important area of criticism which plays a crucial role in orienting and educating the public on the reading of literature in general, and on our subject, Biblical literature in particular. These two forms of criticism do not compete and one should not reject the other as they both respectively play an important role of their own.

Conclusion

To summarise, there are a number of communities of readers. There are communities of theologians and there are communities of scholars of religion who consider religion as a manifestation of a human phenomenon. These communities sustain, given their constitution, different aims and subsequently different strategies of interpretation. The question regarding these communities is what influence do they have on Isaiah? They both deal with a text; but how do they interpret the text and for whom is the crucial concern? Do they make a distinction between the communities or mix scholarship with public criticism? As a matter of fact, we are witnessing a growing tendency to publish in designated scholarly critical publications, material relating to public criticism; a situation that adds to the scholarly frustration regarding the aim of interpretation. The problem of public criticism's intrusion into the realm of scholarship – specifically in the course of methodological doubts – is that it creates confusion regarding the place of literary criticism as a discipline in its own right. The bottom line is that literary criticism and public criticism are two distinct modes of criticism and public criticism, in spite of its friendly mode of presentation, is not a substitution for scholarship. Thus, the merging of the two different approaches to interpretation, in the context of Isaiah, presents a problem on the meaning of interpretation, specifically that the two interpretive avenues – literary criticism (scholarship) and public criticism (education) – are not synchronised, given their different agendas and different interpretive concerns.

Recently, Isaiah scholarship has experienced difficulties, reaching a sort of confusion expressed in the concern for the public audience and the feeling of ineffectiveness regarding "pure" scholarship that reaches a limited circle of readers and that is untouched by the concrete reality. However, this sort of confusion should not compromise scholarship which needs to maintain its sovereignty as a discipline in its own right.

Nevertheless, scholarship, specifically in a stage of feeling "useless", must clarify its discipline and seek to ensure its validity. Scholars are required to keep assessing their discipline, questioning whether they are on the right track in terms of their methodology, and whether their theory matches the evidence of the empirical research in the investigation of the internal design of the work, in this case, the book of Isaiah. Are they open to new avenues of research or to new dimensions, given the utilisation of interdisciplinary studies that could lead to fresh avenues of inquiries? These are potential directions in reviving the validity of scholarship.

The empirical research that is performed in the light of specific literary frames, which systemise structures of knowledge, indicates whether a certain literary theory actually works in the evidence of a particular content. The scholarly conclusions might reveal that in a specific instance when a theory of a piece of work does not match with the context, which is revealed through a detailed intrinsic analysis of all the parts as a design of the whole and vice versa, this specific literary theory might be replaced through the process of a paradigm shift. The process is slow but is a necessity; otherwise, scholarship itself might be questionable.[3]

The bottom line is that the literary-critical study of Isaiah is inclusive and depends on a unified structure of knowledge as other disciplines of knowledge. Indeed, such a presentation of scholarship is designated to a limited circle of professionals. Nevertheless, professional criticism must be dynamic and should not be allowed to stagnate.

The growing frustration on the employment of a specific methodology of research on Isaiah, for example, must be answered, but not through a scholarly compromise. Rather, it calls for a reassessment of the methodology of research. This methodological re-evaluation cannot pander to a particular interested audience, serving their interests, but it must be based on the systemisation of a unified structure of knowledge.

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[3]   For references to issues of rhetoric and orality on the current scholarly paradigm, see Gitay (2001a:101-128 and pp. 29-41 below).

The public critics, on their side, are not bound to a specific theory of unified structure of knowledge, but are concerned with the pragmatic issues revolving around their readers. Here lies the significance and the contribution of public criticism as a teaching guidance for readers who seek interpretation in the context of their particular community as a response to individual or social concrete concerns.

A Call for a Paradigm Shift

The Paradigm of Research

The subject of interest here is the paradigm of research. As Thomas Kuhn (1970) has indicated, scholarship is based on a shared paradigm. Kuhn maintains that in order to join the professional community, scholars must operate and publish in the framework of a common paradigm. The paradigm has been established and every investigator, wherever he or she is located, whether they are black, Asian or white, or of any religious affiliation, can join the 'company' on condition that their scholarship conforms to the prevailing paradigm. This is the only way to be accepted into the community of scholarship and to conduct accepted scholarship within the parameters of the paradigm.

The employment of the common methodology opens the door for dialogue between scholars of different backgrounds when they all operate within the same paradigm. The international meetings of learned societies demonstrate the point. Scholars of various nationalities or different religions communicate effectively and share their scholarship because they all subscribe to the same paradigm as their research employs a common scholarly language. In effect, the adoption of the same paradigm opens the door for mutual respect and appreciation by the international community of researchers (Collins 2005).

The scholarly international paradigm for studying, say, the Hebrew Scriptures in their historical and literary setting is accepted by African scholarship as well. It is common for African scholars to earn their doctorates in Western institutions. The reason for this is not merely a matter of prestige but revolves around the sociology of scholarship, 'how it works', and how one joins the 'company'. The paradigm is therefore the subject of interest in this essay because the paradigm has been established by Western scholarship.

Scholars therefore aim to practice within the accepted paradigm as an entrance ticket to the community of researchers. In this regard, it is noticeable that most of the academic institutions in Africa, and South Africa in particular, teach their post-graduate courses and supervise dissertations for higher degrees in terms of the existing westernised paradigms.

Nevertheless, the argument here is that this paradigm, which is the essence of scholarship, is based on assumptions that can be seriously questioned in the light of the African literary tradition. The argument here is that African literary data has never been used as a tool to investigate such texts and accordingly to shift the paradigm.

Biblical Studies — A Case Study

The issue revolves around the notion of the paradigm of research. The field of Biblical studies is taken here as a case study. The main question is thus the definition of the work and the determination of the literary unit. The paradigm of research is not self-evident. Rather, it emerged as a product of a tradition of studying texts in line with Greek and Western poetics which had established specific premises for a literary work. The first premise is literary coherence. Thus, literary-stylistic repetitions in the course of a prosaic narrative or the repetitions of a similar scene in a specific corpus are actually indications of different literary works. For instance, Genesis 12:9-20, 20:1-18, 26:1-33 constitute episodes which revolve around a similar theme, that is, the wife-sister theme. A patriarch moves into a foreign land where his life is threatened because of the beauty of his wife who captures the attention of the local king. The patriarch declares that his wife is actually his sister, she is taken into the king's palace, and the patriarch's life is saved. Nevertheless, God intervenes and rescues the patriarch and his wife (Abraham and Sarah; again, Abraham and Sarah; and Isaac and Rebecca). Consequently, Biblical scholarship concludes that these repeated scenes are actually a reflection of three separate literary strata each of which is actually a work in itself. That is, coherent and consistent style characterises a literary unit (or a speech).

A careful stylistic analysis of, say, the Pentateuch reveals indeed such a mixture, interpreted by Biblical scholarship as an indication that the Pentateuch is a structure of different compositions. Consequently, given the paradigm, scholars are able to divide the literary strata of the Pentateuch into the 'original' works. These literary divisions are functional and operational in the scholarly reconstruction of the literary-historical and literary-religious development of the Scriptures. Every literary division, in terms of the paradigm of coherence, is an individual literary stratum that represents a different historical-religious perception. Hence, the assumption is that the Pentateuch is actually not one book, but a literary complex of varieties of styles and repeated themes, an inconsistent 'creature' of different historical and thematic documents. This is the theory behind the so-called 'Documentary Hypothesis' (Wellhausen 1957; see also Friedman 1989).

Another example is the paradigm of the determination of the origin of the Biblical production. Here the premise is that specific literary genres are not mingled together and every genre is stylised in a specific formulaic language which is fixed, constituting therefore a self-maintained unit. The determination of these atomic units assists us – the argument goes on – in our scholarly attempt to reconstruct the complex process of the Biblical composition from sporadic oral performances units of, say, epos, oracles, creation accounts or laws, into long written narratives and eventually books. This assumption is one of the features, like an identity card, for the determination of Biblical authorship which seeks to trace the process from an oral tale into a written composition. This is, indeed, the foundation of the paradigm of Form Criticism, the scholarly effort to determine the basic Biblical units of composition. Hence, mixtures of styles, prose and poetry co-existing in the present text, are an indication of different speeches or separate literary units mingled together. For example, Genesis 9:6 is a poetic verse which is foreign to its literary context which is prosaic. The assumption is that such a poetical-rhythmical verse reveals the earlier literary epical stratum while the prosaic text indicates a later written literary level (see Albright 1968:37; for the methodological concern, consult Gitay 1993:192-202). The poetic stratum is a sign of the earlier oral origin of the discourse. Interestingly enough, this literary-stylistic paradigm of the separate genres of the Biblical discourse has been developed on the foundation of Germanic studies of folktales where a variety of material needed to be separated and categorised into its original settings (see Koch 1969 and Gitay 2001a:101-128).

The paradigm has not been altered through the years. However, the direction of scholarship has changed as a result of the alternations in society's ideology. Social-ideological concerns can determine the move of scholarship as the following examples demonstrate. In the past, namely till about the Second World War and the post-Second World War periods, the focus of literary studies was on the 'heroes' and their time (Carlyle 1971; Ryan 1985:38-52). Literary criticism as well as Biblical criticism revolved around the historical restoration of the main figures of the work in the light of the historical circumstances (Blenkinsopp 1983; see also Gitay 1995b:279-292). Speaking about Hebrew prophecy as a case study, the centre of attention would be the figures of the prophets, and the reconstruction of the historical period of their activities (e.g. Fleming 1939; Welch 1956). In other words, prophetic criticism was concerned with a strict historical-theological aim, that is, revealing the 'authentic' prophetic word. The premise of this critical objective was that every prophetic book, which carries the name of a prophet, referred in fact to an historical figure that delivered the prophetic message under particular historical circumstances. These prophetic words, researchers claimed, were preserved and they could be reconstructed in accordance with the paradigm of

the fixed 'atomic' genre (Duhm 1993). The assumption was that a prophetic book was actually not more than an anthology of a chain of sporadic speeches. Consequently, the critics did not read the prophetic book as an integrated organic work, but rather as a chain of distinct single speeches, each of which is a unit in itself, which given the stylistic design of the 'atomic' genre happened to be a short oracle (this was the foundation of Gunkel's Form Criticism: 1969, 1924, 1928).

A distinguishing characteristic of these short speeches is their anti-establishment and critical attitude. The speeches criticise the worship at the Temple as a false religious performance which covers up for the 'authentic', that is, sincere moral behaviour. Also, the prophetic criticism refers to the Kings' political approach which opposed the prophets' theological scope of the world affairs. The prophetic speeches depict therefore the image of the 'no' prophets, corresponding with the critical voice of morality and authentic religious behaviour. Furthermore, the determination of the prophetic speeches into short utterances also defined the prophetic office as the deliverer of oracles of judgment only, rather than a developer of the full address which motivated the judgment.

Critical prophetic study maintained that a prophetic book as such did not just preserve the genuine prophetic words, but is also a long literary editorial product of supplementations. Hence, the major task of Prophetic Criticism, which sought to retrieve the 'original', was to distinguish between the editorial and the genuine prophetic word. Given the interest in the prophet himself, the priority was given to genuine prophetic utterances while the editorial additions were regarded as marginal in comparison to the speeches of the prophet himself.

The post-Second War period presented a new literary shift influenced by the age of democracy and social concern. The individual hero was replaced by the community and the present readers replaced the historical set-up of the work with its focus on the individual. The community of readers is not by necessity the historical one, but rather the readers who are also the perceivers of the literary work. Ronald Barthes explains the new paradigm through his distinction between the 'classical' text and the 'non-classical'. The first is

> a sealed unit, whose closure arrests meaning ... it closes the work,
> chains it to the letter, and rivets it to its signified (1981:33).

By contrast, the non-classical texts tremble and wander; they are 'open' texts. According to Eco, this openness means that they are "co-operatively generated by the addressee" (1979:3-4). Barthes speaks of such a text as a 'writerly' text because the goal of a literary work is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a

producer of the text (1975:4). Barthes, who declares that the author of a literary work is 'dead', affirms that:

> To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing (1977:147).

The literary work then took on a life of its own.

The implications of the new literary focus have had an enormous impact on the current study of the Hebrew prophets. The previous focus on the individual prophet, inspired by God's revelation to deliver sharp speeches of criticism, has been replaced by the present community's concern. Prophetic scholarship is not interested any more in presenting the prophet as an announcer of oracles of doom and judgment, and reading his sporadic speeches as the critical voice of the formal practice of religion. The speeches are read now by the community of readers as a whole, as a divine message (Sweeney 1993; Barton 1995). The book replaced the prophet himself (Gitay 1995b:279-292). As a result, the entire image of the prophet has been changed. His critical portrait, his harsh wrathful tone has been modified through the concentration on the entire book as a literary product. The prophetic book is considered now as a planned work but not of the prophet himself. Rather, this book represents the redactor's religious view, which by adding speeches of comfort to the original utterances of judgment, had shaped the book with a message of religious hope and a manifestation of God's salvation. The redactors provided a theological message of fulfilment to the community of believers. Consequently, given the redactor's theological-literary intention, the focus is now on the course of religious history, as a cycle of the sacred proclamation of punishment which is concluded by redemption, as the ultimate lesson of God's act (Seitz 1996:219-240).

In short, the concentration on the work in its final canonical stage introduces a new reading of the prophetic books which carries a new message. This is a theological reading of the prophetic book as a whole which replaces the historical or biographical prophetic characterisation of the research of the pre-war scholarship (See Melugin and Sweeney 1996 and Gitay's methodological assessment 1999a:315-320). In other words, the prophecies of doom assigned namely to the First Temple period are *not* read anymore in their historical setting. Instead, the new literary setting is a new work sought to be read as a meta-historical work. This is actually a reflection of the Western theology of salvation.

In terms of scholarship, it is important to note that the academic 'company' accepts only scholars who adopt this paradigm and its literary-theological shift whether

they are Westerners or Africans, believers in the theology of salvation or not. Those who choose to pursue the older historical model, for instance, would be regarded as esoteric or dissonant by the 'company'. This is actually the situation of a certain aspect of African scholarship which seeks to engage specific current cultural and social issues, but with no correspondence to an accepted paradigm of research. The result is that these works remain local without leaving their mark on international scholarship (consult West and Dube 2001 and the bibliography cited therein).

What is a Book? Redaction Criticism

Nevertheless, the scholars' presentation of the theological growth of a prophetic book raises the inevitable methodological question, 'what is a book'? The question is addressed by Foucault thus:

> What is this curious unity which we designate as a 'work'? If an individual were not an author, could we say that what he wrote, said, left behind in his papers, or what has been collected of his remarks, could be called a 'work'? (1984:103).

Further, Foucault's remarks (quoted above on p. 20) shows that the task of criticism is to analyse a piece of work "through its structure, its architecture, its intrinsic form, and the play of its internal relationships". A 'work' therefore is not merely an anthology, a collection of speeches or some sort of writing; there must be a specific structure designed as a 'work' that shapes the words, sentences and paragraphs into a book.

Indeed, what is missing in the Redaction prophetic school is the theory of a book. In other words, they do not provide an analysis of this inner structure that as a whole, given its design, makes a text into a book. As the issue at stake regarding current prophetic scholarship is the composition of the book, the question to be asked is how do scholars of the new wave envisage the creation of the prophetic 'work' as a planned literary book? This question is asked particularly in the light of the fact that redactional Prophetic Criticism, as a rule, does not consider the initial prophetic material as constituting a self-contained book, that is, a work that maintains, according to Plato's definition of a literary work, "a head, body and legs" (*Phaedrus* 264).

As a matter of fact, many 'redactionalists' hesitate to speak about an original self-maintained prophetic composition. Instead, under the impact of Form Criticism, that is, the determination of the prophetic speech as an atomic short oracle, the new shift has in mind a complex literary structure based on a number of textual

layers enveloped by the last one. The 'last one' is the redactor who inserted his own contribution into the mixed material. Nevertheless, the modern critics aim to present this complex mixture as a planned book!

The premise of the Redaction School can be demonstrated through a metaphor of 'archaeological strata'. That is, an archaeological dig separated into a number of independent chronological strata but still shaped externally like a hill. The question is whether this is a natural fertile land or simply dust. Methodologically, two fundamental questions must be clarified. The first is archaeological while the second refers to the landscape. In other words, the question is whether the archaeologists developed a reliable methodology for separating the strata, and whether the existing hill can be treated as actually a fertilised land. It appears after all that the shift in Prophetic Criticism seeks, in fact, 'to have the cake and eat it'. Thus, the current tendency is to regard the shape of the prophetic book as a mixed 'creature' which is however redacted into a meaningful book. Consequently, the scholar's problem is how to present the unbound material, as having a comprehensive theological meaning through the redactors' literary interventions that aim to create a book 'with a head, body and legs'?

In spite of the complex literary task of presenting such a 'book', the Redactional School flourishes. The question to be asked therefore is what brought about such a rapid spread of the new school? The explanation for the popularity of the Redactional School is the fact that the *Nouvelle Critique* – the new scholarly task – is not totally revolutionary. The road had already been paved in advance, and the seeds were planted on a familiar soil. That is to say, the point of departure of the new school is, in fact, the methodological premise of the older school. The floor of the Redactional School is built on the foundations of the 'generic' approach (Form Criticism). However, while the earlier form critics confined their research to the question of the determination of the sporadic utterances, the new critics look for the place and function of these original utterances within the literary frame of the newly redacted book. Similarities in language, style and form within the entire given book functioned earlier as indications of repetitions that refute the existence of a planned book.

However, these same philological phenomena are now perceived as the literary indications of the act of redaction, the signature of the redactor's pen, the creator of the whole. Thus, philological criteria (such as transformation in stylistic media from poetry to prose or change of metre and syntax), established at the end of thenineteenth century by the founders of the autonomous Form Criticism approach for the act of separation, are being applied continuously by the patrons of

the redactional approach for the sake of reading the book as a whole. In other words, the point of departure of the Redactional school is the atomic unit, identified on the basis of repetitions and mixed styles while when they look at the book as a whole, as a theological work, these philological criteria function now as a mark of unity! (Gitay 2001a:101-128).

Challenging the Paradigm

The form-critical paradigm, revolving specifically around the questions of literary coherence and the determination of the atomic literary unit may be challenged on the foundation of the study of oral literature. In this respect, the African literary experience could shift the Western-oriented paradigm. A systematic field research can produce a new paradigm of the poetics of the discourse and the definition of the work. In this regard, let us assess first one of the fundamental characteristics of literary coherence in terms of the current paradigm, that is, repetition. Repetition is a sign of different units; however, repetition is a typical feature of oral literature. Thus, Isidore Okpewho, the author of *African Oral Literature* informs us that:

> Certain phrases or lines – even a whole framework of details – are used over and over again for constructing successive stages in the story (1992:76-78 and see his examples therein).

That is to say, consistency in terms of oral literature is not a matter of a lack of repetition; on the contrary, Walter Ong explains:

> Oral cultures need repetitions, redundancy, verbosity ... *verba Volant*: spoken words fly away. A reader can pause over a point he wants to reflect on, or go back a few pages to return it. The inscribed word is still there. The spoken word is gone. So the orator repeats himself, to help his hearers think it over. Second, words do not infallibly carry equally well to everyone in an audience: synonyms, parallelisms, repetitions, neat oppositions give the individual hearer a second chance if he did not hear well the first time ... (1977b:114-15).

> After the invention of script the central verbal activity to which systematic attention was at first given was the art of public speaking, not the art of written composition. Scribes learned how to commit discourse to writing, but basically composition as such remained an oral matter. Early written prose is more or less like a transcribed oration ... From antiquity through the Renaissance and to the beginning of Romanticism ... there lies the more or less dominant supposition that the paradigm of all expression is the oration (1971b:2-3).

Thus, repetition is not an ornament that can be taken away, and by all means is not an indication of separate compositions; rather, repetition is a necessary instrument for the performer as well as the audience to perceive (and to present) the work as unified.

This characteristic feature of oral literature may appear as well in written material as the poetics of oral discourse do not disappear with the emergence of writing. Walter Ong has strongly emphasised the point as has Ruth Finnegan who presents numerous instances to demonstrate that:

> [I]nteraction between oral and written forms is extremely common, and that the idea that the use of writing automatically deals a death blow to oral literary forms has nothing to support it (1992a:160, 160-68).

The implications for our case are significant as the Biblical canon is a written text indeed. However, given the above observations regarding the continuity of the tradition of orality even in the written material (specifically in the pre-printing era), we should not regard specific stylistic oral phenomena as an indication of a pre-written stratum of an ancient Hebrew epic. Rather, given the physical circumstances of the pre-printed era, specifically, the problem of a limited number of copies, written texts were read aloud and the act of reading sought to appeal to the ear more than to the eye. Indeed, even private reading was affected as the practice of silent reading was unknown (Gitay 1980:185-197; see also Niditch 1996).

Thus, the question of mixed styles, which is a further characteristic of the paradigm of the determination of the Biblical unit, is also problematic in the light of the evidence of oral literature. Ruth Finnegan has emphasised that in Malay literature, for example, the distinction between prose and poetry is blurred. Much of Malay prose literature contains jingling, half-rhyming and even metrical passages (1992:26a).

In short, the present Biblical paradigm of defining a literary unit, as a unified literary design of consistent structure without repetitions and with no mixture of styles, does not hold ground. The design of oral literature, which corresponds with the Biblical discourse, contrasts with the Western paradigm of a coherent literary work. That is to say, the oral narrative design opens the door for a paradigm shift based on oral hermeneutics. In other words, repetitions, literary structures that are not based on the same grammatical format, are not by necessity, in terms of the oral data, indications of mixed compositions. Hence, the theory of different literary-thematic compositions of, say, the Pentateuch, could shift to another paradigm. The new paradigm may reveal a more unified composition rather than

the currently accepted one of various literary documents. Thus, the 'documentary hypothesis' of separate literary-religious sources could be replaced by a more harmonic composition. Hence, our reconstruction of the movements that shaped the Biblical religion must be revolutionised on the grounds of the literary paradigm shift. As a result, we will need to rewrite the literary history of the Biblical religion because the present scholarly publications are based on the paradigm of different theologies, each of which projects a separate literary stratum.

In addition, the paradigm of prophetic research, based actually on the principle of the categorisation of Medieval Germanic folktales, will be shifted. The premise of the present paradigm is that the original prophetic oracles were short and consequently did not permit the deliverance of a full prophetic address which seeks to appeal to the audience; hence, the prophets were merely announcers of judgment. This paradigm may be altered given a study of the prophetic speech in accordance with African oral performance (Gitay 2000:173-187). The new literary paradigm would shift the present paradigm, providing a totally different reading of the prophetic office. The prophets would not be regarded anymore as messengers who merely delivered an oracle of judgment through a short utterance. Rather, the paradigm shift presents the prophetic address in a literary form that seeks to appeal to the audience through the delivery of full, rich literary complex addresses. Thus, the portrait of the prophet as a messenger of oracles of judgment only, may be changed into the concept of the prophet who developed through his speeches a comprehensive religious vision of punishment and reward as well (Gitay 1991). Given the paradigm shift, oracles of doom are placed together with speeches of salvation as an integral part of the genuine prophetic speech. Consequently, the redactional literary theory could be disregarded and the 'additions' of the redactors dismissed as the product of the scholars' theological conviction (Gitay 2001a:101-128).

The paradigm of canonical studies may change given a systematic study of the transmission of oral literature to the written discourse. The African paradigm of oral literature is crucial therefore for creating a new platform for research.

African Oral Hermeneutics

The issue at stake is that the African oral hermeneutics introduces a literary design which corresponds with the Biblical material, that is, a mixture of styles and repetitions. Consequently, Africa, given its rich experience in oral performance, poetry and other modes of verbal expressions (such as storytelling and figuration) is more in concert with the nature of the Biblical discourse than the existing Western

models. African scholarship can challenge therefore the present paradigm of research through the establishment of a different but more suitable paradigm.

The root of the problem is that scholars who work in Africa still accept the Western paradigms as the main or even the sole authority of international scholarship. The irony is that scholars in Africa complain that their scholarship (based on the Western paradigm) cannot compete with scholarship in the West given the lack of financial resources. This is absurd. Africa has not exhausted its great potential to shift the universal paradigm. Here, fundamental research, undertaken specifically by scholars in Africa, must take place to assess the current paradigm. This must be done systematically through proper research and through a chain of publications in leading periodicals and publishing houses in order to shift the paradigm. A lot can be done in this direction with poetic narratives; Wisdom literature such as the all-complex issue of the arrangement and editorship of the book of Proverbs, restudied in the light of the African tradition of storing didactic proverbs as common knowledge; Psalms as songs of praise or laments, or the Song of Songs. We should furnish scholarship with fresh sociological and anthropological tools for reading the Pentateuch narrative in its proper literary and consequently religious setting (see Deist 1994:35-51).

Work has already begun (Deist 1994:33-57; Gitay 2000:173-187). For African examples and elaborations, attention could be given also to J Opland's *Xhosa Oral Poetry* (mention has been made above of Okpewho's *African Oral Poetry* and its bibliography). We have noted that the oral data challenges the current paradigm of research. Nevertheless, there is still a need to develop dynamic and creative interdisciplinary research, aimed at assessing existing paradigms in the light of the study of oral literature and culture. In other words, the study of oral literature would be expanded and it would not focus merely on the phenomenon itself but on the implications for current models of research. This will motivate a new momentum in revolutionising the study of various disciplines of the humanities and social studies such as – to cite only a number of examples – discourse analysis, rhetoric, reasoning, philosophy, religious studies, art and education.

These interdisciplinary studies could result in *shifting* the existing paradigms of research. Nevertheless, such studies are not the subject of sporadic and individual research. Rather, such studies require the establishment of teams of researchers composed of experts in oral literature, on the one hand, and researchers of the various disciplines, on the other hand. The goal is to work together on the foundations of the various methodologies, assessing the current paradigms. This is,

in fact, a call for introducing a research institute as a focus of research. Such an institute will take a fresh look at the operation of scholarship in Africa. African scholarship must make sure that the African material is taken into account and scholars in Africa need to be furnished with the appropriate academic means for shifting the paradigm.

This scholarly focus will shift the geographical centre of research. Instead of African scholars going to Western institutes to be trained in Western-oriented paradigms, an institute in Africa, which combines systematic fieldwork, will attract the international community of researchers to study in Africa. Such an institute can stimulate scholarship, can attract post-doctoral as well as established researchers, can stimulate international symposia and can assist in supervising dissertations. Such an institute can organise interdisciplinary workshops and seminars for Biblical scholars, researchers of discourse studies, rhetoricians, anthropologists – to name only a few disciplines – and experts in orality. In short, orality has not diminished and it is not confined to Third World cultures. In fact, a recent study which focused on well developed literary societies of the West has investigated the prominence of oral poetry in terms of the relationships of contemporary oral poetry to the state of mind (Wood 2003:35-63). Acknowledging the significance of orality, Nora K. Chadwick, the author of the monumental work on oral literature, *The Growth of Literature* (1932-1940) already noted three generations ago that:

> Oral literature may be said to be the Cinderella of anthropological studies. One of the great tasks for the future is to bring together and classify the native literary records of the people of the world ... the evidence of these native literatures is essential to a comprehensive survey of Man's intellectual history (1939:92).

Chadwick's call for the study of orality as a fundamental element of human intellectual history is still in demand. The study of oral literature and culture is essential for a comprehensive survey of human literary history and its implications for the analysis of the human discourse.

Africa can become an international focus of research and researchers. This is the vision for the new face of scholarship which aims to shift the existing paradigm and create a new international language of scholarship established in Africa.

Conclusion

This programmatic chapter is a call to assess specific paradigms of research which are based on patterns developed in accordance with certain civilisations and

cultures of learning. The paradigm of research is dominant and almost untouchable. However, research in oral literature and culture leads to another paradigm, and even though the field of orality has been studied quite intensively, the implications regarding the existing paradigms have not been implemented, as they should be. The question of paradigm shift given oral hermeneutics is not a matter of an abstract academic concern; it is the essence of research which could change concepts, existing perceptions and scholarly positions, and affect strategies and techniques of teaching.

This fresh scholarly focus will shift the geographical centre of research. Are we going to miss this exciting opportunity?

The Promise: The Winding Road[4]

Genesis 13-14 in Light of a Theory of Narrative Studies

The Background

The literary-thematic design of the Genesis narrative is complex and Form critics take the original material as a sporadic collection of separate units. However, as I have claimed elsewhere, the chain of stories which comprises Genesis 2-12 is integrated through a unified double theme – the human search for a geographical centre, on the one hand, and the question of who is the right person to settle down in the chosen place, on the other hand (Gitay 1996a:205-216).

The narrative reflects the tension between the human natural drive for a central location and God's determination to choose the centre and to elect its proper resident. This tension creates complex situations portrayed through a chain of dramatic stories which raise many obstacles on the way. Abram is the receiver of the Promise which revolves around the double theme – the Land and its people. Abram, the chosen resident of the Land, moves to the yet unknown place under God's guidance. He leaves the Promised Land for Egypt under the hardship of famine but he is sent back to Canaan through God's intervention. It appears that the narrative reaches its climax: Abram now lives in Canaan, the Promised Land:

> Therefore, Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife, and all
> that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negev (13:1).

However, under the law of nature, the chosen person is able to fulfil the Promise of Genesis 12:1-3 only partially. He reaches the place but he is unable to fulfil the promise of being the father of a great nation because he is childless.

The present discussion examines the place and function of Genesis 13-14 as a thematic unified story. Our analysis starts with chapter 13 – the story of Abram's life in Canaan and his separation from his nephew Lot. Is Genesis 13:1-18 a self-maintained story or does the story continue thematically the narrative of Genesis 2-12? This literary issue revolves around the critical issue of the structure of the Genesis narrative and its coherence as a thematic integration.

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[4]   This chapter appeared originally as an article in *Old Testament Essays,* 20/2 (2007), pp. 352-364.

The reader is reminded that Abram is back in Canaan together with his nephew (13:1). It might be assumed therefore that at least the first part of the Promise, that is, the Land, has been fulfilled. Still, the tension between nature and belief – the subject matter of the narrative – is not solved. Abram is childless; we are left with no solution as to the question of the heir. Consequently, one wonders – will the nephew be the object of God's promise? The audience is kept in suspense.

Literary Concerns — The Matter of Methodology

Taking 13:1-18 as a micro-plot, the concern is how the central theme of the Promise progresses especially when the question of the offspring is at stake. Nevertheless, the literary design of the narrative of 13:1-18 presents a complex structure that might question the existence of a unified thought.

After the dramatic events of chapter 12 – God's crucial interventions in the course of Abram's life – the atmosphere of chapter 13 gives an impression of 'landing back on earth'. This depiction of daily life is provided through episodes that revolve around Abram's new problem, the constant struggle between his shepherds and Lot's regarding the wells which are a matter of life and death in the Negev, the semi-desert land of Abram's residence.

Thus, at first glance, the realistic-pragmatic description of daily life seems to dominate the story rather than the matter of the Promise. In this regard, notice should be given to the fact that after the critical event of Abram's return to the Land, there is no immediate renewal of the Promise as might be expected. As a matter of fact, the Promise is renewed but only later on at the conclusion of the chapter (vv. 14-18). Given this literary design, one might conclude that at this stage the matter of the Promise is not the narrative's main concern.

The literary answer depends on the literary-thematic function of verses 1-13. In other words, is there an integral relationship between this part and verses 14-18 (the renewal of the Promise)?

Two literary episodes are presented through specific schematic forms – an itinerary narrative (vv. 1-4; cf. 12:6-9) and an incident regarding a severe struggle between the shepherds (vv. 5-13; see also chapters 21:22-32, 26:15-17). Such shaped repeated forms may suggest that we are concerned with characteristic episodes regarding the nomadic way of life depicting the Patriarch's daily concern for physical survival.

Thus, a major literary concern is emerging. What is the purpose – is it just to tell us about the physical life in the Negev? It may seem that the real-life episodes dominate the narrative when the Promise is an artificial insertion in contrast to the 'real-life' episodes (as Westermann 1985:125 proposes). The assumption is that the 'religious' element, the Promise, is designed through a specific literary form that constitutes a literary genre of its own. That is to say, the formalistic genre of the Promise has been added artificially in the course of the act of redaction (Westermann, *ibid*).

The matter of formalistic design as a literary genre is crucial because the literary premise of Form critics is that there is a mutual relationship between form and subject matter, that is, form represents an independent unit which is in this context the Promise. Thus, given the Form critical analysis we are faced with a series of literary genres each of which is a self-maintained episode with no initial tie.

Is that the case? Is that the proper critical study of the narrative? The question of the design of the narrative depends therefore on the methodology of the research – a literary genre, based on a fixed form as a self-maintained unit versus a complex literary-stylistic design that could mix various forms and styles as a complex literary structure of a unified work. Hence, the literary methodology is the crux of the determination of the design, function and place of the Promise in the context of Abram's narrative.

Subsequently, the main task for the researchers of the Biblical narrative is to provide sound literary criticism which is presented in the broad context of narrative studies as a matter of literary inquiry. Such a literary methodological study will be our guideline in our literary determination whether the narrative is based on a chain of sporadic episodes distinguished in terms of their forms or an alternative literary concept, claiming that form is actually a tool which leads the subject through various avenues and 'adventures' of different vehicles. The question, in other words, is what constitutes a unified work? Is it the form or the subject matter as a whole?

We need to establish therefore our idea of narrative criticism. The principle of literary criticism is defined by Northrop Frye in his famous 'Polemical Introduction', as follows:

> Criticism is a structure of thought and knowledge existing in its own right, with some measure of independence from the art it deals with ... The development of such a criticism would fulfill

> the systematic and progressive element in research by assimilating its work into a unified structure of knowledge, as other sciences do (1957:5, 11).

We look for a unified structure of knowledge (cf. Gitay 2006:633-649). Therefore, the question is what is a work, what constitutes a narrative, how do we determine its structure and consequently discover its subject matter? These questions are our chief concern in this endeavour to reveal the structure and the subject matter of the narrative of Genesis 13:1-18.

In this regard, Aristotle's definition of the tragedy could be adapted to the design of our work. He defines tragedy as:

> An imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts both of character and thought [that are] the two natural causes from which actions spring, and on actions again all success or failure depends ... an action implies personal agents, who necessarily possess certain distinctive qualities ... Most important is the structure of the incidents ... for tragedy is an imitation of action and life ... the incidents and the plot are the end of tragedy ... A whole is that which has a beginning, middle and an end ... the unity and sense of a whole is lost for the spectator ... Unity of the plot does not consist in the unity of the hero (*Poetics*, chapters 6, 7).

It is important to notice that the work, according to Aristotle, is based on a structure which revolves around an action that establishes the unity of a plot rather than the unified style. Nevertheless, the subject may not be discovered immediately given the various forms and actions which are employed in the work. The form itself should not lead in the search for the unity and the thought because it is only a tool rather than a literary work in its own right, with head, body and legs.

The question "what is a narrative?" has been further developed by Gerard Genette who sheds light on the issue as follows:

> Narrative refers to the narrative statement, the oral or written discourse that undertakes to tell of an event or a series of events ... Narrative refers to the succession of events that are the subjects of this discourse, and to their several relations of linking, opposition, repetition, etc. Analysis of narrative means the study of totality of actions and situations taken in themselves, *without regard to the medium through which knowledge of that totality comes to us* (1980:25, my emphasis).

The knowledge of the totality, the narrative statement, is a product of the succession of the events and their linking. That is, the study of the totality – not the separate incidents – is the aim for discovering the thought, the subject matter. Form is merely a communicative vehicle rather than a unit of knowledge.

Furthermore, a systematic field research of oral literature correlates with the above conclusions of the poetics of the work. In this regard, we need to remind ourselves that the poetics of the Biblical literature is actually oral even if the material has been preserved in a written form. The point is that even in antiquity, the written literature carries within itself the characteristic features of oral literature because the oral elements of the discourse did not disappear with the emergence of writing. Thus, even the written literature specifically in the pre-printing era aimed to capture the ear rather than the eye (Gitay 1980:185-197). That is to say, the introduction of writing did not have an immediate effect on the oral form of public discourse. Walter Ong has strongly emphasised the point:

> After the invention of script the central verbal activity to which systematic attention was at first given was the art of public speaking, not the art of written composition. Scribes learned how to commit discourse to writing, but basically composition as such remained an oral matter. Early written prose is more or less like a transcribed oration ... From antiquity through the Renaissance and to the beginning of Romanticism ... there lies the more or less dominant supposition that the paradigm of all expression is the oration (1971a:2-3).

Oration is the paradigm of composition. Ruth Finnegan has also presented numerous instances to demonstrate that:

> interaction between oral and written forms is extremely common, and that the idea that the use of writing automatically deals a death blow to oral literary forms has nothing to support it (1992b:160-168).

In other words, Biblical literature, as a written discourse, is formulated under the influence of oral presentation. Consequently, the study of orality sheds light on the structure of the Biblical narrative and the function of its forms which are presented in the narrative through formulae, conventions of speech, groups of ideas or themes which are instrumental in oral performance (Gitay, *ibid*).

The realisation of the place of orality provides the legitimisation for employing Aristotle's *Poetics* which systemises his analysis of the narrative on the basis of oral performance or written texts produced in the light of the poetics of oral literature.

Furthermore, it appears that the principles of orality are universal; thus, the reassessment of the poetics of African orality regarding Biblical literature is in place (Gitay, *ibid*).

In this regard, there is a need to examine a fundamental characteristic of oral literature, that is, repetition. Repetition is a typical feature of orality indicating coherency. Thus, Isidore Okpewho, the author of *African Oral Literature,* informs us that:

> Certain phrases or lines – even a whole framework of details – are used over and over again for constructing successive stages in the story (1992:76-78).

Ruth Finnegan has also emphasised that in Malay literature, for example, the distinction between prose and poetry is blurred. Much of Malay prosaic literature contains jingling, half-rhyming and even metrical passages (1992b:26).

Walter Ong (1977a:114-15) explains further that oral cultures need repetitions (compare Ong's statement cited on p. 37 above). Thus, repetition is not an ornament that can be removed and by all means it is not an indication of isolated compositions that indicate separate literary forms of literary units. Rather, repetition is instrumental for the performer as well as the audience to perceive the work as unified.

Furthermore, Albert Lord has identified groups of ideas, the 'themes', regularly used in telling a tale or reciting a poem in the formulaic style. Thus, a young oral performer learns his 'text' not through the faculty of memory but through the story theme by theme. He did it through his familiarity with the common themes and his ability to use the formula as a means of composition. The work is composed through repeated themes (1960:130).

Consequently, the direction of the research regarding the structure of the Abram narrative is as follows:

(a)   Looking for the major theme, content, subject matter, and studying the totality of activity and the incidents without paying attention to the medium.

(b)   Regarding the form (medium) as a communicative and aesthetical means of presenting the plot as a whole.

The Thought of 13:1-18

Now, we may look at the structure of 13:1-18 on a micro-level by searching for the integration of thought and medium. The subject matter as a whole revolves around the Promise and the obstacles on the winding road to fulfilment. The literary question is the matter of integration; how the various incidents, each in its characteristic form, constitute together a totality of head, body and legs. The following analysis seeks to reveal whether and how the succession of the events, which are constructed through the medium of the three dependent agents (the itinerary, the separation between the uncle and the nephew and the Promise), create a totality of head, body and legs.

We start according to the order of *the itinerary*:

> He went on his journeys from the south (Negev) till Beth-El to the place where his tent used to be at the beginning between Beth-El and Ai. The site of the altar that he had built there at first; and there Abram invoked the Lord by name (13:3-4).

The Promise is re-established through the medium of the itinerary – Abram's travel in the Land. Attention is given to Beth-El, the place of his sojourn: "the place where his tent had been at the beginning" (13:3). Nevertheless, this is not just a place: "There (at his first stay) he built an altar to God and invoked the name of God" (12:8). Now, he returns to the altar and again invokes the name of God (13:4). That is to say, Abram signifies God's revelation and their unique relationship proclaimed through the Promise.

Furthermore, at the conclusion of the renewal of the Promise God tells Abram: "Rise up, walk about the land, through its length and its breadth, for I give it to you" (13:17). Walk around in the Land; it is yours. It appears therefore that the itinerary is not just an incident in Abram's life but is integrated into the plot. The itinerary is therefore a medium which proclaims Abram's fulfilment of the Promise of the Land.

The Lot-Abram Relationship

A close reading reveals that the Abram-Lot relationship plays a central role in the thought of the narrative. Lot is moving with Abram to the Promised Land, Lot is going with him to Egypt, Lot returns to Canaan together with Abram, and Lot is separated from Abram. The attachment of Lot to Abram suggests that the tension between nature and God's Promise, the childless Abram versus the question of the offspring, could be resolved perhaps indirectly through the nephew.

However, a certain development regarding the relationship between the uncle and th*e* nephew is taking place as the style reflects. We read:

> ויקח אברם את שרי אשתו, ואת לוט בן אחיו, ואת כל רכושם אשר רכשו
>
> Abram took his wife Sarai, and his brother's son Lot, and all their possession that they possessed (12:5).

> ... וישלחו אתו ואת אשתו, ואת כל אשר לו
>
> ... and they sent him off with his wife, and all that he possessed (12:20).

> ויעל אברם ממצרים, הוא ואשתו, וכל אשר לו – ולוט עמו
>
> From Egypt Abraham went up, he and his wife, and all that he possessed – and with him Lot (13:1).

Here, we encounter three verses that are similarly designed. They all revolve around Abram's movements in crucial periods in his life. The first refers to his journey to the unknown land upon God's call. The second is his departure from Egypt on his way back to Canaan and the third is his resettlement in Canaan. As a matter of fact, the three movements indicate the major developments in Abram's life from the moment that he received the call – going to Canaan, leaving for Egypt and coming back. The similar structure – referring to himself, his wife, his nephew and the possessions – creates a pattern. However, the pattern has been kept in general but not in details. There are certain alterations in style and order which refer to Lot.

The order is meaningful. Abram goes out of Haran together with his wife and Lot as well as their possessions (12:5). Then, 12:20 (going out from Egypt) does not mention Lot at all, but 13:1 (arriving back at Canaan) breaks the pattern of the trio, placing Lot separately only after the reference to the possessions. That is, the structure alludes to a new situation – Lot is not so close to Sarai and Abram as before. Such a design is purposeful. A unified repeated linguistic form – a formulaic style – which is altered at a specific point, is designed to deliver a message. The aim is to point out the differences between Abram and Lot that reaches its climax in the resettlement in Canaan. This critical development precedes the struggle between the shepherds of the uncle and of the nephew. They are still together, but distanced (cf. Leibovitz 1967:88-89).

The narrator does not elaborate on what happened. However, there is no need for it because the narrative centres round an action rather than detailing the incidents in the heroes' lives. An analogy to such a structure is in Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*

which do not include all the adventures of Odyssey given the intention to focus on the action as the unity of the plot (as emphasised by Aristotle's *Poetics*, chapter 8). Consequently, the struggle between the shepherds is actually the final straw that broke the earlier close ties between the uncle and his nephew, casting doubt on the fulfilment of the Promise of a nation.

Nevertheless, the narrative's elaboration of the act of the separation receives further meaning in the light of the Promise. It appears that the Abram-Sarai-Lot relationship plays a significant role in the contents of the narrative and a new crisis regarding the Promise has emerged.

Thus, the immediate story which follows Abram's return revolves around a severe conflict on the crucial issue of the Land. Given the intensification of the strife, Abram has reached a critical decision – he and his nephew must separate (13:8). Abram's dilemma is critical – land or peace, that is, risking even if partially God's Promise of the Land on account of peace. However, the renewal of the Promise – stressing the matter of the offspring – immediately after Lot's departure (13:14) makes it clear that the act of separation eliminates Lot as the substitute for the offspring. Thus, Abram's decision to separate is crucial to both the Land and the offspring.

Therefore, Abram has made a critical religious decision. Indeed, God, his saviour from his traumatic ordeal in Egypt, has promised him the Land. Consequently, will he compromise the Promise on account of keeping peace with his nephew through his division of the Land and risk therefore his total control of the Land? The matter is emphasised through the following remark which is intentional: "The Canaanites and the Perizzites were then dwelling in the land" (13:7). Consequently, is he allowed to keep his possession of the Promised Land? Can he act according to his intention, contrasting, in fact, his obligation to the Land?

It appears that Abram has made up his mind through his critical decision to separate. In this regard, it seems that Abram sacrificed the two principles of the Promise – Land and offspring. Consequently, the question is would Abram's decision be regarded as an act of disobedience to God? Apparently, the fertile land is now in Lot's hands. The narrative places a strong emphasis on this point (v. 10). Is there a message there?

Lot's elimination as the objective of the Promise is not without explanation. Actually, as the narrative has already alluded, there has been a distance between Abram and Lot. Now, the narrative sheds light on Lot's personality indicating a fault in his morality. Thus, the narrative sheds light on Lot's exclusion, focusing on

his personality which is exposed through his choice of priorities. As a result, Lot's choice of land reveals a contrast between property and morality; choosing the rich country of Sodom without considering the quality of his future neighbours as verse 13 suggests: "The people of Sodom were wicked and sinners against God exceedingly". A significant message has been transmitted and the critic's task is to reveal the meaning of the comment in the context of Lot's choice.

The sequence of events reveals that there is a causal link between land and the morality of its occupants. An important connection has been established regarding the essence of the Promise – God is ready to destroy two cities in his Land due to the citizens' immoral behaviour. The message is that land and morality are mutually related. This moral commitment has caused the elimination of nations and people as the potential residents of the land (cf. Gitay 1996a:205-216). Hence, Abram's determination to separate even on account of the land for the sake of peace is morally justified.

The Promise

After Lot's departure, the question of the offspring is critical. Thus, the renewal at this stage of the Promise is illuminating:

> I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one
> can count the dust of the earth, then your offspring too can be
> counted (13:16).

The emphasis in this particular context is meaningful. It is clear now that Lot is not the object of the Promise.

Nature versus faith is the major theme of the narrative. The clue to the problem is the emphasis on the timing of the renewal of the Promise – after the separation and not, as might be expected, upon the arrival in Canaan. That is to say, Lot's separation relates directly to the Promise reassuring Abram that the Promise is referring to Abram's direct offspring rather than to his nephew as may be perceived – even by Abram himself – given the law of nature.

The literary means of the elimination, on the one hand, and creating a suspense regarding the accomplishment, on the other hand, characterise the structure of the first part – the introduction (chapters 2-12). The subject matter is repeated in chapter 13. How at the end of the day, will the Promise be fulfilled after the exclusion of the closest family kin, given Abram's situation?

Abram – Prosperity versus Morality (Genesis 14)

The story of the battle of the kings presents a new profile of Abram – a warrior. The war and the new image confound the conventional analytical scholarship of the Abram cycle (Hamilton 1990:398). Scholars are divided on the question of the historical situation. Nevertheless, there is a tendency to regard the chapter as a so-called midrash, an exilic elaboration of the central place of Israel in the later period (Van Seters 1975:296-308; Von Rad 1961:174; and Westermann 1985:182-208). The 'religious' episode regarding Abram and Melchizedek (vv. 18-20) is considered secondary to the narrative (cf. Westermann 1985:191; Hamilton 1990:408). Given the confusion, Westermann provides a methodological clarification as a guideline for the study:

> One must first study the constituent parts and the tradition history of each; only then can one study the chapter as a whole (1985:189).

Form is the criterion of separation; there is no mixture of various styles.

In accordance, the chapter is divided on the basis of form into three individual elements: (a) The report of the campaign (vv. 1-11), (b) The liberation narrative, and (c) The Melchizedek episode (vv. 18-20) (Westermann 1985:190).

Nevertheless, Westermann does not hesitate to comment on the meaning of the whole:

> The author of Gen 14 gave Abraham, the father of the people, a significance on the stage of world history by making him victor over four kings of powerful eastern empires ... The episode of vv. 18-20 has a very different goal ... it is to be seen in the context of the thinking of circles in the early monarchy which wanted to anchor the new form of worship in the old traditions of ancient Israel ... An exchange such as this was possible only in the early monarchy, a period of transition, when David and Solomon were kings of a territory in which Israelites lived peacefully with Canaanites. It accords too with the universal character of blessing in the OT as shown for example in Gen 1:28 (Westermann 1985:207).

Nahum Sarna provides some insight in this regard:

> Undoubtedly, its primary motive is to bring into prominence new facets of Abram's character. The man of peace knows how to exhibit skill and heroism in battle ... the power of the few against the many (1989:102).

The two approaches are influenced undoubtedly by different backgrounds of the interpreters.

Nevertheless, as Frye (quoted above) has emphasised that a unified structure of knowledge is the condition for sound literary criticism. Furthermore, as Aristotle (cited above) has pointed out, the unity of a work is not dependent on the unity of the hero. The problem regarding the earlier interpretations is that they are dominated by the form. However, the search for the whole is independent of the literary vehicles. Form is not more than a medium.

Our attention should shift to the focus of chapter 14. As a rule, the literary design is schematic; a report transmitted in the third person of the events of the war and Abram's military campaign, but without elaboration, just the dry events. However, a significant stylistic-literary change has taken place with Lot being saved by Abram. We see a dramatic meeting constructed through a vivid dialogue between Abram and the king of Sodom as well as with Melchizedek, the priest of El Elyon, the king of Shalem (vv. 17-24). The narrative's special elaboration on this meeting alludes to its significance regarding the subject matter.

The literary point is that Abram's impressive victory over the four kings – who already had demonstrated their strength by defeating the five kings – is just mentioned as an event with no details. Consequently, the focus on the meeting leads to the conclusion that the earlier part, verses 1-16, is a prelude to the climax – the meeting. In this regard, careful attention should be given to the key words which motivate the dialogue.

> Abram's main purpose in fighting the battle was to release his nephew.

However, the order of verse 16 which reports freeing Lot is odd. First, we are told about the property and only then, in the second place, Lot, Abram's object is mentioned. Therefore, the focus is not on Lot but on the possessions. The critic's inquiry should concentrate on this issue.

Indeed, the king of Sodom is interested in the goods:

> And the king of Sodom said to Abram: Give me the persons, but
> take the goods (רכוש) to yourselves (v. 21).

רכוש appears to be a key word in this context as the word is recited often in the course of the narrative (12:5: רכושם אשר רכשו, duplication, 13:6; 14, 11, 12, 16 [twice], 21). Repetition plays an important role in the Biblical narrative, creating a

strategy of informational redundancy, "informing principles, determinate means" (Sternberg 1985:386-387).

רכוש indicates property, goods which in this context are contrasted with quality. Goods are associated with problems, quarrels that caused the dramatic final separation between Abram and Lot:

> So that the land could not support both of them living together; for their possessions (רכושם) were so great that they could not live together. And there was strife ... (13:6-7).

As was noted, this is not just a separation between shepherds, but a separation that might prevent the fulfilment of the Promise, the central issue of the narrative.

Nevertheless, at the high point of the celebration of the victory, the King of Sodom offers to Abram to take as a gift the רכוש (goods). Will Abram be tempted to do what Lot had actually done preferring prosperity to quality? This is the crux of the matter, the issue which revolves around Lot's elimination as a potential objective of the Promise.

In fact, Lot's removal has been doubly justified and the offering of the king of Sodom – the new chosen geographical location of Lot – provides a further opportunity to point out the rejection of prosperity versus human quality. Abram who earns the reward, given his successful intervention on behalf of his nephew, demonstrates through his rejection of the goods, his high qualities, elucidating whom the true object of the Promise is.

Consequently, Abram's refusal to take the goods from the king of Sodom – in the context of Lot's release – re-establishes the analogy between Abram's behaviour and Lot's. This is a further explanation for Lot's elimination and for Abram's election as God's chosen resident of the Land. That is to say, unlike Lot who sacrificed human high qualities for prosperity, Abram is faithful to his high standard of moral principles. The narrative presents a further potential obstacle on the road to the fulfilment of the Promise and again Abram justifies God's choice that he is the right person.

Conclusion

The study of the Biblical narrative is subject to a critical theory of criticism which is based on narrative studies and on the poetics of orality. In this regard, form is a servant rather than a dictation of content. The narrative is dominated by the

subject matter. Thus, the narrative which constitutes Genesis 13-14 is integrated into the idea of the whole which dominates chapters 2-12. The matter is the fulfilment of God's promise to Abram of the Land and the nation that will live there. The road to fulfilment is followed by a chain of obstacles which tests Abram's quality and examine his belief in the Promise in addition to the obstacle of nature – barrenness.

The form of the scenes which construct the plot may differ from one episode to the other. This should not disturb the critics in their search for the thought of the totality because the episodes, different as they are, are constructed to exhibit and dramatise the subject matter.

SPEECH

On the Foundation of Human Partnership and the Faculty of Speech[5]

A Thematic and Rhetorical Study of Genesis 2-3

The Background

The Garden narrative is the subject of numerous inquiries from many perspectives such as anthropological, theological or tradition history (see Stordalen 2000). However, the present task aims to pursue a fresh venue which looks at the narrative as a tension between the human intellect and the human condition of being immortal. The narrative position is that the human couple who lived in the Garden were designed to be immortal; however, they became mortal given their misbehaviour which is presumably the result of their intellect.

First, the discussion seeks to dwell on the ideal situation of man and woman in accordance to the garden's vision which might be determined as the phase of partnership. Thus, I seek to explore the Biblical concept of human partnership. Then I intend to shed light on the power of the human intellect and its potential danger in terms of the Biblical narrative, which is disobedience. The way the intellect manifests itself as the leading force of the human rebellion is the focus of the second part of the chapter.

In order to reach a common point of departure, I will begin the discussion with a synopsis of the story of Adam and Eve, as depicted in the garden narrative, and clarified through the angel, of the inter-human relationship and the human attitude to the physical environment.

The narrative informs us of Adam's creation and his way of life in the garden. He was formed out of the אדמה (אדם-אדמה a wordplay) that is, out of the earth (ground). Then, in order to be a living being, God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (2:7). He was occupied, given his specific assignment to take care of the garden, לעבדה ולשמרה, "to till and keep the land" (2:15; see Westermann 1984:220-222).

Furthermore, Adam's freedom was confined. He was prohibited from eating from the fruit of one specific tree (2:16-17). The language indicates the significance of the command of the prohibition:

<div dir="rtl">ויצו ה' אלהים ...</div>

The imperative breaks down the stylistic pattern of the narrative, mirroring its significance. That is, the third person approach of the report that characterises the language of the narrative has been changed into the second person approach of the imperative, signifying God's command.

It seems that Adam's life is in order. However, God identifies a problem, admitting, in fact, a certain defect in human life. After all, God observes that Adam needs an addition to his daily routine of work and frame of order which establishes his relationship with the physical environment as well as with God. Indeed, God identifies the problem – לא טוב היות האדם לבדו, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (2:18).

The combination "not good" (לא טוב) contrasts with the definition of the perfect condition – of the account of creation in chapter 1 which is conveyed linguistically through the word טוב. Therefore, God's creation of man is not perfect anymore and God acts accordingly – אעשה לו עזר כנגדו, "I will make him a helper as his partner" (v. 18, the New RSV).

The meaning of "helper" is crucial to understanding the role of the new creature. Actually, עזר (helper) connotes the notion of working together rather than being dependent (see Josh 1:14; 10:4; 1 Chron 12:18, 22; see also Trible 1978:88-90). It appears therefore that Adam's problem, his loneliness – being the only existing creature in the world – has been solved through God's new creation. The question which God does not determine is the nature of such a partner.

Interestingly enough, God's initial idea is to create other living creatures, animals and birds, as candidates for Adam partnership (v. 20). Indeed, the new living creatures appear in front of Adam who, from his side, is capable of defining their nature by assigning to each one of them a name which is the manifestation of his intellect (consult Von Rad 1961:82-83 and see below). Nevertheless, the problem is not solved; Adam is still alone. ולאדם לא מצא עזר כנגדו – "But for Adam there was not found a helper as his partner" (v. 20).

It appears that God is testing Adam's needs. Consequently, the question of the human partner is complex because Adam's needs require specific qualities which are not found in the animals but within himself as a human being. As a result, God

takes a radical turn and does not form a totally new creature, but resolves the issue in a totally different form. God builds – out of Adam himself – a new human being as an integral part of the man, as Adam himself acknowledges:

זאת הפעם

עצם מעצמי ובשר מבשרי

> This at last a bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh (v. 23).

The unique human relationship is reflected through the wordplay that alludes to their mutual similarity:

לזאת יקרא <u>אשה</u> כי <u>מאיש</u> לקחה זאת (v. 23)

(אשה is derived from איש even though not philologically; see Cassutto 1965:89; for the poetic language, see Wenham 1987:70). But, are the man and the woman just physically similar? The following comment is illuminating:

ויהיו שניהם ערומים האדם ואשתו ולֹא יתבששו

> And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed (v. 25).

The issue revolves around the tension between shame and nakedness (the *hitpolel* in the imperfection of שוב is unique, but the root is familiar as is the literary context). That is to say, the stress on ערומים (naked) in the context of יתבששו (shame) refers to the human Eros (see, for instance, Hosea 2:5, 12; for the philological connection between ערומים and sexuality consult Wallace 1982: 144-145).

The question of human Eros is made clear given the event of the eating of the fruit of the Tree; the eating has determined the human mortality. Thus, in its practical way – avoiding philosophical statements – the narrative sheds light on the new phase in the human situation:

וידעו כי עירמים הם ... ויעשו להם חגרות

> They knew that they were naked ... and made loincloths for themselves (3:7).

The meaning is that before Adam and the woman ate the fruit of the Tree they were naked but not ashamed. However, after they ate from the forbidden tree and became mortal, both the man and the woman rushed to cover their nakedness, indicating therefore that they exposed their sexuality. That is to say,

they were not ashamed before eating from the forbidden tree because they were immortal. Now that they had become mortal, they were aware of their sexual organs; they discovered Eros.

In other words, the appearance of the woman introduces human duality in the double form of man and woman as the names of the human pair – איש-אשה is revealing. However, the function of the human pair is not sexual; they are immortal and Eros is unknown and unfelt. Indeed, the building of the woman aims for partnership (עזר) rather than reproduction (פרו ורבו) which is the essence of the human creation in the light of the P account of Gen 1:27-28). Thus, the introduction of the woman to the man's life signifies the essence of partnership, as it was meant to be through the human condition of immortality which was not concerned with death (and consequently with Eros).

That is to say, the essence of partnership, as it was meant to be through the human age of immortality, had been manifested in their similarity which was not concerned with Eros.

The Essence of Human Partnership

There is an intensive literature by feminist theorists and Biblical interpreters on the awareness of sexuality and the form of the relationship which was formed between Adam and the woman (see, among others, the programmatic studies of Pardes 1996; Simkins 1998:32-52; Beer 2005:3-28 and Meyers 2005). I call attention to the breakthrough work of Phyllis Trible who regards the relationship that was formed between man and woman – given the building of the woman out of the man's organs – as an indication of unification, mutuality and equality (1978:94-105; Trible has reconfirmed her position twenty years later in Kvam 1999:431-443). Adam is not superior to the woman, claims Trible, specifically as he considers her an integral part of himself. Trible writes as follows:

> Unlike all the rest of creation, she does not come from the earth;
>
> Rather Yahweh God builds the rib into the woman. The Hebrew verb *build* indicates considerable labour to produce solid results. Hence woman is no weak, dainty, ephemeral creature. No opposite sex, no second sex ... (1978:102; see also Rogerson 1991:35-41).

The sexes begin in equality. Furthermore, the linguistic relation between the names איש-אשה indicates that the male human being derives his identity in relation to the woman and vice versa (see Van Wolde 1998:30-31).

Attention was given to the material used for building the woman. Thus, Bal called attention to the difference between shaping an image out of clay (Adam) and the building of the woman – it is more difficult, more sophisticated (1985:27; see also Bloom 1990:179-180).

Still, the answer to the question of the place of the woman in the pre-Eros human condition is not self-evident. The fact that the woman – rather than an animal – was elected as Adam's partner requires clarifications regarding her unique qualifications. We recall that the immortal humans expressed their closeness in terms which are not sexual – they are both immortal, lacking the drive of Eros. Therefore, there is a tendency to present the relationship between the man and the woman in the period before they ate the forbidden fruit, as two naïve children.

However, a clue can be found when human beings are contrasted with the animals. The woman's unique advantage over the animals and the birds is in the intellect which is conveyed as well through the unique human privilege, that is, the faculty of speech that manifests the power of the intellect.

In short, only the woman אשה (only later under the status of mortality to be called Eve) has been elected as Adam's true partner; she is part of him. In this regard, the later Midrash on Genesis Raba (17:2) has perpetuated the feeling of true partnership through its characteristic language:

> Whoever has no wife exists without goodness, without a helpmate, without joy, without blessing, without atonement ... without well-being, without a full life (cited in Sarna 1989:21).

Similarly, Qohelet has concluded:

טובים השנים מן האחד

> Two are better than one (4:9).

The lesson is that human partnership is not essential for the human physical existence because there was no such concern; thus, man was created alone. However, God discovered that there is a further dimension out of the human physicality which is crucial for determining the human creation as good. Actually, the narrative alludes to this sort of relationship after Adam's rejection of the animals, that is, the exclusion of the animals is not just a curious episode, but a meaningful statement. That is to say, the relationship which manifests friendship conveys intellectual capacity – *Sophia*, in Socrates' terms (see also Sellner 1991:240-257).

What is the meaning of human partnership without Eros? For clarification (which is by no means an indication of historical or thematic dependency), it is helpful to present at this stage of the discussion on human relationship in the pre-Eros condition, Plato's views on friendship versus the body's desire as he has developed it in his famous dialogue, *Phaderus*. First, we shall look at Lysias' speech on love read by his admirer Phaderus:

> Many of those in love desire a person's body before they know his ways and before they have experience of the other aspects belonging to him, so that it is unclear to them if they will still want to be friends with him when they cease to desire him (232b, e1-e5).

Socrates himself says:

> Let that then, my boy, be your lesson: be sure that the attentions of a lover carry no goodwill: they are no more than a glutting of his appetite for as wolf to lamb, so lover to his lad (241d, in Plato).

However, Socrates contrasts love with the education of the soul (241b c5-d1):

> ... well if the better elements of their minds get the upper hand by drawing them to a well-ordered life, and to philosophy, they pass their life here in blessedness and harmony, masters of themselves and orderly in their behavior, having enslaved that part through which badness attempted to enter the soul and having freed that part through which goodness enters (265a-b1, in Plato).

Eros, desire, seeks benefit and is dependent on the desire itself which can disappear. Thus, there is no equality in this sort of relationship. However, friendship is not beneficial and it frees the good.

Similarly, we may conclude that the tendency of the Biblical Garden narrative is to depict Adam and the woman, prior to the eating of the forbidden fruit, living the life of friendship, of seeking the good with no benefit except for values ('helper'). The partnership between Adam and the woman represents the meaning of sincere עזר, that is, true human equality. Thus, immortality does not imply loneliness, but friendship which is – given the Garden narrative's view – essential for human fulfilment.

Mind and Speech – The Tension

As noted above, Adam gives names to the animals – he defines them in terms of their distinction. Adam uses his faculty of speech for the matter of identification

and determination. In other words, Adam's superiority over the animals is conveyed by means of the faculty of speech which enables him to categorise his environment through a system of order. This human capacity is understood by the Psalmist, employing his poetic language, as the power of dominion over the creatures:

ותחסרהו מעט מאלהים וכבוד והדר תעטרהו / תמשילהו במעשי ידיך

> You have made them (אנוש, בן אדם) a little lower than God (Psalms 8:6).

Human beings are unique and their dominion has been manifested through their wisdom (*Sophia*), giving them the honourable status of being almost God-like.

Indeed, the human mind is mutually related to speech. The philosopher of language, John Searle, has elaborated on the matter as follows:

> The function of evolutionary history is to enable us to represent and cope with the world outside ourselves. The mind enables us both to get information about the world, and to coordinate intentional action in the world. Language is an immensely powerful extension of these very capacities. So, an animal without language can have perceptions and even some sorts of memories, and beliefs and desires, but once an animal has language it has an immensely richer system of representation. The representational capacity of languages is an extension of the biological representational capacity of the mind (2002:18).

The mind enables us to go beyond ourselves and to understand the world. In this way our mind enriches our conceptions and perceptions; we are capable of integrating ourselves into the world. And language is the extension, the means of providing the understanding of the world.

Speech is therefore the manifestation of *Sophia* in terms of arguing a case, building a dialogue, exploring through conversation, through reasoning – speech is the greatness of the human faculty. There is no evolutionary development compared to the human ability to build sentences, to create a narrative or to recite a poem.

In this regard, the unforgettable words of Isocrates (436-338 BCE), a member of the canon of the Ten Attic Orators, convey his appraisal of the speech as the basis of civilisation:

> In most of our abilities we differ not at all from the animals; we are in fact behind many in swiftness and strength and other resources. But because there is born in us the power to persuade

each other and to show ourselves whatever we wish, we not only have escaped from living as brutes, but also by becoming together have founded cities and set up laws and invented arts, and speech has helped us attain practically all the things we have devised. For it is speech that has made laws about justice and injustice and honor and disgrace, without which provisions we should not be able to live together. By speech we refute the wicked and praise the good. By speech we educate the ignorant and inform the wise. We regard the ability to speak properly as the best sign of intelligence, and truthful, legal, and just speech is the reflection of a good and trustworthy soul. *With speech we contest about disputes and investigate what is unknown … Nothing done with intelligence is done without speech, but speech is the marshal of all actions and of thoughts and those most use it who have the greatest wisdom* (cited in Kennedy 1963:8-9, emphasis mine).

And the 'father of humanism', the Renaissance poet and rhetorician, Petrarch highlights the importance of speech as follows:

Eloquence on its own can be of great help to the progress of human life … people are suddenly turned from a most wicked way of life to the greatest modesty through the spoken words of others (cited in Wickers 1993:31).

Human beings ask questions and explore. They can progress, educate themselves through speech and develop civilised life.

However, language is a double-edged sword. Humankind possesses the wisdom of speech which might bring them to the highest intellectual capacities, to become the sole dominant, and the most educated. On the other hand, speech can also lead to the great rebellion without keeping the boundary straight between the human and the meta-physical. Consequently, the great intellect could bring catastrophe on the human instead of a combination of morality and discipline which keeps the balance by knowing limitation. The tension is forcefully expressed in the book of Job which outlines the heights of human wisdom but also the limitations:

הן יראת אדני היא חכמה וסור מרע בינה

Truly, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
And to depart from evil is understanding
(Job 28:28; see Greenstein 2003:253-280).

In terms of Biblical religion as manifested in Job, this statement is the crux of human wisdom which could lead to destruction unless the balance is kept through fear.

The Duality of Speech

As a result of eating the forbidden fruit, Eros reflects the revolutionary transformation in human existence. Eros projects therefore the new relationship between Adam and Eve, on the one side, and the relationship to God, on the other. The way Adam responds to God's inquiry reflects his new attitude to the woman:

<div dir="rtl">

האשה אשר נתתה עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואכל.

</div>

> The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit
> from the tree, and I ate (3:12).

This is *not* the language of partnership but of accusation, mistrust. Eros marks the new relationship between Adam and Eve formerly determined as איש and אשה the manifestation of equality, that is, partnership. Now, at the point of the departure of the man and the woman from their initial and intended condition, the sexes fall out of equality. The eating has established a new atmosphere of accusation and suspicion that marks the distinction between the condition of the true values of friendship of the pre-Eros phase and the Eros condition. Furthermore, now when the woman has become mortal, Adam changes her previous name (conveying similarity), and gives her a new name that characterises her new condition in the Eros era:

<div dir="rtl">

חוה כי היא היתה אם כל- חי

</div>

> Eve because she was the mother of all living (3:20).

A new era of relationship has been established:

<div dir="rtl">

ואל אישך תשוקתך והוא ימשל בך

</div>

> Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you
> (3:16).

ימשל ("rule over you") connotes the new human situation. The partnership, based on independence which meant equality, friendship and *Sophia,* has disappeared, and a new relationship between man and woman has been formed. This new relationship is based on dependency, control, desire, dominion. Everything has changed – "Eve is imprisoned in motherhood", claims Bal (1987:128).

Furthermore, the double-edged sword of the faculty of human speech is associated with the Eros revolution. Thus, when passion, תאוה, intervenes with *Sophia,* להשכיל (3:6), there is room for doubt which is presented in the first Biblical argument, that is, the serpent and the woman's reasoning over the issue of God's order with regard

to the Tree. With the instrument of speech and reasoning, human beings possess the power to create new situations which could be tragic.

Actually, the pivotal episode in the Garden narrative revolves around speech – the dialogue between the woman and the serpent. The way the woman talks to the serpent indicates her intellect – "She is intelligent, informed, perceptive" (Murphy 1999:54). In short, the woman is creative; she is capable of interpreting situations and creating new realities.

Indeed, the garden narrative maintains a dramatic argument which demonstrates the power of the faculty of speech as a creator of situations. The issue revolves around the critical matter of eating from the tree of knowledge of good and bad. It should be noted that God did not motivate his command; thus, the door has been opened for interpretations and elaborations. This is the place of the human faculty of speech; the verbal means to question and to argue a case.

The serpent is the "devil's advocate" who provokes the issue. His definition is meaningful in this context: ערום (with *qamats*) shrewdness is associated through the faculty of the sound with ערומים (with *hathaph pathah*) nakedness. The phenomenon of wordplay is characteristic of the Garden narrative (איש, אדם-אדמה אשה), connoting related meanings. The phonetic similarity gives more emphasis, and functions as a signal – 'It immediately makes clear to the reader that something is happening at the content level of the text' (Van Wolde 1989:75). Thus, when the serpent approaches the naked woman, the text connotes sexuality, alluding therefore to the Eros revolution. That is to say, Eros has been integrated with *Sophia* – ערומים together with ערום (with *qamats*) stimulating therefore the double-edged sword of the faculty of the intellect, that is, speech – intellect versus passion, good versus bad.

It appears that speech changes perceptions. A powerful demonstration of the effect of speech is Gorgias' Encomium of Helen. The Sophist describes speech as a moving force:

> The effect of speech upon the condition of the soul is comparable to the power of drugs over the nature of bodies. For just as different drugs dispel different secretions from the body, and some bring an end to disease and others to life, so also in the case of speeches, some distress, other delight, some cause fear, others make the hearers bold, and some drug and bewitch the soul with a kind of evil persuasion (cited in Bizzell & Herzberg 1990:41).

Speech is powerful, setting up the mind.

The dialogue which takes place between the serpent and the woman reveals indeed that he dominates the art of speech and demonstrates that the serpent is not considered by accident as the shrewdest. The serpent approaches the woman through a statement which confronts her straightforwardly. His statement starts with the combination אף-כי that introduces an assertive clause (assertive, yes, indeed; cf. Ezek 14:21), or stress a temporal clause (even when; cf. Neh 9:18) or introduce elliptically a question. Translators are inclined to read the serpent's approach to the woman as a question: 'Did God say?' (e.g. the New RSV of 3:1). However, rhetorically it appears that the combination is an assertive clause. Thus, the shrewd serpent seeks to provoke the woman through his statement – "you shall not eat from any tree of the garden!" (*ibid*). Actually, the serpent has employed the rhetorical device of hyperbole:

> fired with brutality: its role is to give a direction to thought ... by the return shock is it intended to give an indication to the significant term (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:290).

The serpent provokes the woman through the employment of hyperbole to respond, but he also alludes provocatively to a broader plan of God to exclude further the freedom of the two human beings. The seed of suspicion has been planted.

Indeed, the woman has been provoked. Interestingly enough, her response correlates with the serpent's rhetorical approach reflecting her feelings of uneasiness regarding God's instruction:

<div dir="rtl">

ומפרי העץ אשר בתוך-הגן אמר אלהים לא תאכלו ממנו ולא תגעו
בו פן- תמתון

</div>

> You shall not eat from the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die (3:3).

The serpent has aimed well and the woman on her side takes the initiative (see Korsak 1994:458). Actually, her ample words reveal that she is declaring her readiness to make a human independent decision regarding the moral matter of obedience to the high authority, God (Sheleff 2002:171-172).

She refers to a certain tree at the centre of the garden; however, she does not define it as the tree of knowledge (cf. Jacob 1974:23). That is to say, the woman presents the Tree as merely a tree, creating therefore a new reality through her perception – this is actually an ordinary tree. In this regard, Bal, who in order to save the woman's integrity against the accusation of stupidity, regards her answer as a simple mistake on her side that has missed the point (1987:121-122). The critic has misread the nature of the argument which is the woman's struggle for independence.

Furthermore, the woman also exaggerates as she adds a new element to God's original prohibition which has been conveyed in the infinitive absolute מות תמות (2:17). The infinitive absolute is employed to strengthen the verbal idea (Kautzsch and Cowley 1966, §113.1a). However, the woman addresses the serpent without using the absolute but speaks instead in terms of a 'possible event' פן (cf. 3:22). Thus, she doubts whether indeed they will die as a consequence of the eating. Hence, the woman presents a situation which looks less demanding (merely a tree) but also more alarming (the touch) and less definite regarding the results (dying). Consequently, her perception conveys frustration and uneasiness regarding God's prohibition rather than trust in God.

In other words, speech is a double-edged sword: the woman could stop the serpent's tone of provocation; however, as she pursues the matter she indicates a problem and feelings of doubt and hesitation regarding God's command; a situation that the serpent is developing to his advantage.

Indeed, the serpent strengthens the woman's feelings:

<div align="center">ויאמר הנחש אל האשה: לא מות תמתון</div>

> The serpent said to the woman: you shall not surely die (3:4).

The serpent forcefully denies God's original prohibition utilising the infinitive absolute as his means of rejection – "You shall not *surely* die" (the New RSV's "you will not die" is inaccurate).

Thus, the serpent has convinced the woman to eat, strengthening, in fact, her own feelings on the matter. He has justified his shrewdness through his rhetorical skills of choosing a useful strategy which avoids a direct confrontation with his addressee. On the contrary, the serpent is adjusting himself to the woman's position, ensuring her state of mind. The serpent's rhetorical approach is a remarkable demonstration of the basic principle of persuasion as Chaim Perelman has pointed out:

> To make his discourse effective, a speaker must adapt to his audience ... The speaker can choose as his points of departure only the theses accepted by those he addresses (1982:21).

Indeed, language, which is an extension of the mind, is capable of creating new realities, as the serpent together with the woman have done.

Conclusion

The garden narrative (Gen 2-3) presents the story of humankind as a course of three phases – the lonely Adam, the partnership of friendship and *Sophia,* and the Eros condition. The narrative introduces the three phases as a chain of events but not as an evolutionary development. That is, each of the events did not emerge as a process of development but as a matter of reward or punishment. Thus, the narrative describes the human transformation, paying special attention to its motivations.

This essay investigates the implications of the second phase, that is, the pre-Eros condition which has been presented as the ideal human relationship – the period of friendship and *Sophia*. In this regard, the power of language – the extension of the mind as an essential human force – has been examined.

The narrative reveals a deep interest in the relationship between Adam and the woman. The woman has been presented as the ideal response to Adam's loneliness; she is his partner and her introduction to his life manifests the significance of the *Sophia* in human life.

However, *Sophia,* through the extension of language, is a double-edged sword which manifests the limits and boundaries of the human intellect. Language is capable of creating new realities which stand at the border between order and disobedience. As a matter of fact, this tension between order and disobedience is the Biblical story of the tension between God and humankind. The woman's disobedience reflects her capacity to mediate over God's order – as she conveys verbally in her confrontation with the serpent. Indeed, this is the human trial – *Sophia*, language which might keep the balance, on the one hand, but might lead to rebellion, on the other hand.

It is illuminating to reconstruct the Biblical view of the essence of friendship and *Sophia* in the pre-Eros condition in contrast to the relationship between Adam and Eve in the Eros phase. Indeed, Eros is the provider of new life but is also the source of subordination which ends the partnership of equality, that is, friendship of values and *Sophia*.

Biblical Rhetoric

The Art of Religious Dialogue[6]

Introduction

Ever since the appearance of the earliest written texts, their authors do not cease to express their appreciation of the word and its impact. Thus, we find in the early Egyptian literature of the Middle Kingdom (1940-1640 BCE) a poem recited by a companion of an Egyptian commander who returns after an unsuccessful mission. The poem is known in the literature as "The tale of the shipwrecked sailor". It reads:

> Listen to me, my Count,
> / ...
> Wash yourself; pour water on your hands,
> So you may reply when you are addressed
> and speak to the king with self-possession
> and answer without stammering.
> *A man's utterance saves him*
> *is speech turns anger away from him ...*
> (cited in Carey 1999:2, my emphasis).

Human speech signifies life. People must use words if they seek to present themselves and their personality; without words, they are meaningless, even dead. Words create status; words shape the human reality and determine the human image. In this regard, the issue to be discussed below is: How, and for what purpose, do Biblical figures use words?

The Realm of Rhetoric

Our first goal is to shed light on the art of speech and its history. The art of using words as a means of communication is known as rhetoric, that is, the "art of discourse" which claims to produce utterances on a wide range of matters. A linguistic analysis of the term rhetoric reveals that the Greek root *rhe* means "to say", that is, "to use discourse", *logos*. The connotation of this use is of fullness. Rhetoric is therefore a comprehensive, total way of using discourse. Nevertheless, rhetoric does not limit itself to conveying neutral, sterilised facts (*docere*) but its

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aim is to carry away the audience, to produce an effect on them, to leave them different as a result of the impact of the words (cf. Barilli 1989:vii-xi). This aim of influencing the audience and carrying them away has raised serious concerns regarding the ethics of the discipline of persuasion employed by speakers. Such concerns were raised already in ancient Greece and the trend continues to this day. Socrates discussed the issue in his dialogue with Phaedrus as follows:

> S: When one says 'iron' or 'silver' we all understand the same thing, do we not?
>
> P: Surely.
>
> S: What if he says 'justice' or 'goodness'? Do we not part company, and disagree?
>
> P: Certainly.
>
> S: Then in which of the two we are easier to deceive, and in which has rhetoric the greater power?
>
> P: Evidently in the class of doubtful things (262-263).

The point is that the answer regarding the ultimate definition of words pertaining to values such as "justice" or "goodness" as a matter of ultimate truth is not self-evident; it is doubtful. Thus, under such a situation, how can rhetoric sincerely influence and carry the audience along when the issues could be debated and undetermined? The question Socrates addressed is – What is rhetoric? Is it a bombastic technique of illusion? Is it a science, a discipline of reaching the truth? Or is it a matter of manipulating the audience?

The conclusion is that Socrates did not make the necessary distinction between two notions of reasoning – dialectical and analytical. In referring to rhetoric as an argumentative endeavour, we need to make a distinction between logic and argument. Logic is a conclusion about truth and the justification of its acceptance. Logic is without appeal; its propositions are true. Logic is demonstrative, impersonal. However, argumentation, which also deals with propositions, i.e., truth-values, is no more than a substitute, appropriate in non-scientific contexts. A proposition is the point of departure of an argument which is rhetoric. Consequently, argumentation is more personal and is based on assumptions which are generally accepted (*eulogos*) (cf. Aristotle, *Topics* 100.20-24). Rhetoric works therefore with the conflict between propositions that truth is not convincing "as such" (Meyer 1994:67-68; see also Schopenhauer 1896).

Thus, a distinction is made between dialectical and analytical reasoning. Analytical reasoning deals with truth while dialectical reasoning deals with justifiable opinion

(Schopenhauer 1896; Perelman 1982:1-8). Each field of reasoning requires a different type of discourse. Analytical reasoning derives from facts (undisputable data) and is impersonal. However, dialectical reasoning – the realm of rhetoric – begins with theses that are generally accepted (such as universal moral concepts) with the purpose of gaining the acceptance of other theses which could be or are controversial. Thus, dialectic argument is personal because "it derives its value from its action upon the mind of some person" (Perelman 1982:3).

Indeed, Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1357a) regards rhetoric as the art of the orator's techniques in addressing a crowd – a group of people who lack both specialised knowledge and the ability to follow a lengthy chain of argument (versus the analytical reasoning of the professionals). Nevertheless, when speakers select and put forward the premises that are to serve as foundation for their argument, they rely on their hearers' adherence to the proposition from which they will start (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:65). These propositions are taken from three sources – truth and facts, presumptions, and values (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:74-79). That is to say, rhetoric is derived from the specific cases in which there is no agreement or causal link between the claim and the conclusion. In other words, the speaker actually seeks adherence between positions. Adherence does not mean that the persuasion is a matter of a deduction but a bridge between positions. This is the realm of the "real life" which aims to communicate between positions, concepts or worldviews. Thus, rhetoric is ultimately a complex area of communication because there is no "mathematical" link between the claim and the conclusion.

How does this dialectical reasoning apply to Biblical rhetoric? Is the Biblical text an instance of analytical reasoning given the assumed authoritative nature of the Biblical discourse?

Religious Rhetoric? The Bible and Rhetoric – Is it Possible?

The conventional view of religious rhetoric claims that, "All religious systems are rhetorical because they strive to communicate truth. It argues for a distinctive rhetoric of religion, based on authoritative proclamation, not rational persuasion, with the speaker's character as dominant" (O'Rourke Boyle 2001:662). The assumption is that authoritative proclamation determines the nature of religious rhetoric and, as such, religious systems call for a distinctive rhetoric rather than persuasion by reason (the Aristotelian way). The premise is that religion and reason are disharmonised.

However, the rhetorical notion of authoritative Biblical texts is not self-evident. The question revolves around our reading of specific Biblical texts where God responds to human criticism regarding His justice. Actually, God's authority (in terms of "the power or a right to command, enforce obedience", Webster) is demonstrated to human beings through the account of creation; as the creator of human beings, He is the authority. However, the meaning of the creation of human beings in God's image has been perceived by the poet of the Psalms to mean that humankind is actually quite similar to God, just a little bit less – "For you have made him a little power than Elohim"; ותחסרהו מעט מאלהים (Ps 8:6). The application, as I have argued elsewhere (Gitay 2007:1-14), is that human beings are privileged to possess the unique power of speech as the creators of new realities or new situations through their verbal skill. This unique human verbal skill is correlated to the notion of the Biblical world of the word as the power of creation, as the following citations demonstrate: ויאמר אלהים יהי אור ויהי אור ("God said: Let there be light, and there was light", Gen 1:3; see vv. 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26); קול ה' על המים...קול ה' שבר ארזים ("The voice of the Lord is over the waters ... The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars", Ps 29:3, 5). The act of creation is a speech endeavour – "The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty", mastered by doing, destroying and building.

It is important to note that the first use of God's authority in His relationship with Adam, the first human being (in the narrative of Gen 2), conveys authority as the following command demonstrates:

ויצו ה' אלהים על-האדם לאמר:
מכל עץ-הגן אכל תאכל. ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו כי ביום
אכלך ממנו מות תמות

> And the Lord God commanded the man: 'Of every tree of the garden you might freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it, for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die' (Gen 2:16-17).

God's communication with Adam contains two elements, a command and a threat. However, the threat implies that in spite of God's authority Adam might refuse to obey God. Thus, the ability to decline God's authority is Adam's privilege that constitutes, in fact, the major difference between animals (nature) and human beings. It should be noted that animals (nature) are created exactly as humans are – through the word which carries a creative power. But only human beings have the ability and the power to disobey God's word. Thus, human beings are creatures that, given their freedom of will or independence, have forced God to add a further

element to the command – referring to their potential disobedience which is a threat to punish them.

Furthermore, in addition to the threat, God might seek to affect people through a personal promise which reflects the addressee's personal wish or interest. Abraham's situation is demonstrative as it is promised that he will be the father of a nation (Gen 12:3). However, Abraham is childless; thus, the promise might be his last chance of fatherhood (Gen 12:1-3 cf. Gen 11:30). The promise probably motivates him rather than God's command to follow in God's steps. That is to say, God's authority is unquestionable but there is, for the human being, a way to refuse Him. Nonetheless, human beings may reject God's authority and choose their own way, but the question is, are they in a position to argue with Him in order to change His conduct?

In this regard, we might ask whether the people of the Bible are in the same situation as Prometheus at the end of Aeschylus's horrible tragedy from the tyrannical power of the gods – "see how I suffer, how unjust this is". In the dramatic presentation of *Prometheus bound*, Zeus's government of the universe is represented as despotism of the most brutal kind (see Scully & Herrington 1975:11). Aeschylus presents a concept of the supreme tyrant, the enemy of the human, who is ruling the world. This supreme tyrant stands up against mankind (Murray 1968:56).

Thus, the transformation is from *mythos* to *logos*. In other words, does the Biblical discourse reflect a mythical mode of thinking which is dominated by the realm of the imagination and the fantastic, or does the Biblical discourse reflect a logical mode of argumentation which is the realm of rhetoric? The tension between the *mythos* and the *logos* in this regard applies to the status of God in terms of His behaviour and attitude to humankind – tyrant or rational? The work of Rudolph Otto on the transformation from the mythical-pagan approach to monotheism may justify the employment of *logos* as the inference between the premise of cause and effect which is a fundamental concept of the moralistic principle of Biblical monotheism. It justifies the causal notion of retribution – righteousness and reward or wickedness and punishment. In other words, the notion of retribution is based on the relationship between cause and effect that is determined by demonstration.

However, the inclination is still to regard Biblical religious thought as an authoritative discourse that borrows its religious power, that is, truth, from the nature of its existence which is God's absolute authority. Hence, given its nature, Biblical rhetoric might be analytic rather than dialectic, an ultimate discourse rather than argumentative.

Nevertheless, we may ask: Does the God of Abraham and Moses control His subjects only through threats and punishment (or rewards) with no real sense of a meaningful dialogue between him and his human subjects? In other words, is there no act of persuasion as an appeal to human reasoning or self-understanding in order that the person will be persuaded by God – not just as a result of command or fear, or a fulfilment of self-interest in the light of what seems to be impossible by the course of nature? Actually, as the study of rhetoric may demonstrate, the Biblical situation is not parallel to that of Prometheus. Thus, the prophets communicate God's will to His people, reasoning with the audience through vivid rhetoric and urging the people to argue with God – "Come now, let us argue it out, says God", לכו נא ונוכחה יאמר ה (Isa 1:18; see Gitay 1991:14-34).

God Himself communicates directly with certain individuals by means of dialogue which is a rhetorical endeavour (see further explanation below). The cases of Job, Jonah and Abraham can be cited to demonstrate God's rhetoric as He replies to specific inquiries regarding the meaning of His deeds, and through His responses, He seeks to justify Himself (cf. Gitay 2005a:859-866). Thus, for example, Abraham's claim that God's decision to destroy the entire population of two cities might not be justified in accordance with human criteria of morality is a case to be considered through an act of argumentation, that is, rhetoric:

> And the Lord said, 'Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great ...'
>
> And Abraham drew near and said, 'Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous who are in it? Will you then destroy the place? ... Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' And the Lord said, 'If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the entire place for their sakes' (Gen 18:23-26).

A chain of questions follows the plea: האף תספה צדיק עם רשע. Each of the questions is fully answered by God as Abraham argues in terms of the principle of quality versus quantity as the criterion of justice that might affect God's decision. Abraham continues to argue, reducing the number of potentially righteous persons to ten. God nevertheless responds that even this small number of righteous people does not exist. Consequently, God's punishment has been justified in terms of Abraham's reasoning. That is to say, God's determination to destroy the two cities is not a mere demonstration of His power, but is presented – given Abraham's appeal – as a critical decision which is assessed and argued between humankind and God in accordance with human moral standards and reasoning. The debate

between Abraham and God, between the "dominant character" and a human being, may be defined as a verbal argument that falls into the realm of rhetoric.

What is the meaning of God's reasoning with human beings in terms of His authority? The point is that when God seeks to appeal to His human addressees, He actually shares with them His concerns, expecting them to accept His authority in the light of His reasoning in human dialectical terms and not just because He is God (cf. Gitay 2007:30-44).

This act of reasoning which is in fact participation with the authority's decision making, could be seen as an exercise of "democracy" in the context of religious authority. At first glance, one may claim that democracy and religious authority are not well harmonised and that such a comparison has certain limitations, as there are principles that are non-negotiable for the religious authority (Berger 2004:77-78). However, the following definition of democracy (formulated by the Chair of the International Panel on Democracy and Development, IPDD) may work for us as a guideline for the inclusion of democracy in the realm of religious authority:

> [Democracy is] a system whereby the whole society can participate
> ... in the decision making process and keep control over it ...
> democracy can be defined as a political system that is capable of
> correcting its own dysfunctions (Boutros-Ghali 2003:7-8).

The democratic principles revolve around participation and control in the process of decision making. In this regard, Biblical rhetoric plays a significant role in the act of "democratising" the religious authority. Thus, the prophet Isaiah, seeking to justify God's punishment (given the people's moral misbehaviour), calls for a debate with God, i.e., the religious authority. Therefore, the prophet encourages the community not just to participate in the act of the decision making but, in fact, to control God's decision to punish through their reasoning as Isaiah (1:18) shows:

> Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord.
> Though your sins are like scarlet,
> They shall be as white as snow.

The style is distinctive as the particle "let us" (לכו נא) softens the command "go". The audience is politely (see Gesenius Krautzsch 105b; cf. Gen 18:3) invited to consider the issue rather than forced to accept it (Gitay 1991:33). In other words, the audience, if successful in their argument, might affect God's decision, as the red colour will turn to white. This is the height of God's relationship with the people in terms of participating and controlling God's decision. Isaiah seeks to

present God's justice, not through the manifestation of His ultimate superiority and the exercise of His authority as such, but through reasoning in human terms. Thus, God's authority is not autocratic but subject to human criticism which might influence God to alter His decision. Therefore, God's verbal reasoning with His subordinates democratises His ultimate authority as He is not above criticism, and He is open to sharing His reasoning and be persuaded that He misjudged the case. Rhetoric is instrumental in democratising the religious authority.

In this regard, we need to remind ourselves of the place of rhetoric in the course of the human struggle to be free of the power of magic and the irrational. As noted, in midst of the fifth century BCE, the Greek Sophists introduced a new intellectual dimension to human culture. *Mythos* was replaced by *logos*. "The aristocracy of the myths was losing its authority to a democracy of public arguments," writes Poulakos (1995:13). The high achievement of the Greek Sophists is the secularisation of human thought which is the replacement of magic by reasoning.

Thus, when human beings reason with God we can take it almost as an act of democracy (a term which in this context is preferable to "secularisation"), that is, a reflection of a debate between people transferred to the highest religious sphere. This is the case with the Greeks when the Sophists who developed the art and technique of verbal persuasion replaced the religious means of communication through the power of irrational techniques (e.g. Delphi) that rejected reasoning. In this respect, God's speeches in the (Hebrew) Bible are based on human rhetoric in terms of reasoning and might be looked at in terms of the rhetorical principles of reason, common sense, and *absurdum*. Rhetoric is therefore the means of manifesting God's democratisation which contrasts the communicative medium of the mysterious that manifests God's power – the numinous. That is to say, God's speeches in the Hebrew Bible function to ensure that His will is not perceived as demonic. In this respect, God's rhetoric is harmonised with the matter of His moralisation.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of a God who reasons is paralleled in the development of the Hebrew religion. In terms of the history of religions, Rudolf Otto revealed in Biblical monotheism a moralistic dimension which substitutes the demonic conception. Thus, Otto proposes in his monumental work *The Idea of the Holy* that:

> The venerable religion of Moses marks the beginning of a process which from that point onward ... charged with ethical import, until it becomes the 'holy' in the full sense of the word. The culmination of the process is found in the Prophets and the

> Gospels. And it is in this that the special nobility of the religion
> revealed to us by the Bible is to be found (1970:75).

What Otto has observed as a historian of Biblical religion regarding God's moralisation is the relationship between deeds and punishment (reward). Rhetoric demonstrates this notion of cause and effect as the process of God's reasoning. Biblical rhetoric is therefore the literary-linguistic manifestation of reasoning in human perception which is a true reflection of the democratisation of Biblical religion in response to human criticism.

The Biblical discourse provides numerous examples of argumentative speeches, based on dialectical reasoning that could reflect conflicts of thoughts between God and human beings. In other words, there is a need to argue and justify the position rather than to take it as inference or as a matter of God's authority. The following examples may demonstrate the polemic situation.

> Alas for you who desire the day of the Lord!
> Why do you want the day of the Lord?
> It is darkness, not light;
> As if someone fled from a lion,
> And was met by a bear;
> Or went into the house and rested
> A hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake.
> Is not the day of the Lord darkness not light and doom with
> no brightness in it? (Amos 5:18-20).

The prophet, God's messenger, introduces a new concept of the day of God which is considered by his audience as a day of salvation. However, the prophet argues that the concept of the day of brightness is actually wrong because this day is a day of punishment. He appeals rather than impose the concept on the audience. His technique is the analogy, actually, a chain of analogies which refers to the human conception.

In the next example, the prophet argues with his audience regarding the role of God who in their view is their defender rather than the God of punishment. Amos reasons with his audience through a chain of examples taken from the world of facts and nature:

> Do two walk together unless they have made an appointment?
> Does a lion roar in the forest when it has no prey?
> ... [consequently]
> Does disaster befall a city unless the Lord has done it?
> (Amos 3:3-8).

God's deeds and behaviour are not taken for granted but are demonstrated through a human means of appeal: ...הילכו שנים יחדו בלתי אם נועדו. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* (cf. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:205), a purely formal contradiction on the basis of reason which justifies the logic of the principle of God's punishment.

The Language of Communication between God and the People

We find that God Himself, rather than His agents, justifies His deeds through an appeal to reason. But how does God reason? Are human beings capable of perceiving God's reasoning as an act of persuasion rather than a proclamation of authority? The point is that the process of communication between God and humankind through a linguistic medium is not something that can be taken for granted. Nevertheless, the concept of communication between God and human beings is based on a fundamental hermeneutical principle that has been introduced through medieval Jewish and Christian exegesis of the Bible. The presupposition is that the Torah speaks in human language, *Scriptura humane loquitur*. That is to say, God's verbal revelation is adjusted to the human ability to understand Him. This leading principle of communication has been understood by the great Sephardic Jewish commentator Ibn Ezra (1092-1164) to mean that, linguistically, the Torah adjusted itself to conventional human perception (Funkenstein 1991:72-81). This hermeneutical principle enables human beings to perceive God's word (and argumentation) in their language.

The Rhetorical Strategy — The Discursive Reasoning

I shall start with the great debate between Abraham and God regarding His decision to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. This argument in itself indicates that God's premise is a subject of justification and is not taken as such. How does Abraham argue with God? He reasons through a question (Gen 18:23):

<div align="center">האף תספה צדיק עם רשע</div>

> Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?

This sort of question is the device of *erotesis*; interrogation, or as we might call it today, the rhetorical question. Aristotle deals in length with this device at the end of *Rhetoric*. He writes as follows:

> Something is self-evident and it is clear to the questioner that the
> opponent will grant another point. Receiving the expected answer
> to this, he should not ask about what is self-evident but should

> state the conclusion to which it points, as Socrates did when
> Meletus denied that Socrates believed in the gods; he asked if
> daimones [spirits in which Meletus admitted Socrates believed]
> were not either children of gods or something divine, and when
> Meletus said 'They are', Socrates asked [drawing the conclusion]:
> 'Does anybody think there are children of gods but not gods?'

The expected answer creates common ground (agreement) between the arguers and their addressees; in the case of Abraham, this forms the basis for his argumentation. What sort of agreement serves as the premise in this particular case of Sodom and Gomorrah? Values are the sort of agreement which have been elected by Abraham as "the generally accepted". Common value is not just a commonly agreed on ground but has in itself a persuasive power. Thus, speaking about the types of objects of agreement, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969:74) regard values as follows:

> Agreement with regard to a value means an admission that an
> object, a being, or an ideal must have a specific influence on
> action and on disposition toward action and that one can make
> use of this influence in an argument.

The premise of the value is utilised by Abraham, functioning as the premise of the inference. That is, Abraham, through his rhetorical question, created a moral situation that has influenced God to explain his decision, challenged on the accepted moral-value standards. Isaiah argues similarly:

> Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth:
> For the Lord has spoken:
> I reared children, and brought them up,
> But, they have rebelled against me.
> The ox knows its owner,
> And the donkey its master's crib,
> But Israel does not know,
> My people do not understand! (Isaiah 1:2-3).

<div dir="rtl">ידע שור קנהו וחמור אבוס בעליו // ישראל לא ידע עמי לא התבונן</div>

Isaiah appeals to the universal value of common sense as the generally accepted value. Even though he aims to reach his own audience, the citizens of Jerusalem, he appeals to common human norms which are based in this particular case on accepted human moral standards. It appears that the prophet makes a special effort to reach his audience; he does not just accuse them but seeks to appeal to them on their terms. That is, the emphasis is not on God's judgment as such but on the people's own realisation of their deeds given the prophet's appeal.

Thus, Isaiah, in order to reach a causal link between the punishment and its cause, employs the rhetorical technique of analogy. Hence, the abstract accusation of misbehaviour has been concretised through the analogy which is taken from the well-known and undisputable realm of nature. Through the analogy, one lets the object speak for itself as self-explanatory.

The Rhetorical Strategy — The Presentational Reasoning

The discourse of Micah 1 represents a rhetorical model that differs from the Aristotelian model of causal link that characterises the prophetic mode of argumentation of Isaiah and Amos, for instance. Rather, Micah presents a chain of descriptions as in:

<div dir="rtl">

כי הנה ה' יצא ממקומו וירד ודרך על במותי ארץ

ונמסו ההרים תחתיו והעמקים יתבקעו כדונג מפני האש כמים מגרים

במורד ...

</div>

> Yahweh is coming out of his dwelling-place
> To descend and walk on the heights of the earth.
> Mountains dissolve beneath him,
> Valleys are split open,
> Like wax before fire,
> Like torrents pouring down a hillside ...
> So I shall make Samaria a heap of ruins in open country,
> A place for planting vines,
> I shall cast her stones into the valley
> And lay bare her foundations ... (1:2-6).

The description is dramatic, presented in a lively manner in the form of the genre of the "alive performance poetry" which constitutes in this case the unit of 1:2-16 (Gitay 2003:131-140). Nevertheless, the determination of the genre paves way for the functional question of the impact; how does this "alive performance poetry" seek to affect the audience? The chain of descriptions creates, as a whole, a total notion of disaster. God is punishing the people. God's punishment is the goal of the discourse which is designed to "show" the audience through a vivid language that God brings upon them the awful disaster as a punishment. The argument itself constitutes the chain of the descriptions. One dramatic description follows another, creating, as a whole, a total impact. That is to say, the chain of descriptions creates a series of parallels which establishes meaning as a whole. This is, in argumentative terms, the presentational discourse (parallels/comparisons) which differs from the discursive (causal) discourse. One verse is presented after the other, tending to work on the minds of the readers/listeners through parallels.

The series of parallels expands the meaning. This accumulating list of parallels is, in fact, a process of argumentation. It is a different mode of argumentation which does not seek to affect the readers/listeners through the argumentation process of deduction. Rather, the list of details, the examples cited one after the other, is a mode of argumentation in itself. Parallels replace the causal argument (cf. Gitay 2001b:45-56; 2003:131-140).

This presentational process has been introduced by the philosopher of art, Suzanna Langer (1942), who recognises the concept of argument through parallels as she makes a distinction between presentational and discursive style. Objects are recognised by their relation to one another. Langer succeeds in demonstrating that these two genuinely distinctive modes of thought – discursive and presentational – are equally legitimate forms of logic (cf. Douglas 1993 who studied the art of argumentation in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, claiming that Leviticus represents the presentational argument while Deuteronomy is based on the causal mode of argumentation). Each mode serves a different purpose; the discursive isolates elements while the presentational projects patterns as a whole.

The emphasis on the dramatic effect resembles, in classical rhetorical terms, the Ciceronian approach. Cicero, the Roman rhetorician of the first century BCE, was concerned less with the Platonic truth than with reaching the people. In his monumental work *De Oratore*, he speaks about three sources of persuasion – we show that our case reflects the truth through the device of probabilities, winning the audience, turning their minds/heads to the appropriate emotions given the instance (2.11.15). He categorises style into three modes – plain = teaching, the grand = moving, the middle = giving pleasure. Emotion and the style of repetition and the device of probabilities, together with delivery, are his strength.

Cicero's powerful speeches are structured through a chain of rhetorical questions, possible and impossible-probability, past fact/future facts, repetitions of asyndeton (e.g. What an age! What morals!), absence of connecting particles, assonances, alliterations, polyptoton (same word repeated in different cases), metaphors, parallel phrasing, anaphora, and varied length of sentences to create emphasis. There are repetitions, powerful impressions. The causal appeal to reason is not the first priority, but the impression, the effect on the audience, is the goal.

The comparison with Biblical rhetoric such as that found in Micah is instructive. In both instances, that is, the Ciceronian approach and Micah's discourse, there are numerous repetitions also in the sound – ויצא ודרך; breaking down the parallel structure for the sake of impression through the repeated sound, and dwelling on

the subject not for the sake of information but to capture the audience – ונמסו ההרים תחתיו והעמקים יתבקעו כדונג מפני האש כמים מגרים במורד... (the comparison indicates the universal nature of rhetoric based on the oral performance which looks for devices of attraction).

God's Reasoning

Rhetoric is therefore the foundation of critical thinking which is the core of democracy as well as moralisation. Rhetoric functions to enable the society to participate in decision making, referring in our case to the realm of religious authority.

As a rule, God Himself does not address the entire community (the Mount Sinai revelation is exceptional) but rather individuals, and not under abstract situations but rather in crises. For the sake of demonstration, we can think of Jonah, Job and Abraham as individuals who challenged God's morality and received His arguable response. Thus, in these three cases God's behaviour is under question. Why does God not punish Nineveh, the cruellest enemy of Israel (Jonah)? Why does God torture His most devoted servant (Job)? Why is God ready to destroy righteous people just because they are surrounded by wicked (Abraham)? God's morality is at stake. Therefore, His reasoning is instrumental in justifying His behaviour in human terms and rhetoric is the method of inquiry in these sensitive and crucial cases.

Thus, the argument that takes place between Jonah and God – challenging God to explain His behaviour – is fundamental in democratising His authority. Nevertheless, Jonah's own behaviour is strictly anti-rhetorical. He does not talk to God but runs away. His utterance to the people of Nineveh is deliberately brief (only five words, Jonah 3:4), lacking any rhetorical appeal (Gitay 1995a:197-206). However, after Jonah accuses God of distorting the proper historical course of punishing the evil (4:1-3), God speaks to him. When Jonah prays to God, blaming God for being too merciful (4:2), God explains His reasons for being tolerant and not exercising Jonah's sense of justice in terms of human vengeance. God reasons in human terms (4:10-11). The goal is to persuade Jonah (and the readers) rather than to perpetuate His deeds as such. Here, God seeks persuasion through the rhetorical means of analogy:

אתה חסת על הקיקיון אשר לא עמלת בו ולא גדלתו ...
ואני לא אחוס על נינוה העיר הגדולה אשר יש- בה הרבה משתים-עשרה
רבו אדם אשר לא ידע בין- ימינו לשמאלו ובהמה רבה?!

> Yahweh replied: "You are only upset about a castor-oil plant which cost you no labour, which you did not make grow, which sprouted in a night and has perished in a night. And am I not to feel sorry for Nineveh, the great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, to say nothing of all animals!?" (4:10-11).

This is rhetoric *par excellence* as there is no mystery but reason in God's response. The analogy of the castor-oil plant that had protected Jonah from the terrible heat and had now disappeared is illuminating as self-demonstration. However, God explains through an analogy that aims to demonstrate in human perception the unexplained, transferring the known to the unknown, through comparison that has as its purpose the clarification, structuring and evaluation of the theme in terms of what one knows (Perelman 1982:114-125). God's authority (ethos) has been established through His reasoning that democratised His authority rather than forced His ultimate power. Nevertheless, Otto's warning that God's moralisation and rationalisation is not His substitute is crucial in understanding the notion of Biblical religion:

> This moralizing and rationalizing process does not mean that the numinous itself has been overcome, but merely that its preponderance has been overcome. The numinous is at once the basis upon which and the setting within which the ethical and rational meaning is consummated (1970:75).

This warning regarding the essence of God is applied to His rhetoric as well in terms of its democratisation. Rhetoric, the art of reasoning, does not substitute God's authority but is "charging it with a new content". Thus, God responds to Job's request: "I will ask and you will inform me" (42:4). His reply is through a chain of rhetorical questions that Job is incapable of responding to, appropriately, such as: "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation ... Who decided the dimensions of it, do you know?" (38:4-5). Indeed, Job is presented as a limited human being but as a human, he is capable of asking difficult questions and can receive answers which are designed to persuade him as to why he is incapable of understanding, rather than merely have his inquiries ignored or simply dismissed (Gitay 1999b:1-12). That is to say, Job challenges God to appear before him and to answer his questions, and indeed God speaks to him. Thus, Job is able to assess his criticism of God through His rhetoric, rather than be a mere victim (see also Habel 1985:87).

Conclusion

Martin Heidegger opened his lecture on language with the following statement:

> Man speaks ... we are always speaking ... we speak because speaking is natural to us ... only speech enables man to be the living being he is as man. Language belongs to the closest neighbourhood of man's being ... On the tenth of August 1784 Hamann wrote to Herder: 'If I were eloquent as Demosthenes I would yet have to do nothing more than repeat a single word three times: reason is language, logos' (Heidegger 1971:189-191).

The Biblical discourse bears testimony to the power of the word. People speak and God speaks as well. They speak for the sake of communication. Nevertheless, Biblical verbal communication is also a reflection of reasoning – human reasoning as well as God's reasoning. Biblical rhetoric reveals that reason is a language of communication and persuasion. And as people always speak, God speaks to them in their language. Consequently, Biblical rhetoric is not distinctive in religious terms but is rhetoric in human language and reasoning. Furthermore, reason (language) is the vehicle of moralisation and democratisation because rhetoric (reason, language) forces the religious authority to justify His deeds. By doing so, humans can assess God's morality and participate actively in His decision making (under a certain limitation however, as humans do not substitute God; they never replace Him).

The fact that God explains His deeds in human terms of cogency (in contrast to, say, Zeus) enlightens a specific dimension of Biblical religion, referred to as the democratisation of God's image. God's justification is carried through His speeches designed for specific human beings who ask Him for a moral explanation for His deeds. God explains His reasons through the medium of language and reason, that is, rhetoric.

The Failure of Argumentation in the Book of Job[7]
Humanistic Language versus Religious Language

Job's first speech is delivered in the first person: "Let the day perish in which I was born" (3:3) ... "Because it did not shut the doors of my mother's womb" (v. 9). Similarly, Eliphaz's response is in the first person: "As I have seen those who plow iniquity ..." (4:8), "As for me, I would seek God, and to Elohim I will direct my speech" (5:8). Both speakers seek therefore to base their presentations on personal experience or firsthand knowledge: "All this, we have studied" (חקרנוה 5:27a). Their references to themselves are designed to increase their credibility. Rhetoricians call the means of personal presentation as the ethical appeal, introduced by Aristotle as a fundamental requirement regarding the act of persuasion. Aristotle writes:

> Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible (*Rhetoric* 1356a).

However, there is a fundamental difference between Job's ethical appeal and Eliphaz's. Job conveys his own pain – his own personal traumatic experience. His question, "Why has He given light to one in misery and life to the bitter in soul?" (3:20), is not proclaimed as a philosophical inquiry into the cause of suffering. Rather, it conveys the desperate plea of a painful sufferer. However, Eliphaz, who also speaks in the first person, is not expressing his personal condition. He bases his response to Job on an axiomatic assumption, regarded by him as a matter of common knowledge:

> Recall now, who that was innocent ever perished?
>
> מי הוא נקי אבד (4:7)

Hence:

> As I have seen those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same.
>
> כאשר ראיתי חרשי און וזרעי עמל יקצרהו (4:8)

Eliphaz's personal experience is implied in a supposed general principle of observation, taken by him as the common truth. A rhetorical analysis of Eliphaz's mode of argumentation indicates that he seeks to argue on the principle of self-evidence. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca have illuminated the argumentative impact of the self-evident as follows:

> It is the idea of self-evidence as characteristic to reason, which we must assail ... Self-evidence is conceived both as a force to which every normal mind must yield and as a sign of the truth of that which imposes itself because it is self-evident (1969:3).

Eliphaz's point of departure is the premise of God's retribution: *unde malum*. That is, God determines the human condition as a response to human moral behaviour or misbehaviour. Therefore, Eliphaz reminds his addressee that human suffering is a response from God, and is not accidental. The speaker recites the fundamental theological principle of retribution – reward versus punishment, as a formula of cause and effect which reflects human moral-ethical behaviour. That is to say, Eliphaz analyses Job's condition through the premise of a theological scheme which he implies is common human knowledge. In order to appeal to Job, he utilises personal references that intend to establish his credibility as an authoritative interpreter of Job's suffering: "I have seen", אני ראיתי (5:3). The argumentative strategy is to maintain Job's situation as part of the general scheme, rather than as an exceptional individual case.

Nevertheless, even though the two speakers apply the mode of the ethical appeal, they both fail to persuade each other. Job expresses this failure in communication through his colourful style. Thus, after Eliphaz's speech, Job says:

> My companions are treacherous like a torrent-bed ... (6:15).

אחי בגדו כמו נחל

That is to say, Eliphaz's endeavour to appeal ethically to Job, given his own personal credibility, "I", "I saw" (אני ראיתי), has missed his addressee. Eliphaz relates to Job in terms of a formula of cause and effect, while dismissing the person himself. The theological concept substitutes the personal pain. Consequently, Eliphaz does not comfort Job, but accuses him:

> See you have instructed many, you have strengthened the weak hands ... But now it comes to you, and you are impatient (ותלא); it touches you and you are dismayed (ותבהל) (4:3-5).

Job's personal language utilised for expressing his pain as an appeal to his addressee, has not been responded to, and the personal pain is disregarded. Instead, Job's addressee claims:

> Think now, who that was innocent ever perished? (4:7).

In short, an attempt to engage a dialogue has failed. The personal call of Job is answered through an impersonal theological scheme. A major breach in communication has occurred.

It appears that the method of the argumentation, rather than the personal appeal, is the cause of the opacity. Eliphaz reaches the conclusion that Job is a sinner as a matter of cold deduction. His schematic logic of deduction may be conceptualised in the following principle of algebra: If A is B, and if B is C, the necessary result is that A is C. To shape this argument, suffering (A) is punishment (B). Punishment (B) has been exacted from Job (C). Therefore, Job (C) is suffering (A). The principle is based on a general rule which is axiomatic while the personal example is applied. Thus, argues Eliphaz:

> Those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same (4:8), hence: I have seen fools taking root, but suddenly I cursed their dwelling. Their children are far from safety, they are crushed in the gate … (5:3-4).

This is the principle of cause and effect – human suffering is by no means accidental but fits into a scheme. Consequently, the collapse of Job and the death of his children is evidence that he has committed a sin which results in God's punishment. That is to say, the cause of Job's suffering, affected through punishment, is for Eliphaz a clear deducible matter.

Job's issue is that Eliphaz's deduction is based on a problematic premise, because for him it is not self-evident that he deserves punishment at all. Thus, Job challenges Eliphaz's premise of cause (sin) and effect (punishment) through his claim of innocence: "Though I claim myself innocent (תם אני), He may declare me a hypocrite (ויעקשני)" (9:20).

The question is whether Eliphaz's deduction is based on a false assumption. Actually, Eliphaz applies the method of dialectical reasoning according to the principle of Aristotle. This sort of reasoning presupposes a premise which is constituted by generally accepted opinion (*Topics* 100a.30-31). However, dialectical reasoning, based on the generally accepted opinion, is not a matter of formal

reasoning such as mathematical truth. Rather, if contrasted for example with mathematics which is demonstrative, dialectic seeks persuasion on the ground of the generally accepted values, shared as a premise by both the speaker and the audience, but it is not demonstrative.

Attention must be given to the fact that what is generally accepted is personal, a matter of belief. In other words, the generally accepted is derived from values or actions of the mind of some persons who share the same values (Perelman 1982:1-8). That is to say, Eliphaz's reasoning is not provable, but is accepted only by the members of his circle who have a similar mindset. For this circle, Eliphaz's premise regarding the principle of cause and effect, reflected in Job's case, is self-evident. Hence, the mode of deduction is clear-cut – Job suffers because he has been punished. Consequently, Job is not innocent.

The problem is that Job no longer shares Eliphaz's generally accepted values. Eliphaz fails to realise this drastic change in Job's mind. He does not take into account that his speech implies a method of reasoning which is personal, that is, applied to persons who share the same premises.

Job however seeks to get rid of Eliphaz's dialectical reasoning and instead search for a truth that is impersonal. That is, Job claims to deduce his conclusion of his innocence on the principle of analytical reasoning:

> Put me right, and I will say no more;
> Show me where I have been at fault (6:24).

<div dir="rtl">

הורוני ואני אחריש ומה שגיתי הבינו לי
</div>

Job rejects the premise of cause and effect deduced by Eliphaz, that is, suffering is punishment for committing a sin. He does not see his sin, and he asks Eliphaz and his friends to show him. However, Job requests explicit evidence for his sin rather than an indirect deduction that presupposes his sin. In other words, Job applies analytical reasoning; the method of reasoning which deals with truth rather than justifiable opinion which is the mode of Eliphaz's reasoning. We face therefore different ways of rationalising the situation, each of which requires a different type of discourse (Perelman 1982:3).

Furthermore, the personal pain of Job requires urgent treatment. Instead, Eliphaz has transformed it into a theoretical scheme, and the sick patient finds himself listening to a scholarly discourse on the cause of suffering. As a matter of fact, Job, in his opening speech, has called for help rather than criticising the moral criteria

of God's judgment, defended by the friends. Only towards the conclusion of his first speech does Job address God thus:

לגבר אשר דרכו נסתרה ויסך אלוה בעדו

> To the strong man whose way is hid and God has blocked
> Him off, shutting him in (3:23) (cf. סגר בעדו: Gen 7:16).

Tur-Sinai (1967) has translated this verse as: "To whom whose way is hid". However, Tur-Sinai himself adds the phrase, "from God". The reason for the addition is due to the commentators' presupposition that from the start of his protest Job has challenged God's judgment in causing his suffering. In his commentary to the verse, Rashi comments that, "All the good things that he (Job) has done were hidden from the Possessor (God) of the reward who did not look at them". However, the claim that Job has questioned God's righteousness regarding the doctrine of cause and effect is based, as Funkenstein has argued, on the critics' misreading of Job's protest. Critics have regarded the book of Job as a theological discourse revolving around the question of God's justice, rather than as the call of Job when in pain for personal support from both God and his friends (Funkenstein 1991:35-40). As a matter of fact, Job's desperate call to God, as proclaimed in his first speech (3:23), is a cry for help. Job maintains that there are cases in which a human being, even a strong one (גבר), finds himself in a situation of confusion (דרכו נסתרה). This is very hard for the man who used to be strong. At that moment, the painfully sick person seeks help – God's help. However, at that critical moment in the life of the former hero, at that moment when he really seeks God for help, God shuts him off (ויסך אלוה בעדו).

In other words, at this stage, Job does not search for the cause of his suffering. He does not curse God for causing his pain. Job just sadly points out that particularly at this difficult hour, when he is so lonely, at this hour when he needs God's help so desperately, God hides Himself from him.

Then Eliphaz replies through the conventional and impersonal scheme of cause and effect. Job seeks for help and Eliphaz justifies God (see Gitay 1970:261-264). There is no communication between the two because they speak from two completely different viewpoints. This is a one-sided confrontation because, as Perelman has stressed:

> To make his discourse effective, a speaker must adapt
> to his audience. What constitutes this adaptation,
> which is a specific prerequisite for argumentation? ...

> The speaker can choose as his points of departure
> only the theses accepted
> by those he addresses (1982:21).

The problem with Job and his friends is not only that they differ in their theological premises, but, and this is even more important, they speak about different subject matters. Eventually, when he does not receive any response to his request for help, Job starts to criticise God's justice:

> I will say to God, do not condemn me; let me know why
> You contend against me (10:2).
> I have indeed prepared my case (משפט); I know that I shall be
> Vindicated (אצדק) (13:18).

Nevertheless, Job's call for a trial between him and God is not motivated just by the search for justice. As God does not respond to Job's cry for contact, Job tries to make God communicate with him, even if only by means of a trial (Gitay 1970:262-263). This sort of emotional call for intimate contact is foreign to Eliphaz. Indeed, Eliphaz rejects the human call for personal communication with God. His reaction is conveyed through the form of the rhetorical question that has a negative implication:

> Call now, will there be one to answer thee? And to
> which of the Holy Ones (קדשים) will thou turn? (5:1).

For Eliphaz, there is no need for God to appear because the "truth" is known:

> I have seen fools taking root, but suddenly I cursed
> their dwelling (5:3).

The clash between Job and Eliphaz is projected through their different attitudes to God – the personal versus the impersonal. This difference is also reflected in their language. Job utilises a universal language of argumentation that avoids a theological presupposition. He asks:

> Does the wild ass bray over its grass, or the ox low
> over its fodder? (6:5).

The question is formulated in the style of humanistic language. Humanistic language responds to the common sense of every human being rather than the confined circle of the same mindset. The conclusions arrived at by the humanistic language are not drawn on the basis of accepted values. Thus, through his use of humanistic language, Job appeals to the fundamental law of nature – pain causes a cry. Everyone accepts that crying out is the result of pain; it does not emerge in a

vacuum. However, one does not need to subscribe to any theological preconception for drawing the unavoidable conclusions revolving around the natural mechanism of cause and effect as a universal humanistic foundation of human behaviour. Pain requires attention, that is, treatment; this is self-evident (Gitay 1990:16-19).

However, Eliphaz employs a different argumentative language, that is, religious language. Reasoning is not based on the universally self-evident, but rather on general opinions, shared by a close circle which accepts its presuppositions. The employment of religious language characterises the language of Eliphaz and the friends as well. Thus, Bildad starts his speech:

> Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty do right? If
> your children sinned against him, he delivered them
> into the power of their transgression (8:3-4).

The conclusion is that Job's children could not die just by accident. The theological doctrine of sin and punishment prevails. Bildad draws his conclusion based on the premise that there is judgment, imposed by God, and this judgment is based on the principle of punishment versus reward. On this basis, Bildad deduces that the sudden death of Job's sons is due to the "fact" that they have committed a sin. There is no other logical alternative under this premise of cause and effect, sin and punishment.

However, Job's response is based on the logical principle of induction rather than the deduction of the friends. He says:

> I am blameless; I do not know myself; I loathe my life. It is
> all one; therefore I say, He destroys both the blameless and
> the wicked (9:22).

The act of reason by induction is through individual cases which together constitutes a rule. Hence, the individual cases are examples of a rule, maintained through the chain of examples, and not vice versa. Thus, Job's conclusion: "therefore ... He destroys both the blameless and the wicked" is presented as an attempt at analytical reasoning which is impersonal as it lacks a presupposition (the general accepted view). This is a further illustration of Job's humanistic reasoning (even though the subject matter is, of course, religious).

The analysis of the principle of argumentation of the third friend, Zophar, reveals that he appeals to the mysterious, and not at all to reason:

> Can you find out the deep thing of God? Can you find
> out the limit (תכלית) of the Almighty? (11:7).

Job responds as follows:

> What you know I also know; I am not inferior to you, But I will speak
> to the Almighty, and I desire to argue my case with
> God. As for you, you whitewash with lies (טפלי שקר) (13:2-4).

Job argues that he is familiar with the friends' arguments. However, now that he experiences the pain in his own body, he regards the friends' position, and their religious language, as a lie. The clash between the users of humanistic language and religious language is therefore unavoidable. Job rejects his friend's religious language, challenging them to respond to him in his humanistic language which relies on human reasoning rather than accepted generalisations. He says:

> Teach me, and I will be silent; make me understand how I have
> gone wrong. How forceful are honest words! But your reproof,
> what does it reprove? Do you think that you can reprove words,
>
> As if the speech of the desperate (נאש) were wind? (6:24-26).

Eliphaz's religious language is meaningless, Job claims.

However, the friends refuse to respond to Job's claim as an individual case. They prefer to utilise deduction based on their values as the mode of reasoning. The reason is that in employing humanistic language, they will be speechless or they will be forced to adjust to Job's claim.

There is no dialogue between Job and the friends, not because the one is less intelligent than the other. The following example may further demonstrate the problem. C.P. Snow, the author of the *Two Cultures*, that is, the scientists versus the people of letters, presents the following case:

> At Bradford (the British centre of nuclear energy during the
> Second World War) they thought that Smith (an intelligence
> officer) was a fool. They were quite wrong; he was highly
> intelligent, and very far, much further than many of the scientists
> from being a commonplace man. The trouble was, he did not
> speak their language (1972:359).

Given the block in communication, the door has been opened for God's response which is the climax of the book. Will God's response employ the religious language of the friends and their process of deductive reasoning or will it employ the humanistic language utilised by Job without presupposing accepted values? Does God's response to Job indeed open a channel of communication?

> Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you and you shall declare to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? (38:3-5).

God is responding. A comparison with Zophar's provocative challenge to Job is illuminating. Zophar asks:

> But oh, that God would speak, and open His lips to you, And that He would tell you the secrets of wisdom! Wisdom is wonder (BHS reads פלאים instead of MSS כפלים) Know then that God exacts on you less than your guilt deserves. At the heights of heaven what can you do, Can you find out God's goal (תכלית)? Can you find out the deep things of God? ...
>
> If He passes through, and imprisons and assembles for judgment, who can hinder Him? (11:5-10).

At first glance, God repeats Zophar's position; God's work is mysterious; human beings cannot reach God's wisdom; hence, human beings are totally dependent on God. There is no way that human wisdom can challenge God as Job seeks to do. Further, the fact that Job is alive – in contrast to his sons – is an indication that God does not exhaust Job's punishment.

In His response, God also presents Job's wisdom, compared to His wisdom, as nothing. However, there is a profound difference between God and Zophar in the mode of argumentation which makes God's way of argumentation far more persuasive than Zophar's. Zophar presents God as mysterious and mighty; hence, Job is nothing compared to God. There is no way to engage in any dialogue with God:

> But oh! That Eloah might speak, and open His lips to you ... (11:5).

However, God Himself introduces to Job a series of questions regarding the foundations of the world. God does not exhibit Himself through His questions to Job as an awe-inspiring deity that does not intend to communicate. God's questions are directed at human reason, leading to Job's resignation. Zophar's questions intend to glorify God, disqualifying any sort of dialogue between God and Job. However, God asks questions that seek a dialogue, leaving Job speechless. Job's reasoning has been established as absurd in relation to God's. Job has been given an opportunity to demonstrate his wisdom, but he had to admit that he does not know the foundations. Hence, he is ignorant and cannot question God. Only God is able to demonstrate Job's questioning as absurd.

> Do you know the ordinances of the heavens?
> Can you establish their rule on earth? (38:33).

God addresses Job through his own humanistic language. There is no presupposition; it is merely a matter of reason. Nevertheless, God does not totally dismiss Job's call for communication. He offers Himself implicitly rather than explicitly, as the following questions demonstrate:

> Do you find a prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of the whelps
> When they crouch in their dens and lurk in their lairs?
> Who makes provision for the raven when his squabs cry out to God
> nd cranes their necks in hunger? (38:39-41)
> The ostrich's wings flap wildly ... For it leaves her eggs to the earth, and
> lets them be warmed on the ground, forgetting that a foot may crush
> them ... It deals cruelly with its young, as if they were not its own ...
> Because God has made it forget wisdom, and give it no share in
> understanding. When it spreads its plumes aloft, it laughs at the horse
> and its rider (39:13-19).

Job is confronted with a chain of examples. What is the function of the example? Perelman sheds light on its rhetorical function as follows:

> Argumentation by example does not consider that which is
> evoked to be unique, to be tied indissolubly to the context from
> which the described event arises. On the contrary, it seeks in the
> specific case the law or the structure which the example reveals ...
> The setting out of a number of examples of the same sort cannot
> leave any doubt in the mind of the reader: it is a matter of an
> argument aiming to move from the specific case toward a
> generalization ... Argumentation by example is sometimes used to
> go not from an example to a rule, but to another particular case
> (1982:106-107).

What is therefore the aim of this chain of examples regarding Job? To demonstrate another particular case: there are many creatures in the world that may look foolish, helpless or dependent, but at the end of the day, they find their place in the world because "someone" is always present to guard them and protect them. It is therefore a matter of stupidity and blindness on the part of Job, who lives in the same world, to conclude that his case is unique.

Furthermore, the friends themselves are not strangers to the mode of argument by example. However, there is a major argumentative difference between their mode of argumentation and God's. The friends argue deductively on the principle of generally accepted opinions. However, God's arguments are based on natural

observations which are free of any presuppositions under the single premise which is absolutely accepted by Job that God is the creator.

Finally, God's examples reveal that no one is neglected or forgotten. Every creature receives God's special and personal attention (Gitay 1994). God approaches Job through humanistic language. This, Job does not fail to understand and he draws the conclusion thus:

> I knew you then only by hearsay; now, I have seen you
> with my own eyes (42:5).

Hearing characterises the friends – "Have you been a listener at God's council ...?" (15:8) asks Eliphaz. For him, hearing God is the climax. He follows the tradition that seeing God is forbidden. The prophet, for instance, can hear God but not see Him. Thus, Isaiah concludes: "I am lost ... my eyes have looked at the King, Yahweh Sabaoth" (6:5). However, Job now refers to the intimate dimension of seeing God. Job's initial wish has been accomplished; his search for direct contact with God has beensuccessful.

To summarise, the present discussion argues that the debate between Job and his friends is not a matter of a dispute revolving around the same subject matter. The dispute, conveyed in sharp language and hostility, has not arisen because of a disagreement regarding the matter of God's justice. Rather, Job, on the one hand, and the friends, on the other, seek two different goals, each of which is expressed in different modes that are revealed through a rhetorical analysis of the speeches and mode of argumentation. It is not surprising therefore that the two sides cannot reach any sort of consensus, even as the debate is developed. Job questions God's justice, an issue which the friends address. However, even at this stage of the debate, each side employs a different argumentative language that blocks any channel of communication. However, God has utilised Job's humanistic argumentative language which Job could accept, both intellectually and communicatively.

The Poetics of Exile and Suffering: Memory and Perceptions[8]

A Cognitive-Linguistics Study of Lamentations

Introduction

For about two hundred generations, since 587 BCE, on the ninth of the Hebrew month of *Ab*, which is the traditional date of the fall of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (2 Kings 25:3; Jer 52:12; see also *Tosefta Taanit* 4:10), Jews all over the world gather together and recite Biblical poems reflecting on the national catastrophe. They lament over the destruction of the political centre of the State of Judah and the destruction of the central sacred place of worship.

Interestingly enough, the reading on the ninth day of *Ab* is not the historical Biblical accounts that preserve the story of the disaster in an orderly manner, but rather a poetic Biblical book, the scroll of Lamentations. Thus, Lamentations, the dirge over the fall of Jerusalem, has established the literary tradition of the *kinah* (lament) over the national disaster rather than the detailed documentary prosaic account.

We observe that the Biblical historiographer preserved for us an account of the destruction, yet the recited literature is not the history but the verse; why poetry and not historiography? The question is why do we have a poetic imaginative discourse which does not include an historical report of the circumstances that lead to the disaster (e.g. 2 Kings 25) – the presentation of the historical catastrophe? It appears therefore that the rational, informative and documentary account is less effective than the poetic imaginative poem. Why? Let us look closely at the literary media which convey the nature and impact of the disaster.

Literary Media

First, we shall look at the prosaic account of the events. Here follows an outline of the main events:

---

(1)   Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

(2)   In the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month

(3)   King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon

(4)   came with all his army against Jerusalem, and led siege to it

(5)   They built siege works against it around

(6)   On the ninth day of the fourth month

(7)   the famine became so severe that there was no food

(8)   then they captured the king

(9)   they slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes

(10)   then put out the eyes of Zedekiah

(11)   they bound him and took him to Babylon

(12)   in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month

(13)   Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, came to Jerusalem.

(14)   He burned the house of the Lord, the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem

(15)   Nebuzaradan carried into exile the rest of the people who were left in the city

(16)   The bronze pillars they carried to Babylon, they took away the pots, the shovels ...

(17)   The captain of guard took the chief priest Seraiah

(18)   The second priest Zephaniah ...

(19)   So Judah went into exile out of its land ... (2 K 25:1-26).

This is a coherent narrative which provides in detail the chain of events that led to the exile. There is a chronological framework, and one event leads to another in a coherent order. Each sentence is sequent to the preceding. The city of Jerusalem was under a siege which led to a famine. Consequently, the king of Jerusalem sought to escape, but he was captured by the Babylonian troops. As punishment, his sons were slaughtered in front of his eyes and he was blinded to capture the traumatic memory as the last event that he saw. We also have an account of the Temple's vessels that were removed to Babylon. It appears that the goal of the prosaic document is to present to its readers the chain of events in a logical order; every reference is in its proper place, motivating the course of the narrative (Gitay 1988:1-11).

Furthermore, the narrative is furnished with details, intended to provide the historical reality. The dates of the events are presented, and the information is intended to present a literary form of reality as an historical document which concentrates on the course of the events as such. That is to say, the role of the historian in the light of 2 Kings 25, is to establish a coherent narrative in a realistic syntactical style. The historian's endeavour therefore is to present the political-military disaster of Jerusalem's fall not merely as an event that took place, but to create a credible discourse that recites a chain of events in progressive chronological order, told in a realistic manner of cause and effect which is achieved through a coherent syntactical prosaic structure.

Thus, we know about the famine in Jerusalem and its cause. But how did the famine affect the citizens of Jerusalem? What were the feelings of the people who lived under the siege? This we are not told. History seeks to retell a narrative as a singular event; it happened and it happened once.

Description of the Famine

Let us turn now to Lamentations' focus on the description of the famine:

> Even the jackals offer the breast and nurse their young ...
> The tongue of the infant sticks to the roof of its mouth for thirst;
> The children beg for food but no one gives them anything ...
> Their skin has shriveled on their bones;
> It has become as dry as wood.
> Happier were those pierced by the sword than those pierced by hunger ...
> The hands of compassionate women have boiled their own children ...
> (Lam 4:2-10).

The singularity of the historical event of the famine has been transformed through the poetry of Lamentations into a universal feeling of the awful starvation that drove mothers mad till they cooked their own children. In their madness, the basic rule of kindness to humans as well as to animals is neglected:

> Even the jackals offer their breast and nurse their young ...

Thus, the medium of poetry reaches a different goal from the medium of the historical prose. The historical narrative seeks to narrate *what* happened while poetry retells *how* – how we feel regarding the event. The *how* is the event. Poetry evokes therefore a sense of emotions, based on the relationship between the reader and the world.

The employment of the word in the historical prosaic account is not an aim in itself, but is merely an instrument. Thus, the word רעב (famine) which appears in 2 Kings 25:5 is only a sign. It does not stir emotions and does not depict the horrible feeling. However, the language of poetry is not merely a sign, but simply words which are not more than vehicles for delivering an idea. The words of poetry are the things themselves – "natural things which sprout naturally upon the earth like a grass and trees" (Sartre 1955:6-7). Consequently, poetry does not just recite a sign for famine, but is the famine itself:

> Their skin has shriveled on their bones ... it has become as dry as wood (Lam 4:8).

Thus, the poem of Lamentations 4, which focuses on the starvation, is not composed, as in the prosaic account, from a chain of consecutive sentences that present the events in a coherent order of cause and effect. Here, the entire poem dwells on the topic with no coherent order but, again and again, reciting illustrations of the awful starvation. The issue is illuminated colourfully and repeatedly. The redundant and repetitive style is characteristic of poetry; it is the 'emotive' or 'expressive' language which, "focuses on the addresser", and is a "direct expression of the speaker's attitude toward what he is speaking about. It tends to produce an impression of a certain emotion" (Jakobson 1987:354). The emotive language employs a figurative language.

Metaphors of Lamentations

The metaphors of Lamentations have shaped the poetics of the collective memory of the day of destruction which has been perpetuated in the Jewish liturgy through the annual fasting day of the ninth of *Ab*.

The leading metaphor which starts Lamentation is that of the lonely widow who is weeping over the nights with no comfort when she was left alone by her former admirers:

העיר רבתי עם	איכה ישבה בדד
רבתי בגוים	היתה כאלמנה
היתה למס.	שרתי במדינות
ודמעתה על לחיה	בכו תבכה בלילה
מכל-אהביה	אין לה מנחם
היו לה לאיבים:	כל-רעיה בגדו בה

> How lonely sits the city // that once was full of people!
> How like a widow she has become // she that was great among the nations!
> She that was a princess among the provinces // has become a vassal.
> She weeps bitterly in the night // with tears on her cheeks;
> Among all her lovers she has no one to comfort her;
> All her friends have dealt treacherously with her //
> They have become their enemies (Lam 1:1-2).

Many words have been written and numerous theoretical studies (consult McLaughlin 1990:80-90; Steen 1999; Kristiansen 2006) carried out on the nature of the metaphor, given its remarkable phenomenon of speaking about one thing through another. As Aristotle wrote:

> The use of a strange name by the transfer from genus to species or
> from species to genus or from species to species by comparison,
> that is, parallel (*Poetics* 57b).

In this regard, why are we talking about the isolation of a capital city by using the strange title of a widow? We can say that the power of the metaphor is that it is an instrument with two layers – the unification of word and image (Draaisma 2000:9); a combination of abstract and concrete; word and picture.

The place of the concrete in our mind is essential for our conceptualisation of the world. We conceptualise through practical notions that establish our worldview (Lakoff and Johnson 1980 and Lakoff 1987). In other words, our mind does not conceive in an abstract way but through practical images which enable us to argue cases, to reason and to conceptualise. Thus, the metaphor is instrumental in concretising the abstract, albeit through images that are shared by the community. That is to say, the metaphor must be conceived not as an individual poetic innovation but rather as a community icon.

The adverb לבדד, בדד 'alone, loneliness' appears in the Biblical sphere as well in the context of the human life, as a feeling of emptiness, a source of lack of fulfilment which makes life unbearable. This is the phrase used to describe Adam's condition:

> It is not good that the man should be alone (Gen 2:18).

or Jeremiah's bitter complaint:

> I sat alone because of your hand ... Why is my pain perpetual?
> (15:17-18).

And Isaiah being sensitive to the feeling of the woman's loneliness says in his pathetic style:

> And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying
> We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel,
> Only let us be called by your name, to take away our reproach (4:1).

In other words, the issue of the woman's loneliness is not a matter of financial support or physical existence, but a deep mental feeling which is beyond the physical condition. Thus, loneliness in the context of human social life is a metaphor for reproach, and personal unbearable pain which makes human life miserable.

Consequently, the poet's combination of the lonely city with a widow focuses the listener's/reader's attention on the miserable city/widow. However, the matter does not focus on one item, that is, either on the city or the widow, because a metaphor is interpreted as well as in terms of interaction. Draaisma sums up the idea thus:

> In a metaphor the topic term and vehicle are linked by a set of
> associations and these associations are involved in an interaction.
> This reproduction creates a new meaning (2000:12).

Thus, a new meaning has been established for the notion of the deserted city. The dominant metaphor of loneliness creates the worldview of unbearable emotional pain which is the poet's message in communicating the emotional condition of the people. Obviously, one could interpret the metaphor of the widow and the lonely city as a comparison between God and His people after the destruction of the Temple. However, my claim in this chapter is that this may be an allusion. Through the metaphor of loneliness, the poet creates the notion of pain which may be stronger than the theological meaning of the Fall. We picture the sorrow, the unbearable pain which every human being seeks to avoid, as the leading image.

The language of the fifth poem depicts a family and social crisis:

> אין אב // אמתינו כאלמנות ...
> שרים בידם נתלו // פני זקנים לא נהדרו ...
> זקנים משער שבתו // בחורים מנגינתם ...
> אתה ה' לעולם תשב // כסאך לדור ודור

> We have become orphans // fatherless
> Our mothers are like widows ...
> No respect is shown to the elders // young men are compelled to grind
> The old men have left the city gate // the young men their music ...
> But you, O Lord reigns forever;
> Your throne (chair) endures to all generations ... (5:3-19).

What is the worldview behind these verses? The speaker/poet shares with the audience the worldview of a collapsing family and social hierarchical structures; a total breakdown of the atomic social order of an ordinary family and social life that is constituted by proper interrelationships of trust and respect by the heads of the family, the elders and the fathers – symbols of stability. This worldview of an ordinary family with a father and mother and the social hierarchy which is the normative order of a stable society is collapsing and the crisis is concretising through the familiar metaphor of the stability, namely, family structure and respectful social hierarchy.

Nevertheless, the metaphor of the social collapse is counteracted through a metaphor of the ultimate stability – God is sitting in His chair; a metaphor of power (cf. Isa 6:1). This order portrayed through the stable eternal throne of God points out the proper order. There is a call for salvation – when Jerusalem's social order has collapsed, the eyes turn towards the ultimate heavenly order.

In short, Jerusalem and its sacred Temple have been destroyed and the poem seeks to communicate through concrete symbols of order. Poetry is not a philosophical discourse which seeks to motivate ideas through theological or philosophical meditations. Rather, poetry is a discourse of explosion, pouring powerful words through vivid descriptions and dwelling on the subject. The employment of the metaphors of conceptualising the worldview of family and social crisis points out a poetry which is well designed in terms of its communicative task. Thus, the discourse is well aware of the strategies of effective persuasion which are based on establishing a shared worldview.

Third Poem – Lament of the Man

I call attention to the third poem, the lament of the man, גבר, which connotes a man of power, but this 'man' is collapsing under a tremendous physical, emotional and religious torture (The translation of the New RSV, "one", misses the strength of this 'one').

The attention at this stage is to shed light on the poetics of the poem regarding the act of affecting the emotions of the readers/listeners and consequently letting them identify themselves with suffering of the גבר ('man').

This poem has a specific stylistic design which is the acrostic form. Further, the poem is composed, according to Emil Staiger's characterisation of the modes of style, as the dramatic style, the pathos. Here, the hero of the pathos is absolute. The object's world, his surroundings – his milieu – do not concern him. Here,

pathos demonstrates its driving force (1991:147). Indeed, the hero is the sole focus of the lament. He is absolute, pouring out his soul pathetically. The lack of any focus on the surrounding circumstances opens the stage for a sole focus on the hero himself.

The man's suffering is depicted in physical terms:

> He has worn away my flesh and skin
> He has broken my bones (3:4).

However, the man is in agony because he is in darkness and he cannot see the light; he is situated in darkness which symbolises a situation of no hope. His people laugh at his situation.

The absolute hero is speaking in the first person depicting his own traumatic experience:

> I saw misery ...
> Me he drove and forced to go ...
> against me alone he turns his hand again and again ... (3:1-3).

There is no plot, but a chain of strophes that dwell again and again on the man's agony. We don't know what to expect – what the next personal blow or misery will be.

There is however a certain pattern which the audience might expect and follow up. This is the acrostic – the alphabetic order. That is, you expect the order however you do not know what to expect. This creates a sort of suspense which is filled up by the poetic pathos.

Vv. 7-9 provide a good example for the poem's poetics:

גדר בעדי ולא אצא // הכביד נחשתי

גם כי אזעק ואשוע // שתם תפלתי

גדר דרכי בגזית // נתיבתי עוה

> He has walled me about so that I cannot escape // He has put heavy chains on me
> I call and cry for help // He shuts out my prayer; Though
> He has blocked my ways with hewn stones // He has made my paths crooked.

The combination גדר/נתיבת is recognised as a fixed pair (see, for instance, Job 19:8; Hos 2:8). The combination נתיבתי//עוה (perverted, crooked) is not unusual since the appearance of העוו+דרכם appears (e.g. Jer 3:21) and דרך+נתיב ('hewn stone') appears often (e.g. Hos 2:8). The word גזית is a distinguished strong stone used in

the Temple or for remarkable buildings (e.g. Isa 9:9). However, the combination גדר דרכי בגזית is unusual and, in fact, its elimination (or at least the גזית) would make a well-balanced structure.

Nevertheless, גזית preserves the structure of 3x2 which characterises the קינה metre of the lament. Hence, גזית corresponds to the 'ג' of the strophe, re-emphasising its structure, creating therefore an aesthetic composition and combination, but it also raises curiosity given the unusual combination. In other words, one can see how the formalistic structure has been preserved, on the one hand, but also, how it has been used creatively in order to break the routine and to attract the attention, on the other hand. The routine may be perceived as a cliché; however, the poet raises curiosity when the routine is broken down.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are two literary media which seek to describe events versus senses. This is the language of history which is mainly prose versus poetry which seeks to raise feelings and empathy. The language of history depicts a single event and intends to describe it through a chain of sentences that present a logical order of cause and effect. However, the language of poetry is explosive, dwelling on the subject through repetitions and without a coherent syntactical structure. Prose is the language of what happened while poetry deals with the how – how we, the universal audience, are affected.

The Hebrew Bible employs the two literary media in the references to the fall of Jerusalem into the hands of the Babylonians in 587 BCE However, the poetic medium, the scroll of Lamentations, has been chosen as the literary depiction of the annual ceremony of memorisation of the traumatic event of the destruction of the Temple and the fall of Jerusalem.

The present essay asks why; why Lamentations and not the historical account? The answer is given through the unique characteristic of poetry. Indeed, an analysis of the design of the poetry of Lamentations, its use of language and its metaphoric depiction shed light on its quality and ability to perpetuate the trauma of the people not as a single event but as a universal phenomenon which is presented in a moving, shocking manner.

The Role of Rhetoric in the Rise of Leadership

The Case of Judah[9]

The Word

This essay seeks to demonstrate the power of speech in changing given situations, in solving problems in the course of deep human crises thus creating new realities in human lives. The focus is on the act of human argumentation and verbal performance as the key to sound leadership.

> You have made him a little lower than God and crowned him
> with glory and honor (Ps 8:6).

This is the Biblical description of the Homo sapiens who is above the other creatures, as Homo sapiens may be compared only to God. As a matter of fact, the human faculty is distinguished through the linguistic skill. Many creatures other than human beings are able to communicate through voices or other gestures, but only human beings are able to utilise their linguistic skill to create a moving poem, to compose their history or to create an argument, and to build a lexical discourse of reasoning. This is the 'glory and honour' of the human gift of language and wisdom (see Ong 1981:1-16). Through language, human beings are able to question and investigate their surroundings and their existence. The human power to reason and to inquire provides them with a unique epistemological insight.

Indeed, human beings recognised the unique contribution of the faculty of speech. Thus, the Greek Sophists who were the first to theorise the power of the art of oratory promoted their profession as speakers through the unforgettable words of Isocrates (436-338 BCE), a member of the canon of the Ten Attic Orators. The following conveys his appraisal of speech, as the basis of civilisation:

> In most of our abilities we differ not at all from the animals; we
> are in fact behind many in swiftness and strength and other
> resources. But because there is born in us the power to persuade

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each other and to show ourselves whatever we wish, we not only have escaped from living as brutes, but also by becoming together have founded cities and set up laws and invented arts, and speech has helped us attain practically all the things we have devised. For it is speech that has made laws about justice and injustice and honor and disgrace, without which provisions we should not be able to live together. By speech we refute the wicked and praise the good. By speech we educate the ignorant and inform the wise. We regard the ability to speak properly as the best sign of intelligence, and truthful, legal, and just speech is the reflection of a good and trustworthy soul. With speech we contest about disputes and investigate what is unknown ... Nothing done with intelligence is done without speech, but speech is the marshal of all actions and of thoughts and those most use it who have the greatest wisdom (cited in Kennedy 1963:8-9).

Speech is the core of humanity. Without speech, civilisation would not be established.

The Biblical world regards the word as the power of creation as Genesis 1 and Psalm 29 demonstrate. The act of creation is a speech endeavour:

Then God said: Let there be light; and there was light (Gen 1:3, see vv. 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26).

The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord over mighty waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty (Ps 29:3, and more).

These verses are more than statements which describe the happening. They utter something else, they *do*; they perform. The creation of the light, for instance, is an utterance of doing through speech; that is, words act, words perform (the "performative utterance", according to Austin 1966:255-262). Words create the world.

Speech is an accumulation of words; thus, speech is similar to creation. The creative means of speech are taken by Alter as an ability to build new realities. He writes:

What is important to him is human will confronted with alternatives ... because in the biblical view words underline reality ... the Hebrew tendency to transpose what is preverbal or nonverbal into speech is finally a technique for getting at the essence of things, for obtruding their substratum (1981:69-70).

Words are not just sounds; words constitute reality.

Accordingly, the question presented in this essay is how, in terms of the Biblical worldview, certain biblical figures, created in God's image (possessing the faculty of speech as the means of doing) utter their speech and therefore create realities; how speech creates 'new realities'. Is it the word by itself that does this, or the word in its best form of wisdom, persuasion and power?

Indeed, the faculty of human speech is well developed in the Bible. It appears, on the one hand, that through their speech, people can control situations, create social status, build leadership, but on the other hand, they may also fail and lose their power. Actually, the human linguistic faculty is a matter of self-responsibility, shaping the human character, as a two-sided situation. For instance, Abraham's speech in his great argument on God's justice (Gen 18:23-33) is considered as one of the most important utterances on morality, while Lamech's declaration about his desire for revenge (Gen 4:23-24) may be regarded as a manifestation of the 'glory of murder'. The power of speech is almost endless, but it is a two-sided weapon.

Given this assessment of the power of speech, as a performative utterance, we should not be surprised to find that the Bible regards speech as a means for creating leadership or vice versa as the fatal cause of losing leadership, as this essay seeks to demonstrate. Speech, as the Bible demonstrates, is the core of true leadership and false leadership is the victim of poor verbal performance. Thus, the human ability to speak – compared to the power of creation – might 'do things' (constructively or destructively, depending how it is implemented by certain individuals). Language (speech) is instrumental in constructing social realities. Thus, Berger and Luckmann maintain that, "the reality of everyday life is ongoingly reaffirmed in the individual's interaction with others" (1967:149). Language is capable of generating the meanings people attach to various events (Cherwitz 1980:36).

The Audience Situation

Speeches are not delivered in a vacuum as a goal in itself. They rather respond to situations in a pragmatic way that seeks to affect the hearers (audience), in other words, creating 'new realities'. By creating 'new realities' through speech, we mean, in fact, to affect the audience's mode of behaviour, to change attitudes or to bring people into action. This endeavour is the realm of rhetoric, that is, the art of persuasion. Rhetoric is an act of a performative utterance – to say something is to do something (Austin 1978) when the purpose of the words are not to inform but to perform an act, to change attitudes, and to establish new realities which respond to the previous realities.

Aristotle defined the study of rhetoric as, "The faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (*Rhetoric* 1355b). Rhetoric is the discipline of studying a speech as a means of persuasion which could be determined as the relationship between social power and the concept of language which affects situations. Language might act powerfully (some might say even magically) when it responds to situations, that are determined by the circumstances of the reality of the speech.

Speech is a complex system of reasoning, pathos, ethos (credibility), structure and style, aiming (as an integrated endeavour to achieve a pragmatic goal) to affect the audience and to capture their minds. As such, rhetoric is universal and can apply to various human situations.

As a rule, rhetoric is the reaction to a situation. There are certain conditions, rhetorical situations, which design speeches. These conditions are defined by Lloyd Bitzer as follows:

> First, there must be an exigence – a problem or defect, something other than it should be, second, there must be an audience capable of being constrained in thought or action in order to effect positive modification of the exigence. Third, there must be a set of constrains capable of influencing the rhetor and an audience (1968:1).

In short, a speech is an immediate response to a problem which seeks to bridge a possible gap between the speaker and the audience. As such, rhetoric is actually a dialogue between addressers and their audience when close relationships of adherence or even identification or trust are established by the arguers in order to transmit their views in a persuasive manner (rather than a threat). Rhetoric seeks to establish liaisons between the views of the speakers and those of their audience. This liaison is established through the portrayal of reality, as the audience perceives it. The presence is actually a reflection of the 'generally accepted', that is, a common argumentative ground shared by the speakers and their audience. The act of argumentation, the reasoning, draws on the 'generally accepted'. The speaker's aim is to establish this common ground of the 'generally accepted' through various means of appeal and presentation of the presence (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969; Perelman 1982).

The First Test of Leadership

To illustrate the power of speech in establishing realities, attention is given to the great novella of Joseph (Gen 37-45) which deals with severe human conflicts that

take place in Jacob's family. The crises reach the peak with the use of discourses which are delivered as responses to acute situations. These speeches succeed in creating new realities. They also mirror a dynamic struggle for leadership, demonstrating the merit of sound reasoning.

Two brothers are engaged in speeches that respond to the severe dramatic events which revolve around the family. They are Reuben and Judah (Joseph's competition for leadership is conveyed through his dreams). Reuben is the eldest, the traditional leader, given his birthrights, while Judah is only the fourth son by birth (Gen 29:35). The speeches of these brothers project their argumentative skills, through oratory, as a reflection of sound leadership. We are given the opportunity to look at the Biblical model of leadership.

The story revolves around an acute tension between Joseph and his brothers which reached its climax when the hateful brothers determined to kill Joseph. At the end of the day, the brothers sold Joseph as a slave to traders who took him to Egypt where they believed he would disappear. Even though Joseph remained alive, a tragic situation had emerged as their old father was led to believe that his beloved son (from his beloved wife who had passed away), had been killed by a wild animal. Nevertheless, the events which led to Joseph's disappearance in Egypt were complex, given the brothers' initial plan to kill him. Here, we are presented with the first trial of true leadership through a speech.

The trial revolves around the eldest brother, Reuben, the leader through birthright. What is he to do when his brothers are determined to kill the despised Joseph? Will he surrender to the brothers' plan or will he try to save Joseph, given his responsibility as the eldest, and if so, how?

As we know, Reuben decided to save Joseph which under the circumstances was an almost impossible task; how could he resist the brothers' cruel determination to kill Joseph? It appears that Reuben was well aware that he could not change the brothers' determined minds. Thus, he decided to adopt the strategy of letting them believe they 'arranged' Joseph's death, but actually, he would not die. His plan was to throw Joseph into the pit under the brothers' assumption that he would eventually die there. However, Reuben would later rescue him without them knowing. The argument that he employed to avoid direct killing was based on a sense of guilt. The point was to bring the brothers to a situation of easing their consciences – by knowing that their own hands did not shed their brother's blood: "Let us not take his life ... shed no blood; throw him into the pit ... but lay no hand on him" (Gen 37:21-22). Reuben presented here a sophisticated argument

which sought to persuade a committed group of people to do something bad but not to perform it directly; this is no doubt a difficult rhetorical task.

Reuben's tactic was to appeal to the fundamental sense of 'natural justice'. That is, most people might still have some sort of basic justice that binds them together (cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1373b-1374a). In this regard, a distinction is made between an act and the facts which implies its label. Thus, some people might admit that they took something, but not that they stole it. Reuben successfully employed this argument of the basic sense of 'natural justice': "Let us not take his life," accomplishing his aim through his distinction between a deed and its label: "throw him into this pit here in the wilderness but lay no hand on him" (37:22). Still, under the circumstances, it is not enough just to provide a request on behalf of 'natural justice' in plain language. Reuben armed his language to reach his goal. Facing the reality of his brothers' determination, he deliberately used calculated language which employs the device of repetition, a triple repetition at the beginning and the end of his appeal:

לא נכנו נפש ... אל-תשפכו דם ... יד-אל תשלחו-בו (37:21-22)

Further attention should be given to the linguistic design of the appeal, as the tenses vary when the start is in the imperfect, conveying a wish: "Let us not", and only then is there a repetitive transfer to the imperative. The repetition which follows the same grammatical form is designed to act directly on the audience. Thus, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explain the impact:

> Repetition is important in argumentation ... Repetition can act directly; it may also accentuate the breaking up of a complex event into separate episodes which, as we know, promote the impression of presence (1969:174-175).

Indeed, Reuben succeeded in his appeal, but only temporarily, for when he returned to the scene he was terrified to find out that Joseph had disappeared. In that moment of despair, he expressed his concern, as the eldest, to his brothers: "The boy is gone; and I, where can I turn?" (37:30).

Reuben's rhetorical question indicates another appeal which he has not used before. This is not the 'natural justice' type of argument, but a personal appeal, employing also a personal language which is in contrast to the previous assertive language (of the earlier argument). The language ילד ('child') used for a seventeen year old teenager (37:1) is designed to stir emotions, as the rhetorical question in the first person, "and I, where I can turn?", heightens the emotional stress. Nevertheless, this sort of emotional and personal appeal was not employed earlier,

and rightly so. Then Reuben sought to avoid any personal approach, referring instead to Joseph in the third person, 'objectively'. Rhetorically, it is difficult to blame Reuben for not employing the personal and emotional appeal in the first place. The reason is that the brothers were not ready for such a move, and in order to be effective, speakers (arguers) must adapt themselves (at the beginning at least) to the audience's position (Perelman 1982:21). The brothers were determined to kill Joseph therefore Reuben could not go directly against their will. He took an effective rhetorical venue by offering them a solution, which might satisfy their 'basic sense of justice', but which will lead eventually to achieve their plan, as they saw it. Indeed, this rhetorical strategy saved Joseph's life.

Reuben's verbal explosion in response to his brothers' questions, in fact, his fitness for leadership, his language, reveals a stressed person who cannot control himself and is unable to calculate his steps reasonably under crisis. Meanwhile, when Joseph was still in the pit, a caravan passed through on its way to Egypt. This time it was Judah who decided to take the opportunity to save Joseph's life. How would *he* appeal to the brothers? He suggested that they sell Joseph and get rid of him forever without even alluding to the matter of his death. He did not imply that Joseph would die at the end of the day, as the question of Joseph's death was no longer mentioned. In contrast to Reuben's first appeal to the 'universal law of justice', Judah appeals here to the 'particular law'. He makes a personal appeal which is intended to stir emotions of shame – "pain or disturbance in regard to bad things" (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1383b).

Thus, Judah does not refer to Joseph in the third person (as Reuben did) but he uses the language, אחינו הוא, adding "our own flesh" (v. 27). The reference, "he is our brother", is twice repeated, and the addition "our own flesh" is referred to as *apposition* (when the co-ordinate element serves as an explanation or modification for the sake of emphasis of the first element; Corbett 1971:468). As a matter of fact, Judah builds on Reuben's earlier successful argument: "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ... let us not lay our hands on him" (vv. 26-27). However, Judah differs from Reuben, who through his appeal to the 'universal justice' could only open the door for the brothers to escape from labelling their act as murder. But Judah, through his appeal to a 'particular justice', was able to avoid Joseph's death entirely.

Given the sense of deep hatred towards Joseph, which created a mental situation, Judah presents a compromise that is accepted by his brothers. Furthermore, Judah presents an argument based on shame, but he still knows how to satisfy their deep feelings of hatred. Joseph would be out of their lives and they would be able to live

with their consciences. In this regard, his line of argumentation is more difficult than Reuben's, but its success was conditioned by Reuben's appeal. Reuben starts with a premise accepted by the brothers – Joseph will die: "Let us kill him" (v. 20). The problem that remained for Reuben was to delay the execution and his argument is developed accordingly. However, under the new circumstances – with Joseph still alive – Judah could expand the brothers' premise regarding Joseph's situation rather than narrow it down as Reuben did. He developed a wider premise than the killing itself – he presents a premise that modifies the first one (killing) but still enables them to get rid of him, apparently forever.

Indeed, the brothers adapted this argument. Judah therefore argued practically, through the appeal to (their) sense of humanity. That is to say, people's minds are almost unchangeable when they are already locked into a certain position (Perelman 1982:21). Judah operates according to this rhetorical principle and succeeds. He is wise enough to expand the already successful premise of argumentation which enlarges the previous one. In other words, Judah's strategy is to adapt Reuben's premise (which proved itself) to the new circumstances.

Attention must be given to Judah's language which is illuminating. He starts his speech with a rhetorical question: "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?" (v. 26). As a rule, the rhetorical question is not a question which expects an answer, but aims to achieve a stronger emphasis than a direct statement regarding an issue which is already accepted by the audience (see Abrams 1971:149). Therefore, through the device of the rhetorical question, Judah strengthens the brothers' feeling not to kill their own flesh and blood by their own hands. Indeed, attention must be given to the narrator's comment following Judah's appeal – "His brothers agreed (listened to him)" (v. 27), a remark which did not precede Reuben's speech.

The Second Test of Leadership

Joseph is in Egypt. Given his distinguished talents, he becomes the deputy of Pharaoh, "Only with regard to the throne will I be greater than you" (41:40), being in charge of the critical portfolio of the food allocation through the most difficult period of the famine. Meanwhile, in Canaan, the brothers suffer severely from the drought and are forced to travel to Egypt to fetch food. In Egypt, Pharaoh's deputy, Joseph, recognised them but they did not recognise him – as their brother. Joseph accuses them of spying, keeping one of them (Simon) in prison. However, he promises to release him on condition that they bring his brother Benjamin (his only full brother from the same father and mother) back to Egypt on their return.

Joseph therefore creates a situation that puts the brothers in an impossible position, as they know that the old father will not allow his second son from his beloved wife to leave him, given the tragic circumstances surrounding the disappearance of his first son (42:36). However, the famine is severe, and there is a desperate need to return to Egypt as a matter of survival.

Here, the second cycle of speeches took place when both Reuben and Judah sought to persuade their old father to let the youngest son go with them to Egypt, as they were instructed by the "lord of the land" (42:30). The father, given the traumatic experience of the past, refused. At this critical moment, the eldest Reuben took the initiative, and addressed their father as follows:

> You may kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you. Put
> him in my hands and I will return him back to you (42:37).

That is, if the youngest, Benjamin, was not returned home, Jacob will kill Reuben's own two sons, as a declaration of insurance for the safety of Benjamin. Reuben's utterance is a kind of a promise, a vow. This sort of argumentation through a promise is characterised in terms of rhetoric as a 'process':

> A process is a method of operating in order to obtain a given
> result ... that which is obviously a means or process is given its
> proper value in proportion to its effectiveness (Perelman and
> Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:450).

A promise (vow) is thus a process that seeks to gain a specific result. The promise to kill the two sons indicates an uncompromising commitment which might not be too persuasive at the end of the day. The problem is that Reuben's promise is a process furnished with overstated zeal of an absolute commitment that is beyond any human feelings and with no room for retreat. Such a promise, which commits the lives of two children, is too bombastic and is consequently ineffective. The point is that there must be a normal relationship between the situation and its consequence. Bossuet explains this relationship as follows:

> ... Eloquence to be worthy of a place in the speeches of Christians,
> must not be pursued with too much zeal. It must come by itself,
> drawn out by the greatness of the things and to serve as interpreter
> to Wisdom as she speaks (cited in Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca
> 1969:451).

There must be a sense of normality between the promise and the reality, and not something that seems to be merely a pathetic explosion. Indeed, under the circumstances in which their old father believes that he has already lost one son,

Reuben's proposal is absurd, as the tension between the promise and its sequences is out of proportion, adding to the family's tragic list of death, two more grandchildren! Expectedly, their old father is not impressed by this argument, as he refuses to let Benjamin go (v. 38).

Interestingly enough, when there is a need to approach the father again regarding the matter, which is now a question of life or death, Reuben is not the speaker any more. It appears that he has lost his credibility. Given his rhetorical failure Reuben lost the trust and the authority (or the speaker's ethos in Aristotelian rhetorical terms) of leadership in the eyes of his father and brothers. In other words, although he is the eldest, he has demonstrated through his utterance that he does not possess the quality of true leadership. His ethos, which is "the most effective means of persuasion" (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1356a), is unacceptable to his father. Actually, after this speech, Reuben no longer represents his brothers in future crises that are approached through skilful speeches.

Consequently, Reuben lost his leadership in spite of his birthright, as I Chronicles 5:1-2 reveals. Indeed, the Chronicler indicates that a change in the brothers' hierarchy has taken place. Reuben the oldest lost his position to the sons of Joseph (see Gen 48:5):

יהודה גבר באחיו ולנגיד ממנו (1 Chron 5:2)

> For Judah prevailed above his brethrens, and of him came the
> chief ruler.

Now, Judah, who already proved himself as a sound arguer, is the one who approaches the father, taking upon himself the responsibility for Benjamin. Regarding the father's plea: "Go again, buy us a little more food" (43:2), Judah is the brother who responds, the leader who speaks out:

> The man (the Egyptian) solemnly warned us, saying: you shall not
> see my face unless your brother is with you. If you will send our
> brother with us, we will go down and buy you food; but if you
> will not send him, we will not go down, for the man said to us:
> you shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you
> (43:3-5).

This is a straightforward speech with coherent sentences; there is no pathos here and there are no unrealistic promises. This straightforward style proclaims, in fact, Judah's strategy, as a reflection of the situation. Judah presents the facts without pressing Jacob, but actually forces the father to make a decision. Judah's style avoids rhetorical climaxes relying instead on information and evidence as the

primary mode of persuasion. This is, according to the Roman author of *Rhetoric of ad herennium,* the simple (*adtenuata*) style designed to set up the facts (4.11-16). The delivery of the substance is through plain facts, as Judah's strategy aims to leave the weight of the decision on Jacob's shoulders rather than appeal to him. This strategy happened to be successful given Jacob's stubbornness to keep Benjamin. Accordingly, Jacob, who set the tone, will be the one to decide whether to let Benjamin go after weighing Judah's narration. Judah's rhetoric reveals that he is the right person who knows what to say and even when to speak throughout the course of the events.

Furthermore, even though Judah employs the plain style, his utterance reveals still that he is aware of the use of language, as a depiction of the reality, as Aristotle told his readers: "it is not enough to know what we ought to say; we must also say it as we ought" (*Rhetoric* 1403b). Judah delivers the facts in words that present the reality decisively in an absolute manner thus excluding the chance of misinterpretation. He starts with the duplication העד הע(י)ד in the infinitive absolute which is used for the purpose of amplification:

> The reiteration of the same word makes a deep impression upon the hearer and inflicts a major wound upon the opposition – as if a weapon should repeatedly pierce the same part of the body (*Ad Herennium* 4.28).

The term עוד ("call to witness") has a juridical connotation (see Ruth 4:9-11, for instance); hence, it is irrefutable, an evidence. Judah therefore presents the reality as an ultimatum; either – or. We can bring food, but on one condition – we do as the 'man' told us, bring with us our brother. After the use of the duplication, Judah's presentation of the 'man's' demand is given in a negative form – לא-תראו (my face), rather than in a positive language (such as 'bring him'). The negative is designed to modify the presentation, as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca point out:

> The certainty or the importance of the data ... if a negative formulation is made, the reference to something else is quite explicit ... negative thought only comes to play if one's concern is with persons, that is, if one is arguing (1969:154-155).

The negation connotes certainty, preciseness ('this way and not the other way!'). Judah's determination, speaking on behalf of the brothers in the first person plural, is emphasised again through the negation, לא נרד (v. 5), supplemented by the repletion of his earlier formulation of the 'man's' words, "You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you" (v. 5 and see v. 3), as the conclusion of his speech.

This is not an appeal to go to bring food but rather a presentation of the reality in terms of the hearer's situation.

Although the old man still hesitates, he does not totally refuse as he did earlier. Out of despair and frustration, the father asks the unavoidable question in a personal tone, "Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother?" (v. 6). However, this emotional declaration of despair hints that the old man is giving up his definite objection to let Benjamin go. Judah responds:

> Send the boy with me, and let us be on our way, so that we may live and not die – you and we and also our little ones. I myself will be surety for him; you can hold me accountable for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. If we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice (43:8-10).

The situation has changed somewhat. Judah's present utterance shows that he adapts his rhetorical approach to the new situation, as a new reality has been established, and Jacob must take action. Consequently, Judah needs to put pressure, to persuade and to increase the father's trust in him. He starts in a positive tone, שלחה, in the cohorative which "expresses the direction of the will to an action, and thus denotes especially self-encouragement" (Gesenius and Kautzsch 48e). But, Judah adds the word אתי, that is, do not send him with them, the brothers, but 'with me', the one that you can trust now.

Attention must be paid to the chain of verbs, which Judah employs in this speech, ונקומה ונלכה ונחיה, a straight unit of sound which connects the first two verbs through assonance when the third verb breaks the pattern of the sound, stressing therefore as the heights the fact that we – all of us – will live. The matter of life (versus death) is increased through the negation, ולא נמות, aiming to cancel the alternative of death which under the present circumstances is a real threat. Nevertheless, the reference to death alludes to what might happen just in case Jacob declines Judah's appeal.

Argumentatively, it might appear that Judah's appeal does not totally differ from that of Reuben's which also sought personal assurance. But there is a difference – Judah has learned his lesson and he avoids hyperbole; thus, he does not mention a human sacrifice. Instead, he speaks of personal commitment and a feeling of ceaseless guilt. The appeal is to the father and the function of Judah's statement of absolute commitment is designed to increase the father's confidence in him as a committed human being. Reuben exaggerated his argument through a bombastic promise and failed to establish his father's confidence; thus, his appeal was

disregarded. Judah however appeals to gain his father's confidence through a sincere and trustworthy father-son approach. Confidence is indeed the key factor in the act of persuasion. "Confidence", Aristotle clarifies, "is the opposite of fear ... it is the expectation associated with a mental picture of the nearest of what keeps us safe and the absence of remoteness of what is terrible" (*Rhetoric* 1383a). That is, the father will only let Benjamin go if he has confidence in Judah. Judah seeks to gain this confidence through his commitment to bring back the boy on the basis of his guilt which is a fundamental emotion that affects people; it is between the person and him/herself. Indeed, the father agreed.

Judah's Final Speech

Judah's next important speech takes place in Egypt in the course of the acute crisis surrounding Benjamin's arrest. The situation seemed hopeless, and Jacob's fear that he would lose his youngest son seemed to become a reality. Appearing as the brothers' speaker, Judah actually offered that Joseph arrest not just Benjamin but all of them:

> What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? What can we say to justify ourselves? (מה נצטדק) God has found out the guilt of your servants; here we are then, my lord's slaves, both we and also the one in whose possession the cup has been found (44:16).

Judah admits that the situation is hopeless. The triple repetition of מה ("what can we ...") is designed to emphasise the despair – there is nothing else to say. Nevertheless, Judah's reference to the brothers' sins, and consequently to God's punishment, and as a result the brothers' agreement that all of them should serve as Joseph's slaves, happened to be a turning point in the relationship between Joseph and his brothers. However, the switch did not take place on the spot and an additional speech by Judah is needed to build the bridge.

In his first speech, Judah publicly admits the brothers' guilt. "What more can be said", is Judah's motto. The brothers recognise that they cannot escape from their destiny, as a fundamental self-recognition of their deed. But Judah does not stop here.

It appears that he listened carefully to Joseph's response to his first appeal to release Benjamin. As a matter of fact, Joseph's response alludes to 'something'; he might not be indifferent to the situation:

> Only the one in whose possession the cup was found shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father (44:17).

Joseph indicates that he is not against the brothers, rather he is a man of integrity; thus, he would only arrest the 'thief'. He presents himself as a man of universal justice. Such a declaration might be taken by many as a polite rejection of Judah's appeal. However, Judah seems to hear something more in the statement which reveals certain sympathy for their old father. Thus, the desperate Judah who, at the end of the day, is the one who persuaded the father to let Benjamin go, taking upon himself a personal commitment to bring him back, does not hear Joseph's response as a total rejection of his appeal. Rather, he senses the human side of the Egyptian officer who gave special attention to their old father. Judah reads Joseph's concern for their father as an open invitation for a further appeal. The question is what to say and how.

Judah's only means is his speech. He can beg and beg, seeking to rouse the officer's mercy. He can also appeal to the officer's sense of justice, as in the great petition of the "eloquent peasant". There, a simple Egyptian peasant appeals for justice, complaining that he was oppressed by an official while he was innocent. The appeal, which is a lengthy work from the Middle Kingdom, is called in Egyptian literature, the *Eloquent Peasant*. The peasant, Khun-Anup was going down to Egypt to bring food. On his way, he was confronted by a man (who was related to the subordinate of the high steward) who robbed him and took his donkey. The peasant was left with no choice; he proceeded to appeal to the high steward, Rensi.

The peasant's strategy of appeal is as follows: he referred to an established '*topos*' (source, place of an argument) which is commonly accepted in the society. In this regard, the *topos* is justice. In other words, the high steward is a man of social justice and the peasant emphasises these virtues of the high official as the reason for his protection from disasters when sailing, that is, the steward's good deeds secure his safety. Consequently, the poor peasant asked, is it possible that such a great man who possesses such virtues that protect him will risk himself by not doing justice to the innocent peasant? The question is presented as an absurdity which stands against the moral standards of the society.

The peasant's strategy of argumentation worked, but there was a second appeal, as the king who had heard about the rhetorical skills of the peasant from the high steward asked to proceed in order that they could continue to enjoy the beauty of the peasant's oratory. The peasant used a similar strategy as the earlier one but changed the resource of his appeal. He appealed to the sense of common logic through the means of the rhetorical question, asking whether it is possible that such a great man of high hierarchy as the high steward who is a 'rudder of heaven'

would steal from a 'lonely man'? Then, he referred again to the *topos* of justice – Do you seek to be a man of eternity or not? (Lichtheim 1976:173).

He continued by outlining a chain of cases that presented the high steward in an absurd manner if he punished the innocent: 'The punisher of evil commits crimes'! (*ibid*, 174). He repeatedly employed the previous tactic of the absurd: 'He who should rule by law commands theft, who then will punish crime'? (*ibid*). He says in the seventh petition: "Don't be angry; it is not for you" (179). This long appeal divided into nine petitions indeed appeals to the addressee's ethos and sense of conscience as the models of behaviour of the right order in the world. It cannot be that a man of such high virtues of justice who is in charge of order himself acts against order and justice. The peasant repeated himself again and again, developing the theme through many examples and a chain of rich metaphors that enrich the orations with a charming style – providing the beauty of the speech.

Accordingly, when assessing Judah's options of appeal (as he finds himself in a similar situation to the peasant), he also could have employed the appeal to the right order and the commitment to justice of a man of high status and virtues. But he avoids this option and takes another rhetorical route which dwells on the officer's sensitivity to human feelings towards the father. This reference to the father (44:18) is an addition that enables Judah to reveal his excellent skill for interpreting human utterances and for pressing the issue in order to recover his addressee's deep feelings which at this stage might still be hidden.

Judah delivered a speech which is considered by many critics to be one of the greatest in Biblical oratory. Thus, Hertz, in his introduction to the speech, writes:

> The pathos and beauty of Judah's plea on behalf of Benjamin have retained their appeal to man's heart throughout the ages. Sir Walter Scott called it 'the most complete pattern of genuine natural eloquence extant in any language' (1966:169).

Von Rad calls it, "One of the most beautiful examples of that lofty rhetorical culture" (1961:389). And Skinner writes that, "The speech ... is the finest specimen of dignified and persuasive eloquence in the OT" (1969:485).

Indeed, Judah's speech is distinguished, as it strategically switches the tone of the discourse that takes place between the 'Egyptian' and the brothers. Judah's speech seeks to turn the situation upside down and to involve the Egyptian officer as a partner in the tragedy. His speech therefore creates a new rhetorical sphere that presents the Egyptian as the one who is responsible for the grave situation. Therefore, he should release Benjamin.

Judah starts his speech with a moving attempt to create an atmosphere of ease regarding his powerful addressee in order to decrease the tension. The atmosphere is sensitive as the Egyptian who arrested Benjamin is the deputy of the Pharaoh. Therefore, Judah is careful to keep the man sympathetic rather than hostile, particularly as the Egyptian closes his utterance in a tone which is not indifferent to the father's situation. Nevertheless, Judah intends to remove the existing tension first. Rhetoricians have always insisted that speakers cannot simply proclaim their views without taking their audience's position into consideration. Thus, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca conclude that:

> In argumentation, the important thing is not knowing what the speaker regards as true or important, but knowing the views of those he is addressing ... Speech is like a feast at which the dishes are made to please the guests, and not the cooks (1969:23-24).

Aristotle points out that the aim of the introduction is to "put the audience into a certain frame of mind" (*Rhetoric* 1356a). Indeed, Judah approaches the officer intimately; he establishes a relationship between the two of them, but does not ignore the social difference, as he says:

> O my lord, let your servant please speak a word in my lord's ear, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are like a Pharaoh himself (44:18).

This is an apology that paves the road for the speech itself which might express unexpected accusations against the powerful addressee. The speaker, Judah, is well aware of the situation and the frightening power of the figure that he is facing. Therefore, in order for his words to be heard he needs to create an atmosphere in which his addressee will listen to him patiently, letting his addressee realise that Judah respects and is in awe of him. That is, in order to avoid feelings of resistance in the beginning, there is a need to establish a sort of personal appeal to be accepted.

Judah proceeds, as he now seeks to elaborate on his perception of the Egyptian's human reference to the father. Such a strategy requires a sophisticated rhetorical design. Judah's tactic is to emphasise the Egyptian's responsibility as the cause of the grave situation. He does so through a form of speech that reflects authenticity but paints the events that led to the disaster in high emotional colours. In contrast to his previous speech, Judah does not accept the grave situation as a destiny, as a matter of cause and effect which is unchangeable. He alters his strategy, submitting an earthly argument, rather than the previous heavenly theological one. God is not mentioned any more (compare his earlier speech, 44:16). It is the argument of a

human being, seeking to point the finger at the superior as the cause of the problem in order to involve his addressee emotionally in the matter.

In what follows, Judah decides to focus on a specific issue which he already sensed in the Egyptian's reply – the father. Therefore, he raises the matter of the father immediately after his introduction, revealing his rhetorical strategy, as he says, "My lord asked his servants: have you a father or a brother" (v. 19). This is his starting point. The lord initiated the situation, not the brothers. Here, attention must be paid to Judah's presentation of the family story, to the way that he constructs his narrative and to his choice of words regarding the father and the son relationship. He conveys all in one sentence:

> We have a father, an old man, and a young brother, the child of his old age. His brother is dead; he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.

<div dir="rtl">

ונאמר אל –אדני יש לנו אב זקן וילד זקנים קטן ואחיו מת

ויותר הוא לבדו לאמו

ואביו אהבו (v. 20)

</div>

(For a remarkable stylistic analysis of the passage, see Leibovitz 1967:344-349.)

Judah could retell the story in numerous ways through different styles given his choice. Now it is up to him to present the reality in his colours aiming to affect his hearer. In this regard, Judah's calculated speech, which focuses on the suffering father and the son's place in his bitter life, raises the suspicion that he knows who this Egyptian officer is. We are told earlier that the Egyptian sat the brothers down according to their age, and gave five times more presents to Benjamin than he granted to the other brothers (43:33-34). Judah might suspect therefore that the Egyptian, who is actually not an Egyptian as the brothers discovered (*ibid*, v. 32) is no other than the lost brother who was sold to traders on their way to Egypt. If this is the case, then Judah brilliantly matched his rhetorical skills with his addressee's situation. Thus, his selection of his words is crucial.

Thus, the word (יו) אב ('father', 'his father') appears as a key word in almost every line of the speech (compare the sample above, vv. 19-20). This stress on the word 'father' in a chiastic order needs a certain elaboration. In the history of civilisation, the word fulfils two entirely different functions, the semantic and the magic or the discursive logic and the creative imagination. Words might be used in a descriptive, logical, or semantic sense. That is, the word concerned itself solely with the appreciation of 'facts' and the development of the orderly thought about facts. However, the magic word tries to produce effects and to change the course of

nature. Therefore, in the course of speeches in rhetoric, the magic word takes precedence over the semantic word. Cassirer explains the matter as follows:

> Theoretical, practical and aesthetic consciousness, the word of language and of morality, the basic form of the community and the state – they are all originally tied up with mythico-religious conceptions (1946:44).

Words are used magically as they constitute the specific vocabulary of a community and are destined to produce certain effects and to stir up certain feelings among the members of the community who respond emotionally to the word. Thus, the word 'father', employed repeatedly by Judah, cannot be heard merely as a biological reference, but as a word of magic produced in the context of Judah's address to his addressee who might be a member of the same family, the son of the referred father.

Accordingly, further attention must be given to Judah's employment of the word 'father' in his speech. He concludes his introduction with a statement, "His father loved him" (v. 20). Those are emotional words as the ending of the verse is emphatic (see Waltke and O'Connor 1990:492). This style is, for the author of *rhetorica ad herennium,* the grand (*gravis*) style (4.11-16) which seeks to stir emotions (Judah is in control of his style because when he approached Jacob earlier, he employed the simple, informative style). Furthermore, the rhetorical question, which ends the speech with the mention of the old father in a personal tone, 'my father', as the last word of the utterance (v. 34), heightens the effect. The entire presentation of the father arouses sympathy, as the reference to the father's old age is repeated three times (vv. 20, 29, 31). Also the reference to Benjamin in the connotative expression, 'a small' ('child' or 'brother'), that is, the youngest son, is repeated time and again (vv. 20, 23, 26 [twice]) to stir the emotions. In short, stylistically, Judah does not employ a referential language, as the language of court, but he creates an emotional discourse.

Judah presents his speech colourfully:

אדני שאל את עבדיו לאמר היש- לכם אב או-אח (v. 19)

The lord, in response to Judah, asks a simple question which requires a yes/no answer. Instead, Judah inserts an entire biography, which is a mixture of pathetic expressions with no coherent order, designed to affect one emotionally. Judah has established the tone of the discourse – an old father, one small beloved child, and a dead child, a tragic story which revolves around his addressees' provocative initiation to ask questions regarding the family and, even more, his insistence to

separate the father from his beloved son. Thus, there is a strong emphasis in the speech on death or allusions to the disaster that affected the father. There is also a strong emphasis on the special relationship between the father and the youngest son. The speech also retells repeatedly the old father's deep sorrow because of his son's death. Therefore, it appears that the strategy of Judah's speech is, in fact, designed to appeal to his addressee's state of mind (Joseph is Benjamin's brother, his flesh and blood and he is the lost son of their old father); he dwells on the subject again and again. He does so by avoiding a factual recitation of the events as a dry informative story. Rather, Judah presents the story repeatedly and pathetically; he immediately seeks to rouse feelings, emotions and sympathy for the old father, as the centre of his speech.

This design of the events connotes an elegant accusation against Joseph which actually puts the responsibility for the situation upon him. He is, in fact, the person who raised the critical question regarding the father and the son; hence, he is the one to blame for creating such an acute problem: "My lord asked his servants: Have you a father or another brother?" (v. 19). Judah seems to adapt his appeal to his addressee's interest, satisfying his curiosity through his pathetic elaboration on the old father-small son relationship. Thus, Judah does not aim at a general audience, but at a particular listener who possesses a set of recollection that might be affected by Judah's specific elaboration (for the role of the particular audience, see Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:28-31).

Thus, Judah's speech is designed to create a sense of guilt in Joseph's mind through the employment of a language that is not indifferent to Joseph. Without being asked, Judah repeats the scene that took place at home when the father described his personal tragedy explaining why the youngest son could not leave him. In spite of this extremely sensitive situation in which the father would die upon separation from his beloved son (v. 22), it is Joseph who demanded to bring the father's small beloved son to Egypt therefore causing the tragic separation. To emphasise the drama that is caused by the separation, Judah repeats twice the critical word of separation through the verb עזב ('leave', v. 22).

Judah again points out that 'the Egyptian' insisted that the youngest son be brought to Egypt. Again, he recites the events in a moving description. He avoids factual language such as the father's belief that Joseph had died. Rather, he describes the tragic event quoting the father in the most traumatic language: טרף טרף 'tear into pieces' using the duplication form to show emphasis and to stir emotions (v. 28).

The form that Judah employs in order to describe the father's hesitation to send Benjamin and the painful negotiation with him at home is a dialogue rather than a third person report. The dialogue not only depi'cts the situation but also creates a sense of credibility – this is the way it happened. The dialogue also provides a personal touch; the father and the brothers are presented in their authentic voices. In short, Judah's style is not figurative, but it is also not plain. He selects words which connote emotions, as 'magic' words in the present context, and he employs repetition to reach emotional climaxes. Yet, Judah's style is supposedly objective; he supposedly narrates the events as they occurred. But he does not conceptualise, he does not reach his conclusions explicitly. He presents his case through a dialogue, letting his particular addressee experience the events as a participant. In this regard, Judah creates a vivid utterance and establishes his credibility. He quotes and seems to recite what happened almost word for word.

Judah, in fact, does not respond at all to the officer's accusations. He does not deny that the cup was found in Benjamin's belongings. He does not question whether Benjamin stole it at all, he does not even beg for Benjamin's release. If he did this, then he would be operating according to the 'Egyptian' rules and presuppositions, and he might lose his appeal. Hence, he turns the situation upside down; he, and not the initial accuser, sets the rules and as such, the speech is developed in his direction.

Judah dwells on the subject, presenting again the father's dilemma in the light of the trauma of the lost son: "You will send my white head down to *Sheol* in grief" (v. 29). This, in a way, is a repetition of Judah's first reference to the father's life that depends on the youngest son, as he proclaimed earlier in v. 22. However, the sentence is now conveyed in the first person, as a direct quote from the father, in order to strengthen the impact. Here, Judah could end his appeal, given the strong impact of his dramatic citation. Nevertheless, he keeps dwelling on the subject and he describes the sequences, repeating the absolute dependence of the father on the son.

Furthermore, Judah increases the impact by using two words (at least) to describe something for which one would suffice: "When he sees that the boy is not with us, and he died (the boy) ..." (v. 31). Such a device (*circuitio* in rhetorical terms) is used by poets for a decorative effect and by speakers to stress a point, as perpetuating the matter. Furthermore, Judah dwells on the brothers' responsibility for the father's collapse and death in case Benjamin does not return. Again, he describes the father's death, not in a factual language, but emotionally: "Your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol" (v. 31). He employs further the device of *periphrasis*, "your servant", "our

father". He dwells on the old age, illustrating it by colouring the father's condition – the gray hair – , and by pointing out the pain, the sorrow. This is a sentence that is structured to stir emotions and sympathy. Actually, the description here is not new as Judah already indicated the grave situation earlier. However, this sort of repetition before drawing a conclusion (*iteratio*, consult Cicero's *De Oratore,* Iii. Liii. 203) aims to appeal to the emotions, to leave the addressee with the impact that the addresser intends to affect him.

Judah then concludes on a personal tone as he offers to sit in prison in place of Benjamin. His motivation is again the father's sorrow; he cannot see him mourn again; hence, he prefers to be in prison:

> Now therefore, (ישב נא) I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father (vv. 33-34).

The focus is not on Benjamin, nor on the officer's accusation. Rather, Judah dwells on his main theme – the father's unbearable pain given the Benjamin's affair. He works on this motif repeatedly, seeking to stir the feelings of his addressee on the grounds of the special father-son relationships. He does not enable his addressee to be indifferent to the father's situation.

In short, Judah changes the context of the discussion from being accused, as he is now the accuser. He does so by establishing a common ground of human feeling of pity (cf. Westermann 1986:135). But, he actually does more than that – he 'works' on the personal feelings of his addressee, Joseph.

Indeed, the effect is conveyed in the words: "Joseph could no longer control himself" (45:1). There is no stronger appeal than this one, the full identification with the father's situation (consult Burke 1969). The form of the rhetorical question that ends the speech seeks to leave the addressee no alternative to causing the innocent, almost starving old man to die.

Judah's speech presents him as a true leader who distinguishes himself through his rhetoric.

Sepher Nopheth Zuphim – The Book of the Honeycomb's Flow

Judah's speech is so well designed that Judah Messer Leon, a Rabbi and a Professor of Medicine as well as of Rhetoric, used this speech as a classical sample of the

rhetorical design of an utterance. Messer Leon was a fifteenth century Jewish scholar who incorporated into his work and studies the great achievements of Italian Renaissance. He is the author of the monumental ספר נפת צופים, The *Book of the Honeycomb's Flow* (first published in Mantua in 1475/6) which is the "extraordinary treatise, the novel rhetoric", as the author himself called it (Rabinowitz 1983:ix). This book was intended to be a handbook of rhetoric. The *Book of the Honeycomb's Flow* ranks as one of the earliest monuments of modern literary and rhetorical criticism of the Hebrew Scriptures.

In his presentation of the Hebrew Bible as a rhetorical endeavour exemplified with the principles of classical rhetoric (see Gitay 1985:379-383), Messer Leon took Judah's speech as a demonstration of a perfect arrangement of a speech. He declared that the Hebrew Scriptures were composed, and are to be interpreted, according to the same rhetorical and poetical principles which govern works of secular or profane character.

The *Sepher Nophet Zuphim* was widely used in the training and preparation of Jewish students of medicine and philosophy at the Italian universities of the Renaissance. These students had to study rhetoric as part of their curriculum, but they preferred to use Jewish texts as their source rather than secular or profane works such as Homer (used regularly as to exemplify the art of rhetoric). The *Book of the Honeycomb's Flow* introduces classical rhetoric to demonstrate the (Hebrew) Biblical discourse.

As is known, classical rhetoric pays close attention to the arrangement of the speech, that is, the various parts of the discourse and their function in the entire endeavour of affecting the audience. In this respect, Messer Leon (following Quintillian, *Institutio Oratorical*, 7. Pr. 1) points out that:

> Just as it does not necessarily suffice the masons engaged upon building a house merely to have the essential building material available but the most important requirement is to put these materials together, to arrange them in order, and to build the structure part after part just so it is necessary to do in the case of discourses (Rabinowitz 1983:109-111).

Given the importance of *Sepher Nopheth Zuphim* in the history of the rhetorical treatment of the Hebrew Bible, I hereby outline briefly Messer Leon's remarks on Judah's speech (following Rabinowitz's translation). As Messer Leon indicates (in accordance with Quintillian's instructions), the parts of the speech consist of the introduction, statement of facts, the partition, proof, refutation and conclusion.

The introduction is the statement by which the mind of the hearer is prepared to heed and to comprehend what is going to be said. By virtue of our words, we make the audience attentive, well disposed, and receptive.

The statement of facts is the telling of true or the quasi true facts with an appearance of plausibility.

The partition is a means of making clear wherein one agrees with one's opponent and what remains in dispute.

Proof: When both our evidence and the fact that it substantiates our hypothesis are simultaneously made clear.

Refutation is a statement by means of which it will be clear that the evidence contrary, and the doubts incidental, to the view we hold has been overthrown.

Conclusion: setting of an artistic limit and end to all that has been said ... to arouse the hearer to pity, or to heartlessness and anger; or it should recapitulate in a brief statement all that has previously been said (Messer Leon 1983:57).

Messer Leon's division of the speech under his definition of the rhetorical design will be considered below:

Genesis 44:18 constitutes the introduction. The three conditions of the introduction are met here, first, to render the hearer well disposed. This is achieved partly by Judah's submissiveness before Joseph, and his entreaty: oh my lord בי אדני אל יחר אפך בעבדך, כי כמוך כפרעה. With these words, Judah has so highly praised Joseph as to make him of equal status with the king. Also, Judah makes Joseph attentive and receptive by saying:

ידבר נא עבדך דבר באזני אדני

Vv. 19-29 are the statement of facts in this case as presented by Judah.

V. 30 forms a partition, for in this, the point of their disagreement is clearly brought out – the disagreement on the point of leaving Benjamin behind. It was as though Judah had said, "It is obvious to us that Jacob will die if he should not see the lad; hence, to leave him behind is something which we must not do"; but did not say this openly because he was speaking with humility and tact, like a servant before a king. From here may be understood the point on which the brothers agreed with Joseph – the coming of Benjamin thither. What remains in dispute is the question of leaving him behind; "for on this, indeed, we will not agree".

V. 31 is the proof. It was as though Judah had said, "What proves that we ought not agree with you in this is that if we should so act, 'great punishment would overtake us' (cf. 2K 7:9), for we would have brought about the death of our father, his grey hair in sorrow to the grave – a criminal deed" (cf. Job 31:28).

V. 32 is the refutation, for it was possible that Joseph would say, "Why do you alone multiply exceeding proud talk while your brothers refrain?" But Judah refuted this by saying that he had become surety for Benjamin; thus, it was proper for him to make a greater effort than his brothers.

Vv. 33-34 make up the conclusion. In a short statement, Judah summed up what he had previously said (*ibid*, 57-59).

Messer Leon divided Judah's speech into the six parts of speech in accordance with the classical rules of rhetoric, demonstrating therefore its perfect design.

Conclusion

Max Weber sheds light on the role of the speech in establishing leadership as follows:

> How does the selection of strong leaders take place? Naturally, the force of demagogic speech is above all decisive ... often purely emotional means are used (cited in Gereth and Mills 1958:107).

Indeed, Judah gains the leadership through the force of his speech. Judah's speech is demagogic in terms of its goal of capturing his addressee's mind. However, his speech is not bombastic or reflecting mere propaganda. On the contrary, the one who employed bombastic speech in this endeavour actually failed. Nevertheless, Weber's point is well taken here. The Hebrew Bible is a book that reflects human tensions and struggles for power as well as leadership. It appears that the matter of gaining leadership through heritage is not sufficient, as the leaders must prove themselves through the force of their speeches.

The Joseph narrative revolves around a struggle for leadership. Here, the real tension is between two brothers, Reuben and Judah. In terms of birthright, Reuben is the oldest and he actually considers himself as the leader. However, there are traumatic developments that test the proper performance of the true leader. The real leadership is assessed through speech. The brothers and their father are all confronted with severe situations that ask for leadership, not through military acts or physical heroism, but in terms of human persuasion – how to persuade the brothers or the father to make the proper decision or how to solve critical problems which seem unsolvable through verbal deliberation.

Rhetoric, the art of persuasion, plays a crucial role in the course of the events that constitute the Joseph's narrative. Leaders according to the rights of birth are called to prove their ability to lead through their power of persuasion. In the course of the Joseph story, Reuben, the eldest, failed to lead, as his speeches were ineffective. On the contrary, Judah revealed himself as a true leader given the force of his speeches.

Judah's persuasive speeches are not in line with the Greek's Sophists or Cicero's oratory which reach stylistic and figurative heights. In this regard, Judah's speeches lack these electrifying stylistic and figurative features. Rather, Judah's speeches are down to earth; they are thoughtful and they penetrate into his audience's hearts. Judah knows how to appeal, how to present the reality in terms of his audience's condition. Judah's rhetoric is not a mere photocopy of the reality, but the reality painted by him in colours that are designed to affect the addressee, as they are the addressee's colours as well.

As a rule, Judah does not hurry to speak. He waits for the right moment and then he succeeds in saying the 'right' words which are accepted without objections. This reveals his talent to perceive the views and positions of his audience, and to adapt them to his presentation which is the true talent of a persuasive speaker.

There are situations which seem unchangeable, and people might yield and accept the reality as it appears to be. However, Judah's speeches show that he could turn the impossible into possible. Speech is an act of creation; thus, people have been given the ability to persuade and consequently to create new situations. Judah's speeches demonstrate that leadership is gained through sincere argumentation that listens carefully to the addressees' position and responds forcefully, accordingly.

In short, Judah is a type of a leader who gains his leadership through speech. Rhetoric is therefore the proper means for studying the rise and fall of Biblical figures in their endeavour for leadership.

Rhetoric and its Limitations

Job the Dissident[10]

The Ethics of Reading

Wayne Booth in the epilogue of his masterpiece, *The Company We Keep* (1988) asks the question, "Why, when we seek to discuss matters of morality and truth, do we tell stories rather than presenting the reality itself?" Why can we not make our point in a straightforward manner? And if one decides to tell a story about morality and truth, the question is what the relationship between fiction and reality? The point is that literature could replace reality. As paradoxically as this might sound, the reality itself is not too effective and requires illustrations. For example, Booth quoted a passage from Anton Chekhov's story, *"Home"* (1887). The situation there revolves around the sensitive matter of a child who smokes and a father who prohibits the child from smoking. However, the child does not pay too much attention to the father's warning. The father is helpless, but the next morning he invents a tale which he tells to his seven years old son:

> The emperor's son fell ill with consumption through smoking, and died when he was twenty. His infirm and sick old father was left without anyone to help him. There was no one to govern the kingdom and defend the palace. Enemies came, killed the old man, and destroyed the palace, and now there are neither cherries, nor birds, nor little bells in the garden ...

His son is now for the first time visibly touched. His eyes were clouded by mournfulness and something like fear. For a minute, he looked pensively at the dark window, shuddered and said, in a sinking voice, "I am not going to smoke anymore ..."

The father feels uncomfortable with what he has done:

> It's not the right way. Why must morality and truth never be offered in their crude form, but only with embellishments, sweetened and gilded like pills? ... it's falsification ... deception ...

> tricks ... He thought ... of the general public who absorb history only from legends and historical novels (cited in Booth 1988:483-484).

Readers of the Bible are familiar with the literary strategy of speaking through stories or fables regarding matters of morality. Nathan's fable (2 Sam 12) is a striking example. David's behaviour in the Bath Sheba affair is scandalous; however, Nathan, the prophet, did not approach the king directly. Rather, he told him a story, as a representation of the reality which shocked the king. Hearing how the rich man took the little ewe of the poor and slaughtered her to feed his guest, David exploded angrily, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die" (2 Sam 12:5). Only afterwards, did Nathan gradually confront David with his awful deed of causing the death of the husband of the woman he slept with. The story, not the reality as it is, presents to David the reality and opens him to matters of truth and morality.

This essay is concerned with the book of Job. How should we read the book of Job, as historical reality or as a story? The Rabbis suggest we read this book as a parable. Nevertheless, the Rabbinic interpretation of the reality of Job is in place here:

> Job never was nor was he ever created. He was only a parable (Talmud Bavli, *Bava Batra* 15a).

Actually, the reading goes as follows:

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איוב לא נברא אלא למשל

</div>

That is to say, it is not that Job never was, but that he became a parable, a lesson. The difficult issues of Job are taken as a parable which is presented dramatically in order to draw a moral lesson regarding reality.

Thus, the present essay seeks to introduce the dilemma of Job, as a parable which functions on various levels. There is the dilemma of the book itself which as a Biblical story still requires some clarification for present readers. But because this is a parable, we might also draw a lesson regarding contemporary matters of truth and morality which require a story in order to expose reality.

The first part of the essay discusses the issue of morality and truth through the clarification of the methodology which is employed in the book of Job. Here, the main focus of the book is the question: who is the authority that possesses the knowledge and has the power to make a decision regarding the critical issue of truth and morality. The second part of the essay, which is in fact a development of

the first one, intends to follow the issue of the clarification of the methodology regarding the search for knowledge and truth in our contemporary society. Hence, Job's saga, which is considered a parable, is transformed here into a story of reality that projects a current controversial South African issue – the debate regarding the critical question of who possesses the knowledge and consequently the authority for claiming the truth in the current society. Thus, the Biblical book of Job that might have been composed originally as a parable is still, in our time, able to preserve its power and might function as an interpretative model for our society regarding matters of truth and morality in a quite conceivable way.

The Problem

The issue is manifested with the presentation of Job as righteous. Job is rewarded with everything that a human being can desire – children, property and dignity – "This man was the greatest of all the people of the East" (Job 1:3). There is therefore a harmony between health and wealth and the human way of life. However, without warning, God's agent, the Satan, strikes this extraordinary man in an act of testing which is approved by God Himself (1:12). The motivation for the test is to examine the question whether there is a limit to pious belief in God when it is confronted with human self-interest:

עור בעד עור וכל אשר לאיש יתן בעד נפשו:
אולם שלח- נא ידך וגע אל עצמו ואל בשרו אם לא
אל פניך יברכך:

> Skin for skin! All that people possess (Habel's 1985:79 translation replaces the generic 'man' with 'people') they will surrender for their life. Just stretch forth your hand now and strike his bones and his flesh and he certainly curse you to your face (Job 2:4).

In other words, the question is whether the behaviour of the righteous is conditioned by physical success, as God's reward or not. The test is mediated through physical loss. As a result, Job loses his property, then his children and lastly he is inflicted with a terrible skin disease "from the sole of his foot even unto his crown" (2:7). Job, who is ignorant of the heavenly debate, searches for the cause of his misfortune, and blames God for the catastrophe when he knows himself to be innocent (Job 9:20):

תם אני ויעקשני

> Though I am blameless, he would prove me perverse.

He disputes therefore the "generally accepted" belief in the theory of retribution, a measure for measure – reward for the righteous and punishment of the wicked. As a result, a debate takes place between Job and his friends about the validity of a theory (of retribution) when confronted with a personal experience that could challenge its validity, as Leo Baeck has formulated the position:

> Job is a hero who is always ready to confess that God is God, and that man is man, but he will never deny the way of his life (cited in Glatzer 1966:6).

Nevertheless, Job on the basis of his personal experience, contests the conventional explanation of reward or punishment, and challenges society's "generally accepted" theories. Job maintains his innocence, and against society's "dogma", declares that he is guiltless. Nevertheless, his friends challenge the idea of personal experience as the criterion for judgment, as Zophar claims (in Job 11:7):

<div dir="rtl">

החקר אלוה תמצא אם עד תכלית שדי תמצא

</div>

> Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?

However, the debate confounds the "reality" of the book. The narrative informs the readers of Job's innocence. Actually, Job is introduced by God Himself as the most righteous person upon earth – "there is none like him in the earth, a whole-hearted and an upright man, one that fears God, and shuns evil" (Job 2:3). Consequently, readers might be perplexed when they read the friends' responses which blame Job for his suffering, as his friend Bildad proclaims:

> If your children sinned against him, he delivered them into the power of their transgression ... If you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse himself for you and restore to you your rightful place (Job 8:3-4).

But Bildad does not live in a fantasy because he, like Job's other friends, believes that there is a causal link between human deed and human situation. Job's children perished; consequently, they were sinners. Job suffers; consequently, he turned himself away from God, the friend argues, applying society's "generally accepted" ideas. This position, when confronted with the reality of the book, is puzzling. The author (redactor) knows the truth, the readers know the truth regarding Job's innocence, and still the book gives a voice to the friends' dogma which presents Job as guilty. Of course, we can subscribe to a diachronic reading of the book, calling for a distinction between the prologue, epilogue and the body of the book, as separate works. But this does not solve the problem, and we cannot ignore the

dialogical tension between the various parts of the book (cf. Gitay 1996b:60-68, Newsom 2009:87-108).

As a matter of fact, this odd debate between the friends' automatic acceptance of the common religious view and Job's personal judgment constitutes almost the entire book. This debate occupies almost the entire three cycles of stormy verbal fights, where every side repeatedly asserts his position. Truly, the friends are unaware of the circumstances regarding Job's suffering, but the readers know, and still such a long debate takes place in front of us; why? It appears therefore that the friends' presupposition, that every effect has a cause, that suffering is punishment, presents such a problem that a major Biblical book is required in order to confront the issue (Job 8:4):

<div dir="rtl">אם בניך חטאו לו וישלחם ביד פשעם</div>

If your sons sinned against him, they have paid for their sins.

The drama revolves around the ordeal of Job, the righteous man, and the dilemma of his friends is how to justify the "generally accepted" when it is confronted with a personal instance. The intercourse between society's common view and the individual case is therefore the theme of the book. The drama focuses on the confrontation between a desperate endeavour to explain the suffering of the individual in terms of society's common view with the experience of the individual himself (herself) who seeks to reject the society's "generally accepted" as the legitimised manifestation of truth instead of his own integrity.

The Theory of Job the Sinner

The prologue of the book goes into detail regarding Job's success; a man who has everything that a human being might desire:

> Seven sons and three daughters ... seven thousands ships, three thousands camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-donkeys, and many servants besides. This man was indeed a man of mark among all the people of the East (Job 1:2-3).

The numbers are not accidental as the number ten symbolises perfection (see Driver 1964:5). In short, Job was a perfect man whose success is portrayed as ideal. In any event, the detailed list is not a declaration of prosperity *per se*, but a theological manifestation as well. The real question is why is this man rewarded with so much? The beginning of the book explains:

> The man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil (1:1).

The theory has been formulated. There is a causal link between good behaviour and success in life; there is a system in the world and nothing is accidental or chaotic. Consequently, God rewards Job for his outstanding behaviour and fear of Him. The friends who are familiar with the theory are not only shocked to see Job in his pain and loss, "They did not recognise him" (2:12-13), but implying the theory, they also conclude that Job is being punished, as something had happened here regarding his behaviour, and his loss is a message to him. They might not know exactly what happened, what particular misdeed Job had done, but the theory is valid, and is applied to the reality (in Job 4:7):

זכר נא מי הוא נקי אבד ואיפה ישרים נכחדו?

> Think now, who that was innocent ever perished?

Hence, the friends deduct that Job had committed a sin. There is no doubt in their mind that Job's instance is exceptional. As we will see below, the friends provide a variety of comments on Job's suffering; however, they are united in interpreting the suffering, as an indication of punishment. Thus, the friends, each one in his turn, explain to Job why he is suffering so much and what he should do without actually any inside knowledge of the case. However, they maintain knowledge which is based on a theory of interpretation that prevails in the theology of their society. The friends are therefore not just occasional friends, but they are the theologians of their society, who operate under specific hermeneutical principles that purport to reveal the truth, even the sacred truth which explains God's motivation – the theory reveals the truth (Job 5:27):

הנה זאת חקרנוה כן- היא

> All this, we have searched to it.

Therefore, it concludes Eliphaz's first speech. Eliphaz did not perceive the truth by revelation; he searched it out.

Indeed, the friends blame Job, in line with the theory of retribution, as his deeds are the cause of his grave condition. They present him therefore as a sinner (Job 11:6):

ודע כי ישה לך אלוה מעונך

> Then you will know that God is exacting less from you than your guild demands (there is no strong argument for deleting the verse; for comments on ישה, see Gordis 1978:121).

Hence, for the friends, given the tenets of their convictions, there is no shade of doubt that Job's suffering is an indication of sin.

The Modes of Argumentation

Indeed, the readers' confusion regarding the friends' position is intensified since the friends are skilful speakers, masters of rhetoric who forcefully and colourfully present their accusations against Job. Thus, Eliphaz, the eldest friend, accuses Job of being a hypocrite. He seeks to undermine Job's credibility, and hence dismiss the merit of his accusation against God as the immoral cause of his torture when he himself is guiltless. He tells Job pointedly:

> Behold, you have instructed many and you have strengthened the
> feeble knees (Job 4:4).

Then, Eliphaz points out to Job:

> But now it is come upon you and you faintest; it touches you and
> you are troubled (Job 4:5).

Why then, when others were hit did Job protect the theory? Consequently, Job misses the essence. Who is therefore the authentic Job – the one who knew to encourage people when they suffered or the one who loses his integrity when he himself is under pain? The fundamental principle of human life, which held Job earlier and should hold him now, is manifested here by Eliphaz in the clear term, of "fear" of God. Fear is confidence here; an absolute, which is the presupposition of the human absolute trust in the principle of justice, proclaimed through God's moral judgment:

> Think now, what innocent person ever perished? (Job 4:7).

Therefore, Job is now suffering under a trauma which causes him to behave hypocritically.

After Eliphaz had shaken Job's integrity and re-established the fundamental notion of "fear", as the premise of trust, he makes deductions on the foundation of confidence in God, and concludes:

> As I have seen, they that plow iniquity and sow wickedness reap
> the same (Job 4:8).

Eliphaz employs the rule of cause and effect which works in this case as follows:

> A deed (A) = reaction (B)
> A person's condition (C) = a deed (A)
> ---
> Then B (reaction) = C (condition)

That is to say, Job's condition is of a person who suffers, consequently, he must have performed a deed that brought on the suffering. The premise of cause and effect dominates the friend's interpretation of Job's situation.

Bildad, the second friend, employs the device of the rhetorical question which seeks to establish the acceptance of the common view:

> Does God pervert judgment? Or, does the Almighty pervert justice?
> (8:3).

As a rule, the rhetorical question is designed for a community which shares the same premise of social order or belief; as such the question seeks to re-establish the axiomatic principle of the argument. Thus, Bildad carries on:

> Indeed (אם emphatic, see Gordis 1978:88) your children sinned
> against him, he delivered them into the power of their transgression
> (8:4).

Eliphaz deduces from the principle (Job 4:6-7, for instance), that the matter of Job's sin has resulted in God's justice. However, Bildad argues inductively. First, he reasons, "your sons committed a sin, consequently, God punished them".

Zophar takes a different approach. He appeals to the mysterious, to the non-rational, the supreme power. This is the idea of the "holy", the "*numen*", using Otto's term (1970). The *numen* stresses human limitations:

> But oh, that God would speak, and open his lips to you, and that
> he would tell you the secrets of wisdom ... Can you find out the
> deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?
> (11:6-7).

Consequently, there is no point in arguing with God, or questioning God. What happens is axiomatic regarding human beings, including, of course, Job.

Elihu's approach is personal. He is pleasant; he emphasises that he is equal to Job (33:6). This is the "ethical appeal", making the addresser and the addressee equal. In fact, Elihu appeals to Job on the basis of "equality" through almost his entire address. This lengthy introduction is intentional, as Elihu, in contrast to the other friends, actually does not regard Job as a sinner; he basically seeks to assure Job that God intends to communicate with him (cf. Safire 1992:14-15).

Job the Dissident

The word dissident derives from the Latin *dissentire* which is to differ in opinion, disagree, or think in a contrary manner. The dissident is defined as one who dissents from others, specifically one who separates from an established religion. The dissident is therefore a "troublemaker" in the eyes of the majority. He (she) is an outsider, is out of the community but in an active manner. The dissident is "one who demonstrates his disagreement by action; a damned troublemaker" (Safire 1992:xxvii).

Scientific work (in both the natural sciences and the humanities) is based on paradigms, and the acceptance of scholars to the community of scholarship – their entrance ticket for membership – is when all the members of the community are committed to the same rules of research and practice. Hence, a researcher who does not follow the paradigms or rules is dismissed by the community as a dissident (cf. Gross 1990:82). The dissident is not engaged in scholarly debate as normal scientific procedure. Rather, dissidents ignore the rules; they play by their own rules. Thus, their opponents, who apply the paradigm and debate among themselves regarding their interpretations, dismiss dissidents as complete outsiders.

We may compare Job's position to the individual researcher who is dismissed by the community of scholars. Job does not "play by the rules"; hence, he is a dissident, unaccepted.

Job is the individual who challenges specific hermeneutical religious rules of his society. He does not provide his criticism on the basis of new investigations, or that he had found a new way to interpret God's mind. He bases his argumentation on self-experience which indicates to him that he is guiltless. His long speech in Job 29-31 is a moral decree which is a universal code of ethics as the following quote demonstrates:

> I had dressed myself in righteousness like a garment,
> Justice, for me, was cloak and turban.
> I was eyes for the blind,
> And feet for the lame
> Who but I, was father of the poor? ... (29:14-15).

Consequently, he deduces that if he is suffering, God is guilty:

> Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley
> (31:40).

This is absurd; a situation that contradicts order and justice, as Job had already said:

<div dir="rtl">ארץ נתנה ביד רשע</div>

The earth is given into the hands of the wicked (Job 9:24).

Job therefore applies a model of reasoning which is paradoxical for the friends. Indeed, Job might say, there is a causal link between cause and effect, as the friends actually argue. However, here, the rules work upside down – when the friends tie the cause to the person's moral behaviour, Job attributes it to God's moral behaviour. Consequently, God is a sinner! But, and here the dissident is fully in action, God is not in pain because the rules do not apply to Him. Hence, if a person is in pain, s/he is not the cause of the problem – God is the cause. In short, human suffering is not a punishment, and the moral principle, sin as the cause of suffering, does not exist at all.

Job is full of anger and pain. He is bitter and he expresses his feelings very sharply.

He does not hesitate to criticise God in public and to point to Him as the cause of his problem. Obviously, God acts, as the friends might agree, since God punishes sinners. But Job presents God differently as he claims that he himself is innocent; hence, God is actually torturing him for no reason at all. The conclusion is that Job breaks the pattern of community thought; he is not part of the group, he does not subscribe to the theory.

Truth and Method

The human sciences, by imitating the natural sciences, is concerned with establishing similarities, regularities and conformities to the law which will make it possible to predict individual phenomena and processes. This is exactly what Job's friends have done – they know nothing about the particular instance, yet they are convinced that they can draw conclusions regarding Job's situation. How? They subscribe to the law which makes it possible for them to predict in an individual instance. However, something went wrong. The friends' interpretation missed the issue because in this instance Job did not commit a sin that caused God's punishment. The question of the law and the prediction of the instance is precisely the issue that makes the difference between natural law and the law of the science of the humanities. In natural law, the inductive method enables us to predict the instance; however, in the humanities, the instance might not fit. We can learn about general phenomena in terms of the human sciences but not about a particular case as "One does not discover causes for particular effects, but

simply establishes regularities" (Gadamer 1975:6). Recently, Kramer has pursued the issue further:

> A metaphysical view can hardly undergo either confirmation or refutation through empirical methods. Precisely because a metaphysical doctrine must abstract itself from specifics ... (cited in Fish 2003:393).

Fish presents the matter in the context of the discussions regarding cause and effect between the event of 11 September 2001 and the rise of postmodernism. This is a question between philosophy and an event of history, or as he notes (following Kramer):

> Considerations on the metaphysical level and considerations on the quotidian, mundane level are independent of one another ... (Fish 2003:396).

That is to say, the relationship between theory and a concrete instance are not applied as a mathematical formula or an inductive natural law. Indeed, the matter of establishing a law on the basis of similarities and their implication to the natural sciences and humanities is what creates the differences between these two branches of study (see Gadamer 1975).

It appears therefore that the friends' fault was to adapt a metaphysical theory "as it is" and accordingly deduce Job's specific instance as a confirmation of the theory without studying the particular event. Hence, they rushed to declare him a sinner without any basis, because indeed Job happened to be righteous. Furthermore, we can say that the theory regarding God's justice and the principle of retribution did not collapse here because the specific instance did not fit. Job suffered not because he committed a sin, but because he was being tested – an instance that does not fall within the theory. Nevertheless, Job was rewarded given his true manifestation, as the epilogue indicates.

However, there is a lesson here regarding the human ability to induct a theory on God's retribution; the theory exists but human beings are unable to fit the instance. In other words, the friends applied a method which can indicate a general concept but not a particular case. This distinction, the friends refused to accept.

The book of Job is therefore about the search for truth, allowing the facts or knowledge to lead to the conclusions, and not vice versa, allowing opinion to be the final judgment. The issue is demonstrated through the *Hymn to Wisdom* in Job 28 with the emphasis on human technical ability, but the lack of the true wisdom:

> But tell me, where does wisdom come from?
> Where is understanding to be found?
> The road to it is still unknown to human being,
> Not to be found in the land of living (Job 28:12-13).

Theory cannot reveal wisdom; therefore, it may be faulty.

Nevertheless, the focus of the argument of the book of Job has been altered from the search itself to the methodology of the research. The focus is no longer on the question of God's justice, nor on Job's innocence. Rather, the question, posed specifically to Job by God, is not whether Job is a sinner or whether God acts unjustly, but whether Job is armed with the proper tools for making his accusation. This tool is knowledge which is in fact the foundation of a true inquiry. Here, one might claim that there is no end to inquiry, and even if the investigator possesses the tools, the act of searching for the truth remains a ceaseless process of questioning and arguing. Gadamer (1996:3) tells us that, "The progress of science is sustained by its continual self-correction". However, this process of questioning is under control, as it must be done methodologically to reach the proper conclusions, and by methodology, we mean:

> the establishment of similarities, regularities and conformities to a law which would make it possible to predict the individual phenomena and processes (Gadamer 1975:5).

But this process is based on "hard material", facts and knowledge. In Job's case, God teaches him that the methodology of inquiry must not be based on dogma, but on knowledge which may transcend personal experience.

Job provides a different argumentative context from his friends (Gitay 1999b:239-250) which raises questions regarding the validity of the friends' presupposition and the implication of their "generally accepted" notions. The question therefore is why such a rhetorical endeavour takes place in defence of a view that confounds the reality of the book. The issue at stake is the power of "dogmatic" thinking, the strength of the "generally accepted" and the theory in our life when armed with a vivid rhetoric. Can rhetoric be such a mighty instrument of persuasion, almost without limits, as the Greek Sophists maintained? (Fish 1990:203-222). The fact that the friends deliver their speeches, reiterating society's view, alludes to the problem which is in a broader perspective the confrontation between the "generally accepted" as the source of truth and knowledge and the formulation of a theory when rhetoric serves as the discipline of inquiry. The question, which the book of Job seeks to examine, is the merit of the endeavour of persuasion in a defence of a religious presupposition theorised into a prevailing

scheme. The debate is a manifestation of the powerful position of the "generally accepted" and theory in our thinking and decision making.

The struggle here is about the authority of knowledge when the issue is who is capable of owning knowledge – the individual or the community – when the community does not have sufficient specific knowledge, but functions in the light of a theory of behaviour. Therefore, who has the right of judgment – the "theory" or the experienced individual? The individual bases his/her knowledge on personal experience while the community performs on the basis of the "generally accepted", which can be defined in terms of a dogma: "that which one thinks is true, an opinion; or a decree, a word which is sourced from *dokein*, to think" (Webster Dictionary). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca speak about "facts" and "truths" (e.g. religious truths) as a system of connections that function as follows:

> Connections that enable a transfer of the agreement to be made certainty of fact A (Job suffers) combined with belief in system L (suffering means punishment for a sin) leads to the certainty of fact B (Job suffers as a result of his sin); in other words, acceptance of fact A plus theory L amount to acceptance of B (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:69).

The statement implies that the dogma or the "religious truth" is an act of received opinion, presupposition, thinking in a context of a concept or idea, while individual knowledge is based on personal experience free of dogmatic thinking. In other words, society, specifically religious society, does not possess "true knowledge" as a personal insight or understanding. Rather, there are concepts and doctrines such as punishment or reward that are implemented on the basis of the "generally accepted", rather than personal insight or individual knowledge. Thus, Pope John Paul II speaks about suffering as a Church dogma:

> Suffering, in fact, is always a great test not only of physical strength but also of spiritual strength ... it is a cry for the victory of good even through evil, through suffering, through every wrong and human injustice (Messori 1994:25).

For the Pope, the concept of suffering is not a matter of personal interpretation where every instance might be different and hence explained differently and independently, but suffering is interpreted as a dogma, as an indication which implies a test.

We speak therefore about tension between individual knowledge and the community's "theory". This sort of tension between the judgment of the individual and the judgment of the followers of the "theory", presented so far as the tension

between religious dogma and individual judgment, may be compared to the relationship between the community of scientists and the individual investigator. Thomas Kuhn's conceptualisation of scientific achievements, as a matter of the accomplishment of the community of researchers rather than individual investigation is illuminating. Scientific achievements, Kuhn claims, are not the work of sporadic individual investigation, but achievements produced within the frame of the community of scientists. Thus, Kuhn maintains that:

> "Normal science" means research firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements, achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice ... [this is] what mainly prepares the student for membership in the particular scientific community with which he' will later practice. Because he there joins men who learned the bases of their field from the same concrete models ... Men whose research is based on shared paradigms committed to the same rules and standards for scientific practice (Kuhn 1970:10-11).

The paradigm, the dogma, the friends of Job claim, is the only means of conceiving the meaning of human suffering. Job cannot separate himself from the system, has endured for generations. He cannot start an investigation of God's behaviour and his situation from his own case, ignoring the paradigm which is rooted in the past:

> For inquire, I pray you, of an earlier generation (דר רישון, see Gordis 1978:89) and heed the insight of their fathers. For we are but of yesterday, and we know nothing (Job 8:8-9).

The understanding of the human condition is in line with a long history of knowledge. Therefore, Job's situation cannot by any means be exceptional. God punishes the sinner, and this is precisely – given the dogma – Job's situation. Job may deny his guilt, but such a denial is senseless since the friends maintain that the dogma is the only criterion for human judgment.

The book of Job introduces the tension between the individual and society's "generally accepted" as a complex matter. As readers, our sympathy is with Job, not with the friends, particularly, as the prologue informs us that Job is indeed innocent. The readers actually laugh at the friends' attempt to protect God on the basis of their dogma. The dogma, and hence the "protection", happens to be an irritating comedy. These wise men, who forcefully represent the dogma (theory), argue as fools. The readers sense that the friends do not know what they are talking about; that their dogma is not realistic. Furthermore, the readers who notice that the friends reject independent thinking as a meaningless exercise

which opposes the community's rules may ask, in fact, how and why dogmatic hermeneutics is able to undermine independent thinking which might have no less worth than dogmatic thinking.

Interestingly enough, not only the readers are perplexed about the friends' position. Actually, God Himself criticises them for their dogmatic interpretation rather than conducting direct investigation:

> My wrath is kindled against you [Eliphaz] and against your two friends; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has (Job 42:7).

That is to say, God actually insinuates that there is no knowledge which is based only on dogmatic presupposition. We may paraphrase God's response to the friends' dogmatic theory – the dogma should not be taken automatically because it does not substitute for investigation. That is, the private case of Job may be applied in terms of the theory only if an investigation of the specific instance corresponds with the theory.

Nevertheless, God does not approve of Job's complaints either. He responds to Job's criticism by accusing the accuser of a lack of basic knowledge therefore questioning the validity of Job's claim for innocence and his accusation of injustice against God:

> Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? ...
> Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? ...
> Gird up your loins like a man;
> I will question you, and you declare to me.
> Will you even put me in the wrong?
> Will you condemn me that you will be justified?
> (Job 38:4; 40:8; see Prideaux 2010:75-87).

God blames Job for accusing Him without having a real cause for his judgment. In other words, God argues that if Job wishes to blame Him, he must arm himself with knowledge which Job indeed does not possess. God's accusation of Job in the light of his condemnation of the friends might confuse the readers. Is God using here a double standard – on the one hand, complementing Job for saying the right thing, the truth, while, on the other hand, blaming him for accusations which have no solid foundation, as he speaks without knowledge? As a matter of fact, God's censure of the friends alongside of His acknowledgement of Job's claim must be read in its context. Actually, the friends are accused for not saying the truth, the facts as Job claims (the Hebrew word used by God for "truth" or "facts" is נכונה; cf. Ps 5:10; Deut 17:4), that is, they are accused of implementing a dogma with no

facts to sustain it. The God who speaks to Job rejects the "simple" link between cause and effect for understanding the human condition; the reason for human suffering is a riddle which revolves around God's essence (cf. Kurzweil 1965: 25-33). However, Job manifests the truth as he sees it; he is sincere, even though his conclusions regarding God's immoral conduct are wrong, because as a human being he does not possess the knowledge for such a judgment. Nevertheless, he speaks from his heart, and at least seeks knowledge on the basis of his own experience which happens to be too limited. The friends are blamed, because at the end of the day, they have not searched for knowledge; they already claimed to own it in advance.

Job's friends interpret the situation on the basis of an existing paradigm. However, they are too "mechanical"; thus, they resist a paradigm shift. They reject new information, additional details, and are not able therefore to adopt the new discoveries and bring about a shift in dogma or a reformulation of the theory. Job's friends close their eyes to new discoveries. They are blind to the consistent claim that a specific instance does not fit with their theory.

Knowledge and the methodology of inquiry are therefore the issue at stake. However, neither Job nor his friends own the necessary knowledge, yet God acknowledges Job's method of inquiry, at least, as a sincere one. The friends are blamed not just because they were wrong but because their position and method of inquiry is harmful. They were determined to announce a verdict on a human being without looking at him at all, without investigating the particular instance, but relying instead on a "theory". They ignored the "object" but drew conclusions on the basis of the "generally accepted" which require in this specific case a new adaptation. Consequently, the friends' method of inquiry is not valid, but it could be defined as rhetorical.

Truth and Method Now

The question of knowledge and paradigm in making proper decisions is not limited to Job and the friends. The matter has occupied the South African political and medical circles since President Mbeki's open letter to the world leaders (3 April 2000) which questioned the scientific knowledge of the West in dealing with the HIV epidemic. At first glance, the cases look similar – who possesses the knowledge and who has the moral right to question the received "generally accepted"? President Mbeki defended the right of the minority to ask questions. The Deputy President compared the right even of a single voice to challenge the "consensus" (the dogma) to Galileo's historical example: "As we all know today, he

was right, and they were wrong" (South African Parliament, 19 April 2000). Can Job teach us a lesson here? Job is the individual who questions the validity of the majority to represent the "generally accepted". Therefore, the lesson of Job is that the right to ask questions is fundamental. Abraham also questioned God's righteousness (Gen 18:23-33), and his right to question was not taken from him; on the contrary, God complemented him for his utterance. Still, neither Job nor Abraham was able to judge the matter because they lacked the proper knowledge. The implication for the current situation is that the policymakers have the right to question, and their questions should be encouraged. However, there is a limit which goes beyond the level of questioning and which applied to Job's limit as well. This limit is rooted in the method of inquiry that is based on "the hard facts", that is, knowledge. However, in Job's case, human beings do not possess the tools for measuring knowledge. As a result, Job acknowledged his fault which is his inability to ask questions while trying to draw conclusions:

> Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore
> I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful
> for me which I did not know (Job 42:3).

Can Job's friends be compared to the scientists, the opposition to President Mbeki's criticism? We have seen that God rebuked the friends for not speaking the truth as Job did. Therefore, can we suggest as well, that the scientists also do not tell us the truth? Do the scientists today speak with no knowledge? The point, as we recall with regard to the friends, is who can represent the institution? The paradigm does not possess the means either for the criticism of Job or for the defence of God. It follows the pattern without having the ability to provide a real assessment of the matter. Hence, in this regard, the question will be who could today, in the modern debate about the HIV/AIDS issue, play a similar role to that of Job's friends? Is it the media through its articles and editorials? Can it function in a similar way to that of the friends of Job?

Moreover, the articles, which appear in the newspapers, news magazines and so forth, are rich in literary expressions, metaphors and other rhetorical tropes that seek to stir emotions and to establish a strong public opinion on the basis of rhetoric rather than real knowledge which is the source of judgment. The media provides some information, but it usually offers only the conclusions and then seeks to affect the readers' minds. That is to say, it intends to create the "generally accepted" idea. This rhetoric, as the public or Job's friends, is not furnished with the appropriate tools for judgment. Actually, the readers, given the design of the printed material and its style, are forced to accept the common view and to condemn the opponents without a real understanding of the roots of the problem.

The media's strong involvement in a highly opinionated fashion is a lesson not only for the South African HIV/AIDS debate, but also for the country's new democracy. A healthy democracy is founded on open debate, but not on the type of argument put forward by Job's friends. That is to say, proper debate in democracy should not be a mere exercise in sophist rhetoric.

Our age is one of science and technology. Science, in our age, is not just a matter of accumulating information and theorising on the basis of the data. Science now, creates artificial structures for nature itself; science can even master nature. As a result, a huge gap has been created between those who possess knowledge and those who are the decision makers and need to implement the practice of science on the basis of their judgment. Here, the media has to play a critical role in minimising the gap between scientific knowledge and the layperson. The gulf cannot be bridged through stormy opinionated rhetoric, but through a gradual and systematic educational process which focuses on knowledge. Job's friends rejected a proper investigation and consequently failed. The media, on the other hand, fails its readers by substituting knowledge enveloped in rhetoric with opinions fashioned in rhetoric. Rhetoric, in short, is not a self-maintaining goal, but is a useful tool for effective education which is based upon knowledge.

Epilogue — The Lesson: Limits of Rhetoric

Rhetoric, in this regard, may be defined as a method of arguing, in the realm of politics or public opinions, where there are no "hard facts" ("knowledge") to determine the matter as in "science". Aristotle defines rhetoric, in its function as a tool of public debate, as:

> an ability, in each case, to see the available means of persuasion ... rhetoric seems to be able to observe the persuasive about "the given", so to speak. That, too, is why we say it does not include technical knowledge of any particular, defined genus (*Rhetoric* 1355b).

Rhetoric therefore is not a search for knowledge, but a method of arguing a case for the sake of persuasion. In a rhetorical universe, Barilli maintains:

> The notion of "truth" does not obtain, since it would imply external foundations, to be sought in the nature of things ... This does not mean that all issues will matter in the same way ... But the final right to assess the degree of closeness to the true belongs to the *demon*, that is, the people, a community, an assembly of politicians, judges, the participants in a discussion, in a debate (Barilli 1989:viii-ix).

The "generally accepted" view of the group – the participants' mutual opinion – determines the judgment (see Eco 2007:44-65). This endeavour of persuasion may be achieved by stirring the judges' emotions, establishing the speaker's credibility as a trusted person, as well as presenting the argument as a matter of reason when the aim is to transfer the addresser's portrayal of the reality to the addressees.

The lesson of Job revolves around the source of authority – the theory or the individual's conviction. Should the voice of the dissident be silenced? (cf. Safire 1992:xxiv).The lesson of Job is that the dissident should speak out given the power of self-conviction. The dissident might be wrong, but he receives a response, as God spoke to Job the dissident but not to the friends who represent the voice of the majority. Job is involved in a struggle which we may refer to as a conflict between a private conviction and the society's. That is to say, the book presents a conflict between two approaches which cannot be reconciled. The society operates on the basis of common agreements, shared by its members. The question is how individuals who feel that their truth differs from that of the society should function and maintain their integrity when they oppose the common agreement which keeps the society united. Morally, is it permissible to oppose society's common agreement? The opponents are the dissidents, who take themselves out of society's pattern.

The book of Job revolves around a debate between two adversaries. The first debater, Job, presents the individual in his (her) struggle for truth on the basis of personal knowledge and experience. The second arguer, represented by a group of friends, projects the common view of the community, that is, the "generally accepted" principles as the criterion for truth. Can these two approaches be reconciled? This is the dilemma of the book, dramatised through the personal story of the suffering of an innocent man, Job, and his call for justice on the basis of own conviction. Thus, in conclusion, we can point out that questioning and knowledge, as shown by their implementation both in Job and in modern society, are crucial issues. Questioning is a necessity both for the intelligent believer and the intelligent decision maker, otherwise they might lose their human integrity, as Job demonstrates so powerfully. But the act of questioning is also a tool which opens the door for learning and not just for arguing. Job taught us that knowledge is fundamental, but not everyone can possess it, and those who cannot reach it must admit their limitations and seek further additional avenues of study. Hence, in South Africa the lesson appear similar, particularly in matters of science and medicine.

Human beings accumulate knowledge. One asks, who is armed with the proper tools of knowledge? The irony is that none of the figures who take part in the

debate – neither Job nor his friends – possesses the knowledge. Job, we realise, has the right to argue his case, but he cannot be successful because he lacks the knowledge for drawing the proper conclusions. Knowledge, in other words, is not a matter of a rhetorical persuasion, since it is based on "hard material" such as facts, known only to the architect who designed the universe. Thus, only the builder, the creator, knows and understands the aim and the meaning of the world and its ways of behaviour. He is the only one who really knows, as God's response indicates.

The difference between Job, his friends and Mbeki's position is that in Job they could not rely on knowledge. Job relied on his feelings, the friends relied on a theory, but no one really had the tools for discovering the truth (the readers know). The question regarding the current dilemma is to whom should the decision makers, the politicians who need to make a crucial decision regarding a scientific-medical matter, listen? Should they make their own decision, should they listen to the dissident or to the scientific-medical establishment? Then, the question will be what criteria do the decision makers use in making such a critical decision? Regarding Job, the question of the merit of accepting the decision is presented. We realise that the debate, at the end of the day, was a great exercise in rhetoric, and is being repeated in the current debate on HIV/AIDS.

History, Literature and Memory[11]

The Text as a Dialogue

The following literary presuppositions are fundamental in understanding the process of rewriting the historical narratives. The point of departure is that there is no text which emerges "out of nothing" or in a literary vacuum. Mikhail Bakhtin has illuminated the issue as follows:

> There is a dialogical relationship between proclamations. Every proclamation depends on other proclamations. My proclamation responds in a certain way to proclamations of others which preceded the present. The meaning is manifested only after it touched in another meaning (2008:14-15).

The application of that view to the critics' work is to reveal the subtext which has stimulated the other text, that is, our goal as critics who seek to reconstruct the act of building the Biblical narratives is to shed light on the dialogue which takes place between texts. In other words, we are requested to regard the texts, the narratives, as a chain of responses – one to the other – and to recover the situation that gave birth to the new narrative which means reconstructing the "story" of the dialogue between the present situation and its former one.

Having said that, we would propose that the post-exilic biblical historiographer such as the Chronicler is not an historian like the Greek Herodotus who sought to tell to his readers what happened based on his inquiry. Rather, the Biblical narrator responds to situations and searches for the meaning of history, and does not seek to recover the events as such (Yerushalmi 1982:25). Furthermore, we may conclude that this Chronicler did not produce his narrative in isolation from earlier texts but he dialogues with other texts which requested his response. In other words, his aim is not like that of a researcher – to correct the early historiography – but it is to give a concrete meaning to the new history which he has composed.

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Therefore, the conclusion is that the Biblical narratives – and actually every historical narrative – are not final, "the last word", but are rewritten time and again always in dialogue with others. Ronald Barthes explains this literary phenomenon with his distinction between the "classical" and the "non-classical" text:

> The first is a sealed unit, whose closure arrests meaning ... it closes
> the work, chains it to the letter, and rivets it to its signified.

By contrast, the non-classical texts tremble and wander; they are 'open' texts (1981:33). Obviously, the pre-canonical situation leaves us with the category of "open texts". According to Eco, this openness means that they are "co-operatively generated by the addressee" (1979:3-4). Barthes speaks of such a text as a "writerly" text because the goal of a literary work is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text (1975:4). Indeed, the aim of the new text is not to glorify the author but to attach the text to addressees who own it and need it.

Jacques Derrida's "deconstruction" is implied here in the sense that there is no absolute authority to one text (Derrida 1978). Consequently, the Biblical scribes were able to rewrite texts, borrowing from other books without the authority of the other text.

As a result, the thesis of the present discussion is that books have been written in response to situations. Books "fight" one against the other seeking to establish their signature. My argument is actually broader. There is no such thing as Biblical historiography in terms of writing the events and echoing them. Rather, we have books that seek the meaning of the events and these books refer to the past in terms of the needs of the present, as a process of "non-stop" dialogue between texts and situations.

Changing the Frame

In this section, I intend to present a crucial factor to the question of the audience's perception. The question is how does a text communicate with the audience?

Ultimately, we are talking about the techniques of oral communication. The memorisation of an oral discourse is a difficult task in contrast to the written discourse. How does an audience that hear speeches, myths, poems perceive through their hearing devices? The case of the Power Point presentation is illuminating. Almost every talk or speech today is accompanied by a Power Point

presentation. That is, speakers do not trust their audience's capability to perceive orally; thus, they follow the ear with the more trusted vehicle, the eye. In case the hearers do not concentrate on the oral performance for even one minute, they might lose the point.

Indeed, oral performance scholarship has produced a detailed empirical study of the chain of techniques of perception. Walter Ong has developed the notion of the formula and the theme which characterise oral performance:

> Commonplace is a place in which were stored arguments to prove one or another point, 'the seat of argument'. Oral culture had generated the commonplaces as part of its formulary apparatus for accumulating and retrieving knowledge (1971a:79-87).

That is to say, the common themes are the basis for knowledge and argumentation (see Ong 1977a:9).

Plato has written about the commonplace *(locus communis)*, the widely applicable argument – the frame – as that which occurs, "when it is a matter of topics that are not commonplace, that are difficult to invent ..." (*Phaedrus* 236). That is, there are in the society certain agreements or points of acceptance that are perceived automatically by the audience.

William Walch has pointed out that the historians must also respond to their audience's demand. The audience is not interested in recording the events as such, but it seeks guidance regarding the meaning of the event, the guidance must be formulated in a perceivable language in terms of the audience's perception (1974:141-142).

I intend to shed light on the question of the perceivable language of the Biblical discourse. Narratives are communicative texts perceived by their audience in terms of certain codes, formulae, units of perception which are given the linguistic term, "frame". What is a frame? Cognitive theoreticians have developed a concept which Robin Tolmach Lakoff explains as "clues that tell everyone how to understand what has occurred ... a structure of expectation", or more precisely, "a body of knowledge that is evoked in order to provide an inferential base for the understanding of an utterance" (2001:24, 47).

The following prophetic address illustrates the point:

ויהי דבר ה' אלי לאמר:

הלך וקראת באזני ירושלם לאמר:

כה אמר ה':

זכרתי לך חסד נעוריך // אהבת כלולתיך

לכתך אחרי במדבר // בארץ לא זרועה

קדש ישראל לה' // ראשית תבואתה

כל אכליו יאשמו // רעה תבא אליהם

The word of God came to me:
Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, thus says God:
I remember the devotion of your youth,
Your love as a bride,
How you followed me in the wilderness
...
Israel was holy to God,
The first fruits of his harvest.
All who ate of it held guilty,
Disaster came upon them (Jer 2:1-3).

God is committed to Israel. Israel is sacred to God who is her ultimate saviour. However, the rest of the utterance contrasts with the premise of God the protector:

שמעו דבר ה' בית יעקב וכל משפחות בית ישראל:

כה אמר ה': מה מצאו אבותיכם בי עול כי רחקו מעלי

וילכו אחרי ההבל ויהבלו,

ולא אמרו איה ה'?

המעלה אתנו מארץ מצרים   המוליך אתנו במדבר

בארץ ערבה ושוחה ...

ואביא אתכם אל ארץ הכרמל לאכל פריה וטובה

ותבאו ותטמאו את ארצי ונחלתי שמתם לתועבה

...

לכן עד אריב אתכם נאם ה' ואת בני בניכם אריב ...

Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families
of the house of Israel:
... What wrong did your ancestors find in me
That they went far from me,
And went after worthless themselves?
They did not say, where is the Lord
Who brought us from the land of Egypt,
Who led us in the wilderness,
In a land of deserts and pits,
In a land of drought and deep darkness,

> In a land that no one passes through,
> Where no one lives?
> I brought you into a plentiful land
> To eats its fruits and its good things,
> But when you entered you defiled
> My land,
> And made my heritage an abomination
> ...
> Therefore once more I accuse you, says the Lord,
> And I accuse your children's children (Jer 2:4-9).

A close reading of the speech reveals the construction of a number of components such as an historical reference and an appeal to the audience.

However, the historical reference, the Exodus, is not presented independently as a reference as such, but is instrumental in the speech as a proof, deduction or an example (Perelman 1982:106-114). Attention is given to the fact that the historical reference is contrasted to the beginning – the Exodus connotes God's total commitment versus the Exodus is an excuse for God's punishment.

What has happened? As the speech progresses, we see that the great protector turned out to be the One who punishes His people. Why? They betrayed Him through their ingratitude when they ignored Him and committed sins in the holy land which He had given them after bringing them out of Egypt. In other words, Jeremiah's speech had shaped the course of the political-national history of Israel by giving a new meaning to the historical act of salvation. The historical reference is not regarded any more as a proof that God protects His people by all means; but on the contrary, it is a symbol of moral responsibility which could result in God's punishment through a political disaster. The historical-theological meaning of the symbol of the Exodus has changed.

Let me further explain. Given its place in the speech, the historical event is supposed to function as a frame – Exodus=God the saviour. However, the prophet is turning the frame upside down. He is building a new frame – not salvation but communal responsibility which could carry national punishment. That is to say, for Jeremiah's audience the Exodus is an integral part of their cultural-religious heritage, otherwise, the event would not be mentioned. Nevertheless, the theme of the address – God in terms of punishment rather than salvation – is problematic and could be unperceivable for the addressees. Interestingly enough, Isaiah also used a reference to God's commitment to His people and their ungrateful behaviour but he presented it through the course of nature – a father-son's relationship (1:2-3), rather than historical reference. Nevertheless, the meaning of

Exodus in terms of the people's theological presupposition has been turned upside down. This is a difficult rhetorical task to challenge the frame. Thus, we experience an example of reshaping the frame, the historical reference in terms of the prophetic ideology.

The Question of Collective Memory

With regard to the code as the frame, the question of whether Exodus is an authentic historical event or an historical fiction is totally irrelevant. However, the reference to Exodus is functional and reveals that the nation of Israel *believes* that the Exodus is an authentic event which does not require any proof or archaeological testimony. Nevertheless, the historical references could receive new meanings in the context of the present.

Scholars of cultural studies have developed the concept of collective memory. The question of collective memory revolves around the issue of creating the narrative, the story or the epos of the nation. I shall demonstrate the point with the following recent case.

The military invasion of Gaza by Israel in the war called עופרת יצוקה ("Metal Casting") has been evaluated differently by the Palestinians and the Israelis. Amira Hess, a journalist of the leading newspaper in Israel, *Haaretz* has written an article in her column titled, *"Who is the Coward"* (24 May 2009) about the establishments of parallel narratives. The Israelis claim victory because there was no serious fight against Hamas, arguing that the Hamas ran away and hid themselves. On the other hand, Hamas has created their narrative by explaining that indeed there was no real fight because the Israelis hid themselves under the shelters of their tanks out of fear of the Hamas' snipers. There is no argument regarding the historical event, the invasion to Gaza; however, the question is the meaning of the story of the war and its adoption by each side. Each nation has created its own narrative based on its function in terms of its role and national effect.

Let us be reminded that culture, national identity, is built on the establishment of ideological narratives which function as a national glue. These social-national narratives shape the collective memory of the society. Thus, Daniel Bar-Tal writes:

> In society which exists in a conflict the social beliefs of the collective memory function to represent the history for this society. These beliefs are characterized first of all that they are not aiming to provide an objective historical as possible of the past, but to tell the past in a functional way which is significant for the preservation of the present society given the new challenges. Thus

they might change, might omit evidences, they might be selective and presented subjectively for the need of the present. These narratives are designed, reinterpreted by the establishment, the institutions for the sake of the society's present goals (2007:33).

We speak about the presentations of ideological rather than archaeological factual narratives. That is to say, the national narrative has been designed as a story which mirrors the memory of the society. The goal is to preserve an existing social situation and the narratives are usually hidden behind apparently informative data (Gertz 1996:9-10).

The difference between history and collective memory is highlighted by Halbwachs as follows:

> History the product of a school or by scrutiny of the records of the past is essentially a 'superorganic' science detached from the pressures of the immediate sociopolitical reality. Collective memory is an organic part of social life that is continuously transformed in response to society's changing needs (1980:78-87).

Further, Martin Buber has considered the role of writing history as follows:

> For history is written not in order to recall the past and also not for the future, but essentially for the present generation that can learn its lesson (cited in Hodes 1972:77-78).

Thus, history is not written as such but is programmatic for the sake of the present. The narratives that have been created as collective memory function as frames which rhetorically serve as communicative vehicles that do not require elaboration, and function as an argumentative axiom that does not require further illustration. Consequently, the ideological narratives as collective memory, like the cognitive frame, dominate the public discourse through speeches and shape as sub-text the national political-theological discourse. Our goal in this chapter is to show the process of the creation of the narrative, the collective memory of the society. In short, social beliefs are not the result of objective historical research but a re-designation of the reality even in a selective and subjective way when the new narrative is instrumental in the ideological-social existence of the society.

Reshaping the Meaning of Collective Memory

The philological analysis of Biblical criticism reveals specific tensions between various texts such as Chronicles versus Samuel and Kings. The basic question is why (re)write a new book with a chain of events that is cited in an earlier book. An

important illustration is David's intention to build the Temple of Jerusalem; a plan that has been declined by God and His prophet, as 2 Sam 7 tells us. However, the Samuel narrative assures David that there is no rush in building the Temple, David's glory is assured and his son will be the Temple's builder. Indeed, Chronicles accepts the fact that David did not build the Temple; however, the Chronicler presents David as the driving force behind the Temple; its initiator and organiser. Indeed, David's speech (in 1 Chron: 28-29; also 22:5ff.) motivates his rejection because he is a warrior and he has shed blood (28:3; for David's speeches in Chronicles, see also Jonker 2008:653-669). Nevertheless, David gathers the people and motivates the building even though the Temple has been dedicated by his son Solomon. This is not just a further elaboration on the question of the building but the Chronicler is creating the collective memory of Israel regarding David's active, positive and inspiring role in building the Temple, given its religious importance as the holy sanctuary.

Thus, David plays a stronger role in Chronicles regarding the Temple than in Samuel and Kings. The scribe does not deal with David's biography, as the authors of Samuel do, but focuses on David as the king, the builder of the State and the force behind the building of the Temple (cf. Japhet 1977:334-412).

Furthermore, Chronicles dedicates a significant part of the book to the Temple – the question of the builder and David's speeches on behalf of his son Solomon the builder. What is the purpose? Obviously, the Chronicler is engaged in a dialogue regarding the image of David's instrumental role in the Temple building, but with whom?

Knoppers (2007:99-124) argues that the Chronicler's aim is to emphasise the centrality of the Temple of Jerusalem to all the Israelites who were spread all over the Persian Empire of the fourth century. This is a plausible position but too narrow in terms of the historical-ideological situation, as I seek to show below.

Nevertheless, we need a broader perspective of the situation that has been created in Judah at the time of the Restoration which is the transformation from the exilic situation – no cultic worship – to a geographical centre with a centre of its own – The Temple. We need to reveal the sub-text that the Chronicler is in dialogue with – an enigma, which the rest of the discussion seeks to reveal. For this purpose, we need to look at the important texts of Haggai and Zechariah as well as certain prophetic utterances such as Isaiah 58 and 66.

The Eschatological Expectations – Haggai's Messianic Prophecies

One speech – we get the impression from the book of Haggai – has affected the political and the religious situation of the new community which had just arrived from Babylon. One speech has dramatically changed the people's destiny. As the beginning of the book of Ezra and the conclusion of Chronicles tell us, the motivation for the return has been the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem as the religious centre. However, something acute has happened and the people, who were supposed to enthusiastically restore the religious centre with the financial support of the Persian monarchy, did not do so. Haggai explains this in terms of the people's ego which had resulted in a severe economic situation, an inflation which affected Judah. The prophet had provided a vivid description of the difficult economic situation (1:5-6) promising that it would be repaired given the building of the Temple.

Haggai accuses the people of building for themselves but not for God:

העת לכם אתם לשבת בבתיכם ספונים והבית הזה חרב

You are busy with your own while my House lies in ruins (1:4, 9).

This is a very sharp accusation. Haggai motivates his dramatic call given the people's egoism and sense of guilt – they look out for themselves but not for God. This is a hint that the financial situation regarding the building is not the "only story". Nevertheless, one dramatic motivating speech delivered by Haggai led the people to rebuild – the Temple in spite of everything, that is, from the evidence in the book. This is an historical development which has a deep theological implication.

I propose to look at the problem of the hesitation to rebuild the Temple from a broader sociological-theological perspective as a matter of national determination.

For the prophet Haggai, there is no purpose, no vision, and no future for the nation without an active worship at the Temple. That is, the concept of nation is for him a religious community which worships at the religious centre in Jerusalem but then, Haggai implies that Israel is a poor lost community.

Nevertheless, it appears that Haggai's religious-national position is no longer self-evident, and the duration of the Exile and the massive Jewish community in the Diaspora that preferred to stay in Babylon even after Cyrus declaration alludes to the growth of a new universal theology rather than a geographical one as Isaiah 66:1-4 and 58 indicate (the texts are analysed below). The presupposition is that the people in Exile have adjusted themselves to live with the notion that,

practically, the Temple does not exist anymore. In other words, they kept their national and religious identity without the Temple as a concrete physical centre, and I propose that this sort of dichotomy regarding the Temple is the sub-text of the delay in the building of the Temple in Haggai's days.

However, the project of rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem has motivated a further prophecy by Haggai. Almost one month after completing (or perhaps starting) the building, on the twenty-first day of the seventh month, Haggai delivered a prophetic oracle which maintained a strong messianic connotation:

עוד אחת מעט היא ואני מרעיש את השמים ואת הארץ ואת הים ואת החרבה.
והרעשתי את כל הגוים ובאו חמדת כל הגוים ומלאתי את הבית הזה כבוד ...
ובמקום הזה אתן שלום נאם ה' צבאות.

> A little while now and I are going to shake the heavens and the earth. I will shake all nations, and I will fill this Temple with glory ... (2:6-9).

Indeed, two months later, Haggai addresses Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah who interestingly enough is approached without addressing the priest Yehoshua son of Yehozadak as earlier (both were mentioned constantly together 1:1, 12, 2:2, 4). And again, he proclaims in the same messianic language:

אני מרעיש את השמים ואת הארץ.
והפכתי כסא ממלכות והשמדתי חזק ממלכות הגוים
והפכתי מרכבה ורכביה וירדו סוסים ורכביהם איש בחרב אחיו.
ביום ההוא נאם ה' צבאות אקחך זרבבל בן שאלתיאל עבדי
נאם ה'
ושמתיך כחותם כי בך בחרתי
נאם ה' צבאות

> Speak to Zerubbabel: I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. I will overturn the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the power of the kings ... when the days come I will take you and make you like a seal (2:20-23).

The word חותם ("seal") appears also in Song of Songs 8:6:

שימני כחותם על לבך ... כחותם על זרועך

> Set me as a seal upon your heart // As a seal upon your arm.

The seal is the personal signature which identifies the person. Hence, to be God's חותם connotes identification, the highest closeness to God (see also Jer 22:24-27 which connotes the close, intimate relationship between God and the Judean king).

Still, is it just an abstract metaphor, only a linguistic use? (Rose 2000:219-238, for instance, provides a wider meaning of חותם than kingship; however, his methodology – philology isolated from its literary context – is too cautious and limits the horizons of the interpretation).

Mention is given to the chosen one, Zerubbabel ben (son of) Shealtiel (1 Chron 3:17-18) who is a descendant of the House of David. The oracle refers to the eschatological-apocalyptic day, the great revolution, the coming of the chosen Messiah of the chosen House of David in the chosen Temple (for the language of 2:20-23, see Kessler 2002:222-239).

Attention must be given to the fact that Haggai speaks specifically to Zerubbabel, and the event is due to take place, not in a distant time, but shortly in Zerubbabel's days. This is supported by the employment of the verbs in the participle: אני מרעיש ("I am shaking the heavens" in 2:6, 21) which connote force, urgent action (for the form, consult Gesenius and Kautzsch, 107 D).

The building of the Temple applies an unusual religious-theological dimension – the change is taking place; the Messiah king, a descendant of the house of David is approaching given the building of the Temple (contrast to Rose's 2000:238-242 sterile philological analysis and Kessler 2002:222-239). Thus, the essence of the oracle is that the apocalyptic prophecy is rightly expected given Haggai's theological Temple's agenda (see also Japhet 1982:66-98).

In other words, Haggai envisions a messianic community which revolves around the Temple and is identified in terms of the messianic expectations that are in a stage of fulfilment.

Zechariah – The Reality

Exactly two months after Haggai delivered his messianic prophecy on the twenty-fourth of the ninth month, which is according to his book his last prophetic speech, his contemporary the prophet Zechariah, started to deliver his visions on the twenty-fourth of the eleventh month, the month of *Shevat*. He delivers his message in the form of visions. The first (1:7-17) tells of a horseman who reports that after they have patrolled the earth, they reached the conclusion that the land is peaceful (1:11). However, God's angel is not pleased and begs for action: "O Lord of hosts, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem …" (v. 12). There is a tension between the report; the calmness of the global political situation and the angel's expectations for a stormy reaction of God. It appears that the angel is still inspired by Haggai's prophecy of the twenty-fourth of the ninth month that

envisioned political storms, the shaking of the earth and the kingdoms and the appearance of Zerubbabel as the king, God's חותם. That is, God's messengers report that Haggai's messianic prophecy has not been carried out. Indeed, the Temple has been rebuilt; however, the revolution did not take place. Given the disappointment, it appears that Zechariah seeks to assure his audience that God has at least chosen Jerusalem as His city in spite of the political quietness (vv. 16-17):

לכן כה אמר ה':
שבתי לירושלם ברחמים // ביתי יבנה בה ...

> Therefore, thus says God:
> I have returned to Jerusalem with compassion // my House shall be
> built in it ...

This is a calm prophetic utterance with a lack of enthusiasm regarding the Messianic expectation. Zechariah is down to earth, calming down his excited audience. The point is that the high messianic-apocalyptical assurance of Haggai – who apparently based his utterances on the political storms in the Persian Empire – did not take place. Such a situation which contrasts with the enthusiastic restoration of the Temple and the renewal of the worship could create a severe religious-identical crisis. Consequently, Zechariah rushes to rebuild the religious belief and the community identity in the light of the unexpected development. Indeed, the new Temple exists and as a result Zechariah seeks to assure his audience the people of Judah that God is still their saviour; they are safe under His protection and Jerusalem will be expanded:

פרזות תשב ירושלם מרב אדם ובהמה בתוכה.
ואני אהיה לה נאם ה' חומת אש סביב // ולכבוד אהיה בתוכה ... (2:8-9)

> Jerusalem shall be inhabited like villages without walls,
> Because of the multitude of people and animals in it.
> For I will be a wall of fire all around it,
> And I will be the glory within it (2:4-5).

However, attention must be given to the fact that Zerubbabel is not mentioned; he does not play a role in God's cosmological wall protecting Jerusalem.

Such a situation of the disconfirmation of religious expectations has been investigated by a group of social psychologists who developed the theory of cognitive dissonance which explores the psychological consequences of disconfirmed religious expectations (Festinger *et al* 1956). The thesis is that the disconfirmed situation does not necessarily lead to the collapse of the believers; however, certain actions must be taken by the group. The belief must be continually presented among the believers,

appealing to others as well. Also, the belief under the new circumstances must be introduced in terms that are concerned with the real world; thus, the events will not unequivocally refute the belief. This implies certain moderations regarding the apocalyptic vision (Festinger *et al* 1956:209).

Therefore, we may regard the work of the prophet Zechariah as a response to the critical issue of continuing the belief in spite of the disconfirmation but pointing out as well the way – how to continue Haggai's vision without ignoring the real world. That is, enabling the believers to deal with the reality in terms of the belief.

Indeed, Zechariah appeals to his audience through a vision which illustrates his message in a vivid lively way. He sees a man, God's messenger, who communicates with him directly and personally and the prophet thus shares the direct divine message with the people.

Zechariah's language is not plain but high; a forceful emotional prophetic style. However, he lowers the political-messianic expectations without saying this directly. Nothing to worry about – God is Israel's God and Jerusalem is His city, is Zechariah's message. In brief, the prophet, in contrast to Haggai, does not portray messages which might create unrealistic illusions. He provides his disappointed audience with a belief which is anchored in the real world that surrounds them.

Nevertheless, the new development has to be dealt with, given Haggai's legacy, and above all, the question of the leadership after the decline of Zerubbabel's messianic kingship is an issue at stake. Thus, an important issue in the road of the real life is the status of the high priest, Yehoshua. He did not have a special status in Haggai's vision. Actually, the high priest does not appear in Haggai's messianic vision. However, Zechariah addresses Yehoshua directly and the hypothesis is that the high priest is addressed in Zechariah's vision of Chapter 3 because something had happened which required the prophet's intervention. Nevertheless, there is a reference to "my servant צמח" (3:8) which is not specifically identified by name. The word צמח refers to the branch of God as the following parallel demonstrates:

הנה ימים רבים נאום ה' והקמתי לדוד צמח צדיק ומלך מלך והשכיל

> See the days are coming when I will raise a *virtuous branch* for David
> (Jer 23:5; see also Isa 4:2; Jer 33:15).

Zechariah's rhetoric plays a significant role. Zechariah moderates God's promise – indeed, צמח is the linguistic code mentioned by Zechariah and not Haggai's חותם. Thus, Haggai's explicit reference to Zerubbabel is not repeated literally. Also, the name Zerubbabel is omitted and in fact no name besides Yehoshua the priest is

mentioned at all. Furthermore, Zechariah's vision is not apocalyptic but very modest, realistic – the dream of a person who sits safely in his garden under his trees.

שמע נא יהושע הכהן הגדול:

...

כי הנני מביא את עבדי צמח

...

ביום ההוא נאם ה' צבאות:
תקראו איש לרעהו אל תחת גפן ואל תחת תאנה.

> Now listen Yehoshua High Priest:
> ...
> I am going to bring my servant the branch
> ...
> On that day, says God of hosts,
> You shall invite each other to come under your vine and fig tree
> (3:8-10).

That is to say, the Davidic messianic idea did not disappear in Zechariah even though it is not depicted in explicit colours. Kaufman in his monumental book, *The History of the Israeli Belief* (1960:248-249), refers to two levels in Zechariah's prophecy – the obvious and the covered. The obvious is Zerubbabel the governor and the covered is his messianic connotation. Nevertheless, I propose to go further – צמח is not merely mysterious, there is no intention to refer to a physical figure. He is mentioned here only in order to keep the messianic idea alive but not practically as Haggai promoted it. Meanwhile, there is a need to raise the leadership of Yehoshua the high priest to a higher status given the reduced role of Zerubbabel. A vacuum in leadership – on the account of Zerubbabel – has been created and Yehoshua the priest (but not the Messianic figure) has been promoted to the role of a sole leader.

What happened? Something dramatic has taken place in the course of two months after Haggai's messianic vision – the Persian Empire still exists, meaning that Zerubbabel is not the Messiah. Actually, he disappears after he receives a warning from God:

זה דבר ה' אל זרבבל לאמר:
לא בחיל ולא בכח כי אם ברוחי
אמר ה' צבאות.

> This is the word of God to Zerubbabel:
> Not by might and not by power,
> But by my spirit
> Thus said God (Zech 4:6).

(For a summary of the views of the structure of Zechariah 4 as a mosaic mix of original and editorial, consult O'Kennedy 2008:404-421. For my criticism of the mosaic sporadic reading and consequently Redactional criticism, consult Gitay 2001a:101-128).

The suggestion is that this is a warning against an open rebellion against the Persians given Haggai's prophecy. Did Zerubbabel try to make Haggai's prophecy a reality by force and as a result he disappeared (by the hands of the Persians) from the political scene?

Thus, the comparison between Zechariah 4:6 and 6:12-13 is illuminating; a similar language has been employed regarding the builder of the Temple. First, it refers specifically to Zerubbabel and then just to צמח. Furthermore, the warning against the use of force is followed by an utterance which speaks about יום קטנות ("the day of small things", 4:10). "The day of small things", is the reflection of the state of reality which Zechariah confronts in order to avoid a potential crisis – high expectations which are eventually moderated through Zechariah's rhetoric.

Nevertheless, the clue to the problem is given in Chapter 8. The sermon refers to the difficult time prior to the building of the Temple – the inflation and now a beautiful but realistic low-key speech with no messianic flavours:

עד ישבו זקנים וזקנות ברחבות ירושלם ואיש משענתו בידו מרב ימים.
ורחבות העיר ימלאו ילדים וילדות משחקים ברחבותיה

> Old men and old women will again sit down in the squares of Jerusalem ... and the squares of the city will be full of boys and girls playing in the streets (8:4-5).

Peace, no war, and confidence, relaxation – this is a lot; however, this is not the revolution and this is not the Messiah. Zechariah the great rhetorician and the realist has spoken, keeping alive the Davidic-Temple theology but toning it down. He assures the people of the good given the building of the Temple; he does not dismiss the eschatological hopes but he is down to earth using his poetic language to describe the reality even though in an emotional tone.

Thus, the narrative that Zechariah is reshaping, the central role of the Davidic house regarding the Temple and the Temple itself, is in dialogue with Haggai's Messianic-Temple narrative. Zechariah paves the road for a new narrative.

It appears that Zechariah points out a paradigm shift:

אל תהיו כאבתיכם אשר קראו אליהם הנביאים הראשונים לאמר:
כה אמר ה' צבאות שובו נא מדרכיכם הרעים ומעליליכם הרעים
ולא שמעו ולא הקשיבו אלי נאם ה'.
אבתיכם איה הם והנבאים הלעולם יחיו. אך *דברי וחקי* אשר צויתי את עבדי
הנביאים הלוא השיגו אבתיכם וישובו ויאמרו כאשר זמם ה' צבאות לעשות לנו
כדרכינו וכמעלילינו כן עשה אתנו

> Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the prophets in the past cried:
> Turn back from evil ways and evil deeds.
> Are these prophets still alive, did not *my words and my laws* overtake
> your ancestors? (1:4-6, my emphasis).

This is the shift in the paradigm of the prophetic moral ideology of the First Temple, God's theodicy. The emphasis is on the *law* (cf. Deut 28:15) rather than on the prophetic moral demands (see also Meyers & Meyers 1988:96). That is, Zechariah versus the earlier prophets does not emphasise the moral-ethical lesson (unlike Isa 58 discussed below) which is a paradigm shift. We will see below that this shift is significant regarding the worship and the restoration of the role of the Temple. The shift applies to the importance of the law and accordingly, the worship and the Temple.

The New Narrative – The Rebuilding of the Collective Memory: The Work of Chronicles

The cognitive dissonance created by Haggai might explain also the special emphasis on the Temple and David as the initiator of the building of the Temple in Chronicles. This emphasis reflects the need to focus on the Temple and the house of David in terms of Zechariah's reality and to represent the Temple as God's proclamation of Israel's worship.

It seems that the high Messianic-eschatological expectations of Haggai which received Zechariah's response still requested a shift in the nation's understanding of the place of David and the Temple in the framework of the national identity and ideological-theological determination. This concern applies in literary terms to the rewriting of the history in the light of the identity in terms of the present, that is, reshaping the collective memory in the light of the present needs which is the ultimate significance of the Temple and its initiator David in the context of the life of Israel. (For the Chronicles' rhetorical appeal regarding the house of David and the Temple scheme, consult Duke 1990; see also Duck 1998 for the background of Chronicles on the rebuilding of the Temple and the house of David).

The proposition is that the theological-political decline regarding Haggai's highest Messianic expectations is a turning point in the matter of national identity and religious determination. Zechariah appeals to the people to keep the fire of the Davidic-Temple framework without its burning flame and Chronicles follows up by providing the religious authority for the house of David-Temple religious scheme. The reason for such a tremendous religious prophetic-historiographical literary effort, I propose, is rooted in a strong reaction to Haggai's religious-political platform to a degree that established a new identity which has been manifested in an anti-Temple as well as an anti-house of David agenda as the focus of the national-religious identity of Israel. In this regard, the passage of Isaiah 66:1-4 is illuminating:

כה אמר ה': השמים כסאי // והארץ הדם רגלי

אי זה בית אשר תבנו לי ואי-זה מקום מנוחתי

ואת כל אלה ידי עשתה // ויהיו כל אלה נאום ה'

ואל זה אביט: אל עני ונכה רוח וחרד על דברי

שוחט השור,מכה איש ,זובח השה ,ערף כלב

מעלה מנחה דם חזיר // מזכיר לבונה // מברך און

גם המה בחרו בדרכיהם // ובשקוציהם נפשם חפצה

גם אני אבחר בתעלליהם ... ומגורתם אביא להם

יען קראתי ואין עונה // דברתי ולא שמעו

ויעשו הרע בעיני // ובאשר לא חפצתי בחרו

Thus says God:
Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool;
What is the house that you would build for me
And what is my resting place?

God does not need a house, that is, there is no need for establishing a geographical centre for worshiping God because worship through the Temple is not God's demand from His people. Among the numerous interpretations which have emerged regarding this passage, I am inclined to accept Hanson's approach even though with certain important historical modification (1975:161-180; see also Dim 2005:117-146). I agree that the above passage is a significant theological manifestation contra the Temple which might have developed through the exilic period when the people learnt to develop further alternatives of belief rather than the geographical worship (see also Blenkinsopp 2003:214-215).

Furthermore, my argument is that the anti-Temple theological movement has been effective and not marginal given the literary evidence of Isaiah 66 which otherwise

will not be proclaimed in such a high rhetorical flame. I propose that this anti-Temple movement became even stronger after Haggai's Temple-Messianic disconfirmation which created a serious theological-national crisis in Israel (cf. also Brueggemann 1998b:252).

The chain of dates in Haggai and Zechariah could be misleading as we might be under the impression that everything happened from one day to the next. The work of Chronicles indicates that the crisis was not only a matter of months.

In Isaiah 66, the prophet has taken a major step further than Zechariah's normality. There is here much more than the reservation of the cult and worship. The rebuilding of the Temple inspired by high Messianic-theological expectations is a cognitive dissonance problem that received two forms of responses — Zechariah's religious-theological realism, on the one hand, and anti-Temple theology, on the other hand.

The religious thought of worshiping without a Temple, without sacrifice, is conveyed in a revolutionary religious proclamation – there is no need at all for the Temple, that is to say, no geographical centre of worship or communicating with God:

> Thus says God:
> Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool;
> What is the house that you would build for me
> And what is my resting place? (Isa 66:1-2).

Consequently, a cosmogonic universal notion of worshipping God has been introduced.

Furthermore, Isaiah 58 is in line with this new concept of religion without a physical centre of worship. Here, the proclamation of the social-moral demands is even stronger than the first Temple prophetic call for justice. The address of Isaiah 58 manifests not just a moral awareness but requires an active self-involvement from the members of the community on behalf of the needy and the poor:

> הלוא פרס לרעב לחמך ועניים מרודים תביא בית
> כי תראה ערם וכסיתו ומבשרך לא תתעלם ...
> ותפק לרעב נפשך ונפש נענה תשביע וזרח בחשך אורך ואפלתך כצהרים ...
> ובנו ממך חרבות עולם מוסדי דור-ודור תקומם
> וקרא לך גדר פרץ משובב נתיבות לשבת

> Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
> And bring the homeless poor into your house;
> When you see the naked to cover them ...
> Then your light shall break forth ... (Isa 58:7-12).

The bottom line is giving to the poor and the needy and not merely the awareness of their situation; worship is not a goal in itself. Isaiah 58 adds to the principle of justice in Amos, Isaiah and Micah a request not just to avoid injustice but to show a sense of active compassion and mercy (Kaufman 1960:145-147); and above all, self-involvement. This is a new approach which has led a number of scholars (e.g. Blenkinsopp 2003:177-179) to take the passage as a sermon rather than a prophetic oracle; however, this is a prophetic utterance which manifests a new development in prophetic thought.

There is no doubt – given the Biblical sources – that the period of the Babylonian Exile is crucial to the shaping Jewish identity and defining the community. The fact that the house of David does not keep the kingship, the Temple is destroyed, the people live outside of the Promised Land, and there is the suspicion of great religious revolution as a response – all these have created a profound need to redefine the notion of community and identity in early exilic and post-exilic Judaism.

In other words, the eschatological activity of Haggai and the rebuilding of the Temple under the Messianic leadership of the descendant of the house of David have created a new situation which must be redefined in a new theological historiographical form.

It appears that in line with Haggai, the idea of a religious centre is not an abstract vision anymore. However, the prophecies of Zechariah point out the problem. His efforts to ease the religious messianic tension revolving around Zerubbabel as the objective of the Messiah, reveals the theological problem given the rise of the anti-Temple theology – the religious authority of the Temple and the place of David must be re-established given Haggai's crisis. The greatness of Zechariah lies in the fact that he faces the problem of the crisis of disconfirmation and through a remarkable rhetoric which relies on supposed first evidence, witnessing, he works to keep the belief in Jerusalem and the Temple, to increase the role and authority of the high priest as the leader (given the political vacuum) and to seek to assure the citizens of Jerusalem that the messianic vision has not vanished. Rather, there is a vision of normality in the meanwhile, of a peaceful life without losing the dream – the centrality of Jerusalem and the Temple. Zechariah has provided national goals and he enables the unity of the community in the light of a national-religious vision. However, this is not sufficient. Hence, the Temple-Davidic historiography must be rewritten in response to the situation, reshaping the collective memory of Israel by the religious establishment which re-establishes the authority of David in terms of the Temple through his speeches on behalf of the Temple, the emphasis on the building and the worship. This is the work of Chronicles.

Conclusion

This short but complex "story" of the days of Haggai and Zechariah, as well as Chronicles, reveals a sub-text of crisis in direction and national religious determination. The concept of a nation without a religious centre is no longer prevalent apparently among the people of Judah. However, it has created a situation of cognitive dissonance given Haggai's messianic apocalyptic speeches.

Therefore, the main point of the present discussion is to point out the creation of a new narrative which is in dialogue with the speeches of both Haggai and Zechariah; a narrative that redesigns the collective memory of Israel in the form of a supposed historical narrative that responds to the theological-national needs of the present, that is, the centrality of the Temple of Jerusalem which is built under the authority of David in terms of the Temple as the central place of worship in the life of Israel.

The chapter claims that the period of Restoration is an era of national-theological confusion and the prophecies of Zechariah reveal a dialogue with Haggai. Zechariah's efforts to ease the religious messianic tension revolving around Zerubbabel as the objective of the Messiah given Haggai's apocalyptic utterances, reveals the problem – Does the Jewish community of Judah gathering around the restored Temple is a messianic community? The crisis is historical-theological; the historical developments did not match the prophetic apocalyptic expectations. The importance of Zechariah therefore lies in the fact that he faces the problem of the crisis of disconfirmation through a remarkable rhetoric which relies on proclamation of first-hand evidence, witnessing. He works to uphold the belief in Jerusalem and the Temple, to increase the role and authority of the high priest as the leader (given the political vacuum), and to seek to assure the inhabitants of Jerusalem that the messianic vision has not vanished. Rather, there is a vision of normality in the meanwhile, of a peaceful life without losing the dream – the centrality of Jerusalem and the Temple.

Having done that, Zechariah solves the crisis of leadership and a potential severe religious crisis in the community. He provides national realistic goals and he enables the unity of the community in the light of his modest but touching national-religious vision.

Nevertheless, given an alternative theological-religious agenda that emerged probably in the Exile in Babylon, that is, a universal worship with strong emphasis on moral-ethical commitment rather than scarifying; a concept that might have become stronger following the cognitive dissonance of disconfirming the Messiah

as a result of rebuilding the Temple, an anti-Temple alternative has emerged. This alternative implies a problematic religious-theological and national identity and determination which reject Jerusalem and consequently the Temple as the geographical focus of Judaism. In response, a new need for reshaping the collective memory of Israel around the David dynasty, the Temple and its worship reappeared as the need of the present. This is the sub-text of the work of Chronicles which aims to substitute the earlier narrative through a direct emphasis on David. It begins with his kingship and focuses on his work regarding the Temple and its significance as the centre of the geographical religious centre rather than the alternative of a non-geographical centre, without the centrality of the Temple of Jerusalem.

Furthermore, the chapter reveals a dynamic literature that emerged in the period of Restoration; a literature which reflects a dynamic dialogue that took place between major canonical texts that have re-shaped the collective memory of Israel.

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