THE UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

Faculty of Education, Health & Social Care

Athens *with* Jerusalem:
The Need for a Jewish Voice in
Modern Liberal Arts Education

Tony Biondi

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ABSTRACT FOR THESIS

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This thesis explores the need for a Jewish voice in modern liberal arts education, from which it has been historically excluded. Liberal arts have developed from a tradition reaching back to ancient Greece, and yet are supposedly representative of Western Judeo-Christian culture. Due to an anti-Jewish attitude amongst the Church Fathers that has prevailed for most of church history, both Jews and their texts have been excluded from contributing to Western education. Great Jewish literature is almost entirely absent from the Great Books tradition, while Jewish thinkers have been left out of the university until only relatively recently. This study proposes to introduce the Jewish voice alongside the Western tradition, not in opposition, but as a peer, creating a dialogue between the two voices. Liberal arts begin with the literary arts, which can be defined as the written, spoken and thinking arts. Whilst there is no discrete liberal arts tradition in the Jewish world, the ancient biblical and post-biblical rabbinic texts address these arts in their own distinctive way. This thesis examines the written Jewish voice through the Great Jewish texts and an authentic way of reading them through the rabbinic method of *midrash*, as opposed to the Western grammatical tradition. Consideration of the spoken Jewish voice looks at rhetoric in the biblical tradition, and especially among the Hebrew Prophets, who not only spoke well – like their Western counterparts – but spoke up for the voiceless. Finally, an examination of the thinking Jewish voice reveals Wisdom personified, as distinct from Greek philosophy. It is a wisdom which is inseparable from right action, justice, love and awe. The Jewish voice provides counterbalance to the dominant Western tradition, and opens the door to a dialogue in the fields of reading, speaking and thinking, which, in turn, opens the way for other traditions to join the conversation.

Contents

Declaration, Copyright Statement and Intellectual Property Rights

No portion of the work referred to in the Thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

I confirm that this Thesis is entirely my own work.

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Introduction: The need for a Jewish voice

> And Athens it is that has [honoured] eloquence, which all men crave and envy in its possessors; for she realized that this is the one endowment of our nature which singles us out from all living creatures, and that by using this advantage we have risen above them in all other respects as well; she saw that in other activities the fortunes of life are so capricious that in them often the wise fail and the foolish succeed, whereas beautiful and artistic speech is never allotted to ordinary men, but is the work of an intelligent mind, and that it is in this respect that those who are accounted wise and ignorant present the strongest contrast; and she knew, furthermore, that whether men have been liberally educated from their earliest years is not to be determined by their courage or their wealth or such advantages, but is made manifest most of all by their speech, and that this has proved itself to be the surest sign of culture in every one of us, and that those who are skilled in speech are not only men of power in their own cities but are also held in [honour] in other states' (Isocrates, *Panegyricus*, 4.47-49).[1]

Both medieval and contemporary models of liberal arts education are essentially rooted in the ancient Greek and Roman educational traditions. The words of Isocrates above mention 'men [who] have been liberally educated' – perhaps one of the earliest references to the idea of a liberal education. His words also enshrine the Western voice: the voice of 'eloquence', 'beautiful and artistic speech', 'culture' and 'power'. Thus, the Western voice has dominated the liberal arts tradition. However, another ancient voice has been overlooked in liberal arts education – namely, the voice of the Jewish educational tradition. An explicitly Jewish form of liberal arts education has never existed historically, but the disciplines have all been addressed in the Jewish tradition. I propose that the Hebrew Bible and its subsequent Jewish exegesis from ancient times to the medieval period and into the present, forms an equally valid but very different approach to the disciplines involved in liberal arts education. The absence of these sources impoverishes the potential for any modern liberal arts education to truly address these disciplines beyond the limits of a Western monologue. The inclusion of the Jewish voice, however, opens a dialogue between the traditions. In time this dialogue may open further to include voices from other traditions.

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[1] Isocrates, *Isocrates with an English Translation in three volumes*, trans. George Norlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1980) <www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0144%3Aspeech%3D4%3Asection%3D47> [accessed 30 June 2014]. I have anglicised American spellings in square brackets throughout this work.

Defining Liberal Arts Education

It will help at the outset to try and define a liberal arts education. Paul Axelrod claims that liberal arts education is 'the most enduring and changeable of academic traditions': 'Its roots are in the intellectual culture of ancient Greece and Rome, and it continues, at least ideally, to embrace some core ideals from that period.'[2] Bruce Kimball, likewise, traces the origins of the liberal arts back to the ancient Greek tradition, where reason and speech form the basis: 'it is helpful to contrast a tradition that has privileged "reason" – including its various denotations of a rationale, a faculty of thinking, and an act of thinking – with a tradition that has privileged "speech" with all its meanings – the pronouncing of words, the faculty of talking, and a formal act of communication. These are the two semantic branches of the Greek term *logos,* which was thought to define the nature of civilization and of a civilized human being.'[3] David Conway argues that the liberal arts began to take more definite shape through Roman development: 'In late Roman times, the three linguistic arts of grammar, rhetoric and logic, became collectively known as the *trivium*.'[4] However, James Muir contests this view, with a much later dating: '…the liberal arts were not divided into the *trivium* and *quadrivium* by "the Greeks" or by "the Romans", but by medieval African and European educators'.[5] Muir credits the naming and numbering of seven arts (grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy) to the medieval North African educator Martianus Capella (c. fifth century CE).[6] Yet, he does maintain that the tradition of liberal arts education derives from ancient Greece, and specifically from Isocrates.[7] The division of grammar, rhetoric and logic into the *trivium*, he dates to the Carolingian Renaissance of the eighth century CE; whilst the 'term *quadrivium* originates with Boethius' in the sixth century CE.[8]

The Jewish tradition deals with all seven arts, although not necessarily as discrete subjects. For the purpose of this study I will focus on the disciplines of the *trivium*, as the preliminary and foundational studies in liberal arts education that still shape modern expressions. Specifically, grammar has influenced the Great Books tradition and how we read; rhetoric is still practised as the art of speaking well; and logic can be seen in the study of thinking skills and philosophy. Indeed, what Richard Hare described as an education for

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[2] Paul Axelrod, *Values in Conflict: The University, the Marketplace and the Trials of liberal Education* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), p. 8.
[3] Bruce A. Kimball, *The Condition of American liberal Education: Pragmatism and a Changing Tradition* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1995), p. 3.
[4] David Conway, *liberal Education and the National Curriculum* (London: Civitas, 2010), p. 82.
[5] James R. Muir, '*Is our history of educational philosophy mostly wrong?* The case of Isocrates', *Theory and Research in Education*, 3.2 (2005), pp. 165-195 (p. 180).
[6] Muir, '*Is our history*', pp. 180-181.
[7] Muir, '*Is our history*', p. 181.
[8] Ibid.

philosophers,[9] Andrew Chrucky 'would describe as a liberal arts education'.[10] In America, where liberal arts education has a history stretching back well over two-hundred years, interest continues despite criticisms and changing educational trends and developments in recent decades.[11] This can be witnessed in the ever-popular Great Books undergraduate program at St. Johns College in Annapolis and Santa Fe.[12] Other American institutions where liberal arts programs include specific reference to grammar, rhetoric and logic (or similar terms) include, for example, Smith College, Northampton and Thomas Aquinas College, California.[13] In Europe, and especially in the United Kingdom, there has been a resurgence of interest in the liberal arts and a revival of liberal arts educational programmes, which include reference to the Trivium. In mainland Europe, examples include Bard College in Berlin and the University of Gothenburg in Sweden.[14] In the United Kingdom, examples of this resurgent interest include liberal arts programs from the Benedictus College of the Liberal Arts in London; King's College London; and the University of Winchester in Hampshire.[15] Moreover, in recent years there has been a remarkable interest in the liberal arts coming from Asia, for example, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Seoul National University in South Korea, Waseda University in Japan, and the National University of Singapore;[16] as well as the Middle East, with the opening of the Shalem College in Israel.[17]

The three disciplines of grammar, rhetoric and logic in the Western tradition form what I will term as the written voice, the spoken voice, and the thinking voice of liberal arts education. This thesis proposes that these voices exist in the Jewish tradition, but have been neglected or excluded. Axelrod underlines the case clearly: 'Most published histories of the Western university begin with a discussion of the educational ideas of the Greek philosophers

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[9] Richard M. Hare, 'A School for Philosophers', *Ratio,* 2.2 (1960).

[10] Andrew Chrucky, 'Philosophy of liberal Education', *Digital Text International*, no date <www.ditext.com/libed/libed.html> [accessed 13 September 2014].

[11] For an overview, see, for example, American Council Of Learned Societies, *Liberal Arts Colleges in American Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities*, ACLS Occasional Paper, 59 (2005).

[12] See St. Johns College, *Undergraduate Program* <www.sjc.edu/academic-programs/undergraduate/liberal-arts/> [accessed 15 April 2015].

[13] See Smith College, *Academic Programs: The Liberal Arts* <www.smith.edu/acad_prog_liberalarts.php> [accessed 15 April 2015]; and Thomas Aquinas College, The Liberal Arts and Sciences <thomasaquinas.edu/a-liberating-education/liberal-arts-sciences> [accessed 15 April 2015].

[14] See Bard College, *Humanities, the Arts, and Social Thought* <www.berlin.bard.edu/academics/humanities-the-arts-and-social-thought/> [accessed 15 April 2015]; and Göteborgs universitet, *Liberal Arts, kandidatprogram, 180 hp* <flov.gu.se/utbildning/grundniva/liberal-arts> [accessed 15 April 2015].

[15] See Benedictus College of the Liberal Arts, *The Origin of the Liberal Arts* <www.benedictus.org.uk/page.php?nav=liberal> [accessed 15 April 2015]; King's College London, *Liberal Arts* <www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/liberal/index.aspx> [accessed 15 April 2015]; and the University of Winchester, *Modern Liberal Arts: The seven Liberal Arts* <mla.winchester.ac.uk/?page_id=216> [accessed 15 April 2015]. For a more developed explanation of the relationship between the traditional liberal arts in relation to modern programs, see Nigel Tubbs, *Philosophy and Modern Liberal Arts Education: Freedom is to Learn* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); and 'The Value of the Arts', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 47.3 (2013), pp. 441-456. Tubbs is Programme Leader for Modern Liberal Arts and Professor of Philosophical and Educational Thought at the University of Winchester.

[16] See Pericles Lewis, 'Asia Invests in Liberal Arts', *Harvard International Review*, 35.1 (2013), pp. 36-39.

[17] See Shalem College, *A Great Books College* <shalem.ac.il/en/core-curriculum/a-great-books-college/> [accessed 15 April 2015].

Socrates and Plato in fifth-century BC and quickly make their way to the founding of Europe's first universities in the twelfth century AD … But higher learning itself has an even longer – and seldom acknowledged – history in the Middle East and Far East.'[18] Axelrod notes that 'the Hebrews … stressed the importance of morality and the centrality of the Law of God, which was recorded and interpreted by scribes and scholars'.[19] However, his acknowledgement, whilst welcome, only scratches at the surface of what the Jewish voice (as well as other voices) has to offer liberal arts education. It offers us not only an alternative approach to the arts of reading, speaking and thinking well but, moreover, it offers a unique and valuable perspective that will enrich liberal arts education, alongside the Western tradition.

The Silence of Jerusalem

Within the study of the liberal arts and Great Books in the Western tradition, all but a very few Jewish sources are acknowledged. What happened, then, to the Jewish voice? Why has Jerusalem been so silent? I believe there are at least two major factors responsible. Firstly, anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, especially as it manifested in the works of the Church Fathers in early to late Antiquity and the medieval period, created a disdain for Jewish exegesis. Secondly, a Christian theology divorced from its Hebraic origins and shaped instead by Hellenistic philosophy sought to establish its superiority over Judaism.[20] The patristic period produced almost a unitary voice in expressing anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic views, whether from Greek Fathers such as John Chrysostom or Latin Fathers such as Augustine.[21] Despite Paula Fredriksen's recent defense of Augustine as a misunderstood protector of the Jews,[22] he stands, nonetheless, as a main architect of supersessionist theology.[23] This meant that during the period of early to late Antiquity the seeds of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism were sown deep into Christian thinking. Christians were taught to have nothing to do with Jews or their texts. The Latin Catholic church began its anti-Talmudic campaign through Pope Gregory IX and his 'Office of the Inquisition' in the 1230s, culminating in the 'trial' of the Talmud in Paris.[24] The result of the trial was that 24 cartloads of Jewish texts were burnt. Thereafter, the Talmud was

[18] Axelrod, *Values in Conflict*, p. 9.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Gavin I. Langmuir, 'Majority History and Post-Biblical Jews', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 27.3 (1966), pp. 343-364 (pp. 347-348).
[21] See James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue; a Study in the Origins of Antisemitism* (London: The Soncino press, 1934); and Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974).
[22] Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New York: Doubleday, 2008).
[23] For Augustine and supersessionism see Ronald E. Diprose, *Israel and the Church: The Origins and Effects of Replacement Theology* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2004).
[24] See Steven Bowman, 'Jewish Responses to Byzantine Polemics from the Ninth through the Eleventh Centuries', *Shofar*, 28.3 (2010), pp. 103-115 (p. 113).

regularly confiscated, burnt or censored throughout medieval Christian Europe.[25] In 1233 Dominican inquisitors burnt copies of Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed* at Montpellier.[26]

The Reformation brought little change. Luther's early warmth towards the Jews eventually gave way to the latent anti-Semitism which had shaped his pre-Reformation world. His 1543 publication, *On the Jews and their Lies*, called for severe measures, including the confiscation of rabbinical texts, forbidding rabbis to teach, and burning down synagogues and Jewish homes, so that 'Judaism's falsehood could no longer be taught'.[27] There was no mistaking his view of the Jewish writings: 'I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them.'[28] Both Catholic and Protestant messages were clear: Jewish texts were inferior to Christian texts, and worse still, they were cursed. Thus, they posed a spiritual danger to those who might be tempted to delve into them.

Concerning the rabbinic texts, Geoffrey Hartman comments on the recent and older hostility: 'I cannot forget how these writings were slandered, and how public ignorance abetted such slander in the Nazi era. Jews were demonised at a time when Talmud and Midrash were available yet remained a closed book even to the educated. And for centuries before that, theological anti-Semitism had misrepresented the spirit of Jewish law: non-Jews were taught to see only a crass and stubborn literalism, a mean-spirited, materialistic frame of mind … That era of prejudice and ignorance should be approaching its end.'[29] Hopefully, he is right; and prejudice or ignorance will give way to a welcoming of the Jewish voice in liberal arts education.

The Excluded Jew and the University

Not only were Jewish texts absent during the formative period of the 'Great Conversation', but Jews themselves were physically excluded from the dialogue. The silencing of Jewish voices is extraordinary. Charles Murray notes that only two examples of great Jewish accomplishment emerge between 800 BCE and the first millennium of the Common Era, namely the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. However, the apparent absence of Jews in the fields of science,

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[25] See Anna Sapir Abulafia, 'Talmud trials' in Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn (eds.), *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 417-418.
[26] See Margaret Brearley, 'Dominicans' in Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn (eds.), *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 130-131.
[27] See Alice L. Eckardt, 'Luther' in Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn (eds.), *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 279-280.
[28] Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, Volume 47: Christian in Society IV*, ed. Franklin Sherman (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 269.
[29] Geoffrey H. Hartman, 'Midrash as Law and Literature' in Geoffrey H. Hartman and Daniel T. O'Hara (eds.), *The Geoffrey Hartman Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh, University Press, 2004), pp. 205-222 (p. 205).

philosophy, mathematics or the arts does not signify inactivity during this period.[30] No Jewish scientists are mentioned in medieval histories of science, but George Sarton's monumental work: *Introduction to the History of Science*[31] found that out of all the known scientists working in all the known world between 1150 and 1300, fifteen percent (95 out of 626) were Jews, which as Murray points out, was 'far out of proportion to the Jewish population.' From medieval times to beyond the Renaissance, most Jewish voices, including philosophers, poets, religious thinkers, scholars, physicians, and rabbis, were obscured to all but those within the Jewish world. Murray could only find seven Jews between the years 1200 and 1800 among the inventories of significant figures in arts and sciences. This systematic exclusion and discrimination, 'both by legal restrictions on the occupations they could enter and by savage social discrimination', accounts for the under-representation of Jews during the 'flowering' of the European liberal arts.[32] The Jews have always been 'people of the Book', educated, literate and textual. Murray tracks this back deep into their ancient history, and this leads him to ask a powerful question: 'Why should one particular tribe at the time of Moses, living in the same environment as other nomadic and agricultural peoples of the Middle East, have already evolved elevated intelligence when the others did not?'[33]

Walter Ong argues that the development of the modern European and American universities can be traced back historically to a 'common starting point' – the early medieval universities of Europe.[34] By the thirteenth century the University of Paris had established a faculty of arts (including the study of Latin and philosophy), and higher faculties of medicine, law and theology. However, the medieval Latin word 'universitas' meant 'corporation' or 'guild' rather than a centre for learning. Alongside universities of scholars, there were universities of 'butchers and barbers'. The universities of Paris or Bologna were actually guilds of teachers. Admission into the guild was by means of an apprenticeship whereby one became a bachelor and then master of arts, medicine, law or theology, mirroring the process for a master butcher or a master carpenter. The university faculties formed separate guilds with separate admission. Herein lay the problem for Jewish participation in the university. In medieval Christian thinking Jews epitomised the 'classic stranger' and, in the words of Steven Epstein, they became 'a fixture of the outside world in many regions of Europe and a potential challenge to the spiritual and economic basis of the guild'.[35] Jews were forbidden admission to

[30] Charles Murray, 'Jewish Genius', *Commentary* (April 2007), pp. 29-35 (p. 29).
[31] George Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, Volumes 1-3 (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1927-1947).
[32] Murray, 'Jewish Genius', pp. 29-30.
[33] Murray, 'Jewish Genius', p. 35.
[34] See Walter J. Ong, 'Educationists and the Tradition of Learning', *The Journal of Higher Education*, 29.2 (1958), pp. 59-69 (p. 61).
[35] Steven A. Epstein, *Wage Labour and Guilds in Medieval Europe* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. 169.

the guilds, and as the conferral of degrees was granted by the Catholic Church, they were also denied any hope of gaining qualification.

Alfred Jospe notes that 'contacts between the Jews and the European universities were sporadic and tenuous', and although occasionally a few Jews were granted permission to study science, medicine or Hebrew in the medieval university, this was rare.[36] There was little change in the situation until the nineteenth century, but restrictive admission policies remained in Europe and America and were only really challenged after World War Two.[37] Effectively, a Jewish presence was kept out of the university from its medieval beginnings and thereby Jews were excluded from the crucial formative stages and subsequent development of the liberal arts curricula. Whilst Jewish voices may fully participate in modern academia, contemporary Jewish philosophers have had to join the conversation long after the boundaries of discourse were set, and where the Greek philosophical world-view dominates. Moreover, Jewish texts are still omitted, for the most part, from liberal arts programmes and Great Books study.

This omission of the Jewish voice is endemic in American and European liberal arts programmes. Indeed, it is the default inheritance from the ancient and medieval liberal arts tradition. Thus, any European institution wishing to revive the study of liberal arts revives with it the exclusion and, albeit inadvertently, any associated bias, discrimination, anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism that has favoured the one and excluded the other. Whilst at this point, one might rehearse again Martha Nussbaum's argument over the canon[38] and ask why not consider, for example, ancient Chinese, Buddhist or Islamic texts, the liberal arts are traditionally meant to be representative of a Western world-view, and specifically one that claims to be Judeo-Christian.[39] On that basis, it is time liberal arts education providers at least allowed the 'Judeo' voice to begin to be heard.

Refusing Jerusalem

Beyond the physical exclusion of Jews and the refusal to read Jewish texts, there has been a philosophical refusal to accommodate Jerusalem. Ariella Atzmon believes 'the disparity between Athens and Jerusalem is ingrained in the primordial split between the tiller of the soil

[36] See Alfred Jospe, 'Universities', *Jewish Virtual Library* (2008) <www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0020_0_20217.html> [accessed 22/06/12]. For the exceptional acceptance of Jews as doctors and surgeons by Christians in Medieval Europe, see Joseph Shatzmiller, *Jews, Medicine, and Medieval Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
[37] Jospe, 'Universities'. See also Anne H. Stevens, 'The Philosophy of General Education and its Contradictions: The Influence of Hutchins', *The Journal of General Education*, 50.3 (2001), pp. 165-191 (pp. 174-175).
38 Martha Nussbaum, 'Undemocratic Vistas', The New York Review of Books, 34.17 (1987), pp. 20-26.
[39] For an example of non-Western models, see Reed College in Portland, Oregon, and especially their interdisciplinary studies: <http://www.reed.edu/academics.html> [accessed 10/04/15].

and the wandering shepherd. It is the biblical rivalry between Cain the dweller, signified by the craving for rootedness, and Abel the wanderer'.[40] Of course, Cain put Abel to death, and the Bible's first murder victim is also the first shepherd. As the story of the Hebrew Bible unfolds we meet shepherd after shepherd: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his twelve sons, Moses and David. Moreover, God is made known to us as a shepherd in the Twenty-Third Psalm. Yet, from early on in Scripture the position of the shepherd is lowly and despised. When Joseph is reunited with his father and his brothers in Egypt, he informs them that 'every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians' (Genesis 46:34). Interestingly, Peter Schäfer detects an 'anti-Jewish bais' in the earliest Greek account of the Exodus – Hecataeus of Abdera's *Aegyptiaca* – which dates back to around 300 years before the Christian era.[41] Manetho wrote his version of the Exodus not long after Hecataeus, and it appears in two versions that exhibit even stronger anti-Jewish tendencies.[42] In both versions the Jews are referred to disparagingly as 'Shepherds'. Thus, contempt for the shepherd is long-standing.

Methodological Approach

The flourishing of Jewish thought over the centuries can be likened to a tree, with rabbinic branches, medieval branches, Enlightenment branches, and so on. However, to borrow from the Apostle Paul, the branches do not support the root, but the root supports the branches.[43] Thus, I have deliberately focused on ancient biblical and rabbinic texts from the Jewish tradition in this study, because they form the root or the foundation upon which the Jewish voices of the medieval period and beyond have been built.[44] Even today Jewish voices draw on the biblical foundation.[45] The liberal arts developed out of the ancient Greek and Roman traditions, forming the genesis of Great Books and liberal arts curricula. This is not to diminish the importance or place of post-biblical Jewish voices – far from it – but without a return to and recovery of the foundation any conversation between Athens and Jerusalem will be imbalanced. To begin with the ancient Jewish voice establishes a meaningful context for further encounter in later ages. Moreover, the later developments in Jewish writing, speaking and thinking will make less sense and have far less grounding without laying the foundations of

[40] Ariella Atzmon, *Athens or Jerusalem: Or the story of Cain and Abel Revisited* (2007) <arielaatoz.blogspot.com> [accessed 22/06/12].
[41] Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes towards the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 15-17.
[42] Schäfer, *Judeophobia*, pp. 17-21.
[43] The full quotation from Paul is '… do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you' (Romans 11:18, ESV).
[44] The Talmudic and Midrashic texts and Maimonides are predicated on the Hebrew Scriptures.
[45] See, for example, Emmanuel Levinas, *Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures* (London: Athlone Press, 1994); and more recently Shmuel Trigano, *Philosophy of the Law: The Political in the Torah* (Jerusalem: Shalem Press, 2011) and Yoram Hazony, *The Philosophy of the Hebrew Scripture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Jewish 'first principles'. For example, the inclusion of a few biblical texts inserted into a liberal arts programme after preliminary studies in ancient Western philosophy, gives the impression that these biblical texts are not rooted in a tradition of their own. Thus, a book such as Exodus may be sandwiched between Plato and Augustine. Worse still, it may be presented as a Christian text mediated through a Western bias – yes, the Hebrew Scriptures are texts that belong to Christians as well as Jews, but they are not originally Christian, it is not their first authentic context. Even the New Testament texts and early Christian church history have a Jewish genesis, despite losing that identity within the first two centuries. The Jewish voice needs to be heard in its proper context, as a worthy counterpart to the Western classical tradition and able to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with it. Hence, the focus of this study is on the foundational Jewish texts of Scripture and the Jewish interpreters who first commented on them.

This study shares the view taken by Louis Feldman that there was no significant Greek influence on Jewish society and culture in Israel and no significant Jewish influence on Greek society and culture, before the Hasmonean period, and therefore no significant cross influences on either the texts of the Hebrew Scriptures or the ancient Greek philosophers.[46] On the authorship and dating of the Hebrew Scriptures, traditional Jewish and Christian views of the *Torah* ascribe the texts to Moses (c. 1400 BCE), whereas the view of nineteenth century historical criticism would consider the work to be a composite text redacted over a long period of time, and completed by around 500BCE.[47] The authorship and dating of the *Wisdom Literature* is also unclear, with traditional views ascribing most of *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes* and the *Song of Solomon* to Israel's King Solomon (c. 1000 BCE); most of the *Psalms* to his father, King David (c. 1041 BCE); and while the author of Job is anonymous, the traditional view dates it to the time of the Patriarchs. Again, the historical critical view takes issue with all the traditional dating and authorship of Wisdom Literature, so that at the other extreme, some view *Ecclesiastes* as a post-exilic composition.[48] Prophets, such as *Isaiah* and *Amos* are traditionally viewed as contemporaries, writing in the eighth century BCE, whilst the critical view places them in the exilic period (c. 540 BCE).[49] Axelrod is correct, therefore, to speak of an 'even longer – and seldom acknowledged – history', because even the latest dates place the Scriptures in an earlier timeframe than the Western tradition. The rabbinic texts are

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[46] Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 3-18.

[47] For an overview of the complex variety of views dating the Torah see Gordon Wenham, 'Pentateuchal Studies Today', *Themelios*, 22.1 (1996), pp. 3-13.

[48] The authorship and dating of the *Wisdom Literature* is discussed at length in Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: an Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002).

[49] Theodore Friedman et al., 'Isaiah' in Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik (eds.), *Encyclopaedia Judaica, 2nd ed., Vol. 10* (Detroit: Macmillan, 2007), pp. 57-75; and Menahem Haran, 'Amos' in Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik (eds.), *Encyclopaedia Judaica, 2nd ed., Vol. 2* (Detroit: Macmillan, 2007), pp. 97-103.

anonymous works of early to late Antiquity (first to sixth century CE), and are contemporary with the patristic writings of the Greek and Latin Church Fathers.

Thus, this study pairs the art of grammar with rabbinic exegesis, for example, not because they correspond in time (although the patristic grammar does generally correspond to the period of the rabbinic work) but because they correspond in interest – namely, correctly reading the Scriptures. Likewise, the Hebrew Prophets pre-date Aristotle and Cicero, but all three traditions represented are concerned with the forms and delivery of speech. This is not to suggest that because one tradition pre-dates another it is automatically superior or more worthy of our attention. Rather, this is an attempt to see how the Jewish tradition might enhance the Western, especially – as is the case here – when the latter has dominated the former, and the former has been overlooked or even intentionally ignored. As a consequence of the Western domination, this work is intentionally and unequally weighted in favour of Jerusalem; I have given more time and attention to the Jewish voice – as the excluded tradition – rather than the Western classical voice.

I have also intentionally excluded the study of New Testament texts, not because they are necessarily irrelevant – indeed, I consider the New Testament to be essentially Jewish, for the most part – but because they have played a greater part in the Western tradition through patristic exegesis, in particular. Because of their misappropriation by the Church Fathers, the New Testament writings have become very much Western texts in a Western canon, and have been used throughout church history in anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic polemic.[50] Whilst the New Testament expresses Jewish ideas and quotes extensively from the Hebrew Scriptures, it is nonetheless a Greek language text. The focus of this work is the need for a Jewish voice in modern liberal arts education, beginning primarily with the ancient Hebrew Scriptures and to a lesser extent the post-biblical rabbinic texts. For the same reason I have given relatively little attention to the Septuagint, Philo and Josephus. Moreover, all of these Greek language sources themselves depend directly or indirectly on the original Hebrew foundation of the Scriptures – they are interpreting the Jewish voice. Conversely, I have included some development of grammar, rhetoric and reason in the rabbinic texts of Talmud and Midrash, simply because the Rabbis represent an interpretive voice that is distinctly Jewish rather than the Greco-Roman influence which pervades the commentaries of their patristic counterparts. The rabbinic commentary on the Jewish texts developed out of the scribal, prophetic and Wisdom traditions, rather than a Platonic or Aristotelian worldview. Likewise, I have included some limited reference to the Masorite approach to grammar in Late Antiquity; as further examples

[50] By misappropriation I mean a patristic exegesis that relies heavily on the Greco-Roman grammatical tradition and Platonic or Aristotelian thinking, rather than an authentic contextual understanding (something that became virtually impossible when the Church Fathers rejected the Jewish identity of the New Testament and the First Century Church).

of pre-medieval developments in the art of Jewish reading. The decision not to go further than the period of Late Antiquity is based partly on the view that the medieval Jewish commentators such as Saadia Gaon and Maimonides represent the beginnings of a Jewish synthysis between the Western and Jewish traditions, where the Jewish voice becomes less distinct. The decision is also based on the pragmatic need to limit the scope of study somewhat; and, as has been already stated, the focus on the Hebrew Scriptures and their earliest Jewish commentators creates a starting point in the recovery of the Jewish voice, and lays a necessary foundation for later periods.

Outline of Content

In 'Chapter 1: The Written Jewish Voice', the Great Books tradition will be examined in the light of Great Jewish texts and an appropriate way of reading them – an authentic Jewish reading using *Midrash* (both the exegetical compilations and the method). Early Jewish scribal and later rabbinic traditions will be considered in an attempt to demonstrate that they possess a sophisticated and distinct grammatical approach to the written text, alongside the Western grammatical art of reading and writing. The rabbinic method of *midrash*, including the layered exegesis of *Pardes*, will be specifically considered as a uniquely Jewish approach to the biblical text, in contrast to Augustine and Isidore of Seville's contemporaneous Christian grammar.

In 'Chapter 2: The Spoken Jewish voice', the art of rhetoric in the Greek tradition and oratory in the Roman tradition (represented by Aristotle and Cicero respectively) will be compared with the rhetoric of the Scriptures and, in particular, the Hebrew Prophets: Amos and Isaiah. Where the Western tradition emphasises the art of speaking well, the Jewish tradition emphasises speaking up (for those without a voice) – it is the rhetoric of the prophetic outsider, as opposed to the insider expediency of ancient Greece and Rome.

'Chapter 3: The Jewish Thinking Voice' focuses on ancient Western philosophy – particularly the Socratic Method – and contrasts this with the Wisdom tradition in the Hebrew Scriptures, particularly the Wisdom literature of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes. Hebrew cosmology is also considered in its essential and elemental relationship to Wisdom, and the idea of the Hebrew word *hevel* in Ecclesiastes is explored through its various English translations into 'vanity', 'transience', 'incomprehensible' and 'breath'. The Hebrew word for wisdom, *hokmah*, as distinct from the Greek *sophia*, is wisdom expressed in humble love and awe, and this will be examined in light of the personification of wisdom as a woman in the Book of Proverbs.

Finally, in the 'Conclusion' I will address the idea of the Jewish voice as the 'stranger'; the distinction of Athens *with* Jerusalem, as opposed to Athens *and* Jerusalem; the limitations

of this work and where future study might address the other arts; and where Jerusalem might serve as a prototype for the twinning or joining in of other voices.

Chapter 1: The Written Jewish Voice

The liberal arts, in both their historic and modern forms, have placed much emphasis on the reading of 'Great Books'.[1] In this chapter I will argue that the 'Great Books' tradition in the liberal arts has omitted not just great Jewish books, but has also failed to read the foundational texts of the Judeo-Christian tradition in their rightful context. The scarcity of Jewish texts amongst the Great Books suggests, at the very least, they have been overlooked. At worst, it is the innate fruit of the long history of anti-Semitism and Anti-Judaism rife in Western culture from ancient times to modernity. Either way, the Great Books and the liberal arts, and their students, are impoverished by the absence of the Jewish written voice. Instead of an authentic Jewish way of reading – such as using the rabbinic method of *midrash* – a few texts from the Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament canon are read through a Greco-Roman lens. Yet, to read a text *midrashic*ally, for example, opens an understanding that is absent in the Western grammatical tradition. In order for the liberal arts to pursue the reading of truly Great Books, then the Hebrew Scriptures (the *Tanakh*), and rabbinic works of Talmud and Midrash must be read alongside Homer, Plato, and the Great classical works, with an appropriate interpretive way of reading – only then can a fully developed and balanced Judeo-Christian reading emerge.

In this chapter, I will consider the Great Books tradition and Jewish Great Books. It is beyond the scope of this work to give exhaustive accounts of either the Western or Hebrew traditions, so I will briefly review the development of grammar as the art of reading, from its ancient Greek and Jewish beginnings. As the first of the seven liberal arts in the Roman tradition, I will contrast its culmination in the works of Augustine and Isidore of Seville (two of the Church Fathers who utilised grammar as the means for specifically reading and interpreting the Bible); alongside the Hebrew tradition, which will focus on the biblical scribes and culminate with the rabbinic *midrashic* exegesis of Antiquity.[2] These patristic and rabbinic

[1] For examples of the importance of Great Books in liberal arts education see Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer Adler (eds.) *Great Books of the Western World*, 54 Vols. (Chicago: William Benton, 1952); Thomas J. Tomcho, John C. Norcross and Christopher J. Correia, 'Great Books Curricula: What is Being Read?', *The Journal of General Education*, 43.2 (1994), pp. 90-101; and Gerald Grant and David Riesman, 'St. John's and the Great Books', *Change*, 6.4 (1974), pp. 28-34, 36, 62-63.

[2] For a detailed survey of the Western grammatical tradition, including the medieval grammarians and the speculative grammar of the Modistae, see Jeffrey F. Huntsman, 'Grammar' in David L. Wagner (ed.), *The Seven Liberal arts in the Middle Ages* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 58-95; and Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter (eds.), *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300-1475* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). For a detailed survey of the post-Masoretic and medieval Hebrew grammarians, see Bernhard Pick, 'The Study of the Hebrew Language among Jews and Christians', *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 42:167 (1884), pp. 450-477; Hartwig Hirschfeld, *Literary History of Hebrew Grammarians and Lexicographers: Accompanied by Unpublished Texts* (London: Oxford University Press/Humphrey Milford, 1926); William Chomsky, 'How the Study of Hebrew Grammar Began and Developed', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 35.3 (1945), pp. 281-301;

works are approximately contemporaneous, and reflect a time when for both Christians and Jews the primary academic task was the exposition and exegesis of Scripture – the Book amongst books to be read and understood. The province of Hebrew grammarians usually falls into the medieval period, when the influence of Arabic writers and the appropriation of Aristotle by Maimonides are felt. However, the ancient periods of the pre- and postexilic scribes, and the Rabbis of Antiquity are often overlooked, and the principles of scribal and *midrashic* interpretations are not equated with the work of grammarians, because its focal point is seen as purely biblical exegesis. Yet, Augustine and especially Isidore's influence arguably overshadowed the medieval period with regard to grammar and their ultimate aim was to produce a grammar in the service of Scripture. The aims of Jewish exegetes were not so different, but as Jewish interpreters of a Jewish text their voice has an authenticity lost in the Western tradition. Not only are the Great Jewish Books worthy of our attention, so is the Jewish way of reading them, which potentially provides another way – a more authentic way – of approaching the text.

The Genesis of Great Books

Marijk van der Wende has well highlighted the similarities and differences between the long-established liberal arts programmes in the USA and the more recent developments in Europe.[3] Whilst European and American models differ in many regards, they can both be traced back to a common beginning with ancient Greek philosophy and the medieval European university. European and American models both appear to omit Jewish sources and a good example of this omission can be found in Great Books curricula. The Great Books were initially introduced at St. John's College, Annapolis, in 1937 by Stringfellow Barr and Scott Buchanan, from a list based on John Erskine's 1916 Colombia College program, and a revision by Chicago's *Committee on the Liberal arts*.[4] The list of books chosen were themselves based on the classic liberal arts 'trivium' of grammar, logic and rhetoric; and 'quadrivium' of arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. St. John's has kept fairly true to the original list despite Buchanan's belief that it should be continually amended.

Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler edited a 54-volume collection entitled *Great Books of the Western World*, which was published in 1952. They believed that the best liberal

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and Irene E. Zwiep, 'The Hebrew linguistic tradition of the Middle Ages'*, Histoire Epistémologie Langage*, 18.1 (1996), pp. 41-61.

[3] Marijk van der Wende, 'The Emergence of Liberal arts and Sciences Education in Europe: A Comparative Perspective', *Higher Education Policy,* 24 (2011), pp. 233-253.

[4] See Thomas J. Tomcho, John C. Norcross and Christopher J. Correia, 'Great Books Curricula: What is Being Read?', *The Journal of General Education*, 43.2 (1994), 90-101; and Gerald Grant and David Riesman, 'St. John's and the Great Books', *Change*, 6.4 (1974), pp. 28-34, 36, 62-63.

education was to be achieved through 'the greatest works the West has produced', where the 'voices of the Great Conversation' would address society's problems with the 'wisdom that lies in the works of its greatest thinkers'.[5] In Volume 1, *The Great Conversation: The Substance of a Liberal Education*, Hutchins states: 'Readers who are startled to find the Bible omitted from the set will be reassured to learn that this was done only because Bibles are already widely distributed'.[6] His reassurance is presumably for his American Christian audience, yet the widespread availability of Shakespeare did not stop Hutchins and Adler from including all his plays. Hutchins cannot praise enough the Western tradition:

> The tradition of the West is embodied in the Great Conversation that began in the dawn of history and that continues to the present day. Whatever the merits of other civilizations in other respects, no civilization is like that of the West in this respect. No other civilization can claim that its defining characteristic is a dialogue of this sort. No dialogue in any other civilization can compare with that of the West in the number of great works of the mind that have contributed to this dialogue. The goal toward which Western society moves is the Civilization of the Dialogue. The spirit of Western civilization is the spirit of inquiry.[7]

Cleary, Hutchins and Adler had very set parameters when defining 'Western', and despite the Western indebtedness to Judaeo-Christianity, the 'Judaeo' did not make the list. Hutchins dedicates a whole chapter to the omission of 'great books of the East' (Chapter 9: 'East and West'), in which he essentially argues that in order to ever understand the great books of the East, we must first understand the Great Books of the West. It was not, in his opinion, beneficial to study both simultaneously, as America lacked sufficient teachers to proficiently lead the West through Eastern texts. However, he envisioned a day when 'all the purposes that validate the publication of great books lead logically to Great Books of the World'.[8] To date, there is still no such publication.[9] Norman Davies rightly critiqued Hutchins and Adler's collection for its narrowness: 'the prejudices and preferences are manifest. Of the 151 authors on the amended list, 49 are English or American, 27 French, 20 German, 15 Classical Greek, 9 Classical Latin, 6 Russian, 4 Scandinavians, 3 Spanish, 3 early Italians, 3 Irish, 3 Scots and 3 East Europeans.'[10] Anne Stevens points out that in the early 1900s the Great Books ideal really equated to an 'Americanization' program and, unfortunately, Americanization 'became

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[5] Tomcho, Norcross and Correia, 'Great Books Curricula', pp. 90-91.
[6] Robert M. Hutchins, *The Great Conversation: The Substance of a Liberal Education*, Vol. 1 of Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer Adler (eds.) *Great Books of the Western World*, 54 Vols. (Chicago: William Benton, 1952), p. xvii.
[7] Hutchins, *The Great Conversation*, p. 1.
[8] Hutchins, *The Great Conversation*, pp. 72-73.
[9] St. John's College, Santa Fe, has run an 'Eastern Classics Program' in it Graduate Institute since 1994, offering a 'structured reading of literary, philosophical, and theological texts of India, China, and Japan'; see <www.stjohnscollege.edu/GI/history.shtml> [accessed 19/04/13].
[10] Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (London: Pimlico, 1997), p. 21.

institutional anti-Semitism' amongst 'Harvard, Columbia, and Chicago [who] all claimed to have a "Jewish problem" vis-à-vis admissions quotas'.[11]

In 1994 Thomas Tomcho, John Norcross and Christopher Correia appropriately asked, which books are 'Great Books'? Who chooses them and who reads them? Two years earlier they approached 77 American colleges and universities that were identified as offering Great Books type curricula to try and answer these questions. The survey revealed that little had changed since 1952 and that the lists contained 'very few women, racial minorities or non-Western contributors'.[12] Among the most frequently assigned authors were Plato, Shakespeare, Aristotle and Homer. With the exception of a small number of biblical texts, the Great Books curricula are founded on essentially ancient Greek literature. Thereafter, the periods of Antiquity and Medieval history are virtually silent with regard to Jewish voices. There is no mention of the Talmud or the Midrashim.[13]

A number of liberal arts colleges and universities developed 'Jewish Studies' courses, where Jewish history, culture and literature are taught as discrete subjects.[14] However, according to Daniel Goffman, this tends to create a polarisation rather than an integration, whereby Jewish Studies attracts mainly Jewish students, and leaves non-Jewish students feeling intimidated and ostracised. Jewish Studies programs, he argues, 'too easily become ghettoized' instead of building 'cultural bridges by cultivating the non-Jewish student'.[15] This approach still leaves the Jewish voice on the outside. It designates Jewish texts as elective or a specialisation, rather than including Jewish voices within the 'Great Conversation'. Likewise, parts of the Bible may be presented within a 'Biblical Studies' elective in some liberal arts programmes, but devoid of an authoritatively Jewish context.[16]

The Greek Foundations of the Great Conversation

According to Arthur Hafner, the Great Books are 'humanity's great conversation about the most important questions in life … that began in the dawn of history and continues to the present day':

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[11] Anne H. Stevens, 'The Philosophy of General Education and its Contradictions: The Influence of Hutchins', *The Journal of General Education*, 50.3 (2001), pp. 165-191 (p. 174).
[12] Tomcho, Norcross and Correia, 'Great Books Curricula', p. 99.
[13] St. John's College groups its biblical texts in its Sophomore Year, after a Freshman Year of ancient Greek texts, see <www.sjc.edu/files/5814/0683/1577/ANReadingList20142015.pdf> [accessed 06/08/14].
[14] See Harold S. Wechsler and Paul Ritterband, 'Jewish Learning in American Universities: The Literature of a Field', *Modern Judaism*, 3.3 (1983), pp. 253-289.
[15] Daniel Goffman, 'Teaching Jewish History to the "Other"', *The History Teacher*, 24.2 (1991), pp. 157-174 (p. 158).
[16] See, for example, Alan Lenzi, 'Confessions and Reflections: What Can the Bible Do for the Liberal Arts?', *SBL Forum* (2007) <sbl-site.org/publications/article.aspx?articleId=611> [accessed 22 September 2014]; and Bruce Zuckerman, 'Choosing Among the Strands: Teaching Hebrew Bible Survey to Undergraduates at a Secular University' in Zev Garber (ed.), *Academic Approaches to Teaching Jewish Studies* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2000), pp. 55-82.

> The most basic questions … involve subjects such as the existence of God, the nature of love and justice, the possibility of immortality, and the achievement of freedom … These questions remain important for every human being. An awareness of the conversation that has occurred prior to one's own existence is essential to the introduction of new ideas and concepts into that conversation.[17]

If Hafner is correct, then where are the Jewish voices in this conversation? They surely address these most basic questions – the existence of God is addressed throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, not least in the Torah and in Job. The nature of love and justice is treated by the books of the Prophets and in Wisdom Literature. The possibility of immortality is more than hinted at in the books of Job, David and Daniel. The achievement of freedom *is* the story of Exodus. Whilst a few biblical texts may appear in Liberal arts curricula, the rightful interpreters of those texts are absent. When we claim to have built our Western societies on Judeo-Christian foundations, what we really mean are Greco-Christian foundations. When we dig deeper, we discover that even the Christianity we are talking of is so far removed from its Jewishness, so unrecognisable in its authenticity, that we might just as well concede that our foundations are Greek.

The Great Books tradition is immersed in the Greek world-view, and specifically a Platonic one. As Gerald Grant and David Riesman noted, regarding St. John's:

> Plato is the overwhelming presence in the place: his work shapes St. John's dialectical form, its ideal of governance, its vision of the good, its view of man. As the cofounder and first dean of the modern St. John's, Scott Buchanan wrote: "In our critical age, the reading of Plato by a large number of people could make the difference between a century of folly and a century of wisdom for the world."[18]

Selections from the books of the Torah are included in the 'Great Books Program' at St. John's College in Annapolis and Santa Fe. In a 2010 address at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Christopher B. Nelson, President of St. John's, made the following appeal:

> Consider the Books of Moses. We hear that Genesis may date back between 2700 and 3000 years, but it contains a story of origins that is contemporary to the ears of many today and speaks to the relationship between the natural and the divine. The book gives us examples of love and betrayal, sibling rivalries, men's and women's relationship to the Almighty, and their duties to fellow human beings, all of which raise questions that have a remarkably contemporary sound to them.[19]

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[17] Arthur W. Hafner, 'On My Mind: In Defense of the Great Books', *American Libraries*, 22.11 (1991), pp. 1062-1063 (p. 1063).
[18] Grant and Riesman, 'St. John's and the Great Books', p. 29.
[19] Christopher B. Nelson, *Whither the Future of Higher Education?* (2010) <www.stjohnscollege.edu/about/AN/speeches/harvardaddress.shtml> [accessed 18.04.13].

Nelson clearly appreciates the value of the Pentateuch for modern education, but the introduction to their 'Reading List' makes no mention of a Jewish contribution: 'The first year is devoted to Greek authors and their pioneering understanding of the liberal arts; the second year contains books from the Roman, Medieval, and Renaissance periods; the third year has books of the 17th and 18th centuries, most of which were written in modern languages; the fourth year brings the reading into the 19th and 20th centuries.'[20]

Allan Bloom claimed that 'Only in the Western nations, i.e., those influenced by Greek philosophy, is there some willingness to doubt the identification of the good with one's own way.'[21] Martha Nussbaum challenged Bloom's claim, objecting to its 'startling ignorance of the critical and rationalist tradition' evident in a variety of world-views, although she also failed to mention the Jewish tradition.[22] Thus, if and when the Bible is read, it sits between ancient Greek texts and Augustine, and they create the lens through which it is interpreted. Typical of the Church Fathers, Augustine exegeted Scripture with a background in Manichaean gnosticism and neoplatonic philosophy, and Aquinas followed with his Aristotelian predilection. The patristic doctrine of supersessionism consciously strove to expunge all Jewish traces from the Christian faith and sever Christianity from its Hebraic origins.[23] However, an authentic reading of the Hebrew Scriptures needs a Jewish exegetical lens – an authentic Jewish voice.

The Bible is a Hebrew text, but it has been mediated through a Greek world-view. Worse still, it is repeatedly strip-searched at the door by the 'security' of higher criticism before it is allowed to enter the 'Great Conversation'.[24] We can dissect a butterfly into its constituent parts, labelling the wings, thorax, head, legs, etc., but our butterfly no longer flies; it lies in pieces on glass plates for microscopic scrutiny. The beautiful colouring has all but rubbed off on clumsy fingertips and scalpel blades. But it no longer flies. And so it is that after we have dissected the sacred beauty of Scripture, we see the constituent parts – sources, redactions, pericopes, *Sitz im Leben* – but it no longer flies. Other Great Books enter in with VIP status, whilst the Bible is frisked with suspicion. No one seems to care about the authenticity of Plato or Aristotle's works; no one seems bothered to trace the historical accuracy of Socrates' life as presented by Plato. The Liberal arts are far more concerned with what these Great Books have to say. Not so with the Bible. Indeed, it now stands in danger of being ushered out of the Conversation altogether. Peter Hawkins warns us that

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[20] 'Academic Program', <www.stjohnscollege.edu/academic/readlist.shtml> [accessed 18/04/13].
[21] Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), p. 36.
[22] Martha Nussbaum, 'Undemocratic Vistas', *The New York Review of Books*, 34.17 (1987), pp. 20-26 (p. 22).
[23] See Rosemary Radford Ruether, 'The Adversus Judaeos Tradition in the Church Fathers: The Exegesis of Christian Anti-Judaism' in Jeremy Cohen (ed.), *Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict from Late Antiquity to the Reformation* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), pp.174-189.
[24] Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, pp. 374-375.

> …the Bible is on the endangered species list. This is most obviously a cause for alarm among those who venerate the sacred text "as a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119.105). But it must also trouble the more secular minded who see the Good Book as the cornerstone of The Great Books.[25]

The future for the Bible then – the only ancient Jewish text in Great Books curricula – does not bode well unless the need for the Jewish written voice is recognised.

Why is the written Jewish voice needful? Having a different world-view invites us to approach a text from a different position with a different angle, placing us somewhere else as the viewer and changing our relationship and position to the text in view. Thus, introducing Jewish voices which come from a distinctly different place will give us an alternative viewpoint in the Great Conversation. Sometimes the differences may compliment, sometimes they may challenge. It is not just what Jewish voices say of themselves, but what they tell us about the other. Thus, having another viewpoint can help to minimise our blind spots.

Great Jewish Books

Jonah Cohen has proposed a Jewish Great Books curriculum for Jewish day schools, drawing on the Great Books model:

> My thesis is that an ideal integrated Jewish education starts with universal human concerns, which is to say, with those bedrock problems that all thinking men and women must grapple. What is the good life? How do we define human nature? What is man's relationship to the earth? How should we organize society? Can we trust deduction and induction to give us certainty? What is the meaning of logic, of science, of God? And so on. By organizing the curricula around these kinds of elemental questions, by making them central to the culture of the school, we can obviously bring into conversation a large variety of great thinkers and artists from both the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds, as well as from the various Jewish denominations. What do Plato, Einstein and Levinas have to say about scientific methods? In what ways is scientific thinking similar to Talmudic exegesis and reasoning? How do Kant and Soloveitchik understand God? How might Euclidian and non-Euclidian geometries help us understand the kabbalistic thought of Steinsaltz or the abstract expressionism of Rothko? We can approach these thinkers, rabbis and artists as fellow journeymen

[25] Peter S. Hawkins, 'Lost and Found: The Bible and Its Literary Afterlife', *Religion & Literature*, 36.1 (2004), pp. 1-14 (p. 1).

> sharing a common pursuit of truth, and, like Talmudic scholars, we can compare, discuss and analyze their various perspectives on humanity's fundamental concerns.[26]

Cohen seeks to 'borrow' aspects of the Great Books tradition, whereby students grapple with the primary sources: 'What better way to develop an appreciation of mathematics, logic, science, history, art, music, philosophy and literature than by studying the actual works of the geniuses who made those subjects important and stimulating in the first place.'[27] The distinction is that 'contributions to these fields by the great Jewish thinkers' are put 'into dialogue with the thoughts of eminent non-Jewish intellectuals who are struggling with the same questions'. He notes that the Great Books programs at St. John's and Thomas Aquinas College are biased towards 'authors of a non-Jewish background', but that this is a result of a 'methodological flaw in their selection of readings' rather than bigotry. The flaw is that Hutchins and Adler's selection emphasised texts written before the twentieth century, when Jews were prohibited from fully participating in Western civilization. Here, Cohen is generous because Hutchins and Adler cannot have been ignorant of the Talmud, the Midrashim or even Maimonides.

However, he does question their 'decision to enshrine Chaucer's "The Prioress's Tale" as part of the great works of Western civilization, while excluding far worthier and loftier texts of Medieval Jewish poets'.[28] It is not just Chaucer's work, however, that is questionable. Gavin Langmuir also reminds us of an easily overlooked fact about Western literature: 'Even when Jews were least important or were physically absent, they have been part of the mythology of the West: *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice* were written in and for a society in which the residence of Jews had been illegal for three hundred years.'[29]

Jewish Great Books would, according to Cohen, 'have to highlight the explosion of Jewish genius after 1900' and 'restore to Jewish consciousness a number of ignored but influential ancient and Medieval authors – Philo of Alexandria, Ibn Gabirol, Leone Ebreo and other superb thinkers and poets who were translated into European languages, plagiarized, appropriated, and their names sometimes erased from the Western canon, all because they were Jewish and presumably fair game'. But why should these ancient and Medieval Jewish treasures be restored only to Jewish consciousness, why not introduce them to all students of Great Books? 'Those who contend that Western civilization rests on the struggle between Athens and Jerusalem,' Cohen argues, 'ignore how vigorously the sons and daughters of

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[26] Jonah Cohen, 'Integrating Education in Jewish Day Schools: Toward a Jewish Great Books Program', *Covenant*, 1.3 (2007) <www.covenant.idc.ac.il/en/vol1/issue3/Integrating-Education-in-Jewish-Day-Schools.html#bio> [accessed 27/10/11].
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Gavin I. Langmuir, 'Majority History and Post-Biblical Jews', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 27.3 (1966), pp. 343-364 (p. 364).

Jerusalem have embraced and contributed to the rational, empirical and artistic traditions of Athens'. Regrettably, the same cannot yet be said for Athens' sons and daughters.

The Origins of Greek and Hebrew Grammar

In the Western tradition, the trivium, in its ancient and medieval form, begins with grammar; and this is principally the art connected to reading and writing – the primary textual art. Grammar concerned itself with letters, its own etymology coming from the Greek *grammatike tekhne* ('art of letters'), from the word *gramma* ('letter'), stemming from *graphein* ('to draw or write').[30] According to Casper de Jonge and Johannes van Ophuijsen, the 'most influential linguistic doctrine to survive from antiquity is that of the μέρη λόγου "parts of speech"', in which ancient grammarians 'traditionally distinguished eight word classes: noun (ὄνομα), verb (ῥῆμα), participle (μετοχή), article (ἄρθρον), pronoun (ἀντωνυμία), preposition (πρόθεσις), adverb (ἐπίρρημα), and conjunction (σύνδεσμος).'[31] These classes are 'central to ancient grammatical treatises', but their origins go back to the 'much earlier philosophical interest in λόγος and its parts' and the 'result of a long development beginning with … Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics', who were interested in the 'analysis of the minimal unit of speech called λόγος as the potential truth-bearer'. [32] Indeed, for Andreas Schmidhauser, the 'most important figure in the prehistory of grammar' is Plato (c. 427-347 BCE): 'On every linguistic level – element, syllable, word, sentence – the distinctions he draws, the terms he introduces, the arguments he advances (and also those he thinks he refutes) have left their imprint…'[33] As words were seen as potential truth-bearers, so early grammar began to focus on interpreting and understanding text. Rita Copeland notes that in the work of Aristotle (c. 384-322 BCE) 'we often find ideas about language, but always in the service of his local philosophical interests'.[34] She gives the example of his 'logical study of propositions' in *De interpretatione*, which begins with an analysis of the 'linguistic elements that will feed into the construction of the proposition'. Whilst it became 'arguably … the most influential passage in the history of linguistics, it did not start out as linguistics'.[35] Moreover, in *Rhetoric*, Aristotle's interest is in the analysis of persuasion and prose style; and in *Poetics* he considers language as 'the

[30] Douglas Harper, 'Grammar', *Online Etymological Dictionary* <www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=grammar> [accessed 27 September 2013].
[31] Casper C. de Jonge and Johannes M. van Ophuijsen, 'Greek Philosophers on Language' in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 485-498 (p.495).
[32] Ibid.
[33] Andreas U. Schmidhauser, 'The Birth of Grammar in Greece' in Egbert J. Bakker (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 499-511 (p. 501).
[34] Rita Copeland, 'General Introduction' in Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter (eds.), *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300-1475* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 1-60 (p. 16).
[35] Ibid.

instrument of poetry' (1456b–1457a, section 20).[36] Thus, prose and poetry are distinguished as styles of text for grammatical study, focusing on textual structure as well as content.

Starting in the 'fourth century BCE, when γραμματικός first appears, it is used to describe someone who knows the "letters": a person versed in grammar, that is, knows how to read and write, can set apart vowels, consonants, and semiconsonants, and such'. Then in the 'third century BCE, γραμματική comes to be used for what one now would call philology and criticism':

> Thus the oeuvre of Aristarchus of Samothrace (*fl.* 160 BCE) – ὁ γραμματικώτατος "the most grammatical" to some (Ath. 15.12.2) – consists in editions of and commentaries on Homer, Hesiod, Archilochus, Alcman, Pindar, Herodotus, and others, as well as in a number of critical treatises on Homeric questions.[37]

Grammar, then, as we can see, is already concerning itself with Great Greek Texts and how they should be read, interpreted and understood – emerging as the Western written voice.

Ernest Brehaut notes that 'Alexandrian scholars began to compare the idiom of Homer with that of their own day'.[38] Grammarians were students of 'textual criticism or mythology', of 'literature at large' and studied 'for the purpose of elucidating the poets'.[39] So it was, claims Copeland, that grammar 'embraced not only language and linguistic thought but literature and the analysis of literary texts'.[40] Indeed, Filippomaria Pontani adds that 'the place of Homer in the Greek grammatical tradition is an extremely important one, both at its outset – when the problems connected with the constitution of his text catalyse the philosophical inputs of Stoic and Peripatetic thinkers and precipitate them towards the creation of a new *techne* – and at its peak, when he contributes vital, if partial, elements to the creation of a new linguistic standard, and thus remains perfectly integrated as a pillar of Greek linguistic consciousness for centuries.'[41] Thus, the works of Homer became the literary benchmark – *the* required reading amongst Great Greek Texts.

Marcus Kalisch began his survey of Hebrew grammatical history with the following statement: 'Except in the etymology of proper nouns, the Hebrew Scriptures exhibit no trace of grammatical or linguistic enquiry among the ancient Israelites; although patriots and public teachers exhorted them to watch over the preservation and purity of their language.'[42] As an example of a patriotic and public teacher, he references (in a footnote), Nehemiah (*fl*. fifth

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[36] Copeland, 'General Introduction', p. 16, note 28.
[37] Schmidhauser, 'The Birth of Grammar in Greece', pp. 499-500.
[38] Ernest Brehaut, *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages: Isidore of Seville* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1912), p. 89.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Copeland, 'General Introduction', p. 1.
[41] Filippomaria Pontani, '"Only God Knows the Correct Reading!" The Role of Homer, the Quran and the Bible in the Rise of Philology and Grammar' in Maren Niehoff (ed.), *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 43-83 (p. 53).
[42] Marcus M. Kalisch, *Hebrew Grammar, With Exercises, Part II* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1875), p. 1.

century BCE) berating the state of Jerusalem where he found Jews who had intermarried with women from the surrounding nations, and whose progeny were unable to speak Hebrew:

> In those days also I saw the Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but only the language of each people (Nehemiah 13:23-24).

However, Kalisch's view is totally countered by Jonathan Kearney, who, in one of several examples, demonstrates that the Hebrew Scriptures do indeed exhibit grammatical and linguistic enquiry:

> The Hebrew Bible itself displays an interest in the workings of language in several places. The *Volksetymologien* of Genesis offer several examples of this phenomenon. For instance, at Gen. 21.6 the meaning of the name יִצְחָק *yiṣḥåq* 'Isaac' is explained in terms of its relationship to the verb צָחַק *ṣåḥaq* 'to laugh'.[43]

Kalisch's brusque assessment also overlooks some interesting linguistic and grammatical elements in the ancient Hebrew Script that denote a borrowing of elements from contemporaneous linguistic systems. Nili Shupak has found striking parallels between the Torah texts and contemporary Egyptian language: 'Even non-expert readers who know little about ancient Egypt can discern Egyptian elements integrated into the Hebrew text of the biblical story of Israel in Egypt.'[44] Shupak identifies Egyptian terms transliterated into Hebrew, and which are now translated into English as 'Pharaoh', 'magicians', 'the Nile', 'basket', 'reeds', and 'papyrus'. She also identifies the transliterated Egyptian personal names: 'Moses', 'Pinchas' and 'Miriam'; and the place names: 'Ramesses' and 'Pithom'.[45] In addition to the transliterated terms, personal names and place names, Shupak adds Egyptian idioms that have been translated into Hebrew rather than transliterated:

> To these elements should be added certain typical Egyptian idioms that, rather than being transliterated in the biblical text like those in the first three groups above, were translated into Hebrew, making it difficult at times to discern their foreign origin. Examples include the expressions "a mighty hand"; "an outstretched arm"; "an abomination to the Egyptians"; and the three Hebrew terms that refer to the "hardening" of Pharaoh's heart: *kbd, ḥzq*, and *qšh*.'[46]

Shupak argues that the Egyptian origins of these terms, names and idioms support an earlier dating of the Torah texts, however, her explanation of their usage demonstrates that among

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[43] Jonathan F. Kearney, 'Grammatical Thought in Medieval Jewish Exegesis in Europe' in Geoffrey Khan (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics, Vol 2* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 105-108 (p. 105).
[44] Nili Shupak, 'Using Egyptian Elements in the Bible to Solve the Problem of the Origins of the People of Israel', *Bulletin of the Israel Academic Center in Cairo*, 26 (2003), pp. 5-11 (p. 6).
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

the authors of the Hebrew Scriptures, even in the earliest texts and sources, there was a familiarity with Egyptian semantics and an intentional use of the language that reveals a sophisticated knowledge of linguistics and grammar. When we consider that Aramaic also appears explicitly within the Hebrew text (the place name *Jegar-sahadutha* in Genesis 15:1; the verse: 'Thus shall you say to them: "The gods who did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens"' in Jeremiah 10:11, a lengthy passage in Daniel 2:4b–7:28; and two written letters in Ezra 4:8–6:18 and 7:12–26), we see that the use of Egyptian is not unique and further demonstrates an ease of exchange between languages and grammatical systems to serve a variety of purposes.

Extraordinarily, the name of Israel's great leader, Moses (משה), has deeper significance beyond the title given him by Pharaoh's daughter when she rescued him from the Nile, which has traditionally been explained as sounding like the Hebrew for 'draw out' (משיתהו from the root משה 'to draw', see Exodus 2:10). According to Shupak, Moses was an 'Egyptian theophoric name in which the verb *msi* ("to give birth") originally was joined to the name of an Egyptian god':

> This type of name was common in Egypt in the period of the New Kingdom (the fifteenth through eleventh centuries BCE); examples include Thutmose (i.e., born of the god of wisdom, Thut) and Ramesses (i.e., born of the god Re). Until recently, proponents of this etymology explained the sobriquet "Moses" as a tendentiously shortened form of the original Egyptian name, from which the element of the foreign god's name was expunged by the biblical author. However, this explanation is no longer necessary, now that it has become apparent that the Egyptians themselves often shortened names of this kind by leaving out their second element. We know of at least three people called "Ms" from the Ramesside period (the thirteenth century BCE).[47]

The sophistication in borrowing from the Egyptian and Aramaic reveals that the authors of Scripture were not only conversant in multiple languages and the use of idioms, terminology, and the etymology of names, but they knew their readers to be likewise trained and skilled in understanding.

Jewish and Christian tradition both ascribe the authorship of the Torah to Moses, but regardless of whether this was the case or it is the work of a later redactor (or a plurality of redactors), the Egyptian idioms appear across the books of the Torah, beginning with Genesis. Shupak gives a striking example of this with the expression 'mouth', which represented the 'sovereign' in Egyptian, appearing first in Genesis 41:40 when Pharaoh appoints Joseph as his second-in-command: 'You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as

[47] Shupak, 'Using Egyptian Elements', pp.6-7.

you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.' The word translated into English as 'command' (or 'your word') is פיך (*pika*) in Hebrew, from פה (*peh*) meaning 'mouth':

> The term appears in Egyptian literature as a title designating the holder of a high office, that of the king's counsel. The full title is "Mouth of the King of Upper Egypt" or "the Mouth that quiets the whole land, to its farthest reaches." This designation was used frequently in the period of the New Kingdom, and it remained in use up to the Late Period (the seventh and sixth centuries BCE). The Hebrew narrator thus makes use of an expression ubiquitous in Egyptian court language in order to convey that Aaron would serve as a "mouth" to Moses in the same sense that an Egyptian high official served as the "mouth" of his sovereign [Exodus 4:14-16]. In so doing, he raised Moses to the status of Pharaoh, the Egyptian God-King.[48]

Thus, the term 'mouth' is just one example of an idiom that carries over from Genesis into Exodus, and continues to appear throughout the Hebrew Scriptures with the same sense (for example, see Joshua 1:18, Job 39:27 and Ezekiel 3:27). This not only has a unifying effect but, moreover, it suggests that these idioms and terms were recognisable as signs and symbols to the reader.

Greek Grammar Schools and Hebrew Scribal Training

The first 'Greek school grammar' was written by Dionysius Thrax (c. 170–90 BCE). It appeared in about 80 BCE and was 'destined to be the basis of all the school grammars of antiquity'.[49] For Thrax, the purpose of grammar was simple: 'Grammar is a practical knowledge of the usages of language as generally current among poets and prose writers.' His understanding of grammar was as follows: 'It is divided into six parts: (1) trained reading with due regard to prosody; (2) explanation according to poetical figures; (3) ready statement of dialectical peculiarities and allusions; (4) discovery of etymology; (5) an accurate account of analogies; (6) criticism of poetical productions, which is the noblest part of grammatic art.'[50] Thus, the grammar schools began to standardise the concepts of grammar; and as David Conway states: 'All who undertook any such course would be made to follow a roughly similar programme of studies.' [51] Their studies included an expectation to 'become familiar with the entire corpus of Homeric myth and other epic Greek literature', which was 'considered necessary to gain acquaintance with instances of good style as well as [to] learn about heroism and virtue'.[52] Conway concludes that this reading became part of the grammar curriculum: 'All such literary

[48] Shupak, 'Using Egyptian Elements', p. 10.
[49] Brehaut, *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages*, p. 90.
[50] Dionysius Thrax, *The Grammar of Dionysius Thrax*, trans. Thomas Davidson (St. Louis: Studley, 1874), pp. 3-4.
[51] David Conway, *Liberal Education and the National Curriculum* (London: Civitas, 2010), p. 81.
[52] Ibid.

knowledge and skill came to be subsumed under the term "grammar".'[53] Robert Kaster also observes that as well as the study of language – at the very outset – the Greek grammarian had a literary focus, which could even shape the identity of the reader:

> One of our earliest witnesses to the grammarian's role is an inscription from the Ionian city of Priene [honouring] a local benefactor, dating to sometime after 84 B.C. Among the man's services is noted his subsidy for a grammarian to instruct the youth of Priene in language and literature (φιλολογια), "through which souls progress toward excellence [ἀρετή] and the condition proper to humanity [πάθος ἀνθρώπινον]" … the statement reflects the belief that excellence and humanity not only could be derived from the literary education but could even be defined by it.[54]

Grammar enabled an 'analysis in ancient texts of all genres – from rhetoric and philosophy, to medicine and theology', with an influence exceeding the Greek-speaking world. Thus, 'Latin, in the late second century BCE, became the first language to which the Greek system was adapted; and for the next 600 years Latin grammarians continued to be inspired by their Greek homologues.'[55]

Perhaps Kalisch's view that the Hebrew Scriptures 'exhibit no trace of grammatical or linguistic enquiry among the ancient Israelites' was, in part, informed by the argument that because there is no mention of 'schools' in the Hebrew Bible, they did not, therefore, exist.[56] Countering this argument, Christopher Rollston's research has led him to rightly conclude that:

> Ultimately, I would contend that the precision, meticulousness, and consistency of the Old Hebrew script (and its marked and consistent differences with the Phoenician and Aramaic scripts) are features that reflect formal, standardized scribal education. Such features are certainly not consistent with an absence of formal, standardized education. Furthermore, the orthographic conventions of Old Hebrew also reflect synchronic consistency (and diachronic development).[57]

In other words, the actual writing and copying of the Scriptures, throughout the generations in ancient Israel, is evidenced in a uniformity that necessitates some system of grammatical and linguistic knowledge and training, both amongst the writers and the readers. Supporting Rollston's counterargument, Karel van der Toorn, places Israel in a wider context:

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[53] Ibid.
[54] Robert A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 15.
[55] Schmidhauser, 'The Birth of Grammar in Greece', p. 500.
[56] Christopher A. Rollston, 'Scribal Education in Ancient Israel: The Old Hebrew Epigraphic Evidence', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 344 (2006), pp. 47-74 (p.47). For the view that there were no schools in ancient Israel see Nathan Morris, *The Jewish School: An Introduction to the History of Jewish Education* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1937), pp. 3-4; and Friedemann W. Golka, *The Leopard's Spots: Biblical and African Wisdom in Proverbs* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), p. 11.
[57] Rollston, 'Scribal Education in Ancient Israel', p. 67.

> The scholars of the ancient Near East had by definition received a scribal training; they were scribes in the sense of scholars. The scholars of Israel were no exception to the common pattern: they were scribes who had specialized in the classic texts, which in their case made them scholars of the Torah.'[58]

Indeed, Bernhard Pick considered that, in its relationship to other ancient Semitic languages, Hebrew 'retained the stamp of high antiquity, originality, and greater simplicity and purity of forms'.[59] Pick highlights the linguistic and structural precision that is evident in the earliest texts and confirms an underlying system of formal grammatical and linguistic knowledge: 'In its earliest written state it exhibits, in the writings of Moses, a perfection of structure which was never surpassed.'[60] Ironically, rather than the ancient Hebrew language evolving and developing with greater style and sophistication over the passing of time, it appears that it fell into decay as it began to come under the influence of Aramaic:

> Not only did the intrusion of this powerful Aramaic element greatly tarnish the purity of the Hebrew words and their grammatical formation, older ones having been altered and supplanted by newer ones which are Aramaic for the most part; it also obscured the understanding of the old language, and it enfeebled its instinctive operations until at length it stifled them. The consequence was that the capacity of observing grammatical niceties in the old pure Hebrew was entirely lost; the distinction of prose and poetical diction was partly forgotten; and finally, as the later writers went back to the Pentateuch and other older compositions, many elements which had already died out of the language were reproduced as archaisms.[61]

Thus, the older Hebrew represented a more pure and highly formed language – 'perfection' in Pick's view – replete with prose, poetry, and grammatical detail. If Pick is correct, then ancient Hebrew had a refined grammar running through its core from the outset, and not as a later development. However, the decay in Hebrew that the Aramaic influence brought about, led to a new era of interpretation in reading and understanding the biblical texts:

> This decline of the popular knowledge of pure Hebrew gave occasion to the appointment of an order of interpreters – *meturgemanin* – in the synagogue for the explication of the Scriptures in this more current dialect, as can be seen from Nehemiah viii. 8, where we read, "They (the priests and Levites) read in the book, in the law of God מְפֹרָשׁ and appended thereto the sense, and caused them to understand the reading," where the word means, "with an explanation subjoined," i.e.

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[58] Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 81.
[59] Bernhard Pick, 'The Study of the Hebrew Language among Jews and Christians', *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 42:167 (1884), pp. 450-477 (p. 454).
[60] Ibid.
[61] Pick, 'The Study of the Hebrew Language', p. 455.

> with an interpretation added, with an explanation in Chaldee, the vulgar tongue, as appears from the context and by a comparison of Ezra iv. 18, and verse 7.[62]

The Hebrew word מפרש (*meparash*) is translated into English as 'distinctly' or 'clearly', so these interpreters began to give clarification to the meaning of the text, and with שכל (*sekel*), translated as 'the sense' or 'insight', they helped the community understand the reading. In this way, their function was not so dissimilar to the role that the monks and bishops in Isidore of Seville's community would take on, as we shall see, a thousand years later.

Michael Fishbane notes that the 'technical' title, 'scribe' סופר (*sofer*), 'first appears in connection with the royal council established by King David at the outset of the United Monarchy (2 Sam. 8:16-18 ~20:23-5)'. It then reappears in 'similar listings preserved for the dynasties of King Solomon (1 Kg. 4:1-6), King Joash (2 Chron. 24:11-12), and King Hezekiah (2 Kg. 18:18, 37). Thus the סופר appears as a stable component of the high royal bureaucracy for at least 300 years, from the beginning of the tenth to the seventh century BCE.'[63] Additionally, Emanuel Tov points out that other scribes are mentioned in the Scriptures at various locations (some anonymous and some not): 'Qiryat Sefer, literally "the city of the book" (*i.a.*, Josh 15:15; the site where an archive was kept?), the earlier name of Debir, may have been the site where many such scribes lived.'[64] He suggests that the reference in '1 Chr 2:55, "the families of *soferim* who lived at Jabez," refers to family-like guilds of scribes.' With regard to individual scribes, '1 Chr 24:6 mentions Shemayah son of Netanel, הסופר מ "הלוי, "the scribe, who was of the Levites", whilst the 'best known scribe in Scripture is Ezra, named סופר מהיר (a skilled scribe) in Ezra 7:6 and, similar to Shemayah, deriving from a priestly family (his direct lineage from Aaron is specified in Ezra 7:1-4).'[65] Fishbane correctly identifies that Ezra's acclamation was genuine: 'The fact that Ezra's title already occurs in Ps. 45:2 as a frozen idiom suggests that this designation was known in the pre-exilic period as well, and was not simply a contemporary title conferred upon him by later historians.'[66]

Toorn reminds us of our debt to the scribes for the transmission of the Scriptures: 'The books of the Bible would not have seen the light in the oral culture of Israel if it were not for the professional scribes. They are the main figures behind biblical literature; we owe the Bible entirely to them.'[67] It is a debt not just for Jews, Christians and Muslims, but for everyone who appreciates the value (literary, spiritual, philosophical or otherwise) of the Hebrew Scriptures. Toorn believes that the scribal school of Jerusalem ('more a pedagogical than an architectural

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[62] Pick, 'The Study of the Hebrew Language', p. 456.
[63] Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 25.
[64] Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), p. 8.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 26-27.
[67] Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 75.

concept') was inextricably linked to the temple, because of the school's role as the heart of 'text production':

> In the ancient Near East, the men who taught others to read texts were also the men who wrote texts themselves. All over the Near East, schools were not merely [centres] of text transmission but also of text composition. While the temple scribes in Israel were responsible for teaching the scribal craft, they were also the ones who created the bulk of the biblical literature.[68]

This scribal craft must have included a cohesive understanding of literary grammar, teaching 'students to be conversant with the technical language of all activities for which writing might be needed'.[69] The training in grammar would include an understanding of the 'idiom of particular professions and written genres', as well as 'mastery of one or more foreign languages':

> Around 700, the officials of King Hezekiah were able to conduct a conversation in Aramaic, which to the common people was incomprehensible (2 Kings 18:26). In addition to Aramaic, the scribal program may have taught other languages as well, such as Egyptian and, later, Greek. In the words of Ben Sira, the accomplished scribe "will travel through the lands of foreign nations" to increase his knowledge (Sir 39:4).[70]

These examples lead Toorn to rightly conclude that 'training in foreign languages was part of the scribal education'. It is possible, therefore, that the scribes had a working knowledge of grammatical schemas from several languages, which may, in turn, have influenced their exegesis.[71]

Toorn identifies a 'secondary phase of the scribal program … devoted to the study of the classics'. He draws on the work of André Lemaire, who 'advances the hypothesis that the books of the Bible were preserved and canonized by virtue of the fact that they were on the curriculum of the scribal schools'.[72] Toorn believes that the allusion to the 'books of the fathers' in the prologue of Ben Sira is an explicit reference to the use of the Scriptures for scribal instruction.[73] Moreover, he makes a fascinating argument that the library of Qumran provides a clue to the identity of the most eminent 'classics' in the scribal curriculum:

> About 25 percent of the Dead Sea Scrolls are scriptural. Except for the Scroll of Esther, all books of the Hebrew Bible are represented by at least one copy. The three books

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[68] Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 89. For the view that nothing is known of ancient Israelite scribal training, see Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 25.
[69] Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 100.
[70] Ibid.
[71] For the view that there was an early Greek influence on rabbinic exegesis, see David Daube, 'Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric', *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 22 (1949), pp. 239-264.
[72] André Lemaire, *Les écoles et la formation de la Bible dans l'ancien Israel,* OBO 39 (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), pp. 72–83; see Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 101.
[73] Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 101.

> represented by the most manuscripts are Psalms (thirty-nine in total, including twenty-two manuscripts from Cave 4), Deuteronomy (thirty-one, including twenty-one from Cave 4), and Isaiah (twenty-two, including eighteen from Cave 4).[74]

Toorn quotes from Eugene Ulrich's reflection on these statistics: 'It is interesting, but not surprising, that these three books are also the most frequently quoted in the New Testament'; as further support for their currency as the 'Great Books' of ancient Israel.[75] The argument is all the more compelling because Toorn links the role of the Levites as overseers of scribal education in the Persian period with their influence upon the 'shaping' of Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and Psalms – it is, he claims, 'corroborating evidence for the use of these books in the training of scribes'. Thus, they became the scribal 'textbooks', each with a specific purpose:

> The scribes taught the Torah to the people; the Book of Deuteronomy provided them with a textbook. The scribes assisted worshippers in their devotional duties, including the recitation of prayers and, if need be, the composition in writing of songs of thanksgiving; the Book of Psalms was the handbook for these liturgists. The Book of Isaiah, finally, taught the scribes ways in which to construe the past, the present, and the future; it provided them with a means of dealing with history and its vicissitudes.[76]

Trainee scribes were devoted to the study of the classics, and underwent 'immersion' or 'enculturation' by chanting texts, copying dictated texts and memorising texts. Toorn sees evidence of this in the New Testament, the Pseudepigrapha, and the non-biblical writings from Qumran; and the way in which these 'secondary' texts quote from, allude to and stylistically resemble the classics, revealing a common 'thorough knowledge of the written tradition'.[77]

The education of scribes necessitated that teachers explained the biblical texts to the trainee. Toorn gives a number of examples of this tradition of scribal exegesis emerging from the Scriptures:

> If scribes were to elucidate the sense of the scriptures (Neh 8:8; Dan 11:33), they had to receive exegetical training themselves. An example is found at Neh 8:13–18, which contains a halakhic ruling on the various types of branches to be used for the construction of booths for Sukkoth. A prophecy by Haggai contains an echo of the question-and-answer commentary on rules of purity and contagion (Hag 2:11–13). And Qohelet's counsel against rash vows (Qoh 5:1–6) reads like a commentary on Deut 23:22–24.[78]

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[74] Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 101-102.
[75] Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible,* Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), p. 19; quoted in Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 102.
[76] Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, pp. 102-103.
[77] Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 103.
[78] Ibid.

If Toorn is correct, then it would appear that all of Scripture – the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings – had value in scribal training. Furthermore, even individual elements of exegesis – grammatical semantics – are laid out by Ben Sira, the Psalms and the Book of Daniel:

> Ben Sira emphasizes that the scribe has privileged access to the "subtleties" *(strophais),* "hidden meanings" *(apokrypha),* "obscurities" *(ainigmasi),* and "secrets" *(apokryphois)* of the scriptures (Sir 39:1–8). The protagonist of Psalm 119, held out as an example to apprentice scribes, immerses himself in the Torah in order to penetrate its "mysteries" (*niplā'ôt,* Ps 119:18, 27). Like Daniel, the scribe sits down to consult the books and discover their meaning (Dan 9:2) … For the scribe, reading is a source of revelation.[79]

Adding to and corroborating Toorn's curriculum, Sonja Schoeman claims that scribal training involved the use of 'metaphors, parables, idioms, epigrams, dictums, chanting, counter-questions, debates, allegories, riddles, stories, word association and mnemonic, whilst references to concrete things served to elucidate certain life principles to the students'.[80] This technical training in interpretive skills was essential for the young scribe:

> From earliest times it was necessary for prospective scribes to receive special professional training. Those who were called upon daily to declare and administer the Law must possess not merely a superior knowledge of the Law itself, they must know all possible interpretations, methods of interpretation and the precedents created by former decisions and applications.[81]

Thus, for the scribe it was reading to understand, and understanding to explicate. Tov affirms the view that the scribes were well-educated and well-read, leading to their reputation in 'religious literature', as he refers to it, as being wise.[82]

Like Toorn, Pick also quotes from Ben Sira, the Greek text of the Book of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus, written c. 290-280 BCE), which mentions the paramount importance of the study of the Hebrew Scripture by the scribes. The Greek word used here for scribes is γραμματεύς (*grammateus*), and their work was considered, to use Pick's words, 'the chief and fairest occupation': διανοουμένου ἐν νόμῳ Ὑψίστου, σοφίαν πάντων ἀρχαίων ἐκζητήσει καὶ ἐν προφητείαις ἀσχοληθήσεται (Ecclesiasticus 39.1, Pick's translation in footnote: 'But he that giveth his mind to the law of the Most High, and meditateth thereon, will seek out the wisdom of all the elders and be occupied with prophecies').[83] The scribes of the postexilic period were, therefore, early grammarians of Scripture, reading and expositing the biblical genres of Law,

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[79] Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, p. 106.
[80] Sonja Schoeman, 'Early Hebrew education and its significance for present-day educational theory and practice', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 53.1/2 (1997), pp. 407-427 (p. 416).
[81] Schoeman, 'Early Hebrew education', p. 415.
[82] Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches*, pp. 8-9.
[83] Pick, 'The Study of the Hebrew Language', pp. 457-458.

Wisdom and the Prophets. This postexilic period also gave rise to the scribal schools and academies, of which Jerusalem held primacy until the Roman destruction of the Jewish capital (70 CE), when the academic centre moved to Jamnia, on the coastal plain south of Jaffa, under Jochanan ben Saccai. Under Rabban Gamaliel (*fl*. third century CE), son of Judah the Prince, the seat of learning moved to Tiberias, and shortly after to Babylonia, where 'the schools at certain cities on the Euphrates, Sora, Pumbaditha, and Nehardea, attained, with reference to [scriptural erudition], pre-eminently to high esteem'.[84] The scribes formed the bridge between the biblical and Talmudic periods – from scribe to rabbi –emerging from the postexilic period into the Second Temple period and beyond.

Rome, Augustine, the Talmud and the Masoretes

Martin Bloomer defines the Roman understanding of grammar as 'the rules for correct reading, writing, and speaking, and as the first presentation of literature … the formative stage in literate education'.[85] A typically educated adult 'started by reading Homer and Virgil, could quote from memory passages of verse, and shared a particular academic training in how to comment upon poetry'.[86] Quintilian (c. 35–100CE), although principally a rhetorician, wrote extensively on grammar in his *Institutio Oratoria*, devoting five chapters to the subject in the first book. He deals with practical issues such as the grammatical mistakes of barbarisms and solecisms, as well as analogy and etymology.[87] Francis Colson claims that the 'five chapters which Quintilian has devoted to "Grammatica" are in many ways the most valuable discussion of the subject which we possess'; being 'older than any other surviving account, except the remains of Varro *De lingua Latina* and the grammar of Dionysius Thrax, and this last, though far more complete than Quintilian in its examination of the parts of speech, has nothing that compares with the other chapters on analogy, etymology, etc., nor does it give so clear a view of 'grammatica' as a whole'. [88] Of the grammarian (*Grammaticus*), which Harold Butler translated as 'teacher of literature', Quintilian wrote: 'Whether he speak of style or expound disputed passages, explain stories or paraphrase poems, everyone who hears him will profit by his teaching' (I.II.14).[89] He believed that 'correct reading proceeds interpretation', and he did not limit this to poetry alone, 'every kind of writer must be carefully studied, not merely for

[84] Pick, 'The Study of the Hebrew Language', pp. 458-459.
[85] Martin Bloomer, *The School of Rome: Latin studies and the Origins of Liberal Education* (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2011), p. 117.
[86] Bloomer, *The School of Rome*, p. 118.
[87] For a discussion on the sequence and purpose of Quintilian's chapters on grammar in *Institutio Oratoria* see Kurt von Fritz, 'Ancient Instruction in "Grammar" According to Quintilian', *The American Journal of Philology*, 70.4 (1949), pp. 337-366.
[88] Francis H. Colson, 'The Grammatical Chapters in Quintilian I. 4-8', *The Classical Quarterly*, 8.1 (1914), pp. 33-47 (p. 33).
[89] Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, *Vol. 1*, trans. Harold E. Butler (London: William Heinemann, 1933), pp. 46-47.

the subject matter, but for the vocabulary; for words often acquire authority from their use by a particular author' (I.IV.3-4).[90] His 'golden rule' was that the reader 'must understand what he reads' (I.VIII.2).[91] For Quintilian grammar was a necessary prerequisite to the study of rhetoric, music, astronomy and philosophy; and, as such, was not to be trivialised:

> Unless the foundations of oratory are well and truly laid by the teaching of literature, the superstructure will collapse. The study of literature is a necessity … the sweet companion of our privacy and the sole branch of study which has more solid substance than display. The elementary stages of the teaching of literature must not therefore be despised as trivial … as the pupil gradually approaches the inner shrine of the sacred place, he will come to realise the intricacy of the subject … not merely to sharpen the wits … but to exercise even the most profound knowledge and erudition (I.IV.4-6).[92]

The Latin grammar textbook of Priscian (*fl*. 500 CE) was, likewise, influencial. One of his distinctions, according to Jeffrey Huntsman, is that in his *Institutiones grammaticae* he utilised the 'Latin classics as examples of literary and grammatical excellence', especially Virgil.[93] Indeed, Keith Allan notes that all through *Institutiones* Priscian 'makes very extensive use of literary examples from a range of Greek and Latin authors; most of the last 100 pages of Book XVIII consist of quotations from literature: literature was his corpus'.[94]

Percival Cole identifies the *grammatici* as 'critics as well as grammarians,' emending texts, discriminating between meanings and compiling critical notes, but doing little 'beyond the imitation of the Greeks'.[95] The *grammatici* taught etymology and grammar, and also mythology 'borrowed from Greece'.[96] However, Han-Liang Chang argues that it is in the period from late Roman to the early Middle Ages that the seven liberal arts are truly formulated, especially in the work of Martianus Capella (c. fifth century CE) in his *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*; and in the writings of Boethius (c. 470-524/5 CE): 'his commentaries on or adaptations of Aristotle, Nicomachus, Porphyry, Euclid, Ptolemy, and Cicero.'[97] Martianus elaborately personifies each of the arts, so that they form the characters in his allegorical tale wherein Mercury and philology wed. The seven arts appear as maids given to philology. The character of grammar explains her role, noting the changes in her historical development: 'My duty in the early stages was to read and write correctly; but now there is the added duty of

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[90] Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, pp. 62-63.
[91] Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, pp. 146-147.
[92] Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, pp. 62-65.
[93] Jeffrey F. Huntsman, 'Grammar' in David L. Wagner (ed.), *The Seven Liberal arts in the Middle Ages* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 58-95 (pp.63, 73).
[94] Keith Allan, *The Western Classical Tradition in Linguistics*, Second (expanded) edition (London: Equinox, 2009), p. 113.
[95] Percival R. Cole, *Later Roman Education in Ausonius, Capella and the Theodosian Code* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1909), pp. 34-35.
[96] Cole, *Later Roman Education in Ausonius, Capella and the Theodosian Code*, pp. 34-35.
[97] Han-Liang Chang, 'The Rise of Semiotics and the Liberal arts: Reading Martianus Capella's "The Marriage of Philology and Mercury"', *Mnemosyne*, 51.5 (1998), pp. 538-553 (pp. 539-540).

understanding and criticizing knowledgeably.' Reading and writing she designates as 'active' functions, whereas understanding and the ability to 'assess what has been written' she designates as 'contemplative' – when 'we are engaged in the contemplation of the result'.[98] Martianus characterises grammar's relationship to poetry and speech: 'Letters are what I teach, literature is I who teach, the man of letters is the person whom I have taught, and literary style is the skill of a person whom I form. I claim to speak also about the nature and practice of poetry.'[99] Moreover, grammar holds sway amongst the arts, with 'authority in poetry, rhetoric, philosophy, history, mathematics, and music, all of which contribute to the explication of texts'.[100]

Among the Church Fathers, Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) was a champion of the liberal arts in his day, having taught them before his conversion to Christianity, and continuing to do so thereafter. He unsuccessfully attempted to write a series of treatises on the liberal arts which included an unfinished part of his *De grammatica*, which he claimed to be lost.[101] In his work, *De Doctrina Christiana* (*On Christian Doctrine*), he argued that the biblical writers made more use of figurative devices than can be found in the Greek tradition or anywhere else outside of Scripture:

> …the authors of our Scriptures use all those forms of expression which grammarians call by the Greek name tropes, and use them more freely and in greater variety than people who are unacquainted with the Scriptures, and have learnt these figures of speech from other writings, can imagine or believe. Nevertheless those who know these tropes recognize them in Scripture, and are very much assisted by their knowledge of them in understanding Scripture.[102]

However, Augustine's 'treatment' of the Scriptures in the first three books of this work has, according to Catherine Chin, 'much in common with late ancient grammatical textual analysis'.[103] She argues that Augustine 'uses the decontextualizing and dislocating techniques of ancient grammatical writing to produce the opposing concepts of Christianity and paganism, and to locate the educated Christian subject in relation to them'.[104] He advises that the use of tropes be learnt by the biblically 'illiterate', as a necessary part of learning language. Whilst

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[98] Martianus Capella, *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal arts, Volume II: Marriage of Philology and Mercury*, trans. William H. Stahl, Richard Johnson and Evan L. Burge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), pp. 67-68.
[99] Capella, *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal arts,* p. 68.
[100] Catherine M. Chin, 'The Grammarian's Spoils: *De Doctrina Christiana* and the Contexts of Literary Education' in Karla Pollmann and Mark Vessey (eds.), *Augustine and the Disciplines: From Cassiciacum to Confessions* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007), pp. 167-183 (p. 174).
[101] See James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine, Selected Bibliography* <www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/jod/twayne/twaynebib.html> [accessed 13 January 2014]. For a discussion on Augustine's *Ars grammatica* as 'lost', see Vivien Law, 'St. Augustine's "De Grammatica": Lost and Found?', *Recherches augustiniennes*, 19 (1984) p. 155-183.
[102] Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 3.29.40, trans. James F. Shaw (1887) <www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/doctrine.xxx_2.html> [accessed 14 October 2013].
[103] Chin, 'The Grammarian's Spoils', pp. 168-169.
[104] Chin, 'The Grammarian's Spoils', p. 168.

enumerating 'allegory, enigma, and parable' among the types of biblical trope, Augustine notes that they are not the sole purview of 'liberal education', but 'are found even in the ordinary speech of men who have learnt no grammar, but are content to use the vulgar idiom'.[105] Using the biblical story of the Israelites plundering the Egyptians as they left Egypt (Exodus 12), Augustine sought to utilise the liberal arts in the service of God, and grammar in the service of Scripture.[106] Diomedes, a grammarian and contemporary of Augustine, defined grammar's work as 'the understanding of the poets', and similarly Augustine saw it as the understanding of Scripture.[107] Words were the 'pre-eminent' form of signs for Augustine:

> …since words are signs 'whose whole use is to signify. No one uses words except to signify' (1. 2. 2). Nouns, verbs, conjunctions, and the other parts of speech are the things that, as words, 'have gained supremacy in signifying'; 'all other signs are scant in comparison to words' (2. 3. 4.).[108]

Letters, too, were signs. On one level, letters were a necessity invented whereby 'we can speak to those who are absent'.[109] However, beyond this practical necessity, letters were a link in the manifestation of thought: 'the letters are the signs of words, while the words themselves in our speech are signs of the things of which we are thinking'.[110]

Brian Stock has highlighted Augustine's interest in reading the pagan classics, going as far as to say that this interest gave birth to the 'West's first developed theory of reading'.[111] In this regard, grammar acts as a means of interpreting the written text, as Stock demonstrates through an argument in Augustine's *Soliloquies*:

> 'Grammar is a science which is the guardian and moderatrix of articulate speech: whose profession involves the necessity of collecting even all the figments of the human tongue, which have been committed to memory and letters, not making them false, but teaching and enforcing concerning these certain principles of true interpretation'.[112]

The 'true interpretation' which Augustine speaks of allows the Christian reader to recognise the 'falseness of a story's content while focusing on the truth of the "grammatical" principles involved'.[113] In the *City of God*, Augustine 'frequently quotes from pagan authors: particularly Virgil, Cicero, Sallust and, above all, Varro' and, according to Johannes van Oort, he quotes

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[105] Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 3.29.40.
[106] See Chin, 'The Grammarian's Spoils', p. 175.
[107] Chin, 'The Grammarian's Spoils', p. 169.
[108] Chin, 'The Grammarian's Spoils', p. 172 (Chin here uses her own translation of *De Doctrina Christiana*).
[109] Augustine, *On the Trinity*, ed. Gareth B. Matthews, trans. Stephen McKenna (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 187.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader: Meditation, Self-Knowledge, and the Ethics of Interpretation* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1998), p.1.
[112] Augustine, *Soliloquies*, 2.19, trans. Charles Starbuck (1888) <www.newadvent.org/fathers/170302.htm> [accessed 21 January 2014]; see Stock, *Augustine the Reader*, p. 135.
[113] Stock, *Augustine the Reader*, p. 136.

them 'with exceptional care'.[114] Augustine's early training in grammar served him as reader and writer:

> Thus the training in grammar and rhetoric exerted a profound influence on Augustine. Every word, every turn of phrase in a text had become important for him. This is particularly evident in the *City of God* with respect to the (Latin!) classical authors, but it is also apparent in the works that give an interpretation of Holy Scripture. The meaning of each and every word and phrase was closely traced.[115]

Augustine emphasised the importance of learning the language of Scripture to apprehend its more shrouded meaning: 'when we have made ourselves to a certain extent familiar with the language of Scripture, we may proceed to open up and investigate the obscure passages, and in doing so draw examples from the plainer expressions to throw light upon the more obscure, and use the evidence of passages about which there is no doubt to remove all hesitation in regard to the doubtful passages'.[116] In this regard, grammar is a necessary part of reading in Augustine's exegesis. Chin underlines this necessity: 'The reading practices that Augustine advocates for the resolution of verbal ambiguity, for example (language study, appropriate word division, and familiarity with a wide variety of word usages), obviously come out of the grammatical tradition.'[117] Augustine relates the close similarity between the grammar of reading and the interpretation and exposition of Scripture:

> …the man who lays down rules for interpretation is like one who teaches reading, that is, shows others how to read for themselves. So that, just as he who knows how to read is not dependent on some one else, when he finds a book, to tell him what is written in it, so the man who is in possession of the rules which I here attempt to lay down, if he meet with an obscure passage in the books which he reads, will not need an interpreter to lay open the secret to him, but, holding fast by certain rules, and following up certain indications, will arrive at the hidden sense without any error, or at least without falling into any gross absurdity.[118]

Indeed, Augustine's checklist for the expositor of Scripture requires not only spiritual assistance, but also linguistic and grammatical knowledge and skill:

> The man who fears God seeks diligently in Holy Scripture for a knowledge of His will. And when he has become meek through piety, so as to have no love of strife; when

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[114] Johannes van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of His Doctrine of the Two Cities* (Brill: Leiden, 1991), pp. 22-23. For a comprehensive study on the influence of pagan classics on Augustine see Harold Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics* (Studia Graeca et Latina Gotoburgensia, xx.) 2 vols. (Gothenburg: Elander, 1967); and James J. O'Donnell, 'Augustine's Classical Readings', *Recherches Augustiniennes*, 15 (1980), pp. 144-175.

[115] van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, p. 23.

[116] Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 2.9.14.

[117] Catherine M. Chin, *Grammar and Christianity in the Late Roman World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p. 88.

[118] Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, Praef. 9.

> furnished also with a knowledge of languages, so as not to be stopped by unknown words and forms of speech, and with the knowledge of certain necessary objects, so as not to be ignorant of the force and nature of those which are used figuratively; and assisted, besides, by accuracy in the texts, which has been secured by skill and care in the matter of correction; – when thus prepared, let him proceed to the examination and solution of the ambiguities of Scripture.[119]

The role accorded to grammar in the correct exposition of Scripture led Martin Irvine to call Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* nothing less than a 'Christian *ars grammatica*'.[120] Moreover, Mark Vessey claims that grammar for Augustine 'becomes both an engine for subverting prior disciplinary formations and a self-constituting divine instrument, mediating between human readers and the object of their desire – thus homologous (if not identical?) with Scripture, and with Christ.'[121] Grammar was thus *the* reading tool for Augustine and those that followed in his steps. However, Augustine's grammar is clearly informed by the Greco-Roman tradition, which he applies to the interpretation of Scripture. In keeping with the vast majority of patristic writers, he does not embrace a Jewish approach to interpretation.

Meanwhile, the Jewish schools of Babylonia, alongside, in particular, the school of Tiberius and other schools in Roman Palestine, contributed to the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds respectively.[122] The period of the Talmudic schools runs from the second to the sixth centuries CE.[123] After the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem the role of the scribes diminishes and fades and, in the field of exegesis, it is replaced by the sages and rabbis, the teachers whose influence steadily increases. Most of the works produced in this period fall into two main categories of legal and non-legal texts, as Alexander Samely clearly explains:

> Works mainly devoted to legal themes are called *halakhic*, the word halakhah meaning 'conduct', and literally 'walking'. Documents mainly concerned with nonlegal matters are called *aggadic*. While the Hebrew term aggadah means 'tale' or 'telling', the aggadic works are not narratives. Rather, they tend to have the format of Bible commentary engaging with biblical narrative.[124]

The period itself also falls into two main categories, and again Samely clearly defines them for us:

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[119] Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 3.1.1.
[120] Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: 'Grammatica' and Literary Theory, 350 - 1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 178.
[121] Mark Vessey, 'Introduction' in Karla Pollmann and Mark Vessey (eds.), *Augustine and the Disciplines: From Cassiciacum to Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 1-22 (p. 19).
[122] Pick, 'The Study of the Hebrew Language', p. 459.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Alexander Samely, *Forms of Rabbinic Literature and Thought: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 8.

> Rabbinic texts are also divided according to the period of the rabbinic masters quoted in them. All documents which, like the Mishnah, only mention rabbinic teachers who lived approximately between the first and the middle of the third century CE, are called Tannaitic. The masters themselves are referred to as Tannaim (singular Tanna). All works which also mention later rabbis are referred to as Amoraic, and those masters are called Amoraim (singular Amora).[125]

The most important works of the Amoraic period, according to Samely, are the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Gemaras – both arranged as commentaries on the Mishnah. The Mishnah and Gemara texts are 'interlaced', and together they form the Talmud. The Babylonian and the Jerusalem Talmuds both 'share basically the same Mishnah text (with some important variations), but have different Gemaras.'[126]

Unlike the patristic authors who shared the same historical period, and of whom we know so much, the compilers, authors and redactors of the Talmuds were anonymous, and known collectively as the Rabbis (capitalised for identity). Whilst many individual rabbis are named and quoted in the text, the composers of the text are not. This creates a few difficulties: 'Many single statements are presented as speech of a named rabbi ('R. X says:…'), but may have been reformulated by the editors; other statements are not marked as quotations at all. The same passage can appear in more than one work, but will often be adapted to fit its new literary surroundings.'[127]

When Kalisch turns to the Talmud, he has only a little more to say regarding grammar than with the biblical period: 'In the Talmud, grammatical disquisitions are exceedingly rare, though the very letters of the different Books of the Bible were counted, the various readings collected, and the Keri and Kethiv [the differences between what is read and what is written] in a great measure established.'[128] Again, as was the case with the Hebrew Scriptures, there appears to be more evidence of grammatical discussion in the Talmud than Kalisch was aware of. Countering Kalisch's conclusion, William Chomsky notes that 'grammatical observations are to be found already in the Talmud' and he gives examples from *Tractate Yebamoth* and *Tractate Gittin* in the Babylonian Talmud:[129]

> R. Nehemiah said, 'In the case of every word which requires a 'lamed' [ל] at the beginning [to indicate direction] Scripture has placed a 'he' [ה] at the end; and at the

[125] Samely, *Forms of Rabbinic Literature*, pp. 9-10.
[126] Samely, *Forms of Rabbinic Literature*, p. 10.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Kalisch, *Hebrew Grammar*, pp. 1-2.
[129] William Chomsky, 'How the Study of Hebrew Grammar Began and Developed', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 35.3 (1945), pp. 281-301 (p. 281). Quotations from the Babylonian Talmud are taken from the *Soncino Babylonian Talmud Yebamoth*, trans. Israel W. Slotki, ed. Isidore Epstein (1936) <halakhah.com/yebamoth/index.html> [accessed 26 February 2014]; and the *Soncino Babylonian Talmud Gittin*, trans. Maurice Simon, ed. Isidore Epstein (1936) <halakhah.com/gittin/index.html> [accessed 26 February 2014].

> School of R. Ishmael the following examples were given: *Elim*, *Elimah*; *Mahanayim*, *Mahanayimah*; *Mizrayim*, *Mizraimah*; *Dibelathaimah*; *Yerushalaimah*; *midbarah* (Yeb. 13b).
>
> It is indicated in the dictum of Resh Lakish, who said that [the particle] ki [כִּי] has four meanings – 'if', 'perhaps', 'but', 'because' (Git. 90a).

These examples illustrate an interest in word forms and meanings amongst the Rabbis, and the presentation of the forms with accompanying models is clearly didactic. David Stern offers another example, focusing on the use and abuse of verbal analogy (*gezerah shavah*):

> …in such passages as yPes 6.1 (33a), which retells the story of Hillel's legendary encounter with the Bne Beterah, one observes a new studied interest in – and ambivalence toward – the use of *gezerah shavah*. This passage is the source of the famous rabbinic cautionary formulation, "An individual may not draw a verbal analogy on his own initiative," that is, without having a prior tradition as to the authenticity of the verbal analogy. The very fact that the Talmud feels it necessary to caution against its overuse is an all but certain indication that too many individuals were drawing verbal analogies of this kind on their own.[130]

Again, the inclusion of this illustrative story and caution points to the purpose of instructive grammar for the benefit of the reader. Moreover, Steven Katz notes the dual development of the rabbinic 'codification of the canon of the Bible,' and the 'hermeneutic principles of interpreting it'.[131] Thus, the 'grammatological history and Jewish exegesis coincide: the … "standardization" of the Torah and interpretation of the Square Hebrew letters seems to have occurred somewhat simultaneously'.[132] The Rabbis were choosing their Great Jewish Books and honing the art of reading them.

The period of the Masoretic schools effectively follows on from the Talmudic period, running from the sixth to the ninth century CE.[133] It is with the Masoretic period that Kalisch has more to say regarding Hebrew grammar. He believes that scholarly activity in Late Antiquity had 'no other aim than scrupulously to maintain the text as it had been handed down to them by the latest compilers of the Old Canon', and this was done 'admirably' by the Masorites: 'They fixed, with the minutest care, the letters, or consonants, of the sacred writings … added the vowels, the accents, and the other signs.'[134] This work began in the Babylonian schools, but also developed in the Palestinian schools too, especially in Tiberias,

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[130] David Stern, 'The First Jewish Books and the Early History of Jewish Reading', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 98.2 (2008), pp. 163-202 (p. 175).
[131] Steven B. Katz, 'Letter As Essence: The Rhetorical (Im)Pulse Of The Hebrew Alefbet', *The Journal of Communication and Religion*, 26.2 (2003), pp. 126-162 (p. 130).
[132] Ibid.
[133] Pick, 'The Study of the Hebrew Language', p. 459.
[134] Kalisch, *Hebrew Grammar*, p. 2.

and according to Kalisch, with 'greater vigour and success'. The result was two distinct systems of vocalisation: the Babylonia and the Tiberias, and both were reportedly in use from between the beginning of the sixth century CE and before the end of the seventh.[135] Like the anonymous Rabbis, Stern laments that we have 'little exact knowledge' about the identities or the history of the Masorites as an identifiable group: 'Unfortunately, the only school for which we possess explicit evidence is that of Tiberias, and that because their system ultimately won out over the others and is represented in virtually all surviving Masoretic Bibles.'[136]

Stern notes that all of the earliest surviving Hebrew codices contain 'vocalized texts … with cantillation marks and the scribal notes known as the *masorah*'.[137] Thus, the codices have become known as Masoretic Bibles. In the same way that the postexilic scribal tradition had an ancient, pre-exilic biblical history, so the 'extraordinary scribal sophistication' of the Masoretic texts demonstrates that 'they were clearly products of a tradition of codex-production that must have begun centuries earlier … around the beginning of the eighth century, the date that scholars have given to some of the earliest undated Hebrew codices'.[138] According to Stern, this marks a 'watershed moment in the history of Jewish reading and its technology; indeed, they are our first evidence for "professional" Jewish readers of the Bible'.[139] Prior to these codices the Torah scrolls were unpunctuated, unmarked texts, 'however, the Hebrew text in the codex contains both vowels and the cantillation notes that, aside from indicating the liturgical chant for the text, also mark punctuation and accentuation.'[140]

The most famous representative of the Tiberias system was Rabbi Aaron ben Moshe ben Asher (commonly Ben Asher, *fl*. c. 900 CE), whose work, for Pick, was the 'connecting link' between the Masoretes and the medieval Hebrew grammarians that would follow.[141] Commenting on this connection between the Masoretic schools and 'the beginnings of systematic Hebrew grammar', Stern adds that Ben Asher 'in the early tenth century wrote what was probably the first Hebrew grammatical work, *Sefer dikduke te'amim*, a book of rules concerning vocalization and accentuation deriving from masoretic notes but with the goal of describing a more general grammar of the language.'[142] At a time when Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* was entrenched as the grammar textbook of the medieval Christian world, the Masorete scholar, Ben Asher, produced a grammar textbook for the medieval Jewish world. The connecting link between the Masoretic schools and a discrete Hebrew grammar is so strong that they are all but synonymous with each other: 'Indeed, before grammar had fully

[135] Ibid.
[136] Stern, 'The First Jewish Books', p. 172.
[137] Stern, 'The First Jewish Books', pp. 163-164.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Stern, 'The First Jewish Books', p. 165.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Pick, 'The Study of the Hebrew Language', p. 462.
[142] Stern, 'The First Jewish Books', p. 174.

established itself as a separate and independent discipline in the late tenth century, the two – masorah and grammar – may have been all but indistinguishable.'[143] For Stern, the contribution of the Masoretes to exegesis and the art of reading cannot be emphasised enough: 'they are codifying the reading tradition and its practice, but they are also *reading* the biblical text, and reading it in a new way that has no precedent in Jewish culture'.[144] The Masorites provided a visual aid to reading, by literally marking the way for the reading and guiding the reader through the text. If there had been an emphasis on hearing the Scriptures, the synagogue recitation, the scribal preclusion, then the Masoretic Bible provided a key back into reading.

The *Etymologiae* of Isidore and Rabbinic Midrash

Isidore of Seville (c. 560–636 CE) produced one of the most influential works on the liberal arts in the medieval period, the *Etymologiae sive origins*; of which grammar, his primary interest, accounted for over forty per cent.[145] Indeed, the *Etymologiae* was, according to Stephen Barney, et al, 'arguably the most influential book, after the Bible, in the learned world of the Latin West for nearly a thousand years'.[146] His text is essentially derived from Donatus,[147] but Brehaut believes it likely that his 'working library contained works of the following authors: Lactantius, Tertullian, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Orosius, Cassiodorus, Suetonius, Pliny, Solinus, Hyginus, Sallust, Hegesippus, the abridger of Vitruvius, Servius, the scholia on Lucan, and Justinus'.[148] Irvine places Isidore in a 'self-conscious textual community which defined itself with the methodology of *grammatica*'.[149] His work was not only widely read, but it realised the aspirations of Augustine two centuries before him, for grammar in the service of God:

> Isidore was the last polymath of the Hellenistic-Roman grammatical tradition, fulfilling Augustine's prescription in *De doctrina christiana* that an exegete should be a Christian Varro, applying an encyclopedic textual knowledge to the study of the Scriptures and Christian literature. He was able to apply the Augustinian model of *grammatica* as the

[143] Stern, 'The First Jewish Books', p. 174.
[144] Stern, 'The First Jewish Books', p. 176.
[145] For a discussion on Isidore's influence see Huntsman, 'Grammar', pp.75-76.
[146] Stephen A. Barney, et al, 'Introduction' in Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. Stephen A. Barney, Wendy J. Lewis, Jennifer A. Beach and Oliver Berghof (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 3-28.
[147] Huntsman, 'Grammar', p. 75.
[148] Brehaut, *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages*, pp. 46-47. For the argument that Isidore plagiarised *De Artibus ac Disciplinis Liberalium Litterarum* by Cassiodorus (*c.* 490–585), see Allan, *The Western Classical Tradition*, p. 132.
[149] Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*, p. 210.

> discipline devoted to language and texts at every level from elementary literacy to exegesis to the needs of the textual community of the monastery and cathedral.[150]

What was this textual community? Isidore's audience, according to Irvine, was 'a community of exegetes, scribes and readers that require training in the main divisions of *grammatica* – *lectio*, *emendatio*, *enarratio* – as the foundation of monastic *lectio* and exegesis'.[151]

For Isidore, grammar was the 'source and foundation of literature'.[152] He placed great import on the 'common letters of the alphabet'; they were the 'primary elements of the art of grammar'.[153] Letters were representative: 'tokens of things, the signs of words, and they have so much force that the utterances of those who are absent speak to us without a voice, [for they present words through the eyes, not through the ears]'.[154] They also had a mnemonic property:

> The use of letters was invented for the sake of remembering things, which are bound by letters lest they slip away into oblivion. With so great a variety of information, not everything could be learned by hearing, nor retained in the memory.[155]

Letters and words, therefore, were indispensable to memory and history. They were the means by which the past could be recounted, not just in the personal history of days (*diarium*), months (*kalendarium*) and years (*annales*), but in the epic histories of peoples and nations too:

> Indeed, among the ancients no one would write a history unless he had been present and had seen what was to be written down, for we grasp with our eyes things that occur better than what we gather with our hearing, since what is seen is revealed without falsehood. This discipline has to do with Grammar, because whatever is worthy of remembrance is committed to writing. And for this reason, histories are called 'monuments' (*monumentum*), because they grant a remembrance (*memoria*) of deeds that have been done.[156]

History was an important part of literature and learning in Isidore's schema, and not to be looked down upon in the genres of reading:

> Histories of peoples are no impediment to those who wish to read useful works, for many wise people have imparted the past deeds of humankind in histories for the instruction of the living. Through history they handle a final reckoning back through seasons and years, and they investigate many indispensable matters through the succession of consuls and kings.[157]

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[150] Ibid.
[151] Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*, p. 212.
[152] Brehaut, *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages*, p. 97.
[153] Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 39.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 67.
[157] Ibid.

Isidore has in mind here national and royal histories, both pagan and Christian, with Moses taking pre-eminence amongst the historians, as the chronicler of creation itself.[158]

Isidore subdivided grammar into thirty groups: 'namely, eight parts of speech, the articulate voice, the letter, the syllable, metrical feet, accent, marks of punctuation, signs and abbreviations, orthography, analogy, etymology, glosses, synonyms, barbarisms, solecisms, [other] faults, metaplasms, schemata, tropes, prose, metres, fables, histories'.[159] However, as a Christian theologian and biblicist, Isidore located the origins of language in the Hebrew of the Scriptures:

> Latin and Greek letters have evidently come from the Hebrew. For among the latter *aleph* was first so named; then [judging] by the similarity of sound it was transmitted to the Greeks as *alpha*; likewise to the Latins as *a*. For the borrower fashioned the letter of the second language according to similarity of sound, so that we can know that the Hebrew language is the mother of all languages and alphabets.[160]

Marcel Simon notes that the Spanish patristic authors, such as Isidore, distinguish themselves 'from the rest of the Western literature of this type by the more accurate knowledge they display, not only of Judaism and its institutions but of the Hebrew language'.[161] This would account for Isidore's familiarity with the Hebrew alphabet, and perhaps why he gives it the ascendancy over Greek and Latin. In the sixth book of the *Etymologiae*, Isidore shows off his extensive knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, Jewish feasts and practices with in-depth analysis of the canon, transliterated words and traditions. Günter Stemberger rightly argues that as a later patristic writer, Isidore's evident knowledge of Jewish interpretation would have depended principally upon Jerome, and his higher view of Hebrew.[162]

Letters were imbued with hidden symbolic and instructive meaning – the very word *littera* was itself a prime example, concealed within it is *iter* (a road), because letters 'provide a road' for the reader. [163] Individual letters had their own story to tell. Isidore recounts the origins and significance of the Pythagorean ϒ, which was representative of 'human life', the 'lower stem signifies the first stage of life, an uncertain age indeed, which has not yet given itself to vices or to virtues', whilst the 'branching into two, which is above, begins with adolescence: the right part of it is arduous, but leads toward a blessed life; the left is easier,

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[158] Ibid.
[159] Brehaut, *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages*, pp. 97-98.
[160] Brehaut, *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages*, p. 96; see also Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 39, where 'languages and alphabets' is translated as 'languages and letters'.
[161] Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (AD 135-425)*, trans. H. McKeating (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 141.
[162] Günter Stemberger, 'Exegetical Contacts Between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire' in Magne Sæbø (ed.), *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation, Vol. 1* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), pp. 569-586 (p. 586).
[163] Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 39.

but leads to death and destruction'.[164] Whilst his interpretation closely parallels the parable of the narrow and wide gates in the Gospel of Matthew (7:13-14), Isidore turns to the Roman Stoic Persius to underline the moral point: 'Concerning this Persius (*Satires* 3.56) speaks thus: And where the letter has spread out into Samian branches it has shown you the way that rises by means of the right-hand path.'[165]

Υ, signifying human life, was the first of 'five mystical letters among the Greeks', according to Isidore. The second (standing as the antithesis of the first) is Θ, signifying death, because 'the judges used to put this same letter down against the names of those whom they were sentencing to execution'. Its name 'theta' derives from 'the term Θάνατος, that is, "death" … [having] a spear through the middle, that is, a sign of death'.[166] Signs appear to transcend particular alphabets and languages, as Isidore attempts to demonstrate with the third mystical letter:

> The third, T, shows the figure of the cross of the Lord, whence it is also interpreted as a symbol in Hebrew. Concerning this letter, it was said to an angel in Ezekiel (9:4): "Go through the midst of Jerusalem, and mark a thau upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and mourn."[167]

Here, the letter 'thau' is used in the Latin Vulgate translation from the Hebrew word for 'mark', תו (*taw*), corresponding with the final letter of the Hebrew alphabet, ת (*taw*).[168] Interestingly, however, the Greek Septuagint translated the Hebrew word for 'mark' with the Greek word σημειον (*shmeion*),[169] rather than use the letter thau. Theology and grammar intertwine, as Isidore gives Christological significance to both the Latin and Hebrew alphabets.

With the other two mystical letters, Isidore continues the Christological theme, drawing specifically from the self-appellations which Christ uses in the Book of Revelation:

> The remaining two mystical letters, the first and the last, Christ claims for himself; himself the beginning, himself the end, he says (Apocalypse 22:13): "I am Alpha and Omega," for by moving towards each other in turn, A rolls on all the way to Ω, and Ω bends back to A, so that the Lord might show in himself both the movement of the beginning to the end, and the movement of the end to the beginning.[170]

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[164] Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 40.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.
[168] For the Latin and Hebrew texts of Ezekiel 9:4 see *Latin Vulgate*, Ezekiel 9:4 <www.latinvulgate.com/lv/verse.aspx?t=0&b=31&c=9> [accessed 14 February 2014]; and *A Hebrew - English Bible According to the Masoretic Text and the JPS 1917 Edition*, Ezekiel 9:4 <www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt1209.htm> [accessed 14 February 2014].
[169] For the Greek text of Ezekiel 9:4 see *Kata Biblon Greek Septuagint*, Ezekiel 9:4 <en.katabiblon.com/us/index.php?text=LXX&book=Ez&ch=9> [accessed 14 February 2014].
[170] Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 40.

These examples add Greek to the Latin and Hebrew, as languages and alphabets that have divinely mystical properties. Isidore reinforces this view in the ninth book of the *Etymologiae*:

> There are three sacred languages – Hebrew, Greek, and Latin – which are preeminent throughout the world. On the cross of the Lord the charge laid against him was written at Pilate's command in these three languages (John 19:20). Hence – and because of the obscurity of the Sacred Scriptures – a knowledge of these three languages is necessary, so that, whenever the wording of one of the languages presents any doubt about a name or an interpretation, recourse may be had to another language.[171]

Thus, these sacred languages add an extra deeper level of significance to words and texts as the reader encounters them.

Isidore notes that the Greek alphabet has a numerical value assigned to each of the letters: 'they use the letter alpha as the number 'one' … when they write beta, they mean 'two'; when they write gamma, they mean 'three' … when they write delta, they mean 'four' in their numbers – and so every letter corresponds to a number for the Greeks.[172] However, he points out that Latin does not follow suit: 'Latin speakers, however, do not assign numbers to the letters, but only use them to form words, with the exception of the letters I, and X, which both signifies the cross by its shape, and stands for the number ten.'[173] Again, Isidore finds theological significance in the Latin letter X, remarking on its cross-like shape while giving its numerical value. Ben Tilghman warns against any understanding of Isidore's interpretations as being widespread or common: 'Isidore's text should not be taken for some sort of an iconographic handbook for interpreting the shapes of letters: I do not know of any examples of the ϒ or Θ used in the manner he describes.'[174] Nevertheless, the uses of T and X were common in medieval representations of the cross and the crucifixion of Christ, both as signs and in art.[175]

In the seventh book of *Etymologiae*, Isidore gives the interpretation and etymological meaning of Hebrew names for God and for many of the characters within the Hebrew Scriptures (as well as New Testament characters). Likewise, he frequently draws upon the Hebrew biblical canon, alongside the Greek classics, to illustrate grammatical parts of speech. For example, he uses the Book of Judges to differentiate between riddles and allegories:

> A riddle (*aenigma*) is an obscure question that is difficult to solve unless it is explained, as this (Judges 14:14): "Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the strong came forth sweetness," meaning that a honeycomb was taken from the mouth of a (dead)

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[171] Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 191.
[172] Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 40.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ben C. Tilghman, 'The shape of the word: extralinguistic meaning in insular display lettering', *Word & Image*, 27.3 (2011), pp. 292-308 (p. 295).
[175] Ibid.

> lion. Between allegory and the riddle there is this difference, that the force of allegory is twofold and figuratively indicates one subject under the guise of other subjects, while a riddle merely has an obscure meaning, and its solution is hinted at through certain images.[176]

Isidore's grammar is set in a literary context, so that not only is one meant to be able to differentiate between the technical aspects of riddle and allegory, and understand their function abstractly; but one is also able to differentiate between them and understand their function when encountering them in the text, as the reader.

In the first book, he lists and describes various tropes or 'modes of speech', including metaphor (*metaphora*, 'an adopted transference of some word ... veiled in figural garb with respect to what should be understood, so that they may exercise the reader's understanding');[177] allegory (*allegoria*, '"other-speech" … for it literally says one thing, and another thing is understood'); proverb (*paroemia*, 'a proverb appropriate to the subject or situation'); and similitude (*homoeosis*, 'that by which the description of some less known thing is made clear by something better known which is similar to it').[178] Whilst the tropes are part of a theoretical, technical grammar, they also serve in the literary context. Metaphors, allegories, proverbs, parables and similitudes play no small part in Isidore's reading – whether in Scripture or the Greek classics. This he demonstrates in dealing with the genre of fable:

> …there are fables with a moral, as in Horace a mouse speaks to a mouse, and a weasel to a little fox, so that through an imaginary story a true meaning may be applied to the story's action. Whence also Aesop's fables are the kind told for the purpose of a moral, just as in … Judges (9:8) the trees seek a king for themselves and speak to the olive tree, the fig tree, the grape vine, and the bramble-bush. The whole story is made up especially for the moral, so that we arrive at the matter that is intended with the true meaning, though, to be sure, by means of a made-up narrative.[179]

Aesop and the Book of Judges sit side-by-side in Isidore's literary world, sharing the same space to illustrate how the moral fable works. Ancient pagan and Hebrew stories are fused effortlessly, as if brought to heel by the Christian Isidore.[180] Indeed, he quotes from one hundred and fifty-four authors in the *Etymologiae*: alongside Aesop, Christian and biblical sources, we find 'Anacreon, Apuleius, Aristotle, Boëthius, Caesar, Cato, Catullus, Celsus, Cicero, Demosthenes, Ennius, Herodotus, Hesiod, Homer, Horace, Juvenal, Livy, Lucan, Lucretius, Martial, Ovid, Persius, Pindar, Plato, Plautus, Pliny, Quintilian, Sallust, Suetonius, Terence,

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[176] Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 63.
[177] Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 60.
[178] Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, pp. 63-64.
[179] Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 67.
[180] For a discussion on Isidore's use of Aesop's Fables see Edward Wheatley, *Mastering Aesop: Medieval Education, Chaucer, and His Followers* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2000) pp. 40-41, 49.

Varro, Virgil'.[181] Whilst the Greek and Roman classics are freely called upon, the biblical sources have the majority say amongst the theologian's authorities, even in the realm of grammar, as John Henderson, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, points out:

> …verse is celebrated in a detailed roll-call of types and associated genres, before Moses (in *Deuteronomy*) wins the competition for overall (viz. hexametric) primacy, then David, Solomon, Jeremiah, and Proba wife of Adelphus win their special events. Moses (*Genesis*) will win the prize for prose, too, but not before the poets have been tarred with Fabulation, whether for fun, for picturing reality, or for telling morals, as in Aesop (and in the *Book of Judges*).[182]

Henderson is referring to Isidore's preference for the 'heroic' hexametric meter, which he considers to be the earliest and most important (recounting the 'deeds of heroes'):

> Moses is shown to have composed this meter first in his song in Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 32–33) long before Pherecydes and Homer. Whence it appears that the practice of poetry is more ancient among the Hebrews than among the pagans, seeing that Job, a contemporary of Moses, also took up hexameter verse, with its dactyl and spondee.[183]

Moses is followed by David, and is given the accolade of first hymn writer: 'It is clear that David the prophet first composed and sang hymns (*hymnus*) in praise of God.'[184] David's son, Solomon, is then credited as being the first composer of wedding songs (*epithalamium*), with his *Song of Songs*, which was then appropriated by the pagans. Isidore follows Christian tradition in ascribing the Book of Lamentations to the prophet Jeremiah, the first to compose 'the threnody (*threnos*), which is called 'lament' (*lamentum*) in Latin'.[185]

In Isidore's grammar, we see an interdependent relationship between the written and read language, between the texts and the techniques – the texts provide the instances whereby he endeavours to demonstrate the modes of speech, whilst the techniques (the operational modes) help the reader understand what is written before them. It is not so surprising that Isidore's grammar was 'the source and foundation of literature' when we consider that Isidore's life was so focused on text, as Irvine correctly points out:

> The thoroughly textual function of *grammatica* for Isidore's community of monks and fellow bishops is indicated throughout Isidore's works. The monastic life was based on reading (*lectiones*) and discussions (*disputationes*) or conferences (*collationes*) with

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[181] Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, *Vol. 4* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), pp. 667-668. Schaff refers to 'Caspar Barth's list of the one hundred and fifty-four authors quoted' (uncited).
[182] John Henderson, *The Medieval World of Isidore of Seville: Truth from Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 40.
[183] Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 65.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, p. 66.

> other members of the community. In the monastic rule he wrote for Seville, Isidore prescribes three hours of reading per day as well as a period when the community would meet to discuss problems posed by *divina lectio*, and the abbot was to explain difficult passages for everyone.[186]

Indeed, Irvine makes a strong argument that Isidore's *grammatica* in *Etymologiae* is not 'the science of speaking correctly', as Isidore defines it, but the *grammatica* of texts and textual language.[187] In this context, therefore, grammar was inseparable from the reading of the word, especially the book which Isidore considered *the* Word. Whilst Isidore arguably comes closest amongst the Church fathers to an appreciation of Hebrew in his grammar, like Augustine, he gave no place to Jewish interpretive techniques or tradition. Instead, these influential patristic writers helped shape Christian reading and exegesis – and its resultant theology – in Late Antiquity, drawing on the Western classical tradition: the voices of Athens and Rome without Jerusalem.

Whilst the exegesis of the Church Fathers drew upon Greco-Roman influences, the exegesis of the Rabbis was expressed through *midrash*. The semantic development of *midrash* within the Hebrew Scriptures begins, according to Craig Evans, with the verb *daras* or *drash* (דרש, to seek or inquire, e.g. 1 Samuel 9:9; 1 Kings 22:8). It changes to *midrash* (מדרש) as it appears in 2 Chronicles 13:22 ('written in the Midrash of the Prophet Iddo') and 24:27 ('written in the Midrash of the Book of the Kings'), where the emphasis is on seeking or inquiring scripturally by means of a 'story' or 'commentary'.[188] He notes that from Ezra's 'searching' of the Law (Ezra 7:10), it is 'only a small step' to the subsequent, and unambiguous references to exegetical *midrash*.[189] In Antiquity, *midrash* became the name for both a body of rabbinic commentaries on the Scriptures (a genre) and a method of rabbinic hermeneutics (an approach). Whilst both meanings are connected – the hermeneutics appear in the commentaries – they are also independent of one another (the commentaries are closed historically, whereas the *midrashic* method is still employed by exegetes). Usually with a capitalised first letter, Midrash is used to denote a commentary (Midrashim in the plural). Combined, there are well over thirty *halakhik* (essentially legal) and *aggadic* (essentially nonlegal) Midrashim (over two thirds are *aggadic*). Many are exegetical commentaries on specific books of Scripture, including *Mekilta* (Exodus); *Sifra* to Leviticus; *Sifre* to Numbers; *Sifre* to Deuteronomy; *Bereshit Rabbah* (Genesis); *Ekah Rabbati* (Lamentations); *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* (Song of Songs); *Ruth Rabbah*; *Ḳohelet Rabbah* (Ecclesiastes); and *Esther Rabbah*. Both

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[186] Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*, p. 218.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Craig A. Evans, 'Midrash' in Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight and Ian H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992), pp. 544-548 (p. 544).
[189] Ibid.

meanings of Midrash are vast in the areas they cover, and so for the purpose of this study each will be treated separately but briefly, beginning with the Midrashim.

As with the Talmudic texts, there is a question mark hanging over the date and authorship of the Midrashim – they were not preserved as homogeneous texts. Günter Stemberger raises the issues of dating rabbinic writings and ascribing authorship. The relevant criteria are, for the most part, subjective, and so dating becomes a hypothetical pursuit.[190] Thus, it is only possible to attempt the dating of final redactions of rabbinic writings rather than the traditions they contain, which may or may not predate the written text.[191] Stemberger rightly argues that any 'notion of authorship' is by and large inadequate when dealing with rabbinic writings, because they 'tend to be composite works, incorporating earlier texts which are normally edited before being re-used'.[192] Recognising quotation is also problematic when the names ascribed to rabbinic writings vary significantly during the period of Late Antiquity and beyond. One name could be assigned to different writings, or quotations may have come from similar but different sources.[193] A single text may contain 'different linguistic layers' or even an intentionally archaic style.[194] However, a solution to these problems can be found in the final redaction: 'the personality of the redactor can primarily be perceived in the selection, order and treatment of the citations … the redactor assembles the citations to correspond to his own objective, and argues with them as though they were his own words.'[195] Stemberger also highlights the puzzle created by the use of rabbis' names in rabbinic texts. For example, pseudepigraphy is 'more acute the later a narrative or dictum first appears: very different reasons may account for putting certain words into a rabbi's mouth after the event'.[196] In addition, it was not unusual for several rabbis to share the same name, especially where there is no reference to the father's name.[197] The Rabbis' biographies were not accurate firsthand accounts, but rather most were written much later for the purpose of teaching and encouraging, or for the partisan support of patriarchates or political institutions.[198] It is difficult to ascribe an accurate authorship and date to the Midrashim, there is the problem of attributions. The texts could be the result of collaboration over an indeterminate period of time. The authorship of the Midrashim remains essentially anonymous, but they are likely to have been redacted by one or more editors.

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[190] Günter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 2nd Ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), p. 46.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibd.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Stemberger, *Introduction*, p. 47.
[195] Stemberger, *Introduction*, p. 55.
[196] Stemberger, *Introduction*, p. 58.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Stemberger, *Introduction*, p. 61.

Jacob Neusner, however, takes a different view from Stemberger. He defines Midrashim as compilations of rabbinic exegesis from the first six centuries C.E.[199] He does not believe that the Midrashim were redacted compilations of an immense body of pre-existent materials which evenly covered the biblical text. Instead, he argues that the decision by the compilers to assemble a Midrash preceded the actual compilation process: 'only then, did they collect, borrow, and also determine to make up appropriate materials'.[200] Neusner concludes that the 'compositors wanted to say some one thing in response to the one book they selected for their agglutinative pretext … a single theme and a single message concerning that theme'.[201] However, Catherine Hezser rightly takes issue with Neusner's belief in a singular theme: 'rabbinic literature must be seen as a collective rather than an authorial literature, transmitting a wide variety of partly divergent and contradictory views and teachings'.[202] She finds fault with Neusner's refusal to follow a tradition's transmissional history to see where editorial changes took place:

> It is reasonable to assume that the traditions incorporated into rabbinic documents underwent a number of stages of transmission and that the editors consciously reworked and adapted earlier material to the respective literary contexts … one cannot simply dismiss the question of transmissional and redactional changes, even if the 'original' form of a tradition is irrecoverable.[203]

Irving Jacobs also argues that the Midrashim developed out of a redaction process: 'Although it is generally accepted that the material preserved in our extant *midrashic* works is derived from homilies and expositions which were actually delivered to live audiences in the ancient synagogues and study houses of the Holy Land, it is extremely unlikely that these have been preserved in an unedited form.'[204] Thus, the traditions in the Midrashim may have begun as oral traditions spoken, heard and learnt in the synagogue and Beit Midrash (the house of learning). Charlotte Fonrobert and Martin Jaffee bring together the perspectives of Stemberger, Hezser and Jacobs, to form an articulate consensus view:

> There is virtually no passage in the rabbinic corpus of which we can confidently state that "it was written in such and such a year, in such and such a place, by such and such an individual." At best, individual passages of rabbinic literature can be dated, on the basis of redactional-critical and tradition-critical criteria, in a merely relative sense …

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[199] Jacob Neusner, *A Theological Commentary to the Midrash - Volume VI: Ruth Rabbah and Esther Rabbah I (Maryland: University Press of America, 2001)*, p. xxi.
[200] Jacob Neusner, *The Mother of the Messiah in Judaism: The Book of Ruth* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1993), pp. 3-4.
[201] Neusner, *The Mother*, p. 4.
[202] Catherine Hezser, 'Classical Rabbinic Literature' in Martin Goodman (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 115-140 (p. 116).
[203] Hezser, pp. 124-125.
[204] Irving Jacobs, *The Midrashic Process: Tradition and Interpretation in Rabbinic Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 2.

> To complicate matters, most texts have a prehistory as orally circulated texts, and may have been edited orally.[205]

Moreover, even the methods behind the production of the extant copies of rabbinic texts remain uncertain: 'We know next to nothing about the last generation(s) of sages who edited the vast quantities of textual material and gave it the approximate shape in which the manuscripts have come down to us', because they 'successfully blurred the historical traces of their production'.[206] Thus, the Midrashim of Late Antiquity are the product of anonymous editing.

Gary Porton distinguishes between *midrashic* and non*midrashic* statements amongst the writings of the Rabbis. Thus, the first collection of rabbinic teachings in the first and second centuries CE, the Mishnah, contains a good deal of material based on the Hebrew Scriptures and he is in 'no doubt that the framers of Mishnah knew [Scripture] and believed that they were producing a document that somehow was based on it'. However, the difference is that the 'Mishnah seldom explicitly refers to the biblical verse upon which its statements are based or to the scriptural text from which its laws are derived' and is, therefore mostly non*midrashic*. Indeed, most of the Mishnah's statements 'seem to consciously avoid drawing a clear relationship between themselves and the Bible'.[207] Context, therefore, determines whether a statement is *midrashic* or non*midrashic*. Mishnaic remarks that do not refer to a biblical verse or passage are non*midrashic*, but if the same remarks in the same form appear in a Midrash, 'juxtaposed to a specific biblical verse,' the remarks become *midrashic*: 'The defining characteristic of a *midrashic* statement is its explicit relationship (real or constructed) and formal juxtaposition to the biblical text'.[208]

Porton helpfully breaks down the structure of the Midrashim. Each Midrash – each individual commentary – is a collection of 'independent units whose sequential or thematic arrangements are the work of the editors'. Each independent unit – each individual pericope or statement – is unlikely to have been part of a 'consecutive' biblical commentary. Each biblical unit – each verse – often has 'more than one comment'; thus, 'Several synonymous, complementary, or contradictory remarks may appear in connection with a single verse, word, or letter.'[209] The exegetes of the Midrashim employed grammatical, logical and rhetorical techniques, however they did so in much the same way that Augustine and Isidore did, in the service to God's divine revelation:

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[205] Charlotte E. Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee, 'Introduction: The Talmud, Rabbinic Literature, and Jewish Culture' in Charlotte E. Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 1-16 (p. 2).
[206] Fonrobert and Jaffee, 'Introduction', p. 3.
[207] Gary G. Porton, *Understanding Rabbinic Midrash: Texts and Commentary* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 1984), p. 6.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Porton, *Understanding Rabbinic Midrash*, p. 8.

> Because the rabbis believed that the Bible was the accurate and complete public record of a direct revelation from the One, Only, and Perfect God to His people, nothing in the Bible could be frivolous. Every element of the text – every letter, every verse, every phrase – was important and written as it was for specific reasons. The Bible contained no needless expressions, no "mere" repetitions, and no superfluous words or phrases. If something appeared to be superfluous, repetitious, or needless, it had to be explained and interpreted in order to demonstrate that this was not the case.[210]

In this way, Scripture is broken down into almost elemental properties to extract every potency of significance. As Samely rightly states, 'fragments or segments of Scripture are treated as if they could contain the divine author's meaning to the same degree as the whole of Scripture'.[211] Each word of God alone is imbued with the same energy as all the words of God together. The divine nature of the words keeps them from losing potency when separated from the context of the sentence or passage. Where we might think of a coal taken from the fire soon losing its heat and turning cold, while the fire continues to roar; the divine word taken from its context continues to glow and burn undiminished, with all of the heat and light of the fire from which it came. Thus, Samely asserts that '[even] if a verse is separated from its context, and thereby given a new topic, it is seen as retaining its power to reveal'.

The *midrashic* segment or fragment or element of Scripture – the divine coal – forms what Samely calls a 'micro-Scripture'. These preserve the 'authority and veracity of the word of God':

> Indeed, the segments are created as if they were so many divine answers to individual rabbinic questions, or divine turn-takings in a conversation with the rabbis. The licence to create micro-Scripture includes all linguistic levels, from the individual letter, word, phrase, clause, to a whole verse. Letters can be combined to new words, or given a new vocalization.'[212]

The micro-Scripture allows for both uniqueness and polyvalence in the semantics of grammar, so that signs, words, sentences and stories can all be considered in isolation, or can be given multiple meanings, multiple contexts and multiple connections.

> As a result, the biblical text as a continuum of graphic (and other) signs becomes, strictly speaking, inexhaustible. Some rabbis express this as the 'seventy faces of Torah', or by saying: 'Turn it [i.e. Torah] and turn it, for all is in it' (Mishnah Avot 5:22).'[213]

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[210] Porton, *Understanding Rabbinic Midrash*, p. 9.
[211] Samely, *Forms of Rabbinic Literature*, p. 66.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Samely, *Forms of Rabbinic Literature*, p. 86.

Stern, likewise, locates the primary focus of *midrashic* exegesis in verses and, moreover, in '*details* in verses, rather than … passages or chapters or continuous narratives or other larger literary units'.[214] For the Rabbis then, God, it seems, and not the devil, is in the detail.

Stern claims that 'the most famous feature' of Midrash is 'polysemy, the *midrashic* predilection for offering multiple interpretations of a single verse or phrase,' and he suggests that this may be a result of the 'aural reception of the text' – in other words, the result of multiple hearings. To support this suggestion, he offers a rabbinic explanation:

> Abbaye said: The verse says: "Once (*aḥat*) God has spoken, but twice (*shetayim*) I have heard" (Ps. 62:12) [which Abbaye understands as saying, "One thing God has spoken but two I have heard," thus meaning:] A single verse has several senses, but no two verses ever hold the same meaning. (bSan 34a)'[215]

Samely and Stern give us two possible reasons for the polysemy in Midrash – for Samely it is the divine nature of words that give multiple meaning and interpretation, whilst for Stern, it is the multiple hearings which give rise to the diversity of meaning. In truly *midrashic* style, it is possible to say that both of these reasons are valid and not mutually exclusive. The one difference, however, that comes to mind, and which may have swayed the Rabbis towards the first reason, is that the capacity for multiple hearings is ultimately finite (twice in Abbaye's reckoning), whereas the divine nature of words is not. Even if a rabbi were granted eternity to listen to the multiple hearings, he would still be limited to one at a time. The divine nature knows no such limits, the multiple meanings are free to emanate one at a time and/or simultaneously.

Saul Lieberman addresses the intertextual nature of *midrashic* interpretation, whereby the Rabbis explained the 'Bible by the Bible'. This enabled them to establish the meaning of one text from another or, where a word has different meanings in different texts, they could select one meaning over another, carrying that meaning over to other contexts where the word appears. Lieberman demonstrates with the following example:

> Indeed the verb פסח [*pacach*, Exod. 12:23] certainly means to step over, to skip, but from the Prophets [Isa. 31:5] the Rabbis proved that it also signified to protect … Since the word has two meanings, they preferred the one which suited the context best.[216]

The idea of interpreting the Bible by the Bible has a parallel in the Western grammatical tradition too, used by the Rabbis' Christian patristic counterparts. For example, Origen often used the intertextual principle referred to as 'Homer interpreting Homer' and 'Aristotle

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[214] Stern, 'The First Jewish Books', p. 181.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Saul Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1950), pp. 49, 51; quoted in Gottlieb, 'Midrash as Biblical Philology', p. 145.

interpreting Aristotle'.[217] William Yarchin also highlights *midrashic* intertextual interpretations in the Psalms of David, as well as in 'texts from all the scriptural authors', rendering 'the whole of the biblical canon … as a self-interpreting text through intertextual illumination':

> Midrash … almost always involved the establishing of connections between biblical texts by any of a number of linkages: philological, paronomastic, thematic, numeric, historical – almost any basis could be employed to shed light from one biblical text upon another. As the supremely abiding gift from God to Israel, the midrashically interpreted Torah was so fully infused with teaching potential that combinations of its elements could endlessly yield insight and understanding.'[218]

The endless nature of interpretation in the Midrashim creates problems for those who seek closure in their exegesis, especially in worldviews that demand resolution through singular, linear or monochromatic outcomes (e.g. the historical-grammatical method). The Midrashim fly in the face of such demands, as Yarchin clearly states: 'Classical Jewish interpretation repudiates the notion that understanding is coterminous with final graspability and synthesis. Rather, understanding the Bible more authentically resides, perhaps strangely, in the uncertainty of its interpretation, never fully finished.'[219]

One final characteristic of the Midrashim (though there are many more) is that the Rabbis turn the central characters of Scripture into *midrashic* exegetes. Yarchin gives the example of Solomon, who, 'as (traditionally) the author of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs, appears in rabbinic discussion as not only a writer of Scripture but also an inspired authority who in his biblical writings interprets the Torah'. Yarchin quotes from the Midrash to the Song of Songs:

> He [Solomon] pondered the words of the Torah and investigated [the meaning of] the words of the Torah. He made handles to the Torah … R. Jose said: Imagine a big basket full of produce without any handle, so that it could not be lifted, till one clever man came and made handles to it, and then it began to be carried by the handles. So till Solomon arose no one could properly understand the words of the Torah, but when Solomon arose, all began to comprehend the Torah (*Song of Songs Rabbah* 1.1.8).[220]

In the example given, the Rabbis transform Solomon, in the words of Daniel Boyarin, into a 'sort of protorabbi'.[221] Obviously, transforming the biblical characters into exegetes adds greater authority to the work of the *midrashist*, whilst creating a back-story to the tradition. Whilst it may potentially blur the lines between the classic texts and the interpreters of those

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[217] Ronald E. Heine, 'Articulating identity' in Frances Young, Lewis Ayres and Andrew Louth (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 200-221 (p. 213).
[218] William Yarchin, *History of Biblical Interpretation: A Reader (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011)*, p. xvi.
[219] Yarchin, *History of Biblical Interpretation*, p. xvii.
[220] Yarchin, *History of Biblical Interpretation*, pp. xv-xvi.
[221] Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 150.

texts, it perhaps establishes more parity between the Rabbis and the scribes of old (who had their models – their proto-scribes – in the likes of Ezra and Daniel).

Midrash as a Reading Method

With regard to *midrash* as an exegetical method, it is a fitting and comprehensive term, literally meaning 'search' and 'inquiry'.[222] Isaac Gottlieb states that the 'foremost task' of *midrash* is to interpret the text of the Scriptures: 'Generally, the explication of difficult words lies at the root of these interpretations.' He believes that these *midrashic* word explanations 'can be found in the writings of the earliest grammarians'.[223] However, Porton rightly cautions against a too simplistic definition, arguing that '[even] to those familiar with Hebrew terminology, the word "*midrash*" has a variety of connotations', having 'been used to describe biblical interpretations or exegesis, sermons, and haggadic (nonlegal) discussions'.[224] Thus, to try and understand the methodology of *midrash*, as a technique, requires cautious treading, and this survey of the method will be far from complete.

Neusner divides *midrash* into three categories: paraphrase, prophecy and parable. In paraphrasing Scripture, the interpreter would revise the meaning of the text, bringing new significance through additional words or phrases; as prophecy, Scripture was used to interpret imminent events; and as parable, Scripture was read in other terms than those spoken by the scriptural writer.[225] Through the mediums of paraphrase, prophecy and parable the 'sages mediated between God's Word and their own world', whilst 'equally and reciprocally invoking the one as a metaphor for the other'.[226] Thus, by interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures in this way, the *midrashist* purposed to discover a 'pertinent rule or theological truth'.[227] As a result, Neusner argues that *midrash* works in three dimensions: 'as explanation of meaning imputed to particular verses of Scripture; …as a mode of stating important propositions, syllogisms of thought, in conversation with verses or sustained passages of Scripture; and, …as a way of retelling scriptural stories that imparts new immediacy to those stories'.[228]

To consider *midrash* from a grammatical perspective it may be helpful to look at a number of maxims, followed by some sets of rules or *middot*, that have been laid down by the Rabbis. Samely notes a 'metahermeneutic' maxim credited to R. Ishmael (*fl*. second century CE): '"The Torah speaks (like) the [ordinary] language of man" (Sifre Numbers § 112). This looks

[222] Samely, *Forms of Rabbinic Literature*, p. 64.
[223] Isaac B. Gottlieb, 'Midrash as Biblical Philology', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 75.2 (1984), pp. 134-161 (p. 134).
[224] Porton, *Understanding Rabbinic Midrash*, p. 4.
[225] Jacob Neusner, *What is Midrash?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), pp. 7-8.
[226] Neusner, *What is Midrash?*, p. 102.
[227] Neusner, *What is Midrash?*, p. 109.
[228] Jacob Neusner, *Invitation to Midrash: The Workings of Rabbinic Bible Interpretation* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), pp. 3-4.

like a general principle, but is capable of a number of interpretations'.[229] Samely's comment immediately demonstrates the complexity of *midrash* – is it accessible to all, can anyone become a *midrashist*? Or is it that the work of the true *midrashist* speaks to all comers? Is this an invitation to all to *read* Torah? Or is it an invitation to *hear* Torah? Samely follows this with another example: 'Even more obscure is the maxim, "A [biblical] verse does not lose its *peshat*" (e.g. Bavli Shabbat 63a).' Samely's comments on the maxim are as follows:

> The term *peshat*, when used of biblical words, could perhaps be literally rendered as 'flat meaning'. So far as we can tell, it seems to have referred to the 'traditionally accepted meaning' rather than the 'plain/literal meaning'. In any case, it is unknown how the maxim relates historically to the vast number of actual rabbinic interpretations.[230]

These maxims appear to be getting at something, but as Samely's comments reveal, what exactly they are getting at is not so clear. If he is correct in defining the Rabbis' use of *peshat* as representing the 'traditionally accepted meaning', then the maxim is less helpful without knowledge of the traditionally acceptable and, of course, that tradition is subject to change and variance through the time, space and experience of historically vast numbers of rabbinic exegetes. If *peshat* stands for the alternative, the plain/literal meaning, then it is perhaps slightly more helpful – there is a greater possibility for consensus as to what constitutes literal – as a biblical verse cannot be divorced from its literal meaning. However, the experience of thousands of years of Judeo-Christian exegesis tells us that many verses are often divorced from their literal meanings, quite acrimoniously and irreconcilably. Yarchin, commenting on the latter maxim, notes that most Jewish interpreters, 'particularly in the haggadic or homiletic traditions but also in halakic or legal exegesis as well', were less concerned with the peshat, focusing their attention instead on the 'derived meaning *(derash,* from the same root as for *midrash)*'.[231]

As well as the hermeneutical maxims (which may or may not have been that helpful), there were three lists of interpretive rules (also known as *middot*) from the rabbinic period. In chronological order, the first list of seven *middot* is ascribed to Hillel (c. 32 BCE – 7 CE) and appears within *Tosefta Sanhedrin* (7: 11); whilst the second list of thirteen *middot* is ascribed to R. Ishmael (he of the first maxim above), and appears in the preface to *Sifra*. The third and most extensive list – the thirty-two *middot* – is ascribed to R. Eliezer b. Jose ha-Gelili (c. second century CE), but is 'probably from a much later date'.[232] Hillel's list of seven, reads as follows:

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[229] Samely, *Forms of Rabbinic Literature*, p. 90.
[230] Samely, *Forms of Rabbinic Literature*, p. 94.
[231] Yarchin, *History of Biblical Interpretation*, p. xxii.
[232] Samely, *Forms of Rabbinic Literature*, p. 94.

> Seven rules of interpretation did the elder Hillel expound before the elders of Bethyra: the argument *a fortiori*, the analogy of expressions, the generalization from one instance, the generalization from two instances, universal and particular terms, analogy drawn from another passage, and the conclusion to be drawn from the context. These seven rules did the elder Hillel expound before the elders of Bethyra (Tosefta Sanhedrin 7: 11).[233]

Whilst somewhat pithy, it is hard to grasp the full import of what Hillel meant. Thankfully, at the turn of the 1900s, Wilhelm Bacher and Jacob Lauterbach contributed entries for each of the lists with Hebrew transliterations and explanatory notes, in the monumental work, *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. Following is the entry for Hillel's list:

> Rules given to the sons of Bathyra by Hillel I. as the chief guides for the interpretation of the Scriptures and for the deduction of laws from them (Tosef., Sanh. vii.; the introduction to the Sifra, ed. Weiss, p. 3a, end; Ab. R. N. xxxvii.). They are as follows: 1. Ḳal (ḳol) wa-ḥomer: "Argumentum a minori ad majus" or "a majori ad minus"; corresponding to the scholastic proof a fortiori. 2. Gezerah shawah: Argument from analogy. Biblical passages containing synonyms or homonyms are subject, however much they differ in other respects, to identical definitions and applications. 3. Binyan ab mi-katub eḥad: Application of a provision found in one passage only to passages which are related to the first in content but do not contain the provision in question. 4. Binyan ab mi-shene ketubim: The same as the preceding, except that the provision is generalized from two Biblical passages. 5. Kelal u-Peraṭ and Peraṭ u-kelal: Definition of the general by the particular, and of the particular by the general. 6. Ka-yoẓe bo mi-maḳom aḥer: Similarity in content to another Scriptural passage. 7. Dabar ha-lamed me-'inyano: Interpretation deduced from the context.[234]

The first *middot* is explained using the Latin logic of *Argumentum a minori ad majus*, *a majori ad minus* and *a fortiori* (arguments from less to greater, greater to less, and with stronger reason). Suddenly, the rules for interpretation are explicitly grammatical, with reference to analogy, synonyms, homonyms, definitions, comparisons, and context-based interpretation. These are interpretive rules for Scripture employing technical grammar.

Bacher and Lauterbach's entry for R. Ishmael's list of thirteen is no less clear, and additionally (and most helpfully), they have indicated exactly where R. Ishmael has followed the seven *middot* of Hillel:

> Thirteen rules compiled by Rabbi Ishmael b. Elisha for the elucidation of the Torah and for making halakic deductions from it. They are, strictly speaking, mere amplifications

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[233] *Tractate Sahedrin , Mishnah and Tosefta*, trans. Herbert Danby (London: SPCK, 1919), pp. 76-77.

[234] Wilhelm Bacher and Jacob Zallel Lauterbach, 'Rules of Hillel, the seven' in Isidore Singer et al (eds.), *The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. X* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905), p. 511 (p. 511).

> of the seven Rules of Hillel, and are collected in the Baraita of R. Ishmael, forming the introduction to the Sifra and reading as follows: 1. Ḳal wa-ḥomer: Identical with the first rule of Hillel. 2. Gezerah shawah: Identical with the second rule of Hillel. 3. Binyan ab: Rules deduced from a single passage of Scripture and rules deduced from two passages. This rule is a combination of the third and fourth rules of Hillel. 4. Kelal u-Peraṭ: The general and the particular. 5. u-Peraṭ u-kelal: The particular and the general. 6. Kelal u-Peraṭ u-kelal: The general, the particular, and the general. 7. The general which requires elucidation by the particular, and the particular which requires elucidation by the general. 8. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it for pedagogic purposes elucidates the general as well as the particular. 9. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it on account of the special regulation which corresponds in concept to the general, is thus isolated to decrease rather than to increase the rigidity of its application. 10. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it on account of some other special regulation which does not correspond in concept to the general, is thus isolated either to decrease or to increase the rigidity of its application. 11. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it on account of a new and reversed decision can be referred to the general only in case the passage under consideration makes an explicit reference to it. 12. Deduction from the context. 13. When two Biblical passages contradict each other the contradiction in question must be solved by reference to a third passage. Rules seven to eleven are formed by a subdivision of the fifth rule of Hillel; rule twelve corresponds to the seventh rule of Hillel, but is amplified in certain particulars; rule thirteen does not occur in Hillel, while, on the other hand, the sixth rule of Hillel is omitted by Ishmael.[235]

In their own comments, Bacher and Lauterbach state that R. Ishmael's list is 'strictly speaking, [a] mere amplifications of the seven Rules of Hillel'. Be that as it may, it is interesting to see how the list has so quickly grown and developed, mirroring (in a smaller way) the development of the grammar textbooks in the Western tradition. Noticeably, R. Ishmael's list emphasises a variety of rules for elucidating texts using particular and general examples.

Bacher and Lauterbach's entry for R. Eliezer b. Jose ha-Gelili's thirty-two *middot*, also helpfully cross-references Hillel' seven and R. Ishmael's thirteen *middot*:

> Rules laid down by R. Eliezer b. Jose ha-Gelili for haggadic exegesis, many of them being applied also to halakic interpretation. 1. Ribbuy (extension): The particles "et," "gam," and "af," which are superfluous, indicate that something which is not explicitly

[235] Wilhelm Bacher and Jacob Zallel Lauterbach, 'Rules of R. Ishmael, the thirteen' in Isidore Singer et al (eds.), *The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. X* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905), pp. 511-512 (pp. 511-512).

stated must be regarded as included in the passage under consideration, or that some teaching is implied thereby. 2. Mi'uṭ (limitation): The particles "ak," "raḳ" and "min" indicate that something implied by the concept under consideration must be excluded in a specific case. 3. Ribbuy aḥar ribbuy (extension after extension): When one extension follows another it indicates that more must be regarded as implied. 4. Mi'uṭ aḥar mi'uṭ (limitation after limitation): A double limitation indicates that more is to be omitted. 5. Ḳal wa-ḥomer meforash: "Argumentum a minori ad majus," or vice versa, and expressly so characterized in the text. 6. Ḳal wa-ḥomer satum: "Argumentum a minori ad majus," or vice versa, but only implied, not explicitly declared to be one in the text. This and the preceding rule are contained in the Rules of Hillel, No. 1. Rules 7 and 8 are identical with Rules 2 and 3 of Hillel. 9. Derek ḳeẓarah: Abbreviation is sometimes used in the text when the subject of discussion is self-explanatory. 10. Dabar shehu shanuy (repeated expression): Repetition implies a special meaning. 11. Siddur she-neḥlaḳ: Where in the text a clause or sentence not logically divisible is divided by the punctuation, the proper order and the division of the verses must be restored according to the logical connection. 12. Anything introduced as a comparison to illustrate and explain something else, itself receives in this way a better explanation and elucidation. 13. When the general is followed by the particular, the latter is specific to the former and merely defines it more exactly (comp. Rules of Hillel, No. 5). 14. Something important is compared with something unimportant to elucidate it and render it more readily intelligible. 15. Same as Rule 13 of R. Ishmael. 16. Dabar meyuḥad bi-meḳomo: An expression which occurs in only one passage can be explained only by the context. This must have been the original meaning of the rule, although another explanation is given in the examples cited in the baraita. 17. A point which is not clearly explained in the main passage may be better elucidated in another passage. 18. A statement with regard to a part may imply the whole. 19. A statement concerning one thing may hold good with regard to another as well. 20. A statement concerning one thing may apply only to something else. 21. If one object is compared to two other objects, the best part of both the latter forms the tertium quid of comparison. 22. A passage may be supplemented and explained by a parallel passage. 23. A passage serves to elucidate and supplement its parallel passage. 24. When the specific implied in the general is especially excepted from the general, it serves to emphasize some property characterizing the specific. 25. The specific implied in the general is frequently excepted from the general to elucidate some other specific property, and to develop some special teaching concerning it. 26. Mashal (parable). 27. Mi-ma'al: Interpretation through the preceding. 28. Mi-neged: Interpretation

> through the opposite. 29. Gemaṭria: Interpretation according to the numerical value of the letters. 30. Noṭariḳon: Interpretation by dividing a word into two or more parts. 31. Postposition of the precedent. Many phrases which follow must be regarded as properly preceding, and must be interpreted accordingly in exegesis. 32. Many portions of the Bible refer to an earlier period than do the sections which precede them, and vice versa. These thirty-two rules are united in the so-called Baraita of R. Eliezer b. Jose ha-Gelili. In the introduction to the Midrash ha-Gadol (ed. Schechter, Cambridge, 1902), where this baraita is given, it contains thirty-three rules, Rule 29 being divided into three, and Rule 27 ("Mi-ma'al") being omitted.[236]

Clearly, as a later text, it is unsurprising that with the passing of time it has grown so much from the previous lists, as exegetes experimented with and built upon Hillel and R. Ishmael's *middot*. Additional to the previous lists, however, there are *middot* dealing with the function of superfluous particles, extensions and limitations for indicating that more is to be implied or excluded; the use of abbreviations; the function of repetitions; punctuation; the use of parallels; the use and interpretation of *mashal* (parable); *gemaṭria*: interpretation according to the numerical value of the letters; *noṭariḳon*: interpretation by dividing a word into two or more parts; and the use of precedents. In analysing the three lists, Philip Alexander notes the *aggadic* emphasis in R. Eliezer b. Jose ha-Gelili's thirty-two, and the more *halakhic* leanings in Hillel and R. Ishmael's lists. However, this was by no means exclusive, as all three have been used for both *aggadic* and *halakhic* purposes. However, in legal matters, Hillel and Ishmael show a 'discernible reluctance' to use the more 'fanciful' *aggadic* techniques of *gemaṭria* (numerical exegesis), and *noṭariḳon* (acronymic exegesis), favouring instead a *peshat* approach in the majority of cases.[237]

Beyond the maxims and *middot*, there is a *midrashic* schema called *Pardes* (meaning 'orchard' in Hebrew, but also serving as an acronym), providing an alternative way of interpreting the biblical text in four successive stages:

> 1. פְּשַׁט [*Peshat*] …*simple*, *primary,* or *literal* [the plain sense]; 2. רֶמֶז [*Remez*] …*allegorical* [hint]; 3. דְּרַשׁ [*Derash*] *homiletic*, or *spiritual* [exposition]; 4. סוֹד [*Sod*] *recondite* or *mysterious sense* [secret or symbolic], which was afterwards designated by the *Pardes* (פרדס – each letter representing one of the four rules).[238]

This system begins with *Peshat*, establishing the plain meaning of the text as the first stage in all exegetical endeavours. The second stage, *Remez*, allows for an allegorical reading of the

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[236] Wilhelm Bacher and Jacob Zallel Lauterbach, 'Rules of Eliezer b. Jose ha-Gelili, the thirty-two' in Isidore Singer et al (eds.), *The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. X* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905), pp. 510-511 (pp. 510-511).
[237] Philip S. Alexander, 'Jewish Interpretation' in Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 305-310 (p. 307).
[238] Pick, 'The Study of the Hebrew Language', p. 460. Transliterations and additional descriptive words in square brackets are mine.

text, but securely anchored to the first stage. The third stage, *Derash* (the etymological root of *midrash*), initiates exploratory exposition, breaking down the passage and the verse or verses in view. The final stage, the esoteric *Sod*, begins to penetrate words, letters, and numerical values. *Pardes* is usually seen as a much later medieval *midrashic* development, with the fourth stage verging on Cabbalistic exegesis.[239] However, Pick interestingly places the origins of *Pardes* before Hillel, at the genesis of interpretive *middot*, arguing that the 'fourfold mode of interpretation' was insufficient:

> …since, according to an old saying, "the law can be interpreted in forty-nine different modes," the necessity arose for laying down and fixing certain laws for the interpretation of the Scripture. This was done by Hillel the Great, who laid down seven rules. The seven rules of Hillel were enlarged by Ismael ben Elisa to thirteen, and these again to thirty-two by Elieser ben Jose the Galilean, of the second century.[240]

Nevertheless, *Pardes* offers a completely different approach to *midrash*, an approach not really found in the lists of *middot*.

Rather than offering rules for interpretation, *Pardes* offer instead lenses or 'layers',[241] through which one may read at increasingly deeper levels. Each stage represents a stronger lens. According to Fishbane, each of the layers is 'distinct and privileged, but all variously interrelated or correlated'.[242] Fishbane claims that *Peshat* is 'derived from the textual given, in its received verbal and sentence units'; and is 'concerned to know what the sentences mean in their interrelation and integration – and thus how the various verbal parts cohere in larger segments'.[243] The relationship between verbs and sentences is sought out to discover a primary literal reading of the text. Of course, this attempt to find a universally agreed plain reading is fraught with difficulty and susceptible to the imposition of personal meanings, as Fishbane highlights:

> …the horizon of the plain sense is a neutral entity, distinct from the reader, until a reader tries to be in accord with its presumed sense. Indeed, the arch presumption of the *Peshat* level is that one may find the true 'fit' between oneself as a reader and the text itself … The presumption of 'fit' is the presumption of an accurate knowing, of a successful (or meaningful) conjunction between the mind of a reader and a text – all distance overcome.[244]

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[239] For the medieval dating of Pardes see Fishbane, 'Biblical Hermeneutics and Philosophical Theology: A Jewish Model' (paper presented at the 3rd Annual Interdisciplinary Conference on Philosophical Investigation of the Hebrew Scriptures, Talmud and Midrash, Jerusalem, Israel, July 23-26, 2012).
[240] Pick, 'The Study of the Hebrew Language', p. 460.
[241] Fishbane, 'Biblical Hermeneutics and Philosophical Theology'.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid.

Nevertheless, the *Peshat* can yield a fruitful outcome for the reader, if this consideration is acknowledged and the reader proceeds without presuming finite absolutes in the text. Some distance will be unavoidable.

Establishing the accuracy of the *Peshat* can be partly helped by the introduction of the third layer, *Derash* (Fishbane jumbles the acronym and calls this the second layer):

> *Derash*, refers to the particularities of rabbinic interpretation – both legal and homiletic Midrash. Hermeneutics works here at the level of culture and community, where the natural meaning of the *Peshat*, so to say, is understood in Jewish terms. Scripture is now a Jewish pedagogy – a kind of cultural *paideia* – instructing the faithful in the moral and theological features of Scripture, as understood by rabbinic tradition, or in the proper types of duty and practice.[245]

Thus, the most fitting understanding of a text is found in a Jewish reading of it – it is the reading most appropriate to the text. The reading of Scripture finds its home in a Jewish cultural context not a Western one. The words and sentences of Scripture 'are all inflected with deep rabbinic nuance and pertinence, from beginning to end'.

Fishbane places *Remez* as the third level, where 'allegorical "hints" … may be discerned in Scripture, with traces of a deeper or underlying content'.[246] He equates this level to the Greek word *huponoia* ('a thought or intention that lies below the surface'[247]):

> At this level, reading and knowing require a special knowing – not derived from the text in itself, but from some prior presumption of deeper philosophical or ethical value. One may suspect that the text is allegorical, and that its pattern of words hint at something else; but that 'something else' is derived from 'somewhere else' – perhaps the virtues of an Aristotle, or the mind-body tensions of a Plotinus, or even the valences of the Written and Oral Torah of the Sages.[248]

Here, Fishbane demonstrates that *Remez* has the potential to draw on exegetical contexts both outside of as well as within the Jewish tradition – 'some might say that one enters Scripture through Jerusalem and leaves it by Athens' or that the 'door of Athens swings on the hinge of Jerusalem'. The text must be read from 'some other "species of knowledge", which must then be appropriated and realized subjectively'. Yet, what *Remez* shows us is that it is a lens that can view and embrace Athens *with* Jerusalem. If *Derash* provides the natural Jewish

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[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid.
[247] This interpretation and definition of *huponoia* comes from Andrew Ford, 'Performing Interpretation: Early Allegorical Exegesis of Homer' in Margaret H. Beissinger, Jane Tylus and Susanne Lindgren Wofford (eds.), *Epic Traditions in the Contemporary World: The Poetics of Community (*Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 33-53 (p. 38).
[248] Fishbane, 'Biblical Hermeneutics and Philosophical Theology'.

home for interpreting Scripture, then Remez is the exegetical journey from home to another place.

The fourth level of *Sod* is, Fishbane argues, 'the ultimate esoteric layer of meaning'.[249] If the previous layers have taken us from home to another place in earthly cultural contexts, then *Sod* takes us beyond the earthly in Fishbane's understanding of *Pardes*:

> Hereby one reads Scripture as a vast symbolic thesaurus – its verbal meanings being saturated icons (or prismatic vectors) that flood the mind and heart with super-significance. Thus, reading sequences of words in their received syntactic conjunctions induces a transcendent apperception of the deepest coordinates of meaning imaginable … The hermeneutics of distance and appropriation have no meaning here. The self is flooded by the verbal prisms, and appropriated by their ineffable immediacy.[250]

Thus, the understanding of the reader focuses on the particles of light in the smallest parts of the written text; piercing the sentences to release the truth/light-bearing power with which each word is imbued. Here, there are infinite meanings, possibilities and interpretations of roots, words, phrases and sentences – *Sod* opens up the creative and imaginative – it is at the other end of *Peshat* and no 'fit' is sought.

By reversing the order of the second and third parts of the acronym, Fishbane illustrates how the levels of Pardes can be manipulated and re-ordered in their progression, and still provide a useful method for reading.[251] That method begins with *Peshat* – a simple approach to the text, looking for the most obvious and plain sense of meaning without looking beneath the words, beside them or above. *Derash* and *Remez* help us approach the text from a situated context – that of home and away – and perhaps Fishbane's reversal is only significant with regard to where we decide to begin and end a reading journey. We can begin our journey from home (Jerusalem) and travel away (Athens); from the home context to the other. Or we may begin our journey away and travel home. *Sod* approaches the text from a totally other context, when we have read the text plainly and in a number of contexts, we can move beyond the earthly Jerusalem and Athens to a journey beyond the boundaries of context, where imagination and creativity engage with the text. *Pardes* offers a focus that not only deepens with each successive level, but also broadens. It accommodates a reading that is broad enough to include more than one worldview.

However, there is no compulsion to use all four lenses in any one reading. One need only go as far as the *peshat*, if the plain sense is sufficient for a given reading or for a particular

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[249] Ibid.
[250] Ibid.
[251] Katz treats *Derash* and *Remez* together: '*remez* … often forms the basis of *drash*', see 'Letter As Essence', pp. 142-144.

circumstance (i.e. reading for worship/chant, reading for elucidation, or reading for deeper study). The more demanding the purpose in reading a text is, the stronger the lens to be employed. However, greater magnification is only achieved by adding lenses successively. In other words, employing *sod* without the first three stages will not circumvent the path to esoteric enlightenment; but is more likely to result in a confused or non-contextual eisegesis.

A Jewish Reading Voice for a Jewish Text

As readers, Copeland reminds us that 'literature (not logic) was the oldest domain for the study of language, and … grammarians were not just "guardians of language" but "guardians of literature"'.[252] The rich histories of the Western and Jewish traditions offer so much by way of help in reading, and this chapter has barely scratched the surface. Amongst the ancient Greeks, Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics emphasised the power of the word to communicate – the λόγος as truth-bearer. This potential to convey so much in the most basic units of language is clearly at the heart of both traditions – the analytical tools of grammar and *midrash* offer many ways to uncover and receive the truth borne by a word and in a word. Both provide the means to analyse ancient texts of all genres. The two traditions also reveal a love for the classic texts, demonstrated by the myriad commentaries written to guide, assist and explain the works so highly esteemed. Whether it is Homer and Virgil in the Western tradition, or Deuteronomy, the Psalms and Isaiah in the Jewish, the classic texts were essential reading; they were inexhaustible primers to which one always returned. The classic texts illuminated the way for all that one might go on to read. In Rome, Quintilian's golden rule that the reader must understand what they read meant that it was necessary for grammar to accompany the reader. Indeed, grammar personified, became the guide in all the arts, exercising authority in poetry, rhetoric, philosophy, history, mathematics and music, wherever it brought understanding to a text.

The power of words was no less for Augustine; they were the pre-eminent form of signs. Even after his Christian conversion, Augustine's interest in reading the pagan classics never waned, as could be seen in the frequent reference he made to Virgil, Cicero and Varro, amongst others. His love for Scripture and the pagan classics led to one of the first developed theories of reading, in which grammar acted as a means of interpreting the written text. For Augustine, however, grammar's chief work was in the service of Scripture. In learning the language of Scripture one might apprehend its more shrouded and obscure meaning. The arts of reading and interpretation were inextricably linked, and to teach one to interpret was to teach them to read for themselves.

[252] Rita Copeland, 'General Introduction', p. 19.

Isidore's *Etymologiae* became arguably the most influential book, after the Scriptures, in the Western tradition for the best part of a thousand years. Isidore, like Augustine, believed that grammar's place was in the service of God, but moreover it was the very source and foundation of literature. Isidore saw power not just in words, but in the very letters from which the words were composed. Letters were representatives, tokens and signs, infused with hidden meaning and a force so strong that they spoke without voices. Letters laid down a road for the reader to travel. Isidore employed etymology for interpreting and understanding nouns and verbs correctly, which he demonstrated through his explication of the divine Hebrew names and other aspects of the Scriptures. Isidore equipped the reader with explanations into the function of literary tropes, differentiating between riddles, allegories, metaphors, proverbs, parables, similitudes and fables. He drew extensively on the Scriptures and a multitude of pagan classics to furnish examples, producing a *grammatica* of texts and textual language. Yet neither Augustine nor Isidore employed a contextually authentic reading of Scripture, shunning the rich Jewish tradition that had developed around them in favour of Greek and Roman interlocutors as interpreters.

Despite superficial readings of the Hebrew Scriptures that suggest it has little to say on grammar, a closer and more careful inspection reveals that it contains a sophisticated interest in the workings of language. These can be seen, for example, in the remarkable use of Egyptian language and idioms in the text of the Torah, and in its extraordinarily sophisticated structure. The text reflects a formal, standardized scribal tradition, which was responsible for the ongoing transmission of the Scriptures. Specific writings became the classics of the Hebrew tradition, to which the scribes devoted themselves. Systems developed that functioned in similar ways to the Western grammatical models, for interpreting and clarifying texts. Scribes pursued similar investigations into the hidden, secret and obscure elements of Scriptures. Metaphors, parables, allegories and riddles were likewise studied to elucidate meaning. Scribes read to understand, and understood to explicate. The postexilic scribes functioned as early grammarians of Scripture, reading and expositing the genres of Scripture, but within an authentic historical context.

The work of the Masorites created a grammatical system to aid the reader of the biblical text, placing guiding marks around the words (like signposts on Isidore's road). The rabbinic period produced *midrash*, an interpretive world of commentaries and hermeneutics. The *midrashic* exegetes used grammar in the service to God, no less than their Christian contemporaries, Augustine and Isidore. Words were powerful bearers of truth in the Western tradition, and for the Rabbis, each word of Scripture carried the full potency of God. Midrash provided the reader with maxims and interpretive rules that were explicitly grammatical, with

technical references to analogy, synonyms, homonyms, and the parts of speech we would easily associate with the *ars grammatica* and the textbooks of the Latin grammarians.

In the Western tradition, the relationship between grammar and reading is summed up well by Copeland: 'Through grammatical theory, ancient and medieval readers could move from questions of signification to questions of meaning, from signs to semantics, and ultimately to questions of literary representation, that is, the relationship of poetic language to different kinds of truth, including the possibilities that the poetic language of Scripture offered to speculative theology.'[253] It is the language of Scripture especially that ties a common interest between the Western and Jewish traditions of reading. The Western grammatical tradition has exerted a great influence on the reading of Scripture, and continues to do so. Can the Jewish tradition of interpretation offer anything outside of its application to Scripture? Porton believes that rabbinic *midrash* has the potential to help the reader understand not just Scripture, but 'other text-oriented religions in general'.[254] One obvious example would have to be Christianity and the mostly Jewish-authored texts of the New Testament. Indeed, the parables of Jesus and the writings of Paul contain clear *midrashic* elements.[255] Even the Gospel writers employ *midrash*, as can be seen in the Prologue to John's Gospel. This text is so often interpreted along Philonic and Hellenistic lines of interpretation due to the author's use of Λόγος (*Logos*): 'In the beginning was the Word [Λόγος], and the Word [Λόγος] was with God, and the Word [Λόγος] was God' (1:1).[256] However, whilst the language of the New Testament is Greek, the contents are not. The opening passage of John far more reflects the opening of Genesis and, furthermore, the first three chapters of Genesis are mirrored in the first three chapters of John (for example, the relationship between the greater and lesser light is mirrored in the introduction of John the Baptist; Jesus sees Nathaniel under a fig tree which, in rabbinic thought, is the tree of knowledge[257]; there are 'weddings' in chapter two of both books; and a garden and a serpent appear in chapter three of both books). Moreover, the Gospel of John includes the seven 'I am' sayings of Jesus which invoke the *Tetragrammaton* (יהוה) in Exodus 3:14-15. Like all the other New Testament writers, John quotes frequently and directly from the Hebrew Scriptures, and the weight and implication of these quotes would be lost on a non-Hebraic audience. To this end, I believe a schema such as *Pardes*, with its series of deepening stages, provides an authentic and appropriate approach to reading not only the Hebrew Scriptures, but New Testament texts as well.

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[253] Rita Copeland, 'General Introduction', p. 14.
[254] Porton, *Understanding Rabbinic Midrash*, p.12.
[255] For a thorough analysis of midrash in the New Testament, see Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975).
[256] See, for example, Charles H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp.54-73.
[257] Asaph Goor, 'The History of the Fig in the Holy Land from Ancient Times to the Present Day', *Economic Botany*, 19.2 (1965), 124-135 (p. 124).

Omitting the Hebrew Scriptures from the Great Books is an extraordinary loss. Introducing whole books from the biblical canon would greatly enrich modern liberal arts. I am not suggesting that the whole body of Hebrew Scriptures be added to liberal arts reading lists (although a course that found the time over three or four years would be well rewarded), but at the very least representations of the Jewish voice from the Tanakh: the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings. For example, Genesis in its entirety would provide an understanding of Hebrew cosmology, and the beginnings of not just the universe and the earth, but also to God's relationship with humanity, especially demonstrated in his relationship to the Patriarchs. Exodus continues the narrative of Israel from a family to a nation, their descent into slavery and their journey back into freedom. In the aftermath of their emancipation, Israel receives the Commandments – the covenant as prototype social contract, and the pillars of our Western Judeo-Christian legal and social order. From the Prophets, the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah provide an insight into the breakdown of social covenant, the repercussions of injustice, and the call towards restoration and return. The Minor Prophets such as Amos also illustrate powerful rhetoric in the cause of the oppressed. The Writings give us the history of kingship and ancient political successes and failures in the Book of Kings (divided into two books in the Christian Bible), and of course, the Wisdom literature of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes cover an array of philosophical inquiries into the nature of wisdom, suffering and life.

However, placing the Hebrew Scriptures somewhere between Plato and Augustine does not help the reader. Instead, these Great texts should be read in context with an eye on the Jewish exegetical tradition. I am not advocating a scribal education, but an awareness and an embracing of the ancient Jewish tradition. Indeed, the stages of *Pardes*, for example, can be easily applied to English translations of the biblical text. What can the Jewish voice add to the art of reading? To begin with it accompanies the Greek worldview – Athens with Jerusalem – providing a second voice, a non-Western outsider voice; thus creating a dialogue with the existent canon. Secondly, it provides authenticity to our understanding of who we are and where we come from in the context of our literary history. Our claim to a Judeo-Christian culture is seen in the literary history of our Western culture. For example, if we consider the works of Shakespeare (included in the Great Books), they reference the Bible more than 1200 times.[258] Surely, therefore, our appreciation of Shakespeare can only be greater if we familiarise ourselves with the Scriptures, and understand them in context – they provide a foundation upon which we can make sense of our Western canon. Consider the inclusion of Maimonides or Spinoza in some liberal arts courses – how can they be fully understood unless

[258] Leland Ryken, 'Shakespeare and the Geneva Bible', *Reformation 21* (July 2009) <www.reformation21.org/articles/shakespeare-and-the-geneva-bible.php> [accessed 6 August 2014]. Ryken claims that 1200 references is a conservative estimate and 'could be doubled'.

the foundation is in place?[259] We do not turn to medieval or seventeenth century writers to read Homer or Plato, we go to the source. The Hebrew Scriptures are a Great Source for liberal arts education, providing not just great reading and rich grammatical understanding, but also great models for rhetoric and philosophy, as we shall see in the following chapters.

[259] See, for example, St. Johns College, Santa Fe, Seminar Reading Assignments 2014-1015 for Sophomore and Junior years <www.sjc.edu/files/9814/0719/3710/Reading_list_F14_-_7-25-14.pdf> [accessed 6 August 2014].

Chapter 2: The Spoken Jewish Voice

Having considered the written Jewish voice in biblical literature and rabbinic exegesis, we now turn to another expression of the Jewish voice: the spoken. The spoken voice in the Western classical tradition is exercised through the Greek art of rhetoric and the Roman counterpart of oratory, whereby one learns to speak well. Again, the Jewish tradition is overlooked, yet the spoken voice is clear in Scripture and the rabbinic literature – one learns not just to speak well, but more importantly, to speak up. Speaking up for the poor, the outsider, the unrepresented, the voiceless – this is the task of Jewish rhetoric, and it can be seen most distinctly in the writings of the Hebrew Prophets.

Oratory still plays an important part in liberal arts education, but the art of speaking well has a long history rivalling and eclipsing all the other arts, including the position of philosophy in classical education: 'The history of liberal education is the story of a debate between orators and philosophers.'[1] With these words Bruce Kimball began his history of the liberal arts, seeing a clear divide between the rhetorical and philosophical traditions, represented by Isocrates and Plato respectively, and where their schools held sway or clashed at different times. By the time the seven liberal arts had taken shape in ancient Roman education, rhetoric had come to dominate, and became the 'first characteristic of the *artes liberales* … the goal of training the good citizen to lead society'.[2] In following on from grammar, as the art of reading and writing, rhetoric follows naturally as the art of speaking, or as Henri Marrou states: 'The rhetor took up where the grammarian had left off'.[3] This chapter will focus on the Greek art of rhetoric and its development as oratory in ancient Rome, with specific attention given to Aristotle and Cicero, as respective representatives, and the influence they have had in shaping the art of speaking well. In the rhetoric of the Jewish tradition, consideration will be given to the Scriptures as a whole and the rabbinic texts, but highlighting the art of speaking up in the Hebrew Prophets, especially in the books of Amos and Isaiah. It is beyond the scope of this study to consider the development of rhetoric beyond the ancient period, and its rich history in medieval Christian education.[4]

Gary Remer points to the origins of the interchangeable terms of rhetoric and oratory: 'Etymologically, the orator's art – rhetoric or oratory – is derived from ancient Greek *rhêtorikê*,

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[1] Bruce A. Kimball, *Orators & Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1995), p. 2.
[2] Kimball, *Orators & Philosophers*, p. 37.
[3] Henri I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), p. 201.
[4] For the development of rhetoric in the medieval period see Martin Camargo, 'Rhetoric' in David L. Wagner (ed.), *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 96-124.

from the more ancient Greek *eirô*, meaning "to say, speak, or tell"'.[5] George Kennedy develops the etymological development from its earliest appearances:

> "Rhetoric," and its cognates in other languages, is derived from the Greek word *rhêkorikê*, the art or technique of a *rhêtôr*, or public speaker. The word first appears in Plato's dialogue *Gorgias*, written in the second decade of the fourth century B.C., but dramatically set a generation earlier. In conversation with Socrates (453a2), Gorgias defines *rhêkorikê* as "the worker of persuasion." "Persuasion" (*peithô*) was used in earlier Greek to describe what came to be called "rhetoric." Another Greek word often used of rhetoric is *logos*, literally "word," but also meaning "speech, argument, reason."[6]

In differentiating between oratory and rhetoric, Thomas Habinek defines oratory as 'formal public speechmaking … the characteristic political act of ancient city-states and of later political entities that draw their inspiration from them'.[7] Whereas, rhetoric is the 'study of available means of persuasion … [which] came into being as a distinct intellectual and social enterprise because of the prevalence of oratory in classical antiquity'. Thus, rhetoric 'analyzed successful instances of oratorical persuasion and derived from them principles that could be applied in new situations'. [8] The idea of public speechmaking is reinforced by Matthew Fox, who argues that:

> Rhetoric in the ancient world was experienced primarily in the context of a live performance, a form of communication that presupposes an interaction between speaker and audience. Literature, on the other hand, often revolved around a private act of reading.[9]

Fox's definition holds good for various rhetorical traditions, who share in common the speaker/audience relationship, and in comparing Western and Jewish traditions, this is especially true. However, as we have seen in the previous chapter, literature in the ancient Jewish tradition included public acts of reading, as well as the private.

Kennedy sees evidence of rhetoric in all human cultures and traditions, and even beyond the human: 'Rhetoric in the sense of techniques of persuasion is a phenomenon of all human cultures, and analogies to it are also found in animal communication.'[10] From this he

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[5] Gary Remer, 'The Relationship Between Biblical Prophet and Roman Orator: The Limits of Preaching and Prudence', *Hebraic Political Studies*, 4.1 (2009), pp. 25-55 (p. 31).
[6] George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric & Its Christian & Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p. 1.
[7] Thomas Habinek, *Ancient Rhetoric and Oratory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p. vi.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Matthew Fox, 'Rhetoric and Literature at Rome' in William Dominik and Jon Hall (eds.), *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 369-381 (p. 370).
[10] Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 1.

asserts that: 'All communication involves rhetoric.'[11] Commenting on the speaker/audience relationship, Kennedy argues:

> Every communication is rhetorical because it uses some technique to affect the beliefs, actions, or emotions of an audience. The simplest verbal techniques are pitch, volume, and repetition, as in "help, Help, HELP!"[12]

Explicitly, however, rhetoric was 'primarily an art of persuasion; it was primarily something used in civic life; it was primarily oral … it is an act not a text, though subsequently it can be treated as a text.'[13] The conceptualising of rhetorical techniques, or the 'synthesis of a *metarhetoric*', appears in 'sophisticated, literate societies in varying degrees depending on the practical need for rhetorical instruction, the extent to which the society is introspective, and the rhetorical values the society holds'.[14] Kennedy gives some specific examples of early rhetorical instruction from the ancient world:

> *The Instruction of Ptahhotep*, written in Egypt in the early second millennium B.C., is sometimes regarded as the earliest handbook of public speaking. In third-century B.C. China, Han Fei-tzu wrote a work on power politics that includes discussion of ways to persuade, and about the same time Kautilya in India wrote an extensive discussion of politics and rhetoric that has features in common with Greek rhetorical theory.[15]

However, Greek metarhetoric differed in that it was 'developed largely for speakers in the lawcourts, whereas elsewhere judicial rhetoric is not a major consideration; and only in Greece, and thus in Western Europe, was rhetoric separated from political and ethical philosophy to form a specific discipline that became a feature of formal education'.[16] Ancient Jewish rhetoric is not so distinctly laid out, yet it pervades every genre and category of biblical and post-biblical literature and tradition, and serves to be equally instructive.

The Origins of Greek and Jewish Rhetoric

David Cohen notes that oratory, though not yet specifically defined, played a 'crucial role' in the political deliberations of early Greek society – this is attested in the very earliest literary records of Greek civilization:

> Book 1 of [Homer's] *Iliad* presents a public debate between Agamemnon and Achilles which sets in motion the plot of the epic, and on various other occasions speakers

[11] Ibid.
[12] Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 2.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 4.
[15] Ibid. For an extensive discussion of various ancient rhetoric traditions see Carol S. Lipson and Roberta A. Binkley (eds.), *Rhetoric Before and Beyond the Greeks* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004).
[16] Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, pp. 4-5.

> address collective bodies. What is significant here is that on these occasions those who address the gathering do not just talk, they make speeches … Rhetoric, understood as a self-conscious art of oratorical persuasion, had not yet been invented in Homer's world, but the ability to produce a reasoned and persuasive speech in a deliberative setting was highly prized.'[17]

Indeed, Kennedy argues that 'the attitude toward speech in the *Iliad* strongly influenced the conception of the orator … [because] the Greeks not only tolerated but admired open contention … Anger, retribution, and personal attacks were acceptable in public … evident in the spirited debates, even mud-slinging, between Agamemnon and Achilles'.[18] Similarly, Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee point to the last book of the *Iliad* for another example of early rhetoric, where 'Homer depicted the Trojan king, Priam, appealing to Achilles, the Achean hero, to return the body of his son, Hector' [XXIV 485-506].[19] Moreover, as John Sandys so clearly illustrated by extracting from the text of the *Iliad*: 'Achilles is trained to be "a speaker of words, as well as a doer of deeds" (*Il*. ix 443); Nestor is the clear-voiced orator, from whose lips "sweeter than honey flowed the stream of speech" (i 249); Menelaus touches only on salient points "in words though few, yet clear" (iii 214); while Odysseus, though awkward in action, is beyond compare with his "deep voice" and with his "words that fall like flakes of wintry snow" (iii 222).'[20]

Kennedy notes that the conscious study of Western rhetoric begins in Greece in the fifth century BCE. The emerging democracy of Athens was 'based on the assumption that all citizens had an equal right and duty to participate in their own government', and their effective participation required the ability to speak in public.[21] Public policy was decided in assemblies of adult male citizens, in which all had the 'right to speak'. According to Crowley and Hawhee, this right, 'called *isegoria* ("equality in the agora" or assembly place)', was exercised by very few citizens.[22] Obviously, when hundreds of Athenian men gathered together, it was impractical for very many to participate, and few would have been adequately trained or 'sufficiently informed about the issue at hand' to participate effectively. Thus, the debates were led 'by a small number of ambitious individuals called *rhētores*, who sought to channel the course of events in a direction they thought was best for the city' or for their own

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[17] David Cohen, 'The Politics of Deliberation: Oratory and Democracy in Classical Athens' in Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted (eds.), *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 22-37 (p. 23).
[18] Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 6.
[19] Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, 3rd ed. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2004), p. 207.
[20] John E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship: From the End of the Sixth Century B.C. to the End of the Middle Ages, Vol. 1* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1903), p. 76.
[21] George A. Kennedy, 'Prooemion' in Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, 2nd ed., trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. ix-xiii (p. ix).
[22] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 8.

ends.[23] These *rhētores* were especially trained orators, with 'sufficient education to understand the issues, and who had the leisure to study the issues at hand'. By the fourth century BCE, within the course of just one century, the term *rhetor* transformed from a reference to 'someone who introduced a resolution into the Assembly', to a term meaning 'something like "an expert on politics."'[24]

With no professional lawyers in Greece, citizens needed to defend themselves when seeking legal justice and this gave rise to the need for rhetorical skills. In the legal courts men were expected to speak for themselves, while women were represented by male relatives. Friends or relatives could speak on behalf of a man that was ill or unable to speak for whatever reason, and so it 'became possible to buy a speech from a logographer, or speechwriter, which the party involved would try to memorize'.[25] In addition to legal oratory, addresses at public holidays, funerals and symposia also required speaking proficiency. It was believed that, while some citizens possessed a 'natural gift for communication; others [could] develop these skills by studying the principles of speech and composition, by observing the method of successful speakers and writers, and by practice'.[26] Education in public oratory was provided by teachers who were hired for a fee, and taught their students how to organise arguments, divide speeches into logical components, and select the most effective combination of words.

Eileen Scallen suggests that Corax of Syracuse (c. 465 BCE) was the 'first "theorist" of legal rhetoric', whose theories developed in response to property disputes arising from the transition from a political dictatorship to democratic government in the Greek colony of Syracuse, on the island of Sicily: 'These legal disputes increased the need for training in forensic rhetoric.'[27] Corax and Tisias, his student, brought 'instruction in the art of legal advocacy' to Athens:

> …developing the argument from probability as the basis for forensic proof, in which matters of fact could not be demonstrated with absolute certainty. They encouraged their students to use probability to argue on either side of a case.[28]

Alongside the legal rhetoric of Corax and Tisias, other orators emerged in the context of Athenian politics. Crowley and Hawhee highlight the careers of Pericles (c. 495-429 BCE) and, a century later, Demosthenes (c. 384-322 BCE), who 'exemplify the close connection of oratory to politics'. Pericles is generally credited with the establishment of Athenian democracy: 'His democratic ideal, wherein citizens rendered free and intelligent obedience to a fair system of

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[23] Kennedy, 'Prooemion', p. ix.
[24] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 8.
[25] Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 20.
[26] Kennedy, 'Prooemion', p. ix.
[27] Eileen A. Scallen, 'Classical Rhetoric Practical Reasoning and the Law of Evidence', *The American University Law Review*, 44, (1995), pp. 1717-1816 (p. 1722).
[28] Scallen, 'Classical Rhetoric Practical Reasoning', p. 1723.

laws, is represented in the funeral oration attributed to him in Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian War.'[29] Demosthenes, a contemporary of Aristotle, was famed for his oratory concerning 'Athens's uneasy relations with the Macedonian king Philip and his son, Alexander the Great'. His many speeches against Philip attempted to warn the Athenians regarding the king's dangerous and 'acquisitive' intentions. Demosthenes was 'widely regarded … as the greatest of the Greek orators', and his work vindicating his political life, *On the Crown*, 'is still read as an outstanding example of the persuasive power of rhetoric.'[30]

Scallen believes that Corax and Tisias were 'the forerunners of the class of teachers of rhetoric known as the sophists.'[31] Their name derives from the Greek adjective *sophos*, meaning 'wise', and is best translated as a 'teacher' or 'expert', but 'used for anyone who gave lessons in grammar, rhetoric, politics, ethics, or other subjects for pay'.[32] The primary mode of delivery for the sophists was 'by public or private *epideixis*, oral demonstrations that presented in a striking style their ideas and techniques of proof.'[33] One of the earliest sophists, Gorgias, a teacher from Sicily, came to Athens in 427 BCE; and became famous for his 'poetic style and paradoxical arguments'.[34] His distinct and novel oratorical style struck the Athenians, 'with its pointed antitheses, its symmetrical clauses, its parallelisms of structure and its rhyming endings', which Sandys classified as αντιθεσις (contrast of sense), παρισωσις (parallelism of structure), and παρομοιωσις (parallelism of sound).[35] Gorgias paved the way and, thereafter, various sophists began publishing short rhetorical theory handbooks, which demonstrated 'how a person with little or no experience could organize a speech for delivery in a court of law and how to argue on the basis of the probability of what someone might have done in a given situation'.[36]

Crowley and Hawhee argue that some of the sophists 'taught by example rather than precept', preparing and delivering model speeches for their students to emulate:

> Some may have prepared lists of sample arguments, later called topics, that could be inserted into any speech for which they were appropriate. Such collections, if they existed, would have been called arts *(technai)* of rhetoric; that is, they would have been the rhetoric textbooks of the day.[37]

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[29] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 9. For an overview of the controversy surrounding the authorship of Pericles' funeral oration, see Panajiotis Asimopulos, 'The Authenticity of Pericles' Funeral Oration in the European Historical Thought', *Facta Universitatis, Series: Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology and History*, 10.2 (2011), pp. 233 – 239.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Scallen, 'Classical Rhetoric Practical Reasoning', p. 1723.
[32] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 9; Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 29.
[33] Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 29.
[34] Kennedy, 'Prooemion', p. ix.
[35] Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship*, p. 77.
[36] Kennedy, 'Prooemion', p. ix. See also David Conway, *Liberal Education and the National Curriculum* (London: Civitas, 2010), p. 80, for a discussion of rhetorical training for the sons of wealthy Athenians.
[37] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 10.

Kennedy believes the 'characteristic form of rhetorical study' – the 'tradition of imitating a successful orator, without necessarily any conceptualization of the techniques involved' – ultimately became 'what may be called the "schools" of sophists'.[38]

Habinek asks 'What exactly did the handbooks teach?' His comprehensive answer sheds light on the nature of their contents, and provides us with a complex curriculum, further supporting the idea of sophistic schools:

> …the canonical division of rhetoric into five parts – invention, disposition, style, memory, and performance; the categorization of speeches as deliberative, judicial, or demonstrative; and the subdivision of the standard judicial speech into proem, narrative, division, refutation, argumentation, and peroration. Add to these the three goals of rhetoric (to teach, to move, to persuade), the need to match style, argument, performance, etc. to audience and situation (the doctrine of decorum), as well as meta-questions of the appropriate means of educating the orator in all of the above and of the ultimate role of oratory and rhetoric in society and you have a collective table of contents of the rhetorical treatises taken as a whole.[39]

Donald Russell elucidates on the five parts or headings, beginning with the most important, *invention* (determining the problem: a question of fact, definition or the moral evaluation of a fact; and deciding the most effective arguments based on the speaker's position, character, audience attitudes and opponent); *arrangement* (beginning and ending speeches while obscuring your weaknesses); *verbal expression* (the peculiarly 'rhetorical' element); *delivery* and *memory* ('necessary technical skills' to avoid speaking from a script). Russell also comments on some of the unusual terminology found in the handbooks which appear to draw parallels between the adversarial 'skill of verbal combat' in rhetoric and ancient Greek wrestling, as both share technical terms that meant 'stand', 'hold', or 'grip'.[40]

The Pseudo-Aristotelian text *Rhetoric to Alexander* included 'topics for appealing to the emotions' and the issue of *ethos* (meaning 'character'). On the subject of emotions, it 'discussed appeals to friendliness, kindliness, and the like as a means urging an audience to act on behalf of the needy (1439b 15 ff.)'.[41] With regard to the term *ethos* and its importance in oratory, the author 'cautioned rhetors to be careful about their personal conduct, "because one's manner of life contributes to one's powers of persuasion as well as to the attainment of a good reputation" (1445b 30)'. Thus, the 'rhetor's ability to persuade is connected to [their]

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[38] Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 29.
[39] Habinek, *Ancient Rhetoric*, p. 47.
[40] Donald A. Russell, 'Arts and Sciences in Ancient Education', *Greece & Rome*, 36.2 (1989), pp. 210-225 (pp. 215-216).
[41] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 208.

moral habits'[42] Despite this caution, some sophists appear to have damaged rhetoric's reputation by showing a disregard for ethos and this, in turn, generated criticism.

Chief amongst the critics was Plato (c. 427-347 BCE). 'Unflattering portraits' of the rhetors Gorgias and Protagoras appear in the dialogues Plato named after them. Crowley and Hawhee argue that because he was an Athenian aristocrat and an 'enemy of democracy', Plato 'opposed rhetoric on the ground that rhetoricians did not search for truth but aimed instead to persuade people to believe'.[43] He presents Socrates as distrustful of the sophists and the 'handbook writers', and in the *Gorgias* Socrates criticizes Athenian rhetoric as 'essentially a form of flattery – morally irresponsible and not based on knowledge of truth or sound logic.'[44] Indeed, they 'preferred the probable to the true and made the worse cause the better.'[45] Plato voices his concern over the potential for rhetorical abuse in the *Gorgias*, through the character Polus of Agrigentum: 'Don't they act like tyrants and put to death any one they please and confiscate property and banish any one they've a mind to?' (466c)[46] Kennedy notes the problem with truth in rhetoric that led to Plato's protests – lying, he states, was 'endemic in Western oratory from its beginning'.[47]

Dilip Gaonkar notes that in the dialogue of the *Gorgias*, Socrates 'poses a series of interrogatories regarding rhetoric's identity and domicile, and predictably, neither Gorgias nor Polus and Callicles who successively undertake to respond, gives a satisfactory answer'.[48] Gorgias is bluntly asked to give an account for rhetoric: 'Who are you?' (447), and 'With what class of objects is rhetoric concerned?' (449). For Gaonkar, it is this failure to adequately respond that truly delegitimises the sophists in Plato's view. However, Gaonker sees an even deeper critique of 'rhetoric's lack of substance … Plato as saying that rhetoric's moral deficiency springs from its nomadic quality, a quality accentuated by the itinerant character of its teachers. Rhetoric is amoral precisely because it is rootless.'[49] Gaonker summarises Plato's rejection of rhetoric as a defective and incomplete art:

> First, rhetoric is rooted in a false ontology. It is content to deal with what appears to be true and good rather than inquire into what it is in reality. Second, rhetoric is epistemically deficient because it seeks to impart a mastery of common opinion rather than knowledge. Third, as an instrument of practical politics it exploits the resources of

[42] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 166.
[43] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 10. Kennedy documents Plato's works with reference to his views on rhetoric: 'A vivid, though rather negative picture of sophists can be found in several dialogues of Plato, including *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, *Hippias Major* and *Minor*, and *The Sophist*', *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 29.
[44] Kennedy, 'Prooemion', p. x.
[45] Russell, 'Arts and Sciences', p. 215.
[46] Plato, *Gorgias*, trans. William C. Helmbold (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1952), p. 27. See also Marrou, *A History of Education*, p. 52, for Plato's view on rhetoric via Polus.
[47] Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 7.
[48] Dilip P. Gaonkar, 'Introduction: Contingency and Probability' in Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted (eds.), *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 5- 21 (p. 5).
[49] Ibid.

> language to make the "weaker cause appear stronger" and to promote the acquisition of power as an end in itself without consideration for the well-being of the soul.[50]

Despite Plato's strong opposition to sophistry, Crowley and Hawhee argue that 'he appears to have understood the importance of rhetoric'. In the *Phaedrus* he developed a 'philosophical rhetoric that could supposedly be used to find truth'. This involved 'studying the souls of human beings and learning how to properly define and divide an issue into its constituent parts'.[51] Plato directed rhetors to study the people in their audiences, and thereby be more persuasive. In the *Phaedrus*, he wrote:

> Since the function of oratory is in fact to influence mens' souls, the intending orator must know what types of soul there are. Now these are of a determinate number, and their variety results in a variety of individuals. To the types of soul thus discriminated there corresponds a determinate number of types of discourse. Hence a certain type of hearer will be easy to persuade by a certain type of speech to take such and such action for such and such reason, while another type will be hard to persuade (271d).[52]

Crowley and Hawhee take this to mean that, in part, Plato might have intended that 'rhetors should study the emotions of their potential hearers or readers'. It would certainly seem to be an encouragement for the rhetor to take their cue from the audience rather than the handbook. Plato was not the only critic, however, and Kennedy addresses some of the other objections that arose: 'the creation of rhetorical handbooks and the claims of sophists to teach the art of speech made rhetoric vulnerable to criticism', with the implication that 'anyone motivated to speak in public' could learn rhetorical techniques.[53]

Isocrates (c. 436-338 BCE) emerged as the rhetor who successfully challenged the baser practices of the sophists of his day. Randall Hart notes: 'In his speech, *Against the Sophists*, he attacked teachers who claimed to be able to teach virtue and also opposed those who taught rhetoric as a mechanical formula based on the mastery of a few tricks of the trade.' [54] Isocrates began his career as a logographer, writing speeches for others, and it is possible that he had studied rhetoric with Gorgias, 'from whom he acquired his interest in style'.[55] His earnestness was demonstrated in the establishment of his 'famous and influential school of rhetoric that was attended by ambitious young men from all the Greek city-states'. His students enrolled 'for a period of three to four years, during which they studied rhetorical theory, heard model orations and sample discourses, and practiced intensive declamation'.[56]

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[50] Ibid.
[51] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 11.
[52] Plato, *Phaedrus*, quoted in Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 211.
[53] Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, pp. 53-54.
[54] Randall D. Hart, *Increasing Academic Achievement with the Trivium of Classical Education* (New York: iUniverse, 2006), p. 22.
[55] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 12.
[56] Hart, *Increasing Academic Achievement*, p. 22.

Isocrates taught his students the 'art of rhetoric so that they could become capable and cultured citizens'. Thus, in *Antidosis* he wrote: 'I try to persuade the city as a whole to undertake the sort of actions from which the citizens will become prosperous and which will deliver the other Greeks from their present evils' (85).[57] *Antidosis* also outlines 'the purpose of rhetorical study', as referred to by Crowley and Hawhee:

> When anyone elects to speak or write discourses which are worthy of praise and honour, it is not conceivable that such a person will support causes which are unjust or petty or devoted to private quarrels, and not rather those which are great and honourable, devoted to the welfare of humanity and the common good. It follows, then, that the power to speak well and think right will reward the person who approaches the art of discourse with love of wisdom and love of honour (276).[58]

To achieve this goal, Isocrates claimed that three things were necessary: 'native ability, study, and practice. Some authorities credit Isocrates with establishing the public speech as an art form.'[59] His influence and legacy in the study and advancement of rhetoric cannot be underestimated and, as Marrou reminds us, Isocrates cast a larger shadow than the critic Plato in the educational tradition of the ancient West: 'On the whole it was Isocrates, not Plato, who educated fourth-century Greece and subsequently the Hellenistic and Roman worlds; it was from Isocrates that, "as from a Trojan horse", there emerged all those teachers and men of culture, noble idealists, simple moralists, lovers of fine phrases, all those fluent voluble speakers, to whom classical antiquity owed both the qualities and the defects of its main cultural tradition.'[60]

The Greek rhetorical tradition has, according to Samuel Edelman, profoundly shaped and influenced our understanding of rhetoric, and continues to do so, partly because they 'theorized about their rhetorical practice'.[61] However, Edelman then highlights the oft-neglected rhetoric of the Jewish spoken voice:

> There is another, less studied, tradition in daily use. This rhetorical tradition is older than the 2400-year Greek rhetorical theory based upon the works of Aristotle, Isocrates and the Sophists. That alternative is Jewish rhetoric, which celebrates a 4000 year old tradition.[62]

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[57] Isocrates, *Antidosis*, quoted in Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, 2nd ed., trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 268.
[58] Isocrates, *Antidosis*, quoted in Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 13. American spellings have been altered from the translation.
[59] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 13.
[60] Marrou, *A History of Education*, p. 79.
[61] Samuel M. Edelman, 'Ancient Traditions, Modern Needs: An Introduction to Jewish Rhetoric', *The Journal of Communication and Religion*, 26.2 (2003), pp. 113-125 (p. 113).
[62] Ibid.

With specific regard to Jewish rhetoric, Falk helps to place the written biblical texts in a historical timeframe, noting that it is 'impossible' to situate the Hebrew Scriptures in a 'precise' historical context: 'According to Jewish tradition the oldest sections of the Torah were transcribed around 1220 BCE.'[63] While much of the recent scholarship disagrees with this traditional dating, there is a general consensus that the majority of the texts were written no later than about 400 BCE, with certain selections written many centuries earlier from even older oral sources.[64] Thus, when Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad* were being transferred from an oral to a written form, in a parallel world, the Hebrew Scriptures were also being redacted from an oral tradition.[65] Commenting on one of the major differences between Jewish and Greek rhetoric, Margaret Zulick states that while the Hebrew Scriptures do 'not contain abstract rational reflection analogous to that of the Greeks', they do 'represent a consummate rhetorical practice, containing recognizable forms of invention, arrangement and style'.[66] Jacob Mortensen notes a variety of rhetorical devices in one of the earliest Hebrew texts, the Book of Job; including irony, paradox, and aporia: 'Irony holds great *rhetorical* power, just as paradox and aporia hold great *intellectual* power because they make you think.'[67] Indeed, irony, he argues, 'is perhaps the most prevalent stylistic feature in … Job'.[68] David Howard Jr. claims that, like '*all* religious writing', the 'entire Bible is rhetorical' because it attempts to change behaviour and persuade.[69]

However, Jewish and, especially, biblical rhetoric are often overlooked because they are deemed to have a revelatory nature. An example of this can be found in Kennedy's work on classical rhetoric, where he downplays the role of biblical rhetoric:

> The fundamental rhetorical technique of the Old Testament is assertion of authority. God has given his law to his people. They are convinced because of who he is, what he has done for them, how he will punish them if they transgress, and how his word is revealed to them.[70]

Kennedy concedes that 'Judeo-Christian rhetoric' shows a little resemblance to philosophical rhetoric: 'it claims to be the simple enunciation of truth, uncontaminated by adornment, flattery, or sophistic argumentation'.[71] However, the similarities end there because biblical rhetoric is not discovered through human 'dialectic'. It is worth noting that Kennedy's

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[63] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 16.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Margaret D. Zulick, 'The Active Force of Hearing: The Ancient Hebrew Language of Persuasion', *Rhetorica*, 10.4 (1992), pp. 367-380 (p. 368).
[67] Jacob Mortensen, 'The Book of Job – The Cyclical Progression of the Aporia', *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*, 23.1 (2009), pp. 46-63 (p. 53).
[68] Ibid.
[69] David M. Howard Jr., 'Rhetorical Criticism in Old Testament Studies', *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, 4 (1994), pp. 87-104 (p. 103).
[70] Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 138.
[71] Ibid.

concession has to include Christian rhetoric, and even his ensuing discussion of the 'Old Testament' is framed by Christian interpretation and tradition.[72] Yet, Falk notes that Jewish rhetoric 'represents a distinct (and mostly uncorrupted through time) approach to speech'.[73]

James Crenshaw takes a different view to the narrow analysis which 'isolates' biblical rhetoric as asserted authority: 'Israel's teachers spoke with authority, but they also developed and refined persuasion to an art.'[74] He draws examples from the personification of 'Wisdom' (Dame Wisdom) in the Book of Proverbs; and the speeches of Job, his friends and God in the Book of Job. These examples from the 'Wisdom Literature' of Scripture demonstrate 'appeals to ethos, pathos and logos … [where] persuasive technique oscillates among three different poles: the speaker, the audience, and the speech'.[75] The appeals highlight the character of the speaker, the emotions of the audience, and the logic of the argument, as found in Greco-Roman oratory. The Book of Proverbs presents two rhetors in the personifications of Wisdom and Folly:

> The voice of reason, Wisdom, uses rhetoric steeped in prophetic tradition, filled with threats and authoritative claims. She also offers rich reward for those who heed her teachings. Her rival, Folly, relies on suggestive eloquence, a smooth line that echoes promises often associated with clandestine sexual encounters.[76]

Moreover, while Israelite teachers employed 'persuasive techniques and rhetorical strategies' in their instruction, in the Book of Job it is God who acts as teacher with unanswerable questions and the 'ironical taunt, "Surely you know!"'[77] Indeed, as David Frank asserts: 'The God of the Hebrew Bible is, by nature, argumentative'.[78] In the biblical narrative humans are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), and so they too are argumentative, according to Frank, and as a result: 'Agonistic speech is the beginning of Jewish theology.'[79]

Falk argues that the extreme power of speech, with its ability to create and destroy, forms the basis of Jewish rhetorical theory.[80] In the opening words of the Hebrew Scriptures the universe is made by an act of speech:

> In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Now the earth was unformed and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God hovered

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[72] See Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, pp. 137-143.
[73] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 17.
[74] James L. Crenshaw, 'Wisdom and Authority: Sapiential Rhetoric and Its Warrants' in John A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume: Vienna, 1980* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), pp. 10-29 (p. 29).
[75] Crenshaw, 'Wisdom and Authority', pp. 12, 17-21.
[76] Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel*, p. 131.
[77] See Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), pp. 130-131. Crenshaw's reference to the 'ironical taunt' is found twice in God's speech in the Book of Job, chapter 38:5, 21.
[78] David A. Frank, 'Arguing with God, Talmudic Discourse, and the Jewish Countermodel: Implications for the Study of Argumentation', *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 41 (2004), pp. 71-86 (p. 73).
[79] Ibid.
[80] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 17.

> over the face of the waters. And God said: 'Let there be light.' And there was light (Genesis1:1-3, JPS Tanakh 1917).

These verses evoke the 'very foundations of a Jewish theory of speech' because a universe created with words imbues words with an extraordinary power worthy of respect. Other biblical passages 'reveal a similar philosophy of powerful words', where, for example, God's word is likened to a 'fire' and a 'hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces' (Jeremiah 23:29).[81] Speaking words (דבר, *davar*) becomes the 'touchstone notion' in Scripture, where 'God's arguments become speech acts, creative interventions in the world of experience'.[82] Agonistic speech between the human and divine is not essentially characteristic of the Western tradition – Frank points out that in Greek mythology, 'humans do not engage in genuine argument with Zeus', while 'Christian tradition submerges the arguing-with-God tradition in order to emphasize contrition'.[83] An example of this Christian propensity can be seen in the translation of a verse from the Book of Job in the King James Version, where Job declares: 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him' (13:15). Frank believes that the Christian translation censors the Hebrew to eliminate argument: 'the Hebrew Bible has Job declaring "[God] may well slay me; I may have no hope; Yet I will argue my case before Him"'.[84] The Hebrew explicitly includes a form of the verb יכח (*yakach*), meaning 'to argue'.[85]

God's arguments with Abraham (Genesis 18:16-33), Moses (Exodus 3-4:14, 32:7-14; Numbers 11:10-17, 14:11-20), and Job (Job 13, 23, 38-42:6) reveal 'essential qualities of the Hebrew God,' and elements of these arguments replay in subsequent Jewish thought.[86] Speech from the mouth of God has power to create and destroy, to bring into existence and to sustain all things; whereas humans rarely have this power of speech in the Hebrew Scriptures, unless they are speaking on God's behalf, as in the case, for example, of Moses or Elijah. However, speech in the mouths of humans towards God proves to have a different kind of power, a persuasive power. In response to argument, God shows surprise; changes his course of action; relinquishes control; and allows freedom of choice – God listens and adapts:

> To God's credit, argumentation leads God to reduce the scope of God's claims in argument with Abraham, change mood and the decision to act in response to arguments posed by Moses, and acknowledge defeat in argumentative exchange with

[81] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 18.
[82] Frank, 'Arguing with God', p. 73.
[83] Frank, 'Arguing with God', p. 74.
[84] Frank, 'Arguing with God', p. 74.
[85] To be fair to more modern Christian translations of the Bible, many now render Job 13:15 with the verb 'argue' (for example, the *English Standard Version*, the *New American Standard Bible*, and the *New Living Translation*).
[86] Frank, 'Arguing with God', p. 74.

> Job. By engaging in argument, God reveals an openmindedness, an openness I would extend to God's emotional state as well.[87]

Of course, the effects of argumentation are 'bilateral' – both God and humans undertake risks in the process: 'they risk significant change to self, others, and world', because 'the deepest function served by argument … is to confront self and other with the risk of change'.[88] Frank is right to emphasise the concept of 'risk' in argument because the hearer is always free to agree or disagree – there is no guarantee the argument will successfully persuade. Additionally, the hearer may choose to simply ignore the argument or remain neutral or even subject it to criticism.[89] In this sense, all orators run the risk of failure if their only goal is to persuade.

In Abraham's argument with God regarding the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah's population, Abraham (with his nephew Lot – a resident of Sodom – clearly in mind) attempts to win a reprieve:

> Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just? (Genesis 18:23-25, ESV).

Abraham frames the argument with rhetorical questions to remind God of his standards of justice and clemency, and then appeals to those standards: 'The rhetorical questions pressure God to perform the reasoning necessary to reach a just conclusion.'[90] God replies that if he finds fifty righteous people in Sodom, he will spare the whole city (26). Abraham commences to barter with God, drawing him into a negotiation over numbers, and driving down the minimum for which God will spare Sodom from fifty to forty-five to forty to thirty to twenty. Finally, Abraham says, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." (28-32). Frank likens the exchange to the trade between merchants and customers in a Middle-Eastern Kasbah but, more importantly, Abraham's final offer succeeded in changing the measure of justice.[91]

By using phrases such as 'I who am but dust and ashes' (27), Abraham 'deploys a whole panoply of the abundant rhetorical devices of ancient Hebrew for expressing self-abasement before a powerful figure'.[92] Where Aristotle tied rhetoric to utilitarian goodness and Cicero tied oratory to sapiential prudence, Abraham ties argument to righteousness and

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[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Frank, 'Arguing with God', p. 75.
[90] Frank, 'Arguing with God', p. 77.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.

justice (צדק, *tzedek*). His appeal to *tzedek* 'involves compassion for the other and an integration of equity with mercy, truth and peace, love and justice'.[93] The final fate of Sodom and Gomorrah in the following chapter reveals that although Abraham understood his hearer and pitched his appeal to God's thoughts and emotions with rhetorical skill, he perhaps overestimated the people he sought to help. Nevertheless, he does not challenge God's plans if (as it turns out) 'destruction is warranted by their agreed-upon standards'.[94]

If, as Falk suggests, words have the power to 'create worlds and destroy people,' then it follows that they must be respectfully treated and subjected to laws regulating their use: 'Words are powerful and dangerous and as such Jewish culture puts a strong emphasis on the study of speech and has developed detailed laws concerning when, how, and why to use speech.'[95] Perhaps the most dangerous type of speech identified in Jewish rhetoric is 'falsehood' or lying (שקר, *sheqer*), which is explicitly prohibited in the ninth commandment: 'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour' (Exodus 20:16, ESV). Throughout the Torah and the Book of Proverbs falsehood is prohibited and strongly condemned: 'the LORD hates … a lying tongue' (Proverbs 6:16-17, ESV). According to Falk, the traditional Jewish interpretation of these verses prohibits 'any act of speech that is false and damaging', so that, collectively, the verses prohibit lying 'in all circumstances – in important judicial matters of life and death, as well as in casual conversation'.[96] Yet, there is at least one example in the Scriptures that appears to commend falsehood, when the king of Egypt commands the Hebrew midwives to kill all male babies born to the Hebrew women:

> But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, 'Why have you done this, and let the male children live?' The midwives said to Pharaoh, 'Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.' So God dealt well with the midwives… (Exodus 1:15-20, ESV).

There is no indication in the text that God is displeased with the midwives, quite the opposite, in fact. There is clearly a prioritisation in effect, because the midwives disobey the king's orders, risking their own safety, out of reverence for God. This act appears to legitimise their false report to the king. It is not clear if Falk is aware of this example, but it seems to set a precedent for lying in order to save life. Generally, however, 'acts of deception were considered criminal and punishable through public trial and judgment'.[97] Moreover, Jewish rhetoric also draws attention to the role of the hearer of falsehood – thus, 'Judges have a

[93] Frank, 'Arguing with God', p. 76.
[94] Frank, 'Arguing with God', p. 77.
[95] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 18.
[96] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 19.
[97] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 19.

responsibility not to *listen* to false testimony', and 'it is prohibited for one to listen to casual lies'.[98]

Flattery (from חלף, *chalaq*, literally 'smooth') is likewise condemned in Scripture as a form of deceitfulness. In a Psalm attributed to David, he says of his enemies: 'For there is no truth in their mouth; their inmost self is destruction; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue' (Psalm 5:9, ESV). Falk contrasts the sophistic perspective wherein flattery is a 'persuasive tool,' with 'Jewish rhetoric [which] considers it dangerous and prohibits it'.[99] Both the flattered and the flatterer suffer as a consequence. For the former, 'A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin' (Proverbs 26:28, ESV), because flattery 'prevents self-improvement'. For the latter, 'A man who flatters his neighbour spreads a net for his feet' (Proverbs 29:5, ESV). No good can come of flattery, no matter what the intentions. Far more effective tools in Jewish rhetoric are 'straight talk' and open rebuke: 'Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favour than he who flatters with his tongue' (Exodus 28:23, ESV).[100] Indeed, an appropriate rebuke is positively encouraged, especially when laws have been or might be broken: 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbour, and not bear sin because of him' (Leviticus 19:17, JPS Tanakh 1917). Nevertheless, there are very strict guidelines for giving rebukes – the speaker must show respect to the hearer, and not cause them embarrassment or shame: 'Shaming a [neighbour] in public is considered lashon hara [לשון הרע, literally 'evil tongue'] and is a violation serious enough to warrant exclusion from "olam haba" (the world to come).'[101]

Jewish rhetoric warns against slander (לשן, *lashan*): 'Whoever slanders his neighbour secretly I will destroy' (Psalm 101:5, ESV).'[102] However, it is in the warning against verbosity that Jewish rhetoric makes a truly unique contribution:

> One of the most surprising negative commandments is the restricting of speech itself. One dominant theme in Proverbs is that people should speak seldom. Unlike Platonic rhetoric which promotes debate through dialectic, Jewish rhetoric promotes parsimony in speech and warns against debate. Underlying this approach is an idea fundamental to Judaism that speech is powerful and that dangerous consequences can result from speaking.[103]

The 'distrust of speech' is clearly evidenced in the Scriptures: 'When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent' (Proverbs 10:19, ESV); and 'A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaims folly' (Proverbs

[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 20.
[101] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 24.
[102] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 20.
[103] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 22.

12:23, ESV).[104] Yet, Falk's point is specific to debate rather than persuasive argumentation, for example, in the argument between God and Abraham neither party speaks superfluously.

Whilst Falk's presentation of Jewish rhetorical theory is mainly prohibitive (setting limits on speech), discussion of Torah is 'explicitly promoted': 'And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up' (Deuteronomy 6:6-7, JPS Tanakh 1917). Talking about the law is here commanded in relatively limitless terms, encompassing all times of day and all situations where discussion is possible.[105] The power of speech is also positively manifested in the keeping of promises, especially those promises or vows made to God: 'If a man vows a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth' (Numbers 30:2, ESV).[106] To break a word runs counter to the creative and sustaining power of speech – the broken vow becomes a falsehood and violates *tzedek*. To keep a word reflects the universe-creating power of speech – the intact vow is consistent with true speech and upholds *tzedek*.

The methods of style and delivery in Jewish rhetoric are not as pronounced as in the Greco-Roman counterparts. Neither are the Scriptures silent on these matters:

> Jewish law reflects a general attitude that persuasion and learning are enhanced with polite, well-composed, and pleasant appeals instead of agitating ones. Underlying these tenets are the beliefs that common courtesy and graciousness build relationships and are more effective in overcoming stubborn opposition.[107]

Practical advice for the delivery of Jewish rhetoric can be found in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes: 'A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger' (Proverbs 15:1, ESV); 'sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness' (Proverbs 16:21, ESV); 'Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body' (Proverbs 16:24, ESV); 'A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver' (Proverbs 25:11, ESV); 'With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone' (Proverbs 25:15, ESV); and 'The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools' (Ecclesiastes 9:17, ESV). Falk notes that the word 'soft' in Proverbs 15:1 means 'pacifying', whilst the word 'harsh' (or 'grievous') means 'producing pain'; and that 'most commentaries interpret the line as referring to the persuasiveness of pleasant speech'.[108]

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[104] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 23.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 24.
[108] Ibid. See also Zulick, 'The Active Force of Hearing', p. 368.

Ancient Jewish rhetoric presents conceptual abstraction mainly in the form of personification rather than through rational abstraction.[109] Wisdom is not only personified as a virtuous woman, but also as a witness to creation with a rhetorical voice:

> The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth (Proverbs 8:22-23, ESV).

Wisdom's speech is powerful and authoritative, and throughout the Book of Proverbs her persuasive voice calls out to be heeded. Moreover, the creation itself, to whose birth wisdom was a witness, is given a voice – in the Psalms, 'speech inhabits a sentient cosmos':

> The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
> Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.
> There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.
> Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world (Psalm 19:1-4, ESV).

In the Hebrew world the creation is a rhetor, declaring, proclaiming, speaking and revealing its author. Creation's voice and words fill space and time in a continuous oration of praise. As Zulick rightly states: 'This intensely alive, intensely rhetorical cosmos contains little space for objectivity or abstract rational thought.'[110] Thus, despite the absence of rational abstraction, the Scriptures hold a consistently high regard for the power of speech, eloquence, argument and persuasion: 'not so much an articulated theory as a practice arising out of a distinct rhetorical spirituality…'[111]

The Hebrew Scriptures contain a 'cluster of synonymous verbs' – נזל (*nâzal*), נטף (*natap*), and ערף (*arap*) – literally 'dripping', 'to drip' or 'to trickle', which 'likens eloquence to smooth liquid dripping from the tongue, with either a prophetic or an erotic connotation'.[112] It appears in a 'prophetic embodiment' in one of the songs of Moses:

> Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew… (Deuteronomy 32:1-2).

Zulick renders the beginning of the second verse as 'May my eloquence drop like rain,'[113] so that oratory in the Jewish tradition has the power to refresh and nourish the hearer.

Persuasion in the Scriptures, Zulick argues, 'locates the responsibility for the persuasive act with the hearer.'[114] Thus, when a situation is described in which 'persuasion takes place in an ethically positive way,' it attributes the hearer with the 'decisive action'

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[109] Zulick, 'The Active Force of Hearing', p. 368.
[110] Zulick, 'The Active Force of Hearing', p. 369.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Zulick, 'The Active Force of Hearing', p. 370.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Zulick, 'The Active Force of Hearing', p. 368.

rather than the speaker. Both speaking and hearing are powerful acts in Jewish rhetoric. In Hebrew the verb שמע (*shema*) means 'to hear', 'to listen', 'to pay attention to' and, therefore, by extension 'to obey'. Zulick gives the example of Judah trying to convince his brothers not to kill Joseph:

> Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him (Genesis 37:26-27, ESV).

Here, 'the action is described through their hearing, not his persuading'.[115] Hearing, then, forms an essential part of persuasion and 'formal appeals'. This is especially evident in the numerous appeals to God in prayers and petitions, for example, when Solomon implores God to hear the people (1 Kings 8:27-53). Likewise, the Prophets often 'preface' their messages with the instructive appeal to 'Hear the word of the LORD…'[116] *Shema* has even become the title of *the* fundamental prayer of Judaism – the recitation of Deuteronomy 6:4 – 'Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one.'

The appeal to hear places responsibility on the hearer not the speaker and, thus, makes them the 'deciding figure' in the rhetorical act. Moreover, Zulick argues that it 'strengthens the medium, the word itself, by removing any suggestion that true words might fail to persuade'. The hearer is convinced because of the weight, authority and rightness of the words, and not the art of oratory.[117] Zulick concludes that 'rhetors cannot compel persuasion, that rhetoric appeals to an independent motion of the will on the part of the hearer, much of which is dark to us, and only some aspects of which may be open to a speaker's influence'.[118] This conclusion emphasises the hearer's response, but it does not diminish the effect of the speaker upon that response and the force of persuasion. In balance, the Scriptures present both speaking and hearing as powerful acts. Edelman sums up biblical rhetoric as 'not restricted to policy, legalistic and moralistic rhetorical forms', but as also demonstrating a well developed rhetorical form of poetry as advanced as any developed by the Greeks':

> Most important … is the significance of the Bible as a source for strong models of oratory and general communication between people and God, people and people, and between people and their monarchs and religious leadership. Certainly the last speeches of Moses, those of Aaron, the various angels, and even those of God become

[115] Zulick, 'The Active Force of Hearing', p. 376.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Zulick, 'The Active Force of Hearing', p. 377.
[118] Zulick, 'The Active Force of Hearing', p. 378.

important models for the future development of communication in Jewish society over the centuries.'[119]

Roman and Rabbinic Rhetoric

The Roman Latin word *oratoria*, from the verb *orare*, gives us the origins of the English word oratory, meaning 'to speak before a court assembly, or to plead'.[120] Commenting on Roman rhetoric, Joy Connolly states: 'Active, reactive, and rich with resources for self-reflection, rhetoric in Rome always meant much more than learning to deliver a speech, which is why it has lived for so many centuries not in dusty library corners or the memories of curious antiquarians but at the [centre] of European culture, in monasteries, rural schools, and royal courts.'[121] Alongside grammar and dialectic, 'rhetoric constituted the core of study for educated Romans by (at the latest) the first century BCE'.[122] Not unlike the Greek rhetoric that preceded it, Roman rhetoric arose from 'the practice of oratory, acts of formal speaking before citizens gathered together – political orations, sermons, law court arguments – and also bears the influence of artistic performances and casual exchanges of conversation'.[123] Unsurprisingly, then, the body of Greek rhetoric from the fifth to fourth centuries BCE had an 'enormous impact on the Roman legal culture'.[124] Both Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE) and Marcus Fabius Quintilian (35-95 C.E) were Roman lawyers, educators, and philosophers who fused together and developed the ideas of Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle.[125] They wrote handbooks that 'advocated rhetoric as the basis for all dealings in civic and practical matters'; and the 'unification of philosophy and rhetoric'. This led to Quintilian's definition of the ideal orator as 'the good man speaking well'.[126] The 'good' was the highest virtue committed 'however indirectly, to regulating the *res publica,* especially in the microcosm of the law court, the guardian of justice and equality before the law.'[127]

Enrica Sciarrino, citing Cicero, points to Marcus Porcius Cato (c. 234-149 BCE) as the first Roman to 'produce samples of oratory worth reading (*Brut*. 60)'.[128] Cato came from outside of Roman aristocracy to achieve the heights of consulship in 195 BCE, censor in 184 BCE, and 'as an ex-consul made his opinions heard in the senate for about forty years'. Percival

[119] Edelman, 'Ancient Traditions', p. 115.
[120] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 31.
[121] Joy Connolly, *The State of Speech: Rhetoric and Political Thought in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 1.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Connolly, *The State of Speech*, p. 2.
[124] Scallen, 'Classical Rhetoric Practical Reasoning', p. 1729.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Connolly, *The State of Speech*, p. 10.
[128] Enrica Sciarrino, 'Roman Oratory Before Cicero: The Elder Cato and Gaius Gracchus' in William Dominik and Jon Hall (eds.), *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 54-66 (p. 55).

Cole mentions that a manual of oratory is ascribed to Cato, and that from his time rhetors began to write down and publish their speeches, which had until then been given without notes.[129] Cicero compared Cato's style to that of the Greek logographer and orator, Lysias (c. 445-380 BCE), affirming that Cato was '*acutus* ("acute"), *elegans* ("charming"), *facetus* ("witty"), and *brevis* ("brief") like Lysias' (*Brut*. 63). Cicero also notes that Cato was 'solemn in praising, harsh in chastising, shrewd in preaching, and subtle in arguing (65)'.[130]

For Cicero and Quintilian, the 'goal of rhetoric was to persuade; hence, rhetoric was most commonly deemed as "the art of persuasion."'[131] The 'first criterion' and most common characteristic of Roman rhetoric, according to Remer, is its 'persuasive design':

> In pursuit of their goal of persuasion, Roman orators esteemed prudence as their foremost virtue. In doing so, they manifested their esteem for prudential reasoning as a *sine qua non* for effective oratory while *also* evincing the broader Roman respect for *practical* wisdom.[132]

This was an attempt, then, to create a fusion of persuasion and philosophy – held apart, for the most part, in the Greek sophist and Platonic traditions. The good man was also the wise man speaking well. The prudence of Roman orators was manifested in a commitment to practical, human wisdom. The 'rhetoric of prudence' adapted speech to circumstance, thus, moving towards Plato's suggestion for the orator that they take more consideration of their audience.[133]

Cole claims that above all other study, oratory was pursued by talented Roman youths, who formally trained in oratorical schools and began speaking in the forum at the age of eighteen or nineteen, often debuting in funeral orations.[134] Oratorical education emphasised the 'cultivation of a community of learners, reflecting on tradition, and preparation for public democratic life, particularly through mastering language and texts.'[135] Quintilian's *Institutio Oratorio (Institutes of Oratory)* was considered a classic work on education from its publication in 90 CE, and utilised in Roman schools 'until the collapse of the Empire, and probably beyond': 'The education he prescribed for young citizens was aimed at producing speakers and writers who had the best aims of their community at heart.'[136] However, as oratory developed, it gained 'new functions and a new status' in the Roman world, as a 'pursuit valued for its own sake, a high intellectual amusement'; 'an important element in public ceremonial … to

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[129] Percival R. Cole, *Later Roman Education in Ausonius, Capella: The Theodosian Code* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1909), p. 35.
[130] Sciarrino, 'Roman Oratory Before Cicero', p. 55.
[131] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 32.
[132] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 36.
[133] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', pp. 25-26.
[134] Cole, *Later Roman Education*, p. 35.
[135] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 36.
[136] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 15.

welcome distinguished visitors, to praise a city or a festival, to celebrate a society marriage or commemorate a death'; a 'framework for the discussion of literature in general, and especially poetry'.[137] As a result, rhetoric appeared to lose some of its gravitas. Remer argues that in the later republican period, Roman orators simply reinforced the political consensus regardless of their loyalty, creating an "ideological monotony".[138] As Robert Morstein-Marx notes, the rights and benefits of the people took second place in a battle of personality over ideology.[139] Cole documents the decline of rhetoric in Roman education, where 'oratory became less genuine and more servile'. The schools renounced 'serious topics' and became centres of a 'host of fictions'. Critics believed the schools 'made youths into fools'; and they ridiculed the questions raised for disputation, 'dealing with tyrants, or pirates, or the sacrifice of maidens'. Questions concerning contemporary politics were 'practically tabooed' and historical debates lacked realism.[140]

Connolly summarises the role of the rhetor, which perfectly reflected the Roman governing class:

> The demanding blend of bodily and mental skills involved in rhetorical training, which combined and mingled rival discourses of traditional senatorial authority, logical reasoning, literary knowledge, deportment, theatrical strategies of popular appeal, and sheer pleasure in the grain of the voice, prescribed normative practices of identity formation designed to reflect the values of the Roman governing class and reinforce its traditional dominance.[141]

Nevertheless, in the wake of the classical Roman orators, interest in rhetoric 'waxed and waned through the early Christian period (150-400 C.E.), the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment'.[142] During the Italian Renaissance, rhetoric was recognized and valued as 'an essential route to knowing and acting in the world of practical affairs', however, elsewhere 'it was primarily relegated to issues of style and delivery'. [143] Yet, according to Connolly, it was Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, his handbook on Ciceronian rhetoric, which revealed the 'proximity of ideals of republican citizenship and imperial courtly life' and, thus, 'helps explain the persistence of rhetoric into late antiquity and beyond.'[144]

Edelman notes that during the Talmudic period 'Jewish rhetorical practice moved from orality to literary creation; from policy formulation to policy interpretation'.[145] In the rabbinic

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[137] Russell, 'Arts and Sciences', p. 216.
[138] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 27.
[139] Robert Morstein-Marx, *Mass Oratory and Political Power in the Late Roman Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 276.
[140] Cole, *Later Roman Education*, p. 36.
[141] Connolly, *The State of Speech*, p. 3.
[142] Scallen, 'Classical Rhetoric Practical Reasoning', p. 1729.
[143] Cole, *Later Roman Education*, p. 36.
[144] Connolly, *The State of Speech*, p. 21.
[145] Edelman, 'Ancient Traditions', p. 115.

literature of the first century onwards there is an 'argumentation and argumentative structure' within the texts that reveals the full scope of Jewish rhetorical tradition.[146] Marc Hirshman points out that speech continued to be a powerful act in the post-biblical period:

> For the rabbinic sages, understanding was consummated in speech … for the early rabbis learning was done through recitation and talk. Its object was full mastery of God's word and full understanding of it.[147]

Thus, the study of Torah was 'quintessentially speaking Torah'. The goal of Torah study was to shape the style and content of human speech: 'Learning was conceived of as an oral speech act.'[148] The words of the Torah were 'repeated incessantly', fulfilling the biblical ordinance: 'Let not this Book of the Teaching [Torah] cease from your lips, but recite it day and night' (Joshua 1:8, JPS Tanakh).[149]

Edelman defines Talmudic rhetoric as 'finding balance and integration … the art or method of reconciling of individual and systemic goals and constraints.'[150] He gives as an example the 'principle of Rabbi Judah in which dissent was sanctified'. This principle demonstrates the Talmud's 'rhetorical complexity' and 'malleability'.[151] Frank highlights the visual aspect of the Talmud's rhetorical nature: 'The Talmud is structured as a spiral, with the earliest arguments in the middle of the page, attended by responses curling around the [centre] in chronological order.'[152] The page positioned the rhetorical speakers, celebrating argumentation: 'Disagreement is privileged and assumed, and speech is valued most highly.'[153] Jacob Neusner notes that the rhetorical conventions of both the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds govern the order for setting out the different types of composition in much the same way, such as text-criticism, exegesis, and proof-texts: 'both Talmuds conform to complex and distinctive rhetorical programs'.[154] This ordering, according to Frank, 'placed the elements of argument in relationship and in attenuated hierarchy':

> In this system, all the elements and values in an argument might be valued, but temporarily placed in a rank order given the context and issues facing the community. The argumentative technique used to determine hierarchies in the Talmud is known as

[146] Edelman, 'Ancient Traditions', p. 113.
[147] Marc Hirshman, *The Stabilization of Rabbinic Culture, 100 C.E.–350 C.E.: Texts on Education and Their Late Antique Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 30.
[148] Hirshman, *The Stabilization of Rabbinic Culture*, p. 111.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Edelman, 'Ancient Traditions', p. 117.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Frank, 'Arguing with God', pp. 82-83.
[153] Frank, 'Arguing with God', p. 83.
[154] Jacob Neusner, 'The Canon of Rabbinic Judaism' in Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Judaism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), pp. 93-111 (p. 105).

> the *kal ve-chomer*. *Kal ve-chomer* deploys juxtaposition, seeking to tease out similarities and differences.[155]

The Talmud innovated an interaction between rhetoric and dialectic, where the 'discovery of the truth is paramount', through the method of demonstration.[156] As Eliezer Segal points out, argumentation permeated the atmosphere: 'The encouragement of free exchange was a crucial feature of Talmudic culture, where the preferred mode of instruction involved intensive debate and argumentation, and every statement had to be defended against challenges by colleagues and students.'[157]

The compilers of the Talmud had 'more in mind than to convey legal or theological information', according to Martin Jaffee: 'Their concern was to transmit not only content but, perhaps even more importantly, a discursive process by which content could be intellectually mastered … they clearly chose a rhetorical style that would reconstruct, and draw students into, the richly oral/aural world of the Rabbinic *bet midrash* ("study group"), *bay rav* ("disciple circle"), or *yeshivah* ("learning community").'[158] Indeed, José Faur notes that the teachers of the Talmudic Academies in third and fourth century Israel and Babylonia were called *Amoraim* (singular *amora*), from the root word אמר (*amar*) meaning 'to say' or 'to utter'. Thus, the *amora* is an 'orator, or master of eloquence'.[159]

Rhetoric is also to be found in the *midrashic* texts, as Neusner points to in the Midrash on Genesis: 'The mixed character of Genesis Rabbah, joining propositional to exegetical rhetoric in order to make points of both general intelligibility and also very specific and concrete amplification of detail, marks a transitional moment in the workings of Midrash.'[160] Alexander Samely, commenting on the 'halakhic Midrashim', states that 'one frequently finds a rhetoric of dialogue, featuring expressions such as "You say…", "Am I to understand…?", "I raise an objection: …", "Come and hear!", and many similar ones.'[161] Whereas, David Metzger and Steven Katz, commenting on the 'particular mode of Jewish rhetoric' in 'aggadic' Midrash, note that: Retelling and interpreting these narratives, aphorisms, and parables are central rhetorical activities in Jewish religion, thought, literature, and culture.'[162] Michael Fishbane also comments on the rhetoric of aggadic Midrash, which employs a variety of devices to

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[155] David A. Frank, 'The Jewish Countermodel: Talmudic Argumentation, the New Rhetoric Project, and the Classical Tradition of Rhetoric', *The Journal of Communication and Religion*, 26.2 (2003), pp. 163-194 (p. 184).
[156] Edelman, 'Ancient Traditions', p. 116.
[157] Eliezer Segal, *A Meeting-Place for the Wise: More Excursions Into the Jewish Past and Present* (Calgary: Alberta Judaic Library, 2008), p. 48.
[158] Martin S. Jaffee, 'Oral Tradition in the Writings of Rabbinic Oral Torah: On Theorizing Rabbinic Orality', *Oral Tradition*, 14.1 (1999): pp. 3-32 (p. 7).
[159] José Faur, 'Rhetoric and Hermeneutics: Vico and Rabbinic Tradition', trans. David Ramírez, *Pensar para el nuevo siglo: Giambattista Vico y la cultura europea*, 3 (2001), pp. 917-938 (p. 926).
[160] Neusner, 'The Canon of Rabbinic Judaism', p. 109.
[161] Alexander Samely, *Forms of Rabbinic Literature and Thought: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 156.
[162] David Metzger and Steven B. Katz, 'The "Place" of Rhetoric in Aggadic Midrash', *College English*, 72.6 (2010), pp. 638-653 (p. 639).

transform the audience's position or principles: 'Revision, reorientation, and reversal of the standpoint of the addressee are thus major preoccupations of the rhetor or writer who may use aggadic exegesis and embellishment as his tool; and irony, subversion, co-optation, selective emphasis, or didacticism (lapidary and indirect, or exhortatory and direct) are some of the other rhetorical devices used.'[163] One implication of *midrashic* rhetoric, Metzger and Katz argue, is that the 'rabbinic imagination continually creates new discursive spaces where none could have existed before (or discovers and opens new spaces in old places)'.[164] As a result, *midrashic* rhetoric does not shut down arguments or 'avenues of exploration'. Much like the Talmudic texts, the Midrashim present a polyvalent rhetoric:

> In both aggadic and halakhic *midrash*, interpretations and opinions are often left to coexist in a delicately and eloquently balanced text, although the last opinion is always the preferred option. This is a rhetoric that therefore acknowledges, accepts, and tends to retain multiple perspectives. Midrashic rhetoric accepts the multiplicities of truth, the partiality and limitations of perspective … and the necessity of privileging one version of truth over another (or deception over truth).[165]

Thus, the multifaceted exegesis of the Midrashim forms a rhetorical voice (or voices) on the Scripture it seeks to interpret. Whilst the interpretations of Scripture were open, layered and multitudinous in Midrash, they were also essential to the practical application of Scripture to the hearer or reader. Hence, the interpretations must be persuasive.

Rabbinic discourse marked a watershed moment in the development of Jewish rhetoric – it was post-biblical and increasingly diasporic. It had to contend with the pervasive impact of Hellenistic and Roman culture, as well as the relatively new emergence of Christianity, which was becoming increasingly polemical. Richard Hidary believes that Greco-Roman rhetoric had a degree of influence upon rabbinic argumentation:

> The rabbis and their predecessors flourished in a common culture that included classical rhetoric, and they found within that tradition a mode of reasoning that resonated with their own organic thinking. This resonance allowed the rabbis to adopt various technical aspects of classical rhetoric, such as arrangement, certain hermeneutical tools, and select progymnasmatic exercises, even if they may have rejected some of the more relativistic and sophistic underpinnings and techniques of the Greco-Roman tradition.[166]

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[163] Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p.427.
[164] Metzger and Katz, 'The "Place" of Rhetoric', p. 650.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Richard Hidary, 'Classical Rhetorical Arrangement and Reasoning in the Talmud: The Case of Yerushalmi Berakhot 1:1', *AJS Review*, 34.1 (2010), pp. 33-64 (p. 64).

If Hidary is correct, then the rabbinic period would mark the beginnings of an interest in classical rhetoric that was later developed by the medieval and Renaissance Jewish scholars.[167] Whether the Rabbis embraced aspects of classical rhetoric or not, they clearly had a rich tradition of their own to draw on.

Aristotle and the Hebrew Prophets

Aristotle (c. 384-322 BCE) wrote and delivered his lectures on rhetoric partly in response to Plato's critique of the sophists.[168] He was possibly the first to identify rhetoric as a communicative art that was morally neutral and, thus, it had the potential to be used positively or negatively.[169] Aristotle gathered the rhetorical handbooks that were available in his time and collated them into a collection: the *Synagoge Technon (Synthesis of Arts)*.[170] It seems that this process persuaded him that rhetorical theory was unacceptable in its current state, and consequently he tried to establish rules for rhetoric that would hold good in any given situation. Rather than teaching by example, as was the way of the sophists, Aristotle preferred to teach by these general principles, which could be taught to successive generations of students. Crowley and Hawhee believe that Aristotle's lecture notes to his students formed the basis for the text now known as *On Rhetoric*.[171]

In *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle attempts to bring rhetoric and philosophical dialectic together, bridging the divide between Plato and the sophists:

> Rhetoric is an *antistrophos* [counterpart] to dialectic; for both are concerned with such things as are, to a certain extent, within the knowledge of all people and belong to no separately defined science. A result is that all people, in some way, share in both; for all, up to a point, try both to test and uphold an argument [as in dialectic] and to defend themselves and attack [others, as in rhetoric] (1354a).[172]

As Cohen points out, here Aristotle sought to 'reground' rhetoric: 'emphasizing its capacity to use reasoning from common premises and other forms of logical argument for persuasive purposes'.[173] Previous writers on oratory had missed the essentials, according to Aristotle, and focused instead on either 'formal properties of speeches' or persuasion through emotion and so on. He then argues that rhetorical argument occurs consciously and unconsciously in

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[167] See, for example, Judah Messer Leon, *The Book of the Honeycomb's Flow (Sepher Nopheth Suphim)*, trans. Isaac Rabinowitz (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).
[168] Gaonkar, 'Introduction: Contingency and Probability', p. 6.
[169] Kennedy, 'Prooemion', p. x.
[170] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 11.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, 2nd ed., trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 30.
[173] Cohen, 'The Politics of Deliberation', p. 33.

everyday life: 'Now among the general public, some do these things at random and others through an ability acquired by habit, but since both ways are possible, it is clear that it would also be possible to do the same by [following] a path; for it is possible to observe the cause why some succeed by habit and others accidentally, and all would at once agree that such observation is the activity of an art [*tekhnē*]' (1354a).[174] Thus, as Crowley and Hawhee state, 'all people learn how to argue in the course of their daily affairs'.[175] Nevertheless, Janice Lauer makes the point that as an art, oratory 'entailed knowledge of effective rhetorical strategies and provided a guide for rhetorical action'.[176]

It is likely that Aristotle also observed Plato's imperative that rhetors should know the types of men's souls, and as a result he drew up a long list of audience 'characters', based on age, position, and the like.[177] Indeed, Aristotle defined rhetoric as the ability to find the available arguments suited to any given situation: 'Let rhetoric be [defined as] an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion' (1355b).[178] In commenting on this definition, Steven Katz argues that rhetoric, therefore 'could be considered a means to an end, an expedient,' as well as an '*episteme* or faculty for discovering social knowledge':

> …in Aristotle's conception of deliberative rhetoric, expediency seems to be the primary virtue. Deliberative rhetoric is expedient when it serves its end, that is, political persuasion. The test of success in Aristotelian rhetoric is in the persuasion of the audience (the so-called "audience criterion").[179]

Thus, rhetoric, for Aristotle, must be both pragmatic and personal – it must fit the occasion and the audience in its relevancy to both. However, rhetors could invent characters to fit an occasion, using an 'invented *ethos*', which was an invented ethical proof (1355b). Or if they held a good reputation in their community, they could use that reputation as a 'situated *ethos*', which was a situated ethical proof.[180]

Aristotle described the rhetorical process using the five terms of *invention*, *arrangement, style, memory,* and *delivery*.[181] He identified various *topoi* (topics) – categories of effective argument and information for persuasion – which he listed and grouped for teaching others. Whilst Crowley and Hawhee argue that Aristotle is unlikely to have invented the topics – they had been circulating for years amongst the sophists – he did devise a scheme for their classification.[182] These lists divided into two classes: firstly, there were twenty-eight common

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[174] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, pp. 30-31.
[175] Quoted in Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 11.
[176] Janice M. Lauer, *Invention in Rhetoric and Composition* (West Lafayette: Parlor Press, 2004), p. 50.
[177] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 166.
[178] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 37. See also Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 1.
[179] Steven B. Katz, 'The Ethic of Expediency: Classical Rhetoric, Technology, and the Holocaust', *College English*, 54.3 (1992), pp. 255-275 (p. 267).
[180] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 167.
[181] Lauer, *Invention in Rhetoric*, p. 6.
[182] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 98.

(*koina*) topics – these were lines of reasoning for any type of discourse; and secondly, there were special (*eide*) topics – subject matters for specific types of discourse, such as political, judicial or ceremonial.[183] For the special topics, rhetors require sufficient specific knowledge to argue effectively.[184] He created a range of 'arts' which were his principles for the analysis of discourses and their matter; for using the common and special topics; and for framing rhetorical epistemology aided by the *enthymeme* (or rhetorical syllogism) and the *example* (informal deduction and induction).[185] Of enthymemes, Aristotle remarked:

> …all [speakers] produce logical persuasion by means of paradigms or enthymemes and by nothing other than these … Speeches using paradigms are not less persuasive, but those with enthymemes excite more [favourable] audience reaction (1356b).[186]

Enthymemes are a major principle in *On Rhetoric*, and in Aristotle's writing they often appear as a statement followed by a clause introduced by the supporting reason 'for' (the Greek particle *gar*).[187] Crowley and Hawhee point out that the word enthymeme is derived from the ancient Greek word *thymos*, meaning 'spirit' and the 'capacity whereby people think and feel'; and because *thymos* was literally 'located the in the midsection of the body … an enthymematic proof was a visceral appeal.'[188]

The art of persuasion (*pisteis*) is dependant upon three elements, according to Aristotle: 'Of the *pisteis* provided through speech there are three species; for some are in the character [*ēthos*] of the speaker, and some in disposing the listener in some way, and some in the speech [*logos*] itself, by showing or seeming to show something' (1356a).[189] These intrinsic rhetorical proofs of *ethos, pathos,* and *logos* translate as 'ethical', 'pathetic' and 'logical'. The ethical relates to the character of the rhetor and the audience's perception of their trustworthiness. The pathetic relates to the rhetor's ability to appeal to and engender the audience's emotions. The logical relates to the soundness of the argument being made, in terms of its logical truths.[190] Thus, the rhetor must draw upon personal character, emotional appeal and sound logical argument as resources for winning the audience over. Regarding the logical, Aristotle wrote: 'Persuasion occurs through the arguments [*logoi*] when we show the truth or the apparent truth from whatever is persuasive in each case' (1356a).[191] However, if that truth was in doubt, then the rhetor's character became more important in winning the argument: 'for we believe fair-minded people to a great extent and more quickly [than we do

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[183] Lauer, *Invention in Rhetoric*, p. 7; Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 98.
[184] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 99.
[185] Lauer, *Invention in Rhetoric*, p. 19.
[186] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 40.
[187] Kennedy, 'Prooemion', p. xii.
[188] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 141.
[189] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 38. Here 'disposing the listener in some way' relates to *pathos*, however, the translation adds only the Greek *ēthos* and *logos* in square brackets.
[190] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 20; Kennedy, 'Prooemion', p. x.
[191] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 39.

others] on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt' (1356a). Thus, the better the rhetor's reputation and the more highly esteemed they are, the more credible their arguments appear.[192] The appeal to emotion – *pathos* – which Aristotle used to describe emotions in general derives from early Greek thought, where *pathos* referred to the passive state of 'experience'; and in the Greek tragic plays, where *pathos* became associated with 'suffering'.[193]

A typical speech, claimed Aristotle, could be dissected into three component parts: 'a speaker and a subject on which he speaks and someone addressed' (1358b). The 'objective' or *telos* of a speech is related to the hearer.[194] Rhetorical speeches were either *symbouleutikon* ('deliberative'), *dikanikon* ('judicial') or *epideiktikon* ('demonstrative'):

> Deliberative advice is either protreptic ["exhortation"] or apotreptic ["dissuasion"]; for both those advising in private and those speaking in public always do one or the other of these. In the law courts there is either accusation [*katēgoria*] or defense [*apologia*]; for it is necessary for the disputants to offer one or the other of these. In epideictic, there is either praise [*epainos*] or blame [*psogos*] (1358b).[195]

Regarding deliberative rhetoric, as Katz points out, Aristotle subsumes all ethical questions into the question of expediency[196] – 'he [the speaker] includes other factors as incidental: whether it is just or unjust, or [honourable] or disgraceful' (1358b).[197] It appears from this statement that Aristotle did not care too much if the ultimate goal of deliberative rhetoric was just or unjust, or even true, as long as the means were expedient. As Katz rightly observes, 'it is precisely because rhetoric is a practical art rather than a theoretical science, one located in *praxis*, in the contingent realm of action, that deliberative rhetoric can be understood to be primarily based on an ethic of expediency'.[198] Deliberative oratory mainly focused on expedient subjects: 'finances, war and peace, national defense, imports and exports, and the framing of laws' (1359b).[199] In these subjects, Aristotle was concerned with the common good as well as the utilitarian objective: 'But since the objective of the deliberative speaker is the advantageous [*sympheron*], and since [people] do not deliberate about this objective but about means that contribute to it and these [means] are things advantageous in terms of actions, and since the advantageous is a good, one should grasp the elements of good and

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[192] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 170.
[193] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 205.
[194] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 47.
[195] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 48.
[196] Katz, 'The Ethic of Expediency', p. 260.
[197] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 49.
[198] Katz, 'The Ethic of Expediency', p. 260.
[199] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 53. Kennedy's footnote to this list is as follows: 'This list, except for framing laws, is mentioned by Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* 3.6.4–13. In *Rhetoric for Alexander*, ch. 2, the subjects are listed as religious matters, legislation, the form of the constitution, alliances and treaties, war or peace, and finance.'

advantageous in the abstract' (1362a).[200] Thus, as a combination of logic and ethics, deliberative discourse merges 'goodness' and 'utility', so that they become synonymous.[201]

In *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle claims that political understanding is of paramount importance: 'The greatest and most important of all things in an ability to persuade and give good advice is to grasp an understanding of all forms of constitution [*politeia*] and to distinguish the customs and legal usages and advantages of each; for all people are persuaded by what is advantageous, and preserving the constitution is advantageous' (1365b).[202] He enumerates four political constitutions (echoing Plato in the *Republic* 8.544c[203]) which either partly or wholly form the central authority or decision-making institution: 'democracy, oligarchy, aristocracy, monarchy'. In Aristotle's view, then, it is in the political field that rhetoric displays its greatest worth, regardless of the political system in which it seeks to persuade.

In addition to 'logical demonstration', Aristotle noted the characteristics of the persuasive rhetor: 'These are practical wisdom [*phronēsis*] and virtue [*aretē*] and good will [*eunoia*]; for speakers make mistakes in what they say through [failure to exhibit] either all or one of these…' (1378a).[204] Accordingly, there were three types of ethical mistake which Aristotle believed it was possible for rhetors to make: they could fail to form the correct opinion or conclusion on a matter through a lack of experience or knowledge; they could knowingly fail to disclose the correct opinion or conclusion due to 'bad character' or an ulterior motive; or they could knowingly fail to give the 'best advice' through lack of good will, despite being what Aristotle calls, 'prudent and fair-minded' (1378a).[205] These were the only three ways in which rhetors could make mistakes, and the 'only possibilities for a failed invented *ethos*'.[206]

The 'greatest force' in persuasive rhetoric, according to Aristotle, is *hypokrisis* – this is the style and delivery of a speech: 'It is a matter of how the voice should be used in expressing each emotion, sometimes loud and sometimes soft or intermediate, and how the pitch accents [*tonoi*] should be entoned, whether as acute, grave, or circumflex, and what rhythms should be expressed in each case; for [those who study delivery] consider three things, and these are volume, change of pitch [*harmonia*], and rhythm' (1403b).[207] The emphasis on delivery was necessary for the sake of clarity, as the speaker addressed their audience (1404b). Yet, as important as style and delivery were in Aristotle's view, they were still 'secondary to the

[200] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 61.
[201] Katz, 'The Ethic of Expediency', pp. 260-261.
[202] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 73.
[203] Plato, *Republic*, trans. Charles D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004), p. 239.
[204] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 112.
[205] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 112
[206] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 170.
[207] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 195.

substance of an argument' (1404a).[208] It was also important for the rhetor to possess the lexical knowledge appropriate for each type of speech, be it deliberative, judicial, etc. As Aristotle put it, this meant 'knowing how to speak good Greek' (1413b).[209] The correct language and delivery should have the effect of influencing the audience, so that they are well disposed towards the rhetor, or angry if required, or attentive, or distracted by humour. Aristotle believed that an audience paid more attention if the speaker appeared to be a 'reasonable person' (1415a).[210] The ideal speech should be delivered in two parts: '[first] to state the subject with which it is concerned and [then] to demonstrate the argument' (1414a).[211] A statement (*prothesis*) without a subsequent demonstration (*pistis*) or a demonstration without a preceding statement were both equally ineffective. The statement or premise is 'laid down' or 'assumed' before the argument is made. Therefore, any conclusion drawn from the ensuing argument can only be true if the premise is true.[212]

In summing up Aristotle's contribution to rhetoric, Katz makes the claim that Aristotle provided a 'practical ethic for technical writing and deliberative discourse, an ethic based almost exclusively on expediency'.[213] Yet more than that, as Erika Falk has rightly pointed out, Aristotle 'codified the limits, goals, and methods of rhetoric', and this has resulted in a 'delimitation of rhetoric *as influence* that has continued into the contemporary period'.[214]

The rhetoric of the Hebrew Prophets was, however, far from expedient. Following Remer's definition, the term 'prophet' encompasses 'the prophet of the Hebrew Bible, from Moses to the Babylonian exile, including the "classical" or "canonical" prophets who prophesied in Israel from the eighth century B.C.E. (during the period of the great Assyrian expansion) onward, such as Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others'.[215] According to Henry Ellison, the 'true function' of a prophet is best illustrated by the following verse: 'And the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet."' (Exodus 7:1). Ellison's argument is that the 'prophet is to God what Aaron was to Moses … the prophet is God's spokesman'.[216] This reference in Exodus is the second time that the most common word in Hebrew for 'prophet' or 'speaker' (נביא, *navi*) appears, and suggests the 'intrinsic connection between prophet and speech'.[217] Contrary to the popular understanding of the prophet's function, their role 'may involve foretelling the future', but this

[208] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, pp. 29-30.
[209] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 227.
[210] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 234.
[211] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, p. 230.
[212] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 134.
[213] Katz, 'The Ethic of Expediency', p. 261.
[214] Erika Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech: Toward Multicultural Rhetoric', *Howard Journal of Communications*, 10.1 (1999), pp. 15-28 (p. 16).
[215] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 28.
[216] Henry L. Ellison, *Men Spake from God: Studies in the Hebrew Prophets* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, I966), p. 14.
[217] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', pp. 31-32.

is a secondary function. Indeed, a great deal of the prophetic literature deals with the current and immediate situation of the prophet and the people, and some even focuses on past events.

Yehoshua Gitay, in discussing the nature of the prophetic office, asks: 'Does the prophet seek to influence his audience, or does he limit himself to the role of a messenger delivering God's word as a statement or a judgment, with no intent to sway that audience.'[218] Gitay notes the critical view, and the one taken by Kennedy, that 'there is no need to move the audience; God's judgment is determined, and the prophet announces God's decision'.[219] Whilst not holding this view himself, he traces it logical conclusion, where biblical criticism of the prophetic office led to a general regard for 'prophetic speech as an oracle reflecting various literary forms, but not as a communicative discourse seeking a dialogue with the audience'.[220] Yet, many other scholars of prophetic literature see a clear case for prophetic discourse as a rhetorical dialogue with its audience – for Tim Bulkeley, the prophetic writing has 'rhetorical purposes', because it 'seeks to persuade or convince'.[221] Amos Kiewe also refers explicitly to 'prophetic rhetoric' for the tradition of prophetic speaking practiced in the oratory of Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Isaiah:

> The principal objective of the ancient Hebrew prophets was to warn the people of an impending calamity unless specific measures were taken to avert it and to heed God's command. The prophetic speaking, designated as an address, was rhetorical in structure, substance and style. It was addressed to audiences with the specific objective of influencing people to take a different course of action, and prophetic rhetoric was always action oriented.[222]

Whilst it is easy to understand the critical view, because there is undoubtedly an element of the revelatory in the prophetic message – the prophet is communicating a divine message – yet, at the same time, the prophet must persuade the audience not only of the authority behind his message, but also of the need to act upon the message. The Prophets used recognisable rhetorical devices in their speech, including parables, metaphors, analogies and repetition for the purpose of emphasis, as in: 'the LORD, the God of hosts, the LORD is His name' (Hosea 12:5, JPS Tanakh 1917).[223]

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[218] Yehoshua Gitay, 'The Effectiveness of Isaiah's Speech', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 75.2 (1984), pp. 162-172 (p. 162).
[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Tim Bulkeley, 'Cohesion, Rhetorical Purpose and the Poetics of Coherence in Amos 3', *Australian Biblical Review*, 47 (1999), pp. 16-28 (p. 28).
[222] Amos Kiewe, 'Theodore Herzl's *The Jewish State*: Prophetic Rhetoric in the Service of Political Objectives', *The Journal of Communication and Religion*, 26.2 (2003), pp. 208-239 (p. 210).
[223] Kiewe, 'Theodore Herzl's *The Jewish State*', p. 214.

The prophetic rhetorical tradition did not remain static but, like the Western rhetorical tradition, developed over the centuries. Thus, whilst Samuel, Elijah and the other early prophets delivered a rhetoric of shorter declaration statements; Amos, Isaiah and the later prophets were 'full-fledged orators'. However, some features of the prophetic genre 'remained constant', and resonate throughout the prophetic Scriptures: 'all prophets addressed the nation of Israel and Judea with a distinct message – warning the people of impending disasters unless they corrected their sinful ways'.[224] Across the span of biblical history, the Prophets concerned themselves with an ethical and moral rhetoric and thereby set the social, political and religious 'boundaries'.[225]

Just as the credibility of the orator was important in the Greco-Roman tradition, so too the prophetic message was measured by the credibility of the Prophets, and their 'claim to be selected by God for the special task'.[226] Credibility of the character was, therefore, an equally significant factor for rhetors in both traditions. James Darsey considers the aspect of credibility the central part of prophetic rhetoric, and calls this 'the prophetic *ethos*'.[227] An audience could recognise the prophet's credibility through the stylistic devices they used, which belong to the prophetic office. These rhetorical devices include mentioning the prophet's divine assignment to the task of delivering God's message and recounting the experience of any visions in which the prophets were called, as well as the message or messages of warning. However, Kiewe makes a distinction between the Western and Jewish traditions in that classical rhetoric 'emphasized adaptation of message to audiences, [whereas] prophetic rhetoric's very credibility rested on delivering orations that audiences preferred not to hear':

> Not surprisingly, the prophets were often attacked, called names and were considered 'fanatic' or 'madmen.' The prophet's credibility was present when the audience was unwilling to heed God's warning. This credibility was the distinguishing characteristic of true versus false prophets.[228]

Consequently, the goal of prophetic oratory was not to adapt messages for the audience's sake, but rather to 'summon the people to justice, to righteousness, to humility and trust before God'.[229] The Prophets achieved this goal through delivering a clear warning to the people and threatening God's judgement, if the warning was not heeded: 'Most prophecies included the following structural outline: accusation, repentance, warning, judgment and

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[224] Ibid.
[225] Edelman, 'Ancient Traditions', p. 115.
[226] Kiewe, 'Theodore Herzl's *The Jewish State*', p. 214.
[227] James F. Darsey, *The Prophetic Tradition and Radical Rhetoric in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), p. 27.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Kiewe, 'Theodore Herzl's *The Jewish State*', p. 215.

salvation.'[230] Kevin Youngblood notes that the prophetic judgement warnings often included speech addressed to Israel's neighbours:

> Most prophets delivered oracles of judgment addressed to foreign nations, but they did so rhetorically as part of their message to Israel to serve as harbingers of Israel's deliverance from foreign oppression (e.g., Obadiah and Nahum), to warn Israel/Judah of the disastrous consequences of dependence on alliances with foreign nations (Isaiah 13-24), or to humble Israel by reducing her to the status of one of the nations in need of YHWH's judgment (e.g., Amos 1-2).[231]

Youngblood considers the uniqueness of the Book of Jonah in this context, where Jonah is commissioned to deliver a message of judgement 'directly' to the nation of Nineveh. As he rightly states, Jonah's commission 'breaks new ground in Hebrew prophecy'.[232]

Because the prophet's credibility usually led to attack, name-calling, resistance and disdain, the role was not one that a person voluntarily sought out. Rather, as Darsey correctly points out, it was 'a role with which one [was] burdened'. He gives a clear example of this from the prophet Jeremiah:

> O Lord, you have deceived me, and I was deceived; you are stronger than I, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughing-stock all the day; everyone mocks me. For whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, "Violence and destruction!" For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name", there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot (Jeremiah 20:7-9, ESV).

Jeremiah was 'perhaps the most reluctant prophet,' but considering all that he went on to suffer, he had good reason. Nevertheless, his example illustrates that the prophet's will is 'overpowered and completely subjugated to the will of God'.[233] The prophet's calling is irresistible – Jeremiah cannot contain his message, much as he tries – and this adds an additional force to the act of speech and persuasion. The story of Jonah illustrates even more dramatically the outcome for the prophet who attempts to opt-out.

If we return to Zulick's point that responsibility for the persuasive act lies with the hearer, then Darsey frames the issue of responsibility for the 'community confronted by the prophet' – they must authenticate the prophet's call and credibility. Thus, if they deem that the call is real, then 'there can be no disputation of the message'.[234] The only alternative recourse for the community is to dispute the character, call and credibility of the individual

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[230] Ibid.
[231] Kevin Youngblood, *Jonah: God's Scandalous Mercy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), p. 53.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Darsey, *The Prophetic Tradition*, p. 28.
[234] Darsey, *The Prophetic Tradition*, p. 30.

prophet – not as God's spokesperson, but as an immoral or dubiously motivated fraud. It is not surprising then, that such confrontations degenerate into a personal attack, with name-calling and the vilification of the prophet. The prophet's response is to rise above this accusation by negating or downplaying his part in the call, while emphasising God's part: 'Presenting his *ethos* as nugatory, consumed in the divine *ethos*, the prophet succeeds in making his *ethos*, the authenticity of his call, the paramount question.'[235]

Michael Fox highlights the exception to the rule in the prophetic rhetoric of Ezekiel, who faced an unusual dilemma as his 'artistry was drawing crowds' and proving popular:

> The literary artistry a rhetor employs in order to achieve persuasion can detract from his persuasiveness by competing for the audience's attention. The rhetor's necessary instruments may interfere with his rhetoric.[236]

In the 'Vision of the Valley of the Bones' (Ezekiel 37:1-14), Ezekiel does not take the traditional role of the Hebrew prophet as 'messenger', but as 'an essentially passive spectator'. By doing so, Ezekiel steps into the audience … and aligns himself with them'. He does not ask the audience to accept his vision, or to judge its validity and truth. 'Such a request', argues Fox, 'would invite refusal, and such an argument would invite refutation'.[237] Ezekiel thereby avoids the confrontation scenario that his fellow prophets endure. However, he is still able to persuade:

> In effect the prophet says, "Here is what I saw. I too was surprised. Now believe it or not." This stance gives an impression of objectivity. More important, by taking the point-of-view of an audience the rhetor makes his audience's point-of-view congruent with his own. The audience looks over the rhetor's shoulder and watches the event unfold from the same angle of vision.[238]

Thus, by aligning the audience's perspective with his own, Ezekiel 'encourages alignment of belief'. Whilst this marks a distinct difference with the experiences of the other Hebrew Prophets, it is only fair to note that Ezekiel's context was very different. He exercised his office in exile after judgement had been dealt; and offered, in the 'Vision of the Valley of the Bones', at least, a message of hope and restoration.

When the Prophets spoke, they often conveyed a 'fierceness and anger' in their voices that, as Michael Walzer argues, we 'conventionally attribute to demagogues'.[239] Having already established that the majority of the Prophets were rarely popular, we may add that

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[235] Darsey, *The Prophetic Tradition*, p. 31.
[236] See Footnote (4) in Michael V. Fox, 'The Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of the Bones', *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 51 (1980), pp. 1-15 (p. 2).
[237] Fox, 'The Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision', p. 9.
[238] Ibid.
[239] Michael Walzer, 'Interpretation and Social Criticism' in Sterling M. McMurrin (ed.), *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, Vol. 8 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), pp. 1-80 (p. 59).

they did not aspire to political office. Nevertheless, in practice the Prophets became politicians because, as Remer states, 'prophetic religion "embraced" politics'.[240] As God-ordained messengers, they publicly addressed and rebuked the political authorities of their day – essentially monarchies – but without partisan interests. Moreover, their speeches had political ramifications:

> They called upon political leaders to amend their actions, though … they were not responsible for bringing about these changes. Their predictions, too, were political. In their prophecies of doom, most famously the prophecies of Jeremiah, "political disaster stood ominously at the gate." And, perhaps most important, they reminded earthly rulers that they did not possess ultimate power; God did.[241]

Remer sees a connection between the Roman orator and the Hebrew prophet, as 'both employed public, political speech', and 'made use of distinct rhetorics – each reflective of its own civilization'.[242] However, Remer points out that unlike 'the Roman orator, who adhered to the canons of classical rhetoric, based on prudence', the Prophets 'adopted a rhetoric of purity, obediently but often imprudently imparting God's word to his people'.[243] This 'rhetoric of purity', as Remer calls it, can be defined as 'truthful speech unadulterated by practical concerns'.[244] This also contrasts with the Aristotelian predilection for expediency in rhetoric – persuasion was not the ultimate aspiration. Emmanuel Levinas highlights the open, fearless nature of the Prophets' political rhetoric:

> It is an extremely bold, audacious speech, since the prophet always speaks before the king; the prophet is not in hiding, he is not preparing an underground revelation. In the Bible – it's amazing – the king accepts this direct opposition. He's an odd kind of king! Isaiah and Jeremiah submit to violence. Let us not forget the perennial false prophets who flatter kings. Only the true prophet addresses the king and the people without truckling, and reminds them of ethics.[245]

The true Prophets often put themselves at odds with the political status quo and confronted the king – risking their own welfare in the process – they sought ethical correctness over any expedient harmony.

Like the risk-taking argumentation between God and Abraham, the Prophets message was also open to the risk of apparent failure. If the community rejects the prophet, they will invariably reject his message and fail to act upon it. However, the Prophets had no remit to

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[240] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 34.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 40.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 25.
[245] Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 106.

ensure success – their responsibility was to faithfully deliver the message, and the rest was between God and the people. Obedience to God was the benchmark of the prophet's success.[246] Abraham, Moses and Job had varying degrees of personal vested interest at risk, whereas the Prophets, who received little thanks for their warnings, had less at stake, especially when pushed outside the community. Jonah stands out as the prophet who appeared to have little care or interest in the people to whom he was sent. In chapter four of the Book of Jonah, the prophet becomes angry when the people of Nineveh act upon the message of judgement he has just delivered, and repent. Jonah takes a seat and waits, hoping that judgement has not been averted: 'Then Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city' (Jonah 4:5, JPS Tanakh 1917). God rebukes Jonah for his lack of compassion, and asks with divine rhetoric: 'And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle? (Jonah 4:11, ESV). Jonah's response was not the norm, and regardless of a prophet having 'no responsibility to ensure that his words persuaded, he still tried to move his audience, and, despite his rough words, his prophecies sometimes did persuade.'[247] Jeremiah gives us an example of the prophet's effort in seeking to persuade their hearers to change: 'It may be they will listen, and every one turn from his evil way, that I may relent of the disaster that I intend to do to them because of their evil deeds' (Jeremiah 26:3, ESV).[248]

The paramount objective in the persuasive acts of the Prophets was to urge the community to 'follow the divine commandments already known from the Torah.'[249] According to Walzer, 'the prophetic message depends upon previous messages' and, thus, the prophet's message is not 'radically new', neither is it of his own invention.[250] Later prophets may have revised the message, but it remained essentially the same:

> For the most part, they disclaim originality – and not only in the obvious sense that they attribute their message to God. It is more important that they continually refer themselves to the epic history and the moral teaching of the Torah: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good…" (Micah 6:8). The past tense is significant. The prophets assume the previous messages, the divine "showings," the immediacy of history and law in the minds of their listeners.[251]

Thus, prophetic rhetoric is located as much in the past, as in the future, with the aim of impacting the present. Recalling history awakens 'remembrance, recognition, indignation,

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[246] See Remer, 'The Relationship Between', pp. 38-39.
[247] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 41.
[248] See Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 38; Remer likens this act of persuasion to Roman oratory.
[249] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 26.
[250] Walzer, 'Interpretation and Social Criticism', p. 59.
[251] Ibid.

repentance'.[252] The Hebrew word for repentance (שובה, *shubah*) derives from a root word שוב (*shub*), meaning 'to turn', 'to turn back', or 'to return'. Thus, repentance is 'parasitic' upon something that went before, to which one returns to: 'a previously accepted and commonly understood morality'.[253] Prophetic rhetoric simultaneously evokes time past, present and future, invoking the wisdom of Qohelet: 'What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun' (Ecclesiastes 1:9, ESV). When the prophet foretells impending doom, the hearer is not only motivated by fear of coming disasters, but also by 'knowledge of the law, a sense of their own history, and … religious tradition'.[254] Here, the prophet may use an intertextual analogy, drawing on the hearer's knowledge of Scripture.

Fishbane explains the function of intertextual allusion as a rhetorical tool of the prophet: 'Hereby, the analogical correlations are rhetorically geared to shift the addressee's attention from the present to the past – and its paradigmatic events, biographies, and spatial topoi – for the sake of a new future and the requisite human actions which may be involved.'[255] For example, in the Book of Zephaniah, the author evokes the Torah, and in particular the well-known creation narrative in Genesis, chapter one: 'I will sweep away man and beast; I will sweep away the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea' (Zephaniah 1:3, ESV). However, in the act of destructive judgement we are presented with the opposite of the creative act, and strikingly the order of the creation narrative in Genesis is inverted. It is thus familiar to the hearer but simultaneously alarming. The rhetoric of the Prophet causes the hearer to hear afresh and so challenges complacency.

The Rhetoric of Cicero, Amos and Isaiah

Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE) was a member of the Roman Senate and, according to Crowley and Hawhee, 'the most influential practitioner and theorist of ancient rhetoric who ever lived'.[256] Politically, he was 'unrelentingly republican' and, thus, gave the power of the Senate his full support. Alongside his political career, Cicero was a prolific author, writing on literature, philosophy, and rhetorical theory, and a rhetor of many speeches.[257] Whilst his earliest work on rhetoric, *De Inventione* (*On Invention*), owed much to sophistic rhetoric and the inspiration of Aristotle can be seen in his later work, the overarching influence on Cicero was the Roman state, with its 'respect for authority and tradition, its political fluctuations, and

[252] Walzer, 'Interpretation and Social Criticism', p. 63.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Walzer, 'Interpretation and Social Criticism', p. 63.
[255] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, p.427.
[256] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 14.
[257] Ibid.

its ethical dilemmas'.[258] Connolly makes the claim that from the very outset of Cicero's rhetorical career he was not concerned with the 'ethical formation' of individuals, but rather with a 'civic ideal' that dynamically reflected the republican constitution.[259] His work on oratory was an 'extended engagement with the ideals and demands of republican citizenship' and a 'practice of virtue located firmly in the *political* community'.[260] The art of rhetoric, for Cicero, had the potential to produce a 'well-rounded, humanistically trained, urbane person who can participate with others in governing the state through oratory', rather than the mere ability to address a courtroom or display verbal prowess.[261]

In *De Inventione*, Cicero divided rhetorical discourse into six parts: 'an *exordium*, or introduction; a *narratio,* or statement of the issue; a *partitio,* or division of the issue into its constituent parts; *confirmatio,* where the rhetor's strongest arguments are made; *refutatio,* where arguments that can damage a rhetor's case are anticipated and refuted; and a *peroratio,* or conclusion'.[262] It was important to Cicero that oratory was presented in the language of the people: 'the whole art of oratory lies open to the view, and is concerned in some measure with the common practice, custom, and speech of mankind, so that, whereas in all other arts that is most excellent which is farthest removed from the understanding and mental capacity of the untrained, in oratory the very cardinal sin is to depart from the language of everyday life, and the usage approved by the sense of the community' (I.iii.12).[263] Other arts may use uncommon language and technical terminology, but rhetoric must be understood by the community. The rhetor needed a broad knowledge of 'very many matters' to avoid speaking an 'empty and ridiculous swirl of verbiage' (I.v.17).[264] This should include the memorisation of history, legal precedents, statute laws and national laws. Creating a distinctive style of oratory involved the choice and arrangement of words, and a good understanding of human emotion – 'because it is in calming or kindling the feelings of the audience that the full power and science of oratory are to be brought into play' (I.v.17).[265] Additionally, Cicero lists the following qualities for the speaker: 'a certain humour, flashes of wit, the culture befitting a gentleman, and readiness and terseness alike in repelling and in delivering the attack, the whole being combined with a delicate charm and urbanity'.[266] However, the correct delivery of a speech involved not just the correct language, knowledge

[258] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 15.
[259] Connolly, *The State of Speech*, p. 3.
[260] Connolly, *The State of Speech*, pp. 1, 11.
[261] Robert W. Cape Jr., 'Cicero and the Development of Prudential Practice at Rome' in Robert Hariman, (ed.), *Prudence: Classical Virtue, Postmodern Practice* (University Park, Pa.: Penn State Press, 2003), pp. 35-65 (p. 43).
[262] Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics*, p. 259.
[263] Cicero, *De Oratore, Books I, II*, trans. Edward W. Sutton (London: Heinemann, 1967), p. 11.
[264] Cicero, *De Oratore*, pp. 13-15.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Ibid.

and style, but also the correct physical and vocal expression through posture, gesture and intonation (I.v.18).[267]

Remer believes that the political function of Cicero's ideal orator was not to act as a 'check' on the system, but rather to actively participate in and support the Roman *res publica*.' Thus, in *De oratore*, Cicero's character, Crassus, extols the orator's contribution to the republic by celebrating the eloquent orator who contends for the common good:

> …Crassus asks, 'What is so regal, so generous, so magnanimous, as lending aid to those in distress, raising up the afflicted, offering people safety, freeing them from dangers, saving them from exile?' [*De oratore* 1.32] Through Crassus, Cicero revived the myth of the civilizing orator who, first, led the human race away from a feral existence to 'this truly human, communal way of life,' and, then, 'once communities had been founded… established laws, judicial procedures, and legal arrangements.' For Cicero, the orator protected 'the safety of countless individuals and of the State at large' [*De oratore* 1.33–34].[268]

Crassus presented the orator as the founder of civilization who brought the 'scattered savages together into peaceful societies'.[269] He insists that the orator be well educated and practically experienced: 'an orator can neither attack nor defend a general in court if he does not have experience in battle, or address an assembly or the Senate about governing the state "without the highest understanding of civil affairs and *prudentia*" (1.60)'.[270] Cicero saw great civic power in rhetoric – the orator was to advise with authority, and it was a duty to 'arouse a listless nation, and to curb its unbridled impetuosity'. Eloquence had the potential to destroy the deceitful and deliver the righteous. Oratory held the power to encourage virtuous conduct, rescue those on the wrong path, condemn the wicked, praise the worthy, hold back lawlessness, and comfort the grieving (II.ix.35).[271]

It was of utmost importance to Cicero that orators won the favour of their hearers, because feelings held more influence than facts. An audience could be 'so affected as to be swayed by something resembling a mental impulse or emotion, rather than by judgement or deliberation'; and more problems were decided 'by hate, or love, or lust, or rage, or sorrow, or joy, or hope, or fear, or illusion, or some other inward emotion, than by reality, or authority, or any legal standard, or judicial precedent, or statute' (II.xlii.178).[272] The merits, achievements and reputation of the orator could win the feelings of the hearer, but whilst Cicero points out that these can be embellished if they are genuine, they are harder to fabricate when the

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[267] Cicero, *De Oratore*, p. 15.
[268] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 48.
[269] Cape Jr., 'Cicero and the Development of Prudential Practice', p. 45.
[270] Cape Jr., 'Cicero and the Development of Prudential Practice', p. 46.
[271] Cicero, *De Oratore*, p. 223.
[272] Cicero, *De Oratore*, p. 325.

orator has none. A mild tone of voice, a modest countenance, gentle language, and the ability to appear to be 'dealing reluctantly and under compulsion with something you are really anxious to prove' were all helpful attributes. Likewise, the 'tokens of good-nature, kindness, calmness, loyalty and a disposition that is pleasing and not grasping or covetous, and all the qualities belonging to men who are upright, unassuming and not given to haste, stubbornness, strife or harshness, were also helpful and 'powerful in winning goodwill'. Cicero ungenerously suggests that 'the very opposites of these qualities must be ascribed to our opponents' (II.xliii.182).[273]

The speaker should cultivate versatility in emotional persuasion, through a speaking style which 'excites and urges the feelings of the tribunal towards hatred or love, ill-will or well-wishing, fear or hope, desire or aversion, joy or sorrow, compassion or the wish to punish' (II.xliv.185).[274] However, it was essential that the orator displayed authenticity in their emotional persuasion: 'Moreover it is impossible for the listener to feel indignation, hatred or ill-will, to be terrified of anything, or reduced to tears of compassion, unless all those emotions, which the advocate would inspire in the arbitrator, are visibly stamped or rather branded on the advocate himself' (II.xlv.189).[275] People would not be moved, argued Cicero, unless the speaker was moved or, at the very least, appeared to be. The most common emotional responses that the orator should seek to evoke from the audience were 'love, hate, wrath, jealousy, compassion, hope, joy, fear or vexation'. Love could be 'won' if the speaker is perceived to be upholding the audience's interests, representing good men, or pursuing a good and useful purpose (II.li.206).[276] It was also to the orator's advantage to encourage the audience to hope for a better future rather than reminding them of a better past.[277] Compassion could be 'awakened' in the audience by causing the hearer to consider their own sufferings – whether real or imaginary – while the speaker laments the sufferings of others; or by causing the hearer to refer back to their own experiences while contemplating the speaker's presentation of the plight of others. Even greater compassion could be aroused if the orator laments the 'dejection and ruin of the righteous' (II.lii.211).[278] In contrast, Cicero then notes the value of humour in oratory: 'Jesting too and shafts of wit are agreeable and often highly effective: but these, even if all else can be taught by art, are assuredly the endowment of nature and in no need of art' (II.liv.216).[279] Whilst he goes to great lengths enumerating many types of witticism and jesting, and detailing their characteristics (for example, anecdote,

[273] Cicero, *De Oratore*, pp. 327-329.
[274] Cicero, *De Oratore*, p. 331.
[275] Cicero, *De Oratore*, p. 333.
[276] Cicero, *De Oratore*, p. 349.
[277] Ibid.
[278] Cicero, *De Oratore*, p. 353.
[279] Cicero, *De Oratore*, p. 357.

caricature, mimicry, wordplay, allegory, irony, farce, ridicule), Cicero concludes that because humour is a gift, and not an art, it cannot be taught.

Robert Cape Jr. highlights evidence in *De Inventione* that demonstrates an attempt to bring Greek philosophy into the teaching of oratory, citing an example from the preface: 'Indeed, after long thought, reason itself has led me to this opinion most strongly, that wisdom [*sapientia*] without eloquence has been of little help to states, but eloquence without wisdom has never helped and has often caused too much harm' (1.1).[280] The statement reflects Cicero's desire to fuse rhetoric and philosophy, especially philosophy in the form of the 'broader and more intellectually esteemed' wisdom, *sapientia*: 'Joining *sapientia* and *eloquentia* became the first step in Latin to recover the connection between philosophy and rhetoric that had been severed by Plato.'[281] Through Crassus, Cicero voices the view 'that the orator ought to be devoted to the whole of wisdom'. He praises oratory, saying that 'eloquence [*eloquentia*] is one of the highest virtues'. However, because of oratory's power, it is potentially dangerous and, thus, needs to be tempered: 'the stronger this power is the more it needs to be joined with goodness [*probitate*] and the highest *prudentia*, for if we hand over fluency of speaking [*dicendi copiam*] to men who lack these virtues, we will not have made them orators, but will have given weapons to madmen'. Cicero's influence was felt for centuries after, with his works – from *De inventione* (his first) to *De officiis* (his last) – 'among the most widely read books in the Middle Ages' and resurfacing thereafter as humanist textbooks.[282]

Unlike Cicero, the prophets Amos and Isaiah showed little respect for political authority and tradition. According to Walzer, Amos (*fl*. c. eighth century BCE) was the 'first and possibly the most radical of Israel's literary prophets'.[283] Robert Gordis comments that the Rabbis' fondness for 'etymologizing proper names,' led to an explanation of the name Amos (עמוס) as 'meaning "heavy of tongue, a stammerer" (*Midrash Lev*. *R*., sec. 10), and then repeated by Jerome as 'unskilled in speech'.[284] Yet, this interpretation could not be further from the fluency and skill we find in Amos' words:

> Actually, Amos is a master of Hebrew, expert in his use of rhetorical figures, terse and vigorous in expressing his ideas. Every line of his book is afire with his passionate devotion to his conviction that the ideal of righteousness is God's imperative to Israel and the world. His sensitivity to the domestic scene is matched by his grasp of international affairs, all the more remarkable in 'a herdsman and a dresser of

[280] Cape Jr., 'Cicero and the Development of Prudential Practice', pp. 40-41.
[281] Cape Jr., 'Cicero and the Development of Prudential Practice', p. 41.
[282] Cape Jr., 'Cicero and the Development of Prudential Practice', p. 36.
[283] Walzer, 'Interpretation and Social Criticism', p. 58.
[284] Robert Gordis, 'Studies in the Book of Amos', *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 46/47 (1979 - 1980), pp. 201-264 (p. 201).

> sycamore figs.' Virtually every significant idea and insight of classical Hebrew prophecy is set forth in Amos or is at least adumbrated in his book.[285]

Perhaps his name עמוס owes more to the closely related word עמס (*amas*), meaning 'to carry a load' – in this sense, Amos is the burden-bearer of God. It is also worth noting his profession – 'I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdman, and a dresser of sycamore-trees' (Amos 7:14, JPS Tanakh 1917) – unlike the classical orators, Amos was untrained. As such, he provides an example in the Jewish tradition that demonstrates that the calling of a prophet was open to all, regardless of social status and education – herding and shepherding were lowly occupations. To this, we might add, that gender was no bar to the prophetic calling either, as the Scriptures consider Miriam (Exodus 15:20); Deborah (Judges 4:4); Huldah (2 Kings 22:14); Noadiah (Nehemiah 6:14); and Isaiah's unnamed wife (Isaiah 8:3) as prophetesses (נביאה, *neviah*).

Karl Möller claims that the 'arrangement' of the Book of Amos is 'best described as a rhetorical one, i.e. as being motivated by rhetorical interests'.[286] From a rhetorical perspective, Möller notes that 'it is remarkable' that chapter three of Amos 'opens with the paradoxical notion that Yahweh will punish Israel precisely because he has known only them of all the families of the earth'[287] – 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities' (Amos 3:2, JPS Tanakh 1917). Amos' hearers would not have expected this controversial statement, and it would have aroused their curiosity – 'it must have left them looking at the speaker in utter dismay and disbelief', because they were to 'be punished in spite of, indeed because of (*'al-kēn*), all their privileges'.[288] There then follows a series of rhetorical questions:

> Will two walk together, except they have agreed? Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? Will a young lion give forth his voice out of his den, if he have taken nothing? Will a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where there is no lure for it? Will a snare spring up from the ground, and have taken nothing at all? Shall the horn be blown in a city, and the people not tremble? Shall evil befall a city, and the LORD hath not done it? For the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His counsel unto His servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy? (Amos 3:3-8, JPS Tanakh 1917) [289]

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[285] Ibid.
[286] Karl Möller, '"Hear This Word against You": A Fresh Look at the Arrangement and the Rhetorical Strategy of the Book of Amos', *Vetus Testamentum*, 50.4 (2000), pp. 499-518 (p. 501).
[287] Möller, '"Hear This Word against You"', p. 503.
[288] Ibid.
[289] See Gordis, 'Studies in the Book of Amos', p. 218; where Gordis adds that the use of questions that 'obviously require a negative answer' is a rhetorical characteristic that can be found in Wisdom literature, as well as in other prophetic books (for example, Job 6:5,-6 and Jeremiah 13: 23).

The link between the announcement of punishment and the rhetorical questions that follow seems unclear on a superficial level. However, Möller argues that the link may be established on the grounds of Amos' credibility: 'This link is usually seen in the fact that Amos' audience apparently objected to his announcement of punishment questioning his authority and the validity of his message.'[290] Amos responds to the audience's objections by means of the questions, thus 'forcing' the audience to actively participate in the process of persuasion (this is not unlike Zulick's view, which places responsibility for the persuasive act with the hearer). The rhetorical questions force the audience to consider causation, culminating with the reproof that 'Yahweh would not punish his people without giving them a prior warning, which he does through the prophets (v. 7)'.[291] Amos then establishes his credibility by stating that he is bound to prophesy because God has spoken, no less than a person is bound to fear because the lion has roared (v. 8).[292]

Thus, Möller argues that the 'rhetorical strategy' in the Book of Amos may be described as the 'presentation of a prophet in debate', where Amos' oracles are arranged and presented as 'the debate between the prophet Amos and his eighth-century audience'.[293] Amos appears to struggle and ultimately fail to persuade his audience of their situation, that they 'stand condemned' because of their 'horrible social wrongdoings' and 'misplaced complacency'.[294] Möller suggests that even the redaction of the Book of Amos is a rhetorical strategy aimed at persuading the reader or hearer to 'learn from the failure of the prophet's audience to respond appropriately to his message'.[295]

Lyle Eslinger comments on the rhetoric of the 'first oracle series' in chapters one and two of Amos, as a 'geographical organization'.[296] Amos presents a series of oracles against Israel's various enemies, crisscrossing geographically from north to south and west to east – from Damascus to Gaza, and from Tyre to Edom. He builds up a long list of transgressions committed by these enemies and the judgements that will follow, but his objective is to 'evoke an emotional attitude of judgment in his audience':

> The rhetorical ploy culminates in the oracle against Israel, his audience, which is caught in the same trap that Nathan set for David in 2 Samuel (12:7): "you are the man." Having approved the judgment on all the surrounding nations for their various crimes, the Israelite audience should be compelled – so the rhetorical plan – to assent to their own damnation for the most serious crimes of the series.[297]

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[290] Möller, '"Hear This Word against You"', p. 504.
[291] Ibid.
[292] Möller, '"Hear This Word against You"', p. 505.
[293] Möller, '"Hear This Word against You"', p. 510.
[294] Ibid.
[295] Möller, '"Hear This Word against You"', p. 511.
[296] Lyle M. Eslinger, 'The Education of Amos', *Hebrew Annual Review*, 11 (1987), pp. 35-57 (p. 36).
[297] Ibid.

Thus, Amos sets a rhetorical trap from which there is no escape –those who followed him into the trap, walking in the footsteps of his rhetorical logic, would find themselves caught.

In the dispute between Amos and the priest Amaziah (7:10-17), we can see an element of rhetorical irony where 'the prophet … appeals to religious tradition, the priest only to reason of state'.[298] As Jennifer Stiles points out, the depiction of the characters of Amaziah and Amos and 'all that they may represent … is full of contrasts':

> Amaziah's report of Amos' activity as 'conspiracy' contrasts with Amos' own account of his activity as compulsion. Amaziah orders Amos to be silent; Yahweh orders Amos to speak out. Amos' reported prediction of the king's death and the people's exile is matched by a similar prediction of death for the priest and his children, and the exile of the people.[299]

These contrasts serve as a rhetorical device to 'juxtapose' the ethos of Amaziah and Amos. Amaziah was the representative for the temple at Bethel and, by extension, all state-sanctioned religion, whereas Amos was the prophetic representative of God. The juxtaposition highlights the contrast between human and divine authority.

Thus, Amos not only has to contend with the community but, if needs be, the establishment too. His oracles address the injustices of the rich against the poor. His 'critical message' is that the rich 'live well at the expense of the poor'.[300] Amos warns the social elite:

> Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria … That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall … That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the hurt of Joseph (Amos 6:1, 4-6, JPS Tanakh 1917).

They no longer identify with the poor, there is no 'solidarity', and Amos invokes the name of Joseph – sold into slavery by his brothers and forgotten (Genesis 37). It is the rich, then, according to Amos, who are 'responsible for the hurt of Joseph; they are guilty of the Egyptian crime of oppression'.[301] Again, we see in this charge the rhetorical device of intertextual analogy, referring the hearer back in a persuasive attempt to influence present behaviour. We should not conclude that Amos' rhetoric is hopeless and damning – indeed, he repeatedly appeals to the people to seek God:

> For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel: Seek ye Me, and live … Seek the LORD, and live … Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so the LORD, the God

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[298] Walzer, 'Interpretation and Social Criticism', p. 63.
[299] Jennifer Stiles, 'A Prophetic Herdsman: Amos's Anti-Establishment Message' in Rachael Weber, Peter Sajda and Szabolcs Nagypal (eds.), *Roots of Vision, Routes of Change: Nationalism and Ecumenical Leadership* (Budapest: BGÖI & WSCF-CESR, 2007), pp. 128-138 (p. 137).
[300] Walzer, 'Interpretation and Social Criticism', p. 72.
[301] Ibid.

> of hosts, will be with you, as ye say. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph (Amos 5:4, 6, 14–15, JPS Tanakh 1917).[302]

The message of Amos may have failed, but unlike Jonah, Amos implored his audience to act. He did not trap them in words to simply win an argument, but used powerful rhetoric in an attempt to liberate them from their harmful and self-destructive choices.

John Hayes and Stuart Irvine argue that the prophet Isaiah (*fl*. c. eighth century BCE) was 'an orator, a rhetorician who presented his insights through the medium of the spoken word'.[303] Indeed, they easily cast Isaiah in the role of the classical orator, seeing many shared characteristics in his work:

> Like any good orator, Isaiah varied his material and approach according to the nature of the rhetorical situation and the inclination and character of the audience. At different times, he employed invective and denunciation, rebuke and reproof, satire and sarcasm, assurance and encouragement, poetry and prose, depending apparently on the needs of the situation, the goal at hand, and the response to be evoked.[304]

Isaiah's persuasive appeal can be seen in his 'word choice, turn of phrase, and selection of similes and metaphors', as well as in his 'emotionally based appeals' and 'rational argumentation'.[305] Different rhetorical situations arose in response to the changing national and international state of affairs that Isaiah found himself in.[306]

In the first chapter of the Book of Isaiah, the prophet compares his audience with the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis:

> Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah (Isaiah 1:9-10, JPS Tanakh 1917).

The juxtaposition of the two verses and the use of the 'Sodom and Gomorrah motif' display Isaiah's 'oratorical artistry':

> In verse 9, the prophet uses these two cities to illustrate the state of his audience and to allow the people to feel momentarily how bad off they are, how desperate their condition is, and how pitifully they stand there, in need of consolation, solace, and sympathy. In verse 10, he immediately pulls that protective blanket from the hearers

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[302] See Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 38.
[303] John H. Hayes and Stuart A. Irvine, *Isaiah, The Eighth-Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), p. 60.
[304] Hayes and Irvine, *Isaiah*, p. 61.
[305] Hayes and Irvine, *Isaiah*, p. 62.
[306] Ibid.

> and identifies them with the residents of ancient Sodom and Gomorrah, who everyone in his audience would have believed got what they deserved![307]

Like Amos, Isaiah set a trap; and like Amos' audience, Isaiah's audience walk right in. However, in the realisation that the audience is equally due its just deserts, the rhetorical responsibility is placed upon the hearer – the audience's own deduction leads them to where the prophet wants them to be.

Gitay highlights the use of the poetic as a rhetorical device in Isaiah's prophecy.[308] Specifically, Isaiah takes up a song of lament in chapter one:

> How is the faithful city become a harlot! She that was full of justice, righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth bribes, and followeth after rewards; they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel: Ah, I will ease Me of Mine adversaries, and avenge Me of Mine enemies; And I will turn My hand upon thee, and purge away thy dross as with lye, and will take away all thine alloy; And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city (Isaiah 1:21-26, JPS Tanakh 1917).

In Isaiah's song, the 'instrument' is language and the playing style is the lament, which is characterised by the Hebrew term איכה (*eykhá*, meaning 'alas') and the 'metre' of the song.[309] According to Gitay, Isaiah chooses a 'familiar song as the artistic device to appeal to his audience' and to convey the prophetic truth he seeks to share with them.[310] To counter opposition or even rejection in the audience, the prophet 'creates an easy tune, readily perceived by the audience, by utilizing the devices of assonance and alliteration'.[311] He sharpens the sense of contrast in the song by using the device of 'contradiction (*antithesis*, *contentio*)' .[312] This can be seen, for example, in the contrast of faithful/harlot; silver/dross. The use of the poetic in the form of song, served a very definite purpose for Isaiah:

> Rhetorically, it would be ineffective and unrealistic to announce God's judgment directly. The people had suffered and had expected God's help, not His punishment. However, the use of an appropriate approach and specific language, which may sound sympathetic at first, can reach the audience and capture their immediate attention.[313]

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[307] Hayes and Irvine, *Isaiah*, p. 73.
[308] See Gitay, 'The Effectiveness of Isaiah's Speech', p. 164.
[309] See Gitay, 'The Effectiveness of Isaiah's Speech', p. 167.
[310] Ibid.
[311] Gitay, 'The Effectiveness of Isaiah's Speech', p. 168.
[312] Ibid.
[313] Gitay, 'The Effectiveness of Isaiah's Speech', p. 170.

In a certain sense, then, the lament is also a trap to lure the hearer in, but it is a much gentler construction, attended by feeling. The creative design of Isaiah's composition and the structure of his poetry reveal his 'concern with the impact of his words'.[314] Gitay believes that a 'close rhetorical analysis' of the lament reveals Isaiah's mission: 'to move his audience and to deliver God's judgment by controlling his listeners'; while his 'literary creativity shows him to be a master of language'.[315]

Gitay also identifies the rhetorical use of ridicule in Isaiah: 'The opponent's refusal to accept the speaker's premise motivates the latter to employ a rhetorical weapon which depicts the opponent as someone who does not deserve serious treatment, but a laugh.' [316] Gitay gives the following example to illustrate Isaiah's use of ridicule:

> To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skilful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move (Isaiah 40:18-20, ESV).

In Isaiah's discourse, he is debating the 'uniqueness of God versus the emptiness of the idols'. However, rather than engaging in theological dispute, Isaiah 'prefers to employ the device of *ridicule* as his tool for avoiding a serious theological debate with opponents who do not share his premise'.[317] The effect is to make his hearers 'laugh' at the opposition and, at the same time, make plain the 'superficiality of the opponents' belief: they worship to a piece of wood, shaped into an idol by a fellow human being!'[318] Isaiah continues the theme in a later chapter, commenting on the work of a carpenter:

> He plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it. Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it. Half of it he burns in the fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and says, 'Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!' And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, 'Deliver me, for you are my god' (Isaiah 44:14-17, ESV).

The absurdity of the argument is clear: one piece of wood used for such disparate purposes that one – burning part of the wood for cooking and keeping warm – annuls the validity of the other – fashioning the rest of it into an idol to worship and pray to for deliverance. The

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[314] Gitay, 'The Effectiveness of Isaiah's Speech', p. 171.
[315] Gitay, 'The Effectiveness of Isaiah's Speech', p. 172.
[316] Gitay, 'Religious Rhetoric and Public Deliberation: Preliminary Thoughts', *Javnost - The Public*, 8.3 (2001), pp. 51-58 (p. 56).
[317] Ibid.
[318] Ibid.

rhetorical force of the ridicule might even persuade the idol-worshippers to laugh at themselves and reconsider their actions.

Isaiah actually defines prophetic rhetoric in the first chapter, and it is perhaps the clearest definition in the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures: 'Learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow' (Isaiah 1:17, JPS Tanakh 1917, in Hebrew: למדו היטב דרשו משפט אשרו חמוץ שפטו יתום ריבו אלמנה). The Hebrew verb ריב (*riv*) is translated as 'to plead' in this verse, and can also mean 'to contend', 'to argue', and even 'to agitate'. It is thus a call to the community to become a rhetorical people; to employ powerful speech on behalf of the oppressed and suffering. A similar call can be found in the Book of Proverbs:

> Open thy mouth for the dumb, in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy (Proverbs 31:8-9, JPS Tanakh 1917).

In other words, speak up for those who have no voice or for those who have been silenced by injustice, poverty and hardship. If the responsibility for justice was shared equally by the community, it would be transformed into a nation of prophets, and the onus would no longer fall upon the few or the one. In this regard, the desire expressed by Moses might be realised, 'would that all the LORD'S people were prophets, that the LORD would put His spirit upon them' (Numbers 11:29, JPS Tanakh 1917). However, the final verb in Isaiah's definition of rhetoric, 'plead' must be framed by the first verb 'learn' (למד, *lamad*). Thus, there is a necessity even in the Jewish tradition of rhetoric to learn how to speak powerfully. This is not expressed as clearly as it is in the classical tradition but, nonetheless, learning is involved – learning from Torah; learning from the examples of Abraham, Moses and Job; and, of course, learning from the Prophets.

The Spoken Jewish Voice as Rhetoric for the Voiceless

The two traditions of Western classical rhetoric and Jewish rhetoric are diverse and culturally unconnected. In the biblical history of Israel there exists, according to Fox, 'a well-documented major rhetorical movement entirely independent of the classical tradition from which Western rhetoric and rhetorical criticism descend.'[319] They share many common characteristics, while their differences enhance and enrich all that rhetoric has to offer as an aid to speaking. Unlike the Greek tradition, Jewish rhetoric does not present a systematic understanding of persuasion. Rather, as Falk claims, it presents a 'symbol system,' with 'methods, goals, and effects'. In understanding different types of rhetoric, we may construct 'new inclusive

[319] Fox, 'The Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision', p. 5.

understandings of rhetoric', which will then allow us to 'review traditional (Greek) rhetoric in a different light'.[320] Remer astutely sums up the strengths and weaknesses of both the Greco-Roman and the Jewish rhetorical traditions, as the 'insider' orator and the 'outsider' prophet affected their respective audiences and influenced the political and social sphere:

> The prophet's contribution lay in his role as social critic, a 'political outsider' without ties to formal political institutions, speaking truth to the powers that be. But the prophet did not often effect the changes he called for, because he spoke forthrightly and uncompromisingly – that is, imprudently. The Roman orator, however, did not stand outside the power structure to criticize it. He was a 'political insider' who affected policy decision making primarily by moving the public with his words. At the same time, as a member of the political elite, the orator was limited in his ability to depart from the political status quo, and, at times, he compromised principle for political necessity; he was constrained by a concern for practical consequences.[321]

Moreover, a positive feature of the political system of the Roman republic was that it allowed the hearing and consideration of 'opposing political views', which was altogether 'absent in the Hebraic kingdoms'. On the other hand, the conservative character of Roman oratory was a negative: 'A radical critique of existing policies, open to a political outsider like the prophet, was inconceivable to a political insider like the orator.'[322] The Western classical tradition of rhetoric provides a model for speaking to influence change from within, through the means of persuasion. The Jewish tradition adds a model for critiquing and challenging from the outside, through the means of argumentation.

Oratorical speech was prone to compromise because the speaker needed to stay onside; they 'required a political base of support'.[323] Cicero represented the interests of the senatorial optimates, but also represented the people as a '*consul popularis* at the *contiones*'. However, with the latter, his action was motivated by political prudence because the common people were politically powerful, not weak. Roman orators did not present reforms especially to protect the widows and orphans, or the poor, but the Prophets did (see Isaiah 1:23, 10:1-2, 58; Jeremiah 7:3-11; Ezekiel 22:6-7). The prophetic voice was politically independent and not compromised by trying to maintain the status quo. Their support base was divine not human, as Remer argues and, thus, 'they were able to challenge their society's authorities and conventions through their interpretations of its traditions'.[324] Classical oratory was also prone to a 'deceit' and 'insincerity,' that was absent in prophetic rhetoric:

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[320] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 25.
[321] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 26.
[322] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 49.
[323] Ibid.
[324] Ibid.

> For strong critics of rhetoric, like Plato, rhetoricians had no principles to compromise. In the *Gorgias*, Plato made Socrates contend that orators could argue as easily for falsehood as for truth, for right as simply as for wrong, because their goal was to convince their audience of whichever side they were arguing [*Gorgias* 462c-466a]. But even rhetoricians like Cicero, who defended rhetoric as a moral enterprise, conceded that orators must sometimes use ethically objectionable techniques.[325]

Indeed, Falk notes that no condemnation of lying appears in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, and truthfulness is only discussed in the context of its utility.[326] Falk lists the aspects of rhetoric in the Jewish tradition that manage the act of speech:

> Jewish rhetoric insists that we keep our promises to God, speak sweetly and softly, teach the laws of the culture, be honest and truthful, offer corrections for [behaviour], and listen and think before speaking. Meanwhile, it prohibits flattery, lying, cursing, arguing [not argumentation], slandering, whispering, gossiping, or bearing false witness. These laws specifically govern both what should be said and what should not be said.[327]

These all act as a harness upon the powerful act of speaking, tempering a potentially dangerous and damaging force; so that it serves to exhort, edify and bring change for the good. The Hebrew Scriptures portray speech as 'powerful, serious, and deserving of respect'. Biblical rhetoric is 'dominated by, is built around, and instructs in moral communication'.[328] Falsehood and deception were forms of explicitly forbidden speech. The prophets were always sincere – even in their occasional ridicule or humour, they maintained honesty. They esteemed truth over political success; compromise was not an option. If the prophet had to challenge the status quo, then so be it – no one was above critique, if the critic is God, albeit God speaking through his messenger. Yet, in political terms, the orator may have proved more effective than the prophet, because the prophet's results were seldom quantifiable. As Remer states, the prophets 'may have sometimes checked the power of the kings and the people with their reproofs, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to specify when and to what degree'.[329] The classical tradition offers us prudence as an aid to effective speech. This is counterbalanced by the Jewish tradition, which offers us the value of honest speaking – a safeguard against the potentially dangerous power of persuasion. Falk summarises the main differences, as she sees them, between the Greek and Jewish rhetorical traditions:

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[325] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', pp. 49-50. For an example of Cicero's concession , see *De Oratore*, p. 163: 'And so, although I personally thought these words of yours inspired, Publius Rutilius Rufus, a man of learning and devoted to philosophy, used to say they were not only wanting in discretion, but positively unseemly and disgraceful' (I.liii.227).

[326] See Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 19.

[327] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 25.

[328] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 25.

[329] Remer, 'The Relationship Between', p. 51.

> Like Jewish rhetoric, Greek rhetoric explains what to say and how to say it. But the goals and methods of these different systems are striking. Where one aims at ethical community living and social harmony, the other aims at individual influence and power. Where one code respects and is fearful of the power of speech, the other uses it as a tool. Where one makes no distinction between public and private speech, the other emphasizes the former.[330]

Falk's distinction may seem simplistic, but it does emphasise how rhetoric can be used for such diverse purposes in the two traditions.

However, Scallen argues that for Isocrates, Aristotle and Cicero, 'the utilitarian uses of rhetoric were not the sole measure of the "good" orator'.[331] They emphasised that the good orator taught through example, actively participated in government, and put community interests above self-interests: 'In doing so, the orator influences and inspires the moral consciousness of his audience.'[332] Darsey regards the rhetorical practices of the Prophets as the activity of 'those who agitate on behalf of great causes'.[333] For today's speaker, no less than the speaker of old, it is the work of great rhetoric to champion great causes. For the Prophets, the great causes were not always the most obvious – they were more likely the overlooked, the seemingly weak, those deprived of their own voice, the outcast – it was the outsider speaking for the community of outsiders. Both traditions emphasise the character of the speaker. The ethos of the rhetor and the credibility of the prophet legitimise and give foundational force to their speech. Character establishes the authority of the speaker – be that the authority of knowledge learnt or a cause divine – without it, the force of persuasion is lost, the words are empty. Character, then, places a limit on how far the speaker can go, and how persuasive they can be. These traditions together remind us that character and rhetoric must be ever wed to be in any way effective.

Connolly rightly draws our attention to the exclusivity in the classical rhetorical tradition: 'Not every *homo* is a *vir*: all women stand outside the circle, in the company of the poor, immigrants, and other classes legally or culturally determined to lack the authority necessary to act in the political arena.'[334] Gender, class and background create an exclusive pool from which the orator is raised up. This is clearly not so in the Jewish tradition, which celebrates its prophetesses, and opens opportunity to the inexperienced (Jeremiah), the untrained (Amos), and the alien (Job). The spoken Jewish voice is the voice of the outsider, not just in the sense that they often stand outside of the establishment, but because they stand outside the walls of inclusion – the walls of gender, class and race. This voice challenges the

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[330] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 25.
[331] Scallen, 'Classical Rhetoric Practical Reasoning', p. 1729.
[332] Ibid.
[333] Darsey, *The Prophetic Tradition*, p. 16.
[334] Connolly, *The State of Speech*, p. 4.

lines of exclusion as much as the words challenge the issues they contest. The classical tradition offers us the tools for explicit rhetorical training, and while the Jewish tradition is not as explicit, the spoken Jewish voice does remind us to bar none from speaking up and to speak up on behalf of all.

Chapter 3: The Jewish Thinking Voice

Having considered the Jewish written and spoken voices, we turn finally to the Jewish thinking voice. In the Western classical tradition this voice is expressed through philosophy (the 'love of wisdom') and logic; in the Jewish tradition it is expressed through the voice of wisdom – however, it is not the wisdom of Greek *sophia* but of the Hebrew *hokmah*. This chapter will examine the Jewish tradition for the ways in which it might help us to think, alongside the Western discipline of philosophy. We will consider the origins of Greek philosophy, with particular attention to Socrates, and how this tradition has shaped the way we think. Alongside this, we will explore Hebrew wisdom in the Scriptures, especially in the Wisdom literature of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes. I will argue that Hebrew Wisdom leads us to a sense of love, awe and humility in the perspective of our thinking, which then shapes our actions, influencing the written and spoken voices of the Jewish tradition.

The Western tradition embraces a variety of terms for the thinking voice – philosophy, logic, metaphysics and dialectic. Rachel Fulton explains 'logic or dialectic,' can be 'narrowly defined as the art of constructing arguments or, more generally, as metaphysics, including the philosophy of mind'.[1] Henry Chadwick highlights the variance in meaning with regard to logic in the ancient Greek world:

> The place of logic in the hierarchy of knowledge was one of the many matters long in dispute between the Aristotelians and the Stoics. To the Stoics 'logic' meant something wide, an independent branch of philosophy, the other two contrasted branches being ethics and 'physics' (the scientific study of nature). The Stoics could point out that this threefold classification had a basis in the *Topics* (A, 14) of Aristotle himself. The Aristotelians, on the other hand, treated logic almost in our modern sense as a practical instrument for the discovery of fallacies in argument on any subject, an indispensable tool for every department of human inquiry.[2]

The Stoics' propositional logic was, according to Chadwick, 'developed by the Peripatetic school and then taken over by the late Platonists,' before it was ultimately 'passed down to the Western philosophical tradition'.[3] Thus, the Western philosophical tradition subsumed logic, so that logic and philosophy became terms that involve the capacity for thinking, and to these we

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[1] Rachel Fulton, *The Arts of Language in the Middle Ages: The Trivium* (2012) <home.uchicago.edu/~rfulton/Trivium.htm> [accessed 9 June 2014]. See also Eleonore Stump, 'Dialectic' in David L. Wagner (ed.), *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 125-146; especially pp. 128-131, where she demonstrates the interchange between philosophy, logic and dialectic in the development of medieval liberal arts.

[2] Henry Chadwick, *Boethius: The Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 108.

[3] Chadwick, *Boethius*, p. 173.

could also add dialectic, reasoning or the study of metaphysics. For the purpose of this study, the term philosophy will be considered to reflect the love of wisdom in the classical tradition; which finds a counterpart in the love of biblical wisdom in the Jewish tradition.

The Origins of Greek Philosophy and Hebrew Wisdom

David Wagner cites the beginnings of Western philosophy in the development of early Greek cosmologies: 'Philosophy originated when the Greeks began to interpret the universe in rational terms.'[4] According to Aristotle, Thales of Miletus (c. 620-546 BCE) was the first Greek philosopher – the 'founder' (*Metaphysics*, 1.983b).[5] Thales allegedly proposed that all things originated from water, that the 'permanent entity is water'. He was also numbered first among the 'Seven Sages of Ancient Greece', a company that also included Pittacus of Mitylene, Bias of Priene, Solon of Athens, Cleobulus of Lindus, Myson of Chen, and Chilon of Sparta. Their legend includes seven maxims – one from each of these wise men – that were purportedly distillations of their wisdom. Plato recounts their assembly at Delphi in *Protagoras* (343a), where their maxims were inscribed at Apollo's temple. The most famous of these sayings (343b) were: 'Know thyself' and 'Nothing overmuch' (or 'everything with moderation').[6] Interestingly, John Collins adds that although Thales stated that 'all things are full of gods,' he 'spoke of water, not Oceanus or Poseidon, as the first principle of the universe'.[7] Aristotle also credited Empedocles (c. 490-430 BCE) 'as the first to articulate the four elements,' states Ethan Dor-Shav, 'albeit in a mythic form: "Hear first the four roots of all things: bright Zeus and life-bringing Hera and Aidoneus, and Nestis, whose tears are the source of mortal streams" … (Zeus was the god of fire, Hera supposedly of wind, Aidoneus of earth, and Nestis of water.)'[8] Collins cites Plato (c. 427-347 BCE) as an example of the development in the Greek tradition that attempted to 'integrate the scientific approach of the cosmologists with religious conceptions': 'Already in Plato, especially in the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*, we find a conceptual

[4] David L. Wagner, 'The Seven Liberal Arts and Classical Scholarship' in David L. Wagner (ed.), *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 1-31 (p. 2).
[5] Aristotle, *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, Vols.17-18, trans Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1933/1989) <www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0052%3Abook%3D1%3Asection%3D983b#note2> [accessed 6 June 2014].
[6] Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 3, trans. Walter R. M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1967) <www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0178%3Atext%3DProt.%3Asection%3D343b> [accessed 6 June 2014].
[7] John J. Collins, 'Cosmos and Salvation: Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic in the Hellenistic Age', *History of Religions*, 17.2 (1977), pp. 121-142 (p.130).
[8] Ethan Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire: A Theory of Biblical Man', *Azure*, 22 (2005), pp. 78-113 (p. 103).

cosmological reflection on the universe which leads to the recognition of God as the "Soul of the Cosmos."[9]

Marie Sandy notes that ancient philosophical desire was driven by contemplation: 'The impulse for the Presocratic, and later on, the philosophers' tradition, starts with the observation that thinking requires a withdrawal from the world.'[10] Thus, the philosophers 'most intensely devoted to thinking withdraw from human affairs in order to contemplate the eternal, inspired by a sense of wonder …[and] the space to which they withdraw [is] the "contemplative" realm'.[11] Sandy argues that this is the nascent point of philosophy as a distinct form: 'This is the beginning of the idea of thinking – and knowledge – for its own sake.'[12] She draws here on the work of Hannah Arendt, who distinguishes between the outward appearances of the world and the inner life of the mind: 'In order to find out what truly *is*, the philosopher must *leave* the world of appearances among which he is naturally and originally at home – as Parmenides did when he was carried upward, beyond the gates of night and day, to the divine way that lay "far from the beaten path of men," and as Plato did, too, in the Cave parable.'[13] However, the process means that the outward informs the inner, thus, 'when the philosopher takes leave of the world given to our senses and does a turnabout (Plato's *periagōgē*) to the life of the mind, he takes his clue from the former, looking for something to be revealed to him that would explain its underlying truth'.[14]

Nevertheless, ascertaining Plato's philosophical view is not straightforward because, as Randall Hart points out, 'he did not write a systematic treatise giving his views; rather he wrote about 30 dialogues'.[15] Furthermore, within these dialogues, Plato never appears as a character, and so it is unclear whether 'Plato's assertions truly represent his own views'. While Socrates is Plato's essential protagonist, it is not clear to what extent he or Plato's other characters are expressing views 'which they themselves would have put forward'. Nevertheless, the 'commonly held' position is that 'the thoughts expressed by Socrates in the early dialogues represented views actually held by Socrates'.[16] Although Plato gave no systematic philosophy, he did, according to Henri Marrou, build a 'system of education' to oppose the Sophists and their exclusive concern with 'immediate practical results'.[17] This system was 'built … on a

[9] Collins, 'Cosmos and Salvation', p. 133.
[10] Marie Sandy, 'Tracing the Liberal Arts Traditions in Support of Service-learning and Public-engaged Scholarship in the Humanities', *Humanity & Society*, 37.4 (2013), pp. 306-326 (p. 311).
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Jovanovich, 1978), p. 23.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Randall D. Hart, *Increasing Academic Achievement with the Trivium of Classical Education* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2006), p. 14.
[16] Ibid..
[17] Henri I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), p. 66.

fundamental belief in truth, and on the conquest of truth by rational knowledge'.[18] Marrou emphatically states Plato's aim:

> In any field of human activity whatsoever, the only worthy ideal for a man of culture was that which led him to seek the truth and the possession of real knowledge. The whole of Plato's thought is dominated by this great idea.[19]

According to Gordon Clark, Plato based his system on 'three original, independent principles: the World of Ideas, the Demiurge, and chaotic space'.[20] These principles were 'equally eternal and independent of each other,' however, 'the Demiurge fashioned chaotic space into this visible world by using the Ideas as his model':

> Hence in Plato the World of Ideas is not only independent of but also even in a sense superior to the maker of heaven and earth. He is morally obligated, and in fact willingly submits, to the Ideas of justice, man, equality, and number.'[21]

Jacob Howland points out that Plato's aim was passionately pursued: 'Plato's word for philosophical desire is *erōs* [*Symposium* 203d], the Greek term for the intrinsically clever and resourceful passion of sexual attraction.'[22] Thus, the *erōs* of *philosophia* is, as John Genung so aptly phrases it, 'philosophy, the love of wisdom, a love always in quest of its object and enjoying the process of search'.[23] Plato's love of wisdom is compelling – his quest for truth and knowledge is pursued with intensity. Later, we shall see an equally intense pursuit of wisdom in the Jewish tradition; yet not wisdom manifested in the realm of impersonal Ideas, but wisdom manifested in relational action.

In the Hellenistic period, training in philosophy comprised of three parts, according to Marrou: 'logic, physics and ethics – i.e. a theory of knowledge, a doctrine about the physical world, and a system of morality'.[24] This three part focus was introduced into the schools of philosophy by Xenocrates (c. 396-314 BCE), a student of Plato. The more renowned student in Plato's Academy was, of course, Aristotle (c. 384-322 BCE), who also developed a clear philosophical aim, as Amos Funkenstein succinctly distilled:

> It is the task of philosophy, we are told by Aristotle [*De caelo* Dl, 308a24], to articulate what everyone knows, only better. By "better" or "more adequately" he had in mind a transparent, unequivocal scientific terminology – definitions, first principles, and proofs that proceed according to a clear scheme.[25]

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[18] Ibid..
[19] Ibid..
[20] Gordon H. Clark, 'God and Logic', *The Trinity Review* (November/December 1980), pp. 1-7 (pp. 1-2).
[21] Ibid.
[22] Jacob Howland, *Plato and the Talmud* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.3.
[23] John F. Genung, 'The Development of Hebrew Wisdom', *The Biblical World*, 42.1 (1913), pp. 16-25 (p. 17).
[24] Marrou, *A History of Education*, p. 209.
[25] Amos Funkenstein, 'The Disenchantment of Knowledge: The Emergence of the Ideal of Open Knowledge in Ancient Israel and in Classical Greece', *Aleph*, 3 (2003) pp. 15-81 (p. 56).

In his *Metaphysics* Aristotle boldly asserted that 'All men by nature desire to know' (*Metaphysics*, 980a21).[26] Thus, the philosophical desire for knowledge is innate – to think is natural. He then goes on to consider the object of this desire – the knowledge of wisdom:

> …all men suppose what is called Wisdom to deal with the first causes and the principles of things; so that, as has been said before, the man of experience is thought to be wiser than the possessors of any sense-perception whatever, the artist wiser than the men of experience, the master-worker than the mechanic, and the theoretical kinds of knowledge to be more of the nature of Wisdom than the productive. Clearly then Wisdom is knowledge about certain principles and causes. Since we are seeking this knowledge, we must inquire of what kind are the causes and the principles, the knowledge of which is Wisdom (*Metaphysics*, 981b30-982a5).[27]

Wisdom, for Aristotle, gives meaning and provides knowledge through the principles and causes at work in life and in the world. Yet, he values both this theoretical knowledge and also what he calls 'practical wisdom': 'Now it is thought to be the mark of a man of practical wisdom to be able to deliberate well about what is good and expedient for himself, not in some particular respect, e.g. about what sorts of thing conduce to health or to strength, but about what sorts of thing conduce to the good life in general' (*Nicomachean Ethics* VI, 1140a-b).[28] Theoretical knowledge helps us to understand the world we live in, but practical wisdom helps us to live in that world.

From the outset, the thinking voice in the Jewish tradition finds little room for expression. It is deemed irrelevant because the biblical texts are not appropriate for modern philosophical reflection. However, Shalom Carmy and David Shatz believe that the Bible is an appropriate source for Jewish philosophical reflection,[29] whilst acknowledging a number of problems and objections. Among these, they note that the Bible 'contains, at its very core, a great deal of material that is not necessarily philosophical: law, poetry, and narrative'. Philosophical truths are usually 'formulated in declarative sentences', but the Bible makes few propositional statements. Conclusions in philosophy are normally arrived at 'by means of logical argumentation', whereas the Bible 'contains little sustained argument of a deductive, inductive, or practical nature, and attempts to impose the structure of rational argument on the biblical text yield [meagre] profit'. Whilst philosophers 'try to avoid' contradiction, the Bible 'often juxtaposes contradictory ideas, without explanation or apology', and the

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[26] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. William D. Ross <classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.1.i.html> [accessed 4 July 2014].
[27] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*.
[28] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. William D. Ross <classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.6.vi.html> [accessed 25 June 2014].
[29] Shalom Carmy and David Shatz, 'The Bible as a source for philosophical reflection' in Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman (eds.), *History of Jewish Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 10-29 (p. 10).

'philosophically more sophisticated work of harmonizing the contradictions in the biblical text is left to the exegetical literature'. The biblical position on 'subjects of manifest philosophical importance seems primitive to later philosophical sensibilities':

> For example, the biblical God ostensibly has human form and human emotions; he regrets his actions and changes his mind (e.g. Genesis 6:6; 1 Samuel 15:11). Miracles are commonplace, and natural events like earthquakes and winds are often identified as direct divine acts. If Jewish philosophy begins with the Bible, cynics might suggest, it can advance only by casting it behind.[30]

Yet, having noted so many problems and objections, Carmy and Shatz argue that the Bible has many qualities that lend themselves to Jewish philosophy and philosophy in general:

> The Bible depicts the character of God, presents an account of creation, posits a metaphysics of divine providence and divine interventions, suggests a basis for morality, discusses many features of human nature, and frequently poses the notorious conundrum of how God can allow evil. Surely, then, it engages questions that lie at the very heart of Jewish philosophy, indeed of religious philosophy generally.[31]

In the concluding verses of the Book of Jonah (4:10-11), God asks Jonah a 'long rhetorical question': "You pity the plant, for which you did not labour, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?" God's question to Jonah demonstrates the 'impossibility of limiting philosophy to conventionally formulated sentences'. Indeed, Carmy and Shatz argue that: 'There is no way of turning this interrogation into the indicative mood; yet if this verse is not philosophy, then nothing in the Bible is philosophy!'[32] If there is a willingness to hear, then the Jewish thinking voice has much to say in the philosophical conversation, even if the terms are different.

Yoram Hazony notes another common view that has tended to debar the Bible from philosophical study: 'There are two kinds of literary works that address themselves to ultimate issues – those that are the product of *reason*; and those that are known by way of *revelation*.'[33] According to this view, the works of Plato, for example, fall into the first category; they are 'composed to assist individuals and nations looking to discover the true and the good as best they are able in accordance with man's natural abilities'. However, the Bible falls into the second category; it is 'a text that reports what God himself thinks about things', bypassing

[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Carmy and Shatz, 'The Bible as a source', p. 25, footnote 1.
[33] Yoram Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 1.

'man's natural faculties, [and] giving us knowledge of the true and the good by means of a series of miracles'. On these grounds, the Bible fails to engage with reason. Instead, it 'offers … miraculous knowledge, to be accepted in gratitude and believed on faith'; it 'requires the suspension of the normal operation of our mental faculties, calling on us to believe things that don't make sense to us – because they are supposed to make sense to God.'[34] However, Hazony also finds much to commend the Bible to the category of reason: 'histories of ancient peoples and attempts to draw political lessons from them; explorations of how best to conduct the life of the nation and of the individual; the writings of individuals who struggled with personal persecution and failure and their speculations concerning human nature and the search for the true and the good; attempts to get beyond the sphere of the here and now and to try and reach a more general understanding of the nature of reality, of man's place in it, and of his relationship with that which is beyond his control.'[35]

Hazony disagrees with the view that demands that works which 'have God speaking and acting in them' must be classified as revelation and not reason. This judgement rules out the Jewish thinking voice from any participation in the liberal arts and philosophic discourse, in general. However, such a view, if fairly applied, 'would long ago have ruled out as works of reason some of the most famous works of philosophy ever written – works that are today unchallenged as works of reason, and, indeed, regarded as the basis for the tradition of Western philosophy':

> Consider, for example, the writings of Parmenides (c. 515–440 BCE), an Eleatic philosopher of the generation before Socrates. Parmenides is no sideshow in the history of philosophy. His examination of the nature of being had such an impact on subsequent Greek philosophy that Plato [in *Sophist* 241d] has one of his principal characters call him "father Parmenides." No modern history of philosophy sees him as anything other than crucial. Yet Parmenides, who lived about 130 years after the Israelite prophet Jeremiah (c. 647–572), writes philosophy as though it were – revealed to him by a god.[36]

This is not a 'metaphorical god', argues Hazony, but a god who Parmenides genuinely 'understood as having taught and inspired him and permitted him to engage in philosophy'.[37] Parmenides' account 'carefully describes the experience of climbing into the night sky on a horse-drawn chariot tended by the "daughters of the sun," which ultimately enters the palace of an unnamed goddess'. She 'promises to inform him of "everything" … [and the] *everything* we have of Parmenides' philosophy consists of the words of this goddess as she revealed them

[34] Ibid.
[35] Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, p. 2.
[36] Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, p. 6.
[37] Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, pp. 6-7.

to him'. From the fragments that remain of his poem, Parmenides records that the goddess 'tells him of the creation of night and day, the sun and moon, the stars and the ether, and of "the divinity who governs all things"'.[38] This early Greek cosmology is no less revelatory than the Hebrew cosmology of Genesis or the Wisdom literature. Both traditions draw on divine sources.

Empedocles (c. 490–430), also describes the process of his philosophical thought as 'depending on the goddess Calliopeia, who "sends" him that which is appropriate for men to hear on a chariot from on high.'[39] Moreover, Socrates, 'the very archetype of the philosopher guided by reason,' is restrained by 'the god' and commissioned by the Delphic Oracle.[40] Unlike Parmenides, Socrates does not attribute his philosophy to 'the speech of a goddess', but he is depicted by Plato as 'calling on the Muses and other gods to provide him with answers to the questions that arise in his philosophy,' and for inspiration (for example, *Symposium* 237a; *Republic* 432c; *Laws* 893b; *Timaeus* 27b-d; and *Phaedrus* 242b-d). Thus, the works of Plato – traditionally held in the category of reason – present 'a world in which gods speak to men, guiding them in what they say and how they live'.[41] For Hazony, there is no place for a double standard: 'If we can forgive the Greeks the strange gods and oracles that speak to them, looking beyond this difficulty and judging them by the content of their teachings, why should not this same standard be applied to the writings of the Jews?'[42]

In defence of the Bible, David Novak argues that 'its message is so coherent and its concerns so profound that it can be the object of philosophical reflection'.[43] He likens the Bible to nature because it 'transcends philosophical reflection as an object transcends a subject interested in it, and yet it attracts that subject with whom it has something (but not everything) in common'. The common ground is 'wisdom' (*hokhmah*), both that pertaining to God (for example, Psalms 104:24) and that pertaining to 'humans, especially those humans who are properly related to God (for example, Deuteronomy 4:6)'.[44] This Hebrew term *hokmah* (חכמה), therefore, corresponds to and is somewhat synonymous with the Greek term *philosophia* (φιλοσοφία).[45] Robert Gordis defines *hokmah* as 'encompassing all the practical skills and technical arts of civilization, as well as the inculcation of the personal qualities

[38] Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, p. 7. Hazony quotes from Parmenides' poem in Allan H. Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1986).
[39] Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, p. 8.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, p. 9.
[42] Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, p. 11.
[43] David Novak, 'The Talmud as a source for philosophical reflection' in Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman (eds.), *History of Jewish Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 49-63 (p. 50).
[44] Ibid.
[45] See Robert V. Foster, 'The Hebrew "Wisdom"', *The Old Testament Student*, 5.3 (1885), pp. 104-107 (p. 104).

required for success and well-being in society'.[46] However, according to John McKenzie, biblical wisdom was 'much more than a literary form, much more than a way of life … [it] was also a way of thought and a way of speech, which was by no means limited to the schools and the writings of the sages'.[47] Wisdom was 'the common way of thought and speech, in which those who were called wise excelled'. It shared an essential characteristic with Greek philosophy: 'It was an approach to reality.' McKenzie believes that biblical wisdom 'dealt with some questions which philosophy also handles, and as a technique of discourse it served the purpose which philosophical discursive reasoning served in Greek thought'.[48] However, whereas biblical wisdom 'belonged to everyone,' Greek 'discursive reasoning was the skill of the intellectual'.[49] The potential for elitism is not inherent in the Jewish thinking voice. The technique of discourse runs throughout the biblical narrative, and McKenzie gives a few illustrations:

> But when Joab could find no means to bring David to change his mind towards Absalom, he invoked "a wise woman" (II Sam 141-21). The wise woman trapped David into accepting the principle of forgiveness by a parable, exactly the same technique which Nathan employed to convince David of his sin (II Sam 12 1-15). The professional sage was one who had a wealth of *meshalim*, of riddles such as those by which Samson outwitted the Philistines, of pertinent maxims for any situation. But this was the same technique by which the ordinary Israelite solved his problems as well as he could.[50]

As we shall see in the Book of Proverbs, wisdom, at least in principle, is open to all – it is not the preserve of an elite.

Like the Presocratic philosophers and like Plato, the Hebrew Scriptures have much to say on the subject of cosmology, for example: the creation narrative in the opening chapter of the Book of Genesis; Job, chapters 9, 26, 28 and 38; and Psalms 19 and 104. Dor-Shav has written an excellent article exploring biblical cosmology and the soul, and has demonstrated that the Scriptures contain a sophisticated understanding that compliments the development of ancient Greek cosmology:

> For the Hebrew Bible, the cosmic picture is defined by a four-element hierarchical construct. Surprising to those familiar with the model solely from Greek thought, a version of the ancient theory of the four elements – Earth, Water, Wind, and Fire – debuted in the ancient Israelite kingdom before Aristotle or, probably, Empedocles. Most easily, the four primal elements can be discerned in successive verses in the

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[46] Robert Gordis, 'Religion, Wisdom and History in the Book of Esther: A New Solution to an Ancient Crux', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 100.3 (1981), pp. 359-388 (pp. 364-365).
[47] John L. McKenzie, 'Reflections on Wisdom', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 86.1 (1967), pp. 1-9 (p. 2).
[48] Ibid.
[49] McKenzie, 'Reflections on Wisdom', pp. 2-3.
[50] McKenzie, 'Reflections on Wisdom', p. 3.

opening chapter of Ecclesiastes (this reference will soon help illuminate earlier biblical sources):

4. A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth forever stands. [Earth]

5. The sun rises and the sun comes, and hastens to the place where it rises. [Fire]

6. The wind blows to the south, and goes round to the north; round and round goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. [Wind]

7. All streams run to the sea, but the sea does not fill; to the place where the streams run to, there they run again. [Water][51]

Not only does the biblical view compliment the Greek, but by Dor-Shav's reckoning it also predates it. He makes the case that the Hebrew word for sun *shemesh* (שמש) relates to the word for heavens *shamayim* (שמים), which both represent the element of fire: 'Once we understand that the heavens, *shamayim*, are a literal embodiment of fire, the four elements emerge in many additional verses.' Dor-Shav gives an example from Proverbs 30:4, where a series of four rhetorical questions contain the four elements:

Who has ascended into *Heaven* [Fire] and descended?

Who gathered the *Wind* in his fists?

Who bound the *Water* in a garment?

Who established all the ends of the *earth*?[52]

Both of these examples, as well as 'other references', convince Dor-Shav that 'the four-element scheme was manifest in ancient Israelite writings' from early on. This is supported, not least of all, by the Genesis creation narrative, and specifically in the opening two verses: 'In the beginning God created the *heaven* [fire] and the *earth* … And the *wind* of God hovered upon the face of the *water*.'[53] Thus, the Jewish thinking voice presents a consistent cosmology, which was clearly shared by a number of biblical authors.

Dor-Shav believes that the elemental cosmology of the Scriptures relate to 'the Hebrew Bible's consistent concepts of the soul', as 'each Hebrew soul-term corresponds to one of the cosmic dominions, from which it was created and to which it gravitates at the moment of passing'.[54] Whilst the element of earth relates to the body (the name אדם 'Adam' – the first human – is related to the word אדמה literally 'red earth', the substance from which his body was fashioned), the other three elements relate to corresponding Hebrew terms for the soul: water to *nefesh* (נפש), wind to *ruah* (רוח) and fire to *neshama* (נשמה). Each of these four cosmological elements in the Bible 'represents a realm of being', wherein humans exist simultaneously:

[51] Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire', pp. 82-83.
[52] Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire', pp. 83-84.
[53] Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire', p. 84.
[54] Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire', p. 85.

> For man, therefore, each *elemental soul* represents a different way of existing as an "I." In understanding the three soul-terms distinctively, it becomes apparent that instead of an "immature" text, the Hebrew Bible proves to be philosophically acute, comprehensive, and revolutionary.[55]

At the primary level of existence – earth – represents the 'base component of our existence', the physical body.[56] The body finds both its origin and terminus in the earth: 'out of [the ground] you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return' (Genesis 3:19).[57]

The first of the three soul-terms, *nefesh*, is the second level of existence or being and is 'related to water'. There is a biblical connection between water and life – 'flowing waters are considered "alive" – *mayim hayim*,' and 'Ecclesiastes chose running streams to signify the element'.[58] It is also possible to read the second verse of Genesis 1 as an account of the creation of life out of water rather than *ex nihilo* (והארץ היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על־פני תהום ורוח אלהים מרחפת על־פני המים, 'The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters').[59] Such a reading resonates with that of Thales in the ancient Greek worldview. Dor-Shav claims that there are 'over sixty biblical references' where *nefesh* represents 'life (or the flowing "life force")'; and that in 'ancient Israelite thought, "life" means *animation*, the capacity for independent movement, and is therefore a term reserved for animals.'[60] Moreover, *nefesh* is 'always described as liquid' in its biblical context and Dor-Shav gives four of many examples: 'He poured out his *nefesh* to death' [Isaiah 53:12]; 'My *nefesh* leaks away for sorrow' [Psalm 119:28]; 'our *nefesh* dried away' [Numbers 11:6]; and 'I poured out my *nefesh* before the Lord' [1 Samuel 1:15].[61] The second soul-term, *ruah*, literally meaning wind or breath, is the third level of human existence and 'emanates from an intermediary realm between Heaven and Earth'. This second soul-term, *ruah*, shares a similar attribute to the first, *nefesh*, in that it is 'not unique to humans' – Dor-Shav illustrates this with a reference from Psalm 104:29, 'You take away their *ruah*, they die', which refers to verse 25: 'living things both small and great'.[62] The third soul-term, *neshama*, represents the 'uniquely human soul', appearing 25 times in the Bible and always referring 'only to people'. It is uniquely human, argues Dor-Shav, because 'it is our share in Heaven'.[63]

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[55] Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire', p. 85.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire', p. 86. See also Ecclesiastes 3:20, which repeats the 'dust to dust' refrain from Genesis 3:19..
[58] Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire', p. 88.
[59] I am indebted to Yoram Hazony and Joshua Weinstein for this reading of Genesis 1:2 during the 'Young Scholars Workshop', *The Herzl Institute*, Jerusalem, 17-22 July, 2013.
[60] Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire', p. 88.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire', p. 90.
[63] Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire', p. 93.

This uniquely human soul corresponds to heavenly 'fire' and 'light', which 'signify wisdom and truth – as functions of our innate divine capacity'. It is this level of existence that is unique to humanity amongst all creatures:

> Indeed, in ancient Israelite metaphysics, the fire of supreme divination and the light of Godly knowledge both infuse the fire-nature of heaven … The human *neshama* is a spark of this fiery heaven embedded in man, and the nature of this component is our own ability to create with words, as the sole possessors of language in the animal kingdom.[64]

The human ability to create with words appears in one of Adam's very first 'ensouled' acts: Dor-Shave suggests that the word *neshama* is derived from the root word *shem* ('name'), 'signifying the ability to name (i.e. to categorize) that defines man's capacity for abstract thought'.[65] The Bible, therefore, differentiates between four levels of human existence: 'the material, the dynamic, the relational, and the ideal, and these distinctions add up to a worldview with far-reaching philosophical consequence'. These four distinctions provide an all-encompassing existential framework:

> In the kingdom of light we transcend all characteristics of gender, status, tongue or nationality. In turn, the other three components of our being attain their own continuity: The body in progeny, the *nefesh* in universal life energy, and the *ruah* in the collective. Modern cosmology, therefore, does not debase the Israelite four-tier paradigm any more than dissecting a heart obliterates the idea of love.[66]

Dor-Shav believes that this attempt to decipher 'biblical metaphysics' corrects 'the dualist prejudice regarding the Hebrew Bible,' and 'our entire understanding of the canon'; whilst forcing a reconsideration of 'the common notion that it is a book of stories – one with moral lessons, but without a philosophical backbone'.[67] The 'discovery of the elemental structure' situates ancient Jewish cosmology and philosophy within an indigenous context, liberating it from the claim that it merely reflects borrowed ideas. It also renders the Hebrew Scriptures more holistically with an elemental framework scaffolding the texts, and 'may provide an incentive to relate to the Hebrew canon as a whole, rather than as fragments'.[68] This brings an overall consistency and unity to the Jewish thinking voice – it is a rational voice presenting a coherent cosmology, relating the individual soul to the wider existential context.

Cherbonnier seeks to address the common view that the Bible was 'written with an intent remote from that of the philosopher', and that any effort to discover its 'logical

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[64] Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire', p. 94.
[65] Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire', p. 95.
[66] Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire', p. 99.
[67] Ibid..
[68] Dor-Shav, 'Soul of Fire', p. 99.

implications might therefore appear futile'.[69] He challenges this notion by arguing that in the Bible 'human reason is a God-given instrument of self-criticism', so that anyone who 'abrogates it thereby declares himself incorrigible'.[70] Cherbonnier draws on the work of Levi Olan to support his claim:

> If there is a genuine characteristic of the Hebrew spirit, which is clear and unmistakable, it is its rational nature … Reason is energetically used to purify man's faith of its impurities which were found in mythology and paganism. It is employed as a corrective … Reason, of itself, is never the source of truth, yet it is an integral ingredient of it.[71]

The Jewish thinking voice is rational, as has been stated already and, as such, it defies the accusation that it is merely a revelatory text. Cherbonnier believes that the key to understanding the rational nature of the Bible is through an anthropomorphic understanding of God: 'Anthropomorphism, by placing man and God in the same universe of discourse, may be the only conception of God which invites rational scrutiny.'[72] For Cherbonnier, this is sufficient to allow the Bible to enter the 'philosophical arena'.[73] Indeed, in the Book of Isaiah, God addresses the people of Judah in terms that suggest both God and humanity share the characteristics necessary for rationality: 'Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD' (1:18, ESV). God appears to share the human capacity for reason, and thereby takes on an anthropomorphic quality. However, it could as easily be said that reason is a divine capacity which humans share, being made in the image of God ('Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"' Genesis 1:26, ESV). Later in Isaiah, God appears to distinguish between divine and human thought:

> For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts (55:8-9, ESV).

Whilst, God establishes his superiority in thought, these verses, nonetheless, present both God and humanity engaging in the act and process of thinking. Thus, the God of the Hebrew Scriptures is presented as a thinking, reasoning God; who engages with humanity anthropomorphically. Alternatively, humans are presented as sharing the divine qualities of thinking and reasoning as they engage with God. The Scriptures appear to allow for both readings. Indeed, as Cherbonnier finds the capacity for logic in the anthropomorphism of God, James Crenshaw speaks of a 'divine logic' that is manifested cosmologically: 'Wisdom, *ḥokmâ*,

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[69] Cherbonnier, 'The Logic of Biblical Anthropomorphism', p. 187.
[70] Cherbonnier, 'The Logic of Biblical Anthropomorphism', p. 205.
[71] Levi A. Olan, 'Reinhold Niebuhr and the Hebraic Spirit: A Critical Inquiry', *Judaism*, 5.2 (1956), pp. 1-15 (p. 7).
[72] Cherbonnier, 'The Logic of Biblical Anthropomorphism', p. 205.
[73] Ibid.

represented the divine logic by which the universe took shape, the structuring of things into a coherent order.'[74]

As we shall see, the Jewish thinking voice is most clearly heard in the texts known collectively as Wisdom literature. However, it is not restricted to Wisdom literature alone in the Hebrew Scriptures, as Michael Fox makes clear:

> Wisdom in the first sense can manifest itself anywhere and be a factor in any genre. Hence, the appearance of the wise [behaviour] in a story, or even of words that refer to the faculty of wisdom, such as *ḥākām* and *nābôn*, does not demonstrate a special connection with Wisdom literature.[75]

In this regard, Fox considers the appearance of wisdom in the narratives of the Book of Genesis and the Book of Daniel, and in particular, in the stories of Joseph and Daniel, which demonstrate some similarities in their courtly positions, dream interpretations, etc.[76] The Wisdom literature is placed canonically within the third biblical division of the Writings (כתובים, *Ketuvim* – the other two divisions are, first the Teaching, תורה *Torah*; and, second, the Prophets, נביאים *Nevi'im*). Gordis sees other books within the Writings that possess explicit wisdom: 'both Ruth and Esther are included because they show *hokhmah* in action, revealing practical sagacity, Esther in saving her people from destruction and Ruth (and Naomi) in securing a desirable husband!'[77]

We have seen that proverbs and parables formed an integral part of ancient Jewish grammar and rhetoric but, as Genung points out, they are also central to ancient Jewish philosophy: 'the proverb and parable were speedily [moulded] into the accepted vehicle of a philosophy of life and an instrument of popular education'.[78] The word most commonly translated as 'proverb' in the Hebrew Scriptures is *mashal* (משל) – a 'generic term with a large latitude of meaning; it does not differentiate … between proverb, parable, fable, allegory; nor between prose and verse'.[79] Biblical proverbs embody 'in some fitting form the primary meaning of likeness, or analogy', but they differ in function rather than form. Two of these functions are given in the Book of Proverbs: 'To understand a proverb, and a figure; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings' (1:6, JPS Tanakh 1917). The word translated 'figure' can also mean 'interpretation' (מליצה, *melitsah*), and is juxtaposed with the word for 'dark sayings', which in the singular means a 'riddle' (חידה, *chidah*). Thus, Genung states that the twofold purpose of proverbs is 'to shed light and to shed darkness'.[80] This illuminating and

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[74] James L. Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), p.70.
[75] Michael V. Fox, 'Wisdom in the Joseph Story', *Vetus Testamentum*, 51.1 (2001), pp. 26-41 (p. 30).
[76] Fox appraises Gerhard Von Rad's article, 'Josephgeschichte und altere Chokma', *VTSup*, 1 (1953), pp. 121-127.
[77] Gordis, 'Religion, Wisdom and History', p. 365.
[78] Genung, 'The Development of Hebrew Wisdom', p. 18.
[79] Genung, 'The Development of Hebrew Wisdom', p. 19.
[80] Ibid.

obscuring is reminiscent of the *aporia* experienced by the liberated soul in the Socratic Cave, except that with proverbs it is the deciphering of riddles that requires effort and yields understanding. Genung notes that there are many examples of biblical *mashal* – both older and younger – outside of the Book of Proverbs: these include the *mashals* of Balaam (Numbers 23-24); the Book of Job; the Book of Ecclesiastes; and the later Jesus Sirach. These all 'combine in various proportions' illuminating *melitsah* and obscuring *chidah*, they all provide a philosophical light and darkness.[81]

Nevertheless, illumination may not be the most appropriate term to use in conjunction with ancient Jewish philosophy, because unlike the Greek tradition where sight is the primary sense (as we shall see later), in the Hebrew Scriptures hearing is the sense without equal. As with the Greek tradition, these are not mutually exclusive ideas – there is clearly a place for the visual in the Hebrew Scriptures, if not then the writings of the Prophets, for example, would be extremely brief. Comparatively, however, hearing is the sense most closely connected to biblical wisdom. Conjoined with this positive emphasis on hearing is a negative distrust of sight. This provides an important check to the philosophical voice in the Western tradition that prizes sight so highly. Whilst seeing is positively expressed from God's perspective at the very outset of the Scriptures – 'And God saw that the light was good' (Genesis 1:4, ESV) – it is negatively expressed at the outset from the human perspective, when the serpent encounters Eve:

> He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked (Genesis 3:1-7, ESV).

In the sabotage of Eden, the serpent's first step is to encourage Eve to question her hearing, essentially asking: 'What did you actually hear God say?' The serpent succeeds in engaging Eve, and by repeating back what she believes she heard, the process of undermining begins (i.e. the undermining of the commandment and the undermining of Eve's trust in her ability to hear). It is possible that this undermining produces an immediate effect because Eve misquotes God's words, adding a prohibition against touching the fruit, absent in the original command

[81] Genung, 'The Development of Hebrew Wisdom', p. 20.

(Genesis 2:17).[82] It is not clear from the text if this misquotation is an accidental or intentional embellishment, but it is only after having eaten of the fruit that the consequences are set into motion, not before.

With the disparity between the words actually spoken by God and Eve's recollection of them, the serpent has effected doubt, and is able to reinterpret the command, removing the judicial consequences. The serpent's reinterpretation is presented as a correction – Eve has misunderstood – and he replaces the punishment of death with the promise of godlikeness, the knowledge of good and evil. Eve already has godlikeness (Genesis 1:26-27), but the serpent's empty promise appeals to something beyond her hearing, which has now been deemed faulty, he appeals to seeing: 'your eyes will be opened'. This is indeed what happens, but it is not recorded as a positive event: 'Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked'. In the aftermath, there is only shame, the need to hide and fear towards the God whose company they had previously enjoyed:

> And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" (Genesis 3:8-11, ESV)

It was in the 'cool of the day' that God, Adam and Eve had previously enjoyed their time together – there is no reference to fearfulness in their previous encounters when God first addressed Adam, when Adam names the living creatures in God's presence, and when God presents Eve to Adam (Genesis 2:16-24). Neither was there any shame: 'And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed' (24). In a complete reversal, hearing becomes the negative sense to Adam and Eve as the sound of God creates panic. Yet the opening of their eyes has brought nothing good. The promise was deceptive. As Eve reached for the fruit we are told that she 'saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise' (Genesis 3:6). The sense of sight as an instrument of functional judgement (she 'saw that the tree was good for food'), aesthetic judgement ('it was a delight to the eyes') and philosophical judgement ('the tree was to be desired to make one wise') is deceptive. It is through her eyes that Eve is deceived, not least of all because she picked the wrong tree: 'The tree of life was in the midst of the garden' (Genesis 2:9, ESV).

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[82] For a discussion regarding a variety of Jewish and Christian theological responses to Eve's apparent misquotation, see Wayne Townsend, 'Eve's Answer to the Serpent: An Alternative Paradigm for Sin and Some Implications in Theology', *Calvin Theological Journal*, 33 (1998), pp. 399-420.

Thereafter, numerous references appear to connect vision with deception or evil – thus, the Jewish thinking voice sounds a warning in relation to wisdom and the senses – for example, Potiphar's wife lusting over Joseph: 'And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me"' (Genesis 39:7, ESV); Achan's ruinous coveting: 'when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them' (Joshua 7:21, ESV); and David's adultery: 'It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful' (2 Samuel 11:2, ESV). Like the fruit plucked by Eve, each takes that which is not rightfully theirs because it appealed to their eyes. David was selected as Israel's king by God, but was overlooked by his family and almost overlooked by the Prophet Samuel because he assumed that David's older brother Eliab was God's obvious choice: 'But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart"' (1 Samuel 16:7, ESV). As Eve looked upon the aesthetic beauty of the fruit, Samuel looked upon Eliab's physique – the look, however, was superficial and ill-judged. God was using different criteria, but God's vision is not defective. The wisdom and knowledge that comes though seeing is prone to producing self-deception – when Eve doubts her hearing, the serpent's work is done; and by the time she lifts the fruit to her mouth the deception has become her own. She no longer needs persuading. The warning against self-deceptive wisdom is clear: 'Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight' (Isaiah 5:21, ESV); and 'Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him' (Proverbs 26:12, ESV).

If seeing is construed as the negative sense, then hearing is the sense through which biblical wisdom is mediated. This is perhaps only natural for a tradition built on orality. The injunction given throughout the Hebrew Scriptures is to 'Hear the word of the LORD' (דבר־יהוה שמעי), which appears well over thirty times in this specific form.[83] The vast majority of these references are found in the books of the Prophets, especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel, reflecting the appropriate response to that which is oracular. Likewise, there are over four hundred references to the expression: 'Thus says the LORD' (כה אמר יהוה), prefacing a message from God, and again the vast majority are found in the Prophets, again especially in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. These two prophets had arguably some of the toughest audiences to address, which perhaps explains the necessity to repeat the directives to listen because God is speaking.

[83] See 1 Kings 22:19; 2 Kings 7:1, 20:16; 2 Chronicles 18:18; Isaiah 1:10, 28:14, 39:5, 66:5; Jeremiah 2:4, 7:2, 17:20, 19:3, 21:11, 22:2, 22:29, 29:20, 31:10, 34:4, 42:15, 44:24, 44:26; Ezekiel 6:3, 13:2, 16:35, 20:47, 25:3, 34:7, 34:9, 36:1, 36:4, 37:4; Hosea 4:1; Amos 7:16, 8:11.

Although the Prophet's messages are replete with imagery, the overall emphasis is on the auditory and not the visual.

The relationship between hearing and biblical wisdom is illustrated in a Psalm attributed to the Sons of Korah, where all are enjoined to listen:

> Hear this, all peoples!
> Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,
> both low and high,
> rich and poor together!
> My mouth shall speak wisdom; the meditation of my heart shall be understanding.
> I will incline my ear to a proverb;
> I will solve my riddle to the music of the lyre (Psalm 49:1-4, ESV).

The Psalm is addressed to Jew and non-Jew alike, and to people of all social and economic position – it is thoroughly inclusive. It begins with instructions to hear and to literally give one's ear (אזן, *azan*). The ear must be given to the speaker, or in this case, the singer – it must be a deliberate act, no less than the act of contemplation in the ancient Greek tradition. The Psalm effortlessly weaves together the wisdom of the *mashal* – the light and darkness of understanding and riddle – with the act of hearing. The Psalms are, of course, songs to be sung and often, as with this Psalm, with the accompaniment of instruments. Just as Socrates and Plato fused cosmological astronomy with musical harmonics as kindred sciences (*Republic*, 530d);[84] and just as the Trivium laid the foundation for the study of music and astronomy in the Quadrivium; so we find a similar understanding in the Hebrew tradition, fusing wisdom with music.

In the Book of Proverbs the wise are instructed to 'hear and increase in learning' (1:5) and to hear a 'father's instruction' (1:8). Wisdom is portrayed with a voice: 'Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks' (1:20-21). Like the Prophetic literature, Wisdom literature is aimed at the ear:

> Does not wisdom call? Does not understanding raise her voice? …she cries aloud: "To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the children of man. O simple ones, learn prudence; O fools, learn sense. Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right, for my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are righteous; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them" (Proverbs 8:1-8, ESV).

The voice of wisdom is dependable; it is uncorrupted and therefore can be trusted to impart prudence, good sense, nobility, righteousness, and even truth. This is not the Aristotelian

[84] Plato, *Republic*, p. 202.

understanding of truth as correspondence, but the truth of reliability – of true words spoken and of words being kept.[85]

Perhaps the greatest call to hear in ancient Israel – still in force in Judaism today – comes from Deuteronomy, where Moses, addressing the people, says: 'Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one' (6:4, JPS Tanakh 1917,שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד). This has become a prayer of recitation and a semi-creedal declaration, and is known as the *Shema*, taken from the first word in the verse שמע, to 'hear' or 'heard'. Whilst the focus of the statement is often the identity and unity of Israel's God (the paramount avowal of monotheism), the verbal command is to hear – as Danielle Celermajer states:

> Thus, what is perhaps the central prayer, repeated several times daily and throughout the liturgy, opens with the words, "Shema Israel", "Hear Israel!" This, combined with the prohibition on making images of God and the impossibility of seeing God has led to a general understanding that, for the Hebrews, the pre-eminent knowing takes the form of hearing, and not seeing.[86]

The prohibition against making images is found in the second commandment: 'You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth' (Exodus 20:4). The commandment is reiterated by Moses in Deuteronomy, reminding the people of when they received the Ten Commandments:

> Then the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice … Therefore watch yourselves very carefully. Since you saw no form on the day that the LORD spoke to you … out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven (4:12-19, ESV).

The commandment against idolatry is reemphasised with regard to the relationship between the visual and the auditory. Crucially, the people 'heard the sound of words, but saw no form' – the visual was likely to lead to idolatry, so the people are warned in no uncertain terms –

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[85] See Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, pp. 194-218.
[86] Danielle Celermajer, 'Seeing the Light and Hearing the Call; the Aesthetics of Knowledge and Thought', *Literature & Aesthetics*, 16.2 (2006), pp. 120-144 (p. 127).

God reveals no visual manifestation. They are left with only a voice. However, the sound of words requires both voice and ears, as Shmuel Trigano argues:

> A voice does not exist in itself and for itself. It exists as a "voice" only insofar as it is heard, even and especially by those who push it away. One could even go so far as to say that it is the hearing that makes the voice, that without hearing the voice is nothing and, consequently, that without human beings, creation is nothing, nothing but an endless, anonymous passing. What makes God's Name, the purpose for which God needs a name, is man.[87]

Thus, the sound of words mediates the covenantal relationship – the divine voice and the human ear (via the prophet), the divine ear and the human voice (via the priest). The Jewish thinking voice requires a receptive ear – an open ear. Room must be made in the Great Conversation of literature, rhetoric and philosophy to allow not just for the Jewish written, spoken and thinking voices to sound, but to be heard; to strike a two-way relationship between Athens and Jerusalem.

However, it is necessary that the people remember what they heard, not what they saw. In the absence of the visual (Moses), the people broke the second commandment even before Moses returned to them with the stone tablets; they created a golden calf evoking the deities of Egypt (Exodus 32). To remember what was heard – the sound of words – requires a deliberate act of memorisation – an act of recalling. Hence, the *Shema* and the directives that immediately follow it:

> You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:5-9, ESV).

The commandments were to be recited, taught and learnt in the day-to-day activities of sitting, walking and lying down, dawn till dusk. From ear to heart, they were to be communicated to each successive generation. The binding to hand, head and house has been translated into the physical *tefillin* or *mezuzah*, however, the command may as easily mean that the actions of the hands and the direction of the head are guided by the commandments; whilst the activities of going out of the home into the world and the return again are checked by the words on the doorpost and gate. But even the physical representations are memory

[87] Shmuel Trigano, *Philosophy of the Law: The Political in the Torah* (Jerusalem: Shalem Press, 2011), p. 506.

aids to put in mind the words spoken by God, which correspond to the words heard by the people. As Trigano states:

> …the voice reaches hearing through the agency of words: "you heard the voice of words" (Deut. 4:12), but the hearing in this relationship is by no means pure passivity. The ear has to arrive at hearing words, discerning them, making a covenant.[88]

In Trigano's view, the speaker and the hearer are interdependent – neither can exist without the other: 'The voice can spring forth only in the hearing, which means that in the voice there is always already someone listening … hearing is always preceded by a voice, but a voice exists only to be heard'.[89]

In the ensuing post-biblical period, Carmy and Shatz trace the line of Jewish philosophy: 'Beginning with Philo and continuing on through medieval thinkers like Saadia Gaon and Maimonides, biblical hermeneutics often rested on the principle that the Bible conveys major philosophical and scientific truths.'[90] Daniel Breslauer argues that Philo (c. 20 BCE-50 CE) understood Judaism as 'the best pedagogy for teaching true philosophy':

> Through allegorical interpretation, he identifies the ideals and values of the Bible with Greek thought. He justifies Jewish observances as inherently philosophical and as indispensable for a philosophic life. In this way he defends Judaism, the true philosophy, as an exalted religious tradition worthy of emulation by Jew and non-Jew alike.[91]

An example of Philo's allegorical interpretation can be seen in *On Drunkenness*, where he puts forward a cosmology in which wisdom partners God in the act of creation:

> …the Creator of the universe is also the father of his creation; and that the mother was the knowledge of the Creator with whom God uniting, not as a man unites, became the father of creation. And this knowledge having received the seed of God, when the day of her travail arrived, brought forth her only and well-beloved son, perceptible by the external senses, namely this world. Accordingly wisdom is represented by some one of the beings of the divine company as speaking of herself in this manner: "God created me as the first of his works, and before the beginning of time did he establish me." For it was necessary that all the things which came under the head of the creation must be younger than the mother and nurse of the whole universe (VIII, 30-31).[92]

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[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Carmy and Shatz, 'The Bible as a source', p. 11.
[91] Daniel Breslauer, 'Philosophy in Judaism: Two Stances' in Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Judaism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 162-180 (p. 166).
[92] Philo of Alexandria, *On Drunkenness*, trans. Charles D. Yonge <www.earlyjewishwritings.com/text/philo/book13.html> [accessed 18 June 2014].

Here, Philo quotes directly from the Book of Proverbs: 'God created me as the first of his works, and before the beginning of time did he establish me' (8:22). Yet, he develops the biblical text into an allegorical relationship between God and wisdom that bears a son, which represents the world. This goes well beyond the text of Proverbs, elevating wisdom to a co-creator. Whilst in no way orthodox, he does present a cosmology that could engage a Jewish and/or non-Jewish audience.

Breslauer also notes the contribution of Josephus Flavius (ca. 38-100 CE), the Jewish historian, who in *Against Apion* 'offers several examples to demonstrate that philosophy has an exalted place in Judaism'.[93] He made the bold claim that 'among the formative Greek thinkers, both Protagoras and Aristotle learned from the Jews', thereby suggesting that 'Judaism has a "natural" philosophy, inherent in itself, that has instructed even the most advanced of Greek thinkers'.[94] Josephus quotes from Clearchus of Soli (c. 300 BCE), a student of Aristotle, with regard to an alleged encounter between Aristotle and a Jew: 'Now, for a great part of what this Jew said, it would be too long to recite it; but what includes in it both wonder and philosophy it may not be amiss to discourse of' (*Against Apion* 1.22).[95] Josephus views Judaism and philosophy as compatible. Indeed, as Breslauer points out: 'True Judaism demonstrates its authenticity through its philosophical rigor.'[96] Yet, arguably, Josephus goes beyond the synthesis of Philo:

> While maintaining that Jews have a long history of being philosophical, Josephus goes even further than Philo, arguing that the Greeks already recognized this aspect of Jewish philosophical inclination as inherent to Judaic culture. Josephus does not merely show that Jewish and Greek thought teach the same truths. He insists that native Jewish thought is intrinsically philosophical.[97]

Whether or not Josephus' examples can withstand historic scrutiny, he himself appears to believe them, just as Clearchus appears to believe in the account of Aristotle, even though the veracity of the encounter seems dubious.[98]

In the rabbinic period of Antiquity, the Talmudic view of philosophy would appear to be negative, or superficially so, at least. As Howland points out, 'At first sight, the Talmud's opinion of Greek intellectual [endeavours] seems unambiguous: "Cursed be a man who rears pigs and cursed be a man who teaches his son Greek wisdom!" the Gemara declares [BT Sotah

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[93] Breslauer, 'Philosophy in Judaism', p. 162.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion*, trans. William Whiston <www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0216%3Abook%3D1%3Awhiston+section%3D22 > [accessed 17 July 2014].
[96] Breslauer, 'Philosophy in Judaism', p. 162.
[97] Breslauer, 'Philosophy in Judaism', p. 166.
[98] For a discussion on the veracity of Josephus and Clearchus' accounts, see Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 4-6.

49B (Soncino trans.), repeated at BT Bava Kamma 82B].'[99] Yet, Howland believes that this is not a 'blanket condemnation of Greek thinking', but rather a prohibition on 'teaching such wisdom to children'.[100] The meaning of 'Greek Wisdom' is unclear from the context but, furthermore, 'neither here nor elsewhere does the Talmud explicitly forbid its study'. Indeed, even the prohibition 'bears comparison to Socrates' assertion that no one under thirty years of age should be exposed to dialectical argumentation, lest he be "filled with lawlessness" (*Republic* 537e).'[101] Indeed, in *The Guide for the Perplexed*, Maimonides also appears to uphold the Rabbi's view of age in relation to the teaching of philosophy:

> Now, consider how, in the writings of the Rabbis, the admission of a person into discourses on metaphysics is made dependent on distinction in social qualities, and study of philosophy, as well as on the possession of clearsightedness, intelligence, eloquence, and ability to communicate things by slight allusions. If a person satisfies these requirements, the secrets of the Law are confided to him. In the same place we also read the following passage: - R. Jochanan said to R. Elasar, "Come, I will teach you *Ma'aseh Mercabah*." The reply was, "I am not yet old," or in other words, I have not yet become old, I still perceive in myself the hot blood and the rashness of youth. You learn from this that, in addition to the above-named good qualities, a certain age is also required.[102]

Maimonides is drawing on a rabbinic text where the Law is in view, but he applies the principle of age to metaphysical discourse by extension. Whether this is merely reflects Maimonides' fusion of Western philosophy and the Scriptures, or whether this also represents the rabbinic view from centuries before regarding philosophy is unclear, but his use of the rabbinic allusion supports Howland's conclusion.

If the rabbinic view of Greek philosophy is unclear, the attitude towards Jewish wisdom is much more positive. Thus, the influence of the Jewish thinking voice reaches beyond the biblical age, even if only in the Jewish world. The *Bereshit Rabbah* (Midrash on Genesis) I.1, for example, begins with an exposition of wisdom from Proverbs 8:

> R. Oshaya commenced [his exposition thus]: *Then I was by Him, as a nursling* (amon); *and I was daily all delight* (Prov. VIII, 30). '*Amon*' means tutor; '*amon*' means covered; '*amon*' means hidden; and some say, '*amon*' means great. '*Amon*' is a tutor, as you read, *As an* omen (*nursing-father*) *carrieth the sucking child* (Num. XI, 12). '*Amon*' means covered, as in the verse, Ha'emunim (*they that were clad* – i.e. covered) *in scarlet* (Lam. IV, 5). '*Amon*' means hidden, as in the verse, *And he concealed* (omen)

[99] Howland, *Plato and the Talmud*, p. 8.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. Michael Friedländer (London: George Routledge, 1910), p. 48.

> *Hadassah* (Est. II, 7). '*Amon*' means great, as in the verse, *Art thou better than No-amon* (Nah. III, 8)? Which is rendered, Art thou better than Alexandria the Great, that is situate among the rivers?[103]

The Midrash draws on a variety of biblical sources to flesh out the character of wisdom through the noun *amon* (אמון) meaning 'nursling'. Unlike the Philonic understanding of wisdom, which characterises her as a co-creator with God, this rabbinic exegesis positions her as a subordinate – a nursing child. Wisdom is, therefore, nurtured by God. There is also reference to the dark and obscure nature of wisdom – it is concealed, hidden, covered – like Socratic *aporia*, wisdom is not at first perceived, it must be uncovered, it must be found. The Midrash continues to explore the text:

> Another interpretation: '*amon*' is a workman (*uman*). The Torah declares: 'I was the working tool of the Holy One, blessed be He.' In human practice, when a mortal king builds a palace, he builds it not with his own skill but with the skill of an architect. The architect moreover does not build it out of his head, but employs plans and diagrams to know how to arrange the chambers and the wicket doors. Thus God consulted the Torah and created the world, while the Torah declares, IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED (I, 1), BEGINNING referring to the Torah, as in the verse, *The Lord made me as the beginning of His way* (Prov. VIII, 22).[104]

By means of a small 'word-play', Jacob Neusner explains that in 'changing its vowels and reading *uman*', wisdom becomes a 'workman'.[105] Wisdom is both at once a 'working tool' in God's hand and a skilled workman – an architect. Thus, the nurtured child grows into an apprentice builder-architect in Hebrew cosmology. Yet the key here, for the Rabbis, is that the architect's working plans are no less that Torah. At first, the suggestion is that wisdom is consulting Torah, but going further, the final sentence above identifies wisdom as Torah (i.e. Proverbs 8:22 is referring to Torah as the first of God's creations rather than wisdom). In an editorial footnote to the Midrash, Maurice Simon attempts to clarify the text:

> The speaker is the Torah (Wisdom) personified, referring to the pre-Creation era. The Torah was with God as with a tutor, reared, as it were, by the Almighty … it was also covered up and hidden. This may mean that the laws of the Torah were unknown until the Revelation at Sinai, while some of them remained 'hidden' even then, i.e. their reasons are not known.[106]

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[103] *Midrash Rabbah: Translated Into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices Under the Editorship of Rabbi H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, with Foreword by Rabbi I. Epstein*, *Genesis in Two Volumes, I*, trans. Harry Freedman (London: Soncino Press, 1939), p.1.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Jacob Neusner, *Between Time and Eternity: The Essentials of Judaism* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006), p. 12.
[106] Footnote 1 by Maurice Simon in *Midrash Rabbah*, *Genesis*, p.1.

However, later in the Midrash a clearer understanding of the relationship between wisdom and Torah emerges: 'the incomplete form of the heavenly wisdom is the Torah' (XVII, 5).[107] Thus, by implication, wisdom in its fullest – 'heavenly' – form is greater than the Torah, which in turn implies that Torah is an earthly version of wisdom, not a complete representation, as the earlier text suggests.

Jewish philosophy developed distinctively out of the period of Late Antiquity and into the medieval world, and as it did so, it began to synthesise far more with Platonic and Aristotelian models. Arguably, it began to lose some of its distinctive shape and morph into something different as it imbibed the Western tradition, and as it found itself in the company of Christian appropriations of the Hebrew Scriptures and Islamic appropriations of the Greek philosophers. Effectively, the unique Jewish thinking voice was subdued, as the Western thinking voice began to dominate. Despite the great contributions to Jewish philosophy from the likes of Saadia Gaon (882-942 CE)[108] and Maimonides (1135-1204 CE)[109], Jerusalem began to speak the language of Athens.

The *Elenchus* of Socrates and Hebrew Wisdom Literature

We return now to the work of Plato and the person of Socrates, whose philosophy has had one of the most profound effects on the Western tradition. We have seen that Plato did not directly present himself in his writings – he wrote but did not speak. Conversely, Socrates spoke but did not, as far as we know, write – his philosophy is presented in speech, but he himself composed no written works.[110] Howland sums up the life and times of Socrates as presented by Plato through his dialogues and the socio-political context in the 'aftermath of the Peloponnesian War, a conflict of twenty-seven years that ended when the Spartans starved the Athenians into submission in 404 BCE':

> Unlike many Athenians, including those most strongly allied with the democratic faction, Socrates remained in the city during the brief postwar rule of the Thirty Tyrants, a ruthless Spartan-installed oligarchy that murdered roughly 1,500 of his fellow citizens. When the returning democrats defeated the oligarchs in battle in 403, Socrates fell under their suspicion. Well known for his practice of philosophizing in

[107] *Midrash Rabbah*, *Genesis*, p.136.
[108] Samuel M. Edelman, 'Ancient Traditions, Modern Needs: An Introduction to Jewish Rhetoric', *Journal of Communication and Religion*, 26.2 (2003), pp. 113-125 (p. 118).
[109] Kenneth Seeskin, 'Maimonides', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2013) <plato.stanford.edu/entries/maimonides> [accessed 18 July 2014].
[110] Howland, *Plato and the Talmud*, p. 56. See also Hart, *Increasing Academic Achievement*, p. 11.

> public, he was tried and executed in 399 for the crimes of impiety and corrupting the young.'[111]

However, rejecting these charges, Socrates denied 'having students or being a teacher (*Apology* 33a), presumably because his pedagogy consists in trying to enable others to learn through their own efforts'.[112] Nevertheless, Howland argues that Socrates 'seduces as all great teachers do, inspiring his companions by his moral and intellectual seriousness, passion for learning, and depth of insight to attempt to philosophize as he does in order to achieve something like his nobility of soul'.[113]

During his public trial Socrates uttered one of his most well-known maxims: 'the unexamined life is not worth living' (*Apology* 38a).[114] This epitomises the contemplative act described by Sandy and Arendt. Howland believes that Plato almost fully renders the contemplative act of Socrates in the dialogues:

> Taken as a whole, the dialogues constitute a relatively complete portrait of Socrates' version of the examined life. Most of the dialogues begin in everyday circumstances that spontaneously give rise to a discussion of some philosophical issue – the nature of piety, for example (as in the *Euthyphro*), or courage (the *Laches*), or justice (the *Republic*).[115]

Yet, this was 'philosophical reflection' as life rather than 'a refined pastime nor simply one alternative among many intellectual pursuits'; it was 'a means of examining the basic beliefs that guide human action … an indispensable part of what human beings ordinarily understand by living well'.[116] Howland emphasises the 'social and collaborative' aspect of Socratic philosophising, which is present in 'even the silent and interior process of thinking' – the inner 'conversing [*dialegesthai*]' – where 'the soul proceeds by "asking and answering itself" (*Theaetetus* 189e-90a)'.[117] This outwardly manifests when Socrates 'asks his interlocutors to be cooperative (in participating in a joint inquiry), honest (in saying what they believe), gracious (in submitting to criticism), reasonable (in admitting what they don't know), and courageous (in continuing the investigation once their ignorance has been revealed).'[118] Socrates' social and collaborative philosophy – the conversing – finds a mirror in the Jewish tradition, where the auditory depends on speaker and hearer.

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[111] Ibid.
[112] Howland, *Plato and the Talmud*, p. 58.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Plato, *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo* (2nd edition), trans. George M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), p. 41.
[115] Howland, *Plato and the Talmud*, p. 61.
[116] Howland, *Plato and the Talmud*, p. 62.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.

Thus, as Hart makes clear, Socrates was zealous to 'discover guidelines for leading a just life'; with a concern for 'ethics and morality'.[119] Plato's dialogues present 'Socrates and others in extended conversation about philosophy', and in which Socrates is the 'relentless questioner of his fellow citizens, foreign friends, and various sophists'.[120] His questions were formed to cause his interlocutors to 'examine the basic assumptions of their way of life' – this has become known as the 'Socratic Method' – leading 'his students to draw conclusions in response to his probing questions,' whilst refuting any assumptions. Jenny Labendz adds that the Socratic Method is 'also known as *elenchus* or *elenchos*, from the Greek verb *elenchein* – to refute, examine critically, or censure – which Socrates uses to describe his method in Plato's dialogues'.[121] Consequently, Socratic elenchus 'tests a certain belief through a series of questions and answers between a leader and an interlocutor … Socrates seeks out and initiates conversations with his interlocutors'.[122] As a result, Socrates' interlocutors were 'often left … bewildered because they realized they were ignorant regarding an idea they thought they knew perfectly well'. Socrates, on the other hand, 'openly acknowledged that he did not know everything'.[123]

Socrates' acknowledgement reflects his uniqueness within 'the context of Greek thinking', as Howland rightly notes: 'Socrates is something unexpected: a philosopher for whom the *vita contemplativa* is inseparable from the *vita activa*, and whose intellectual pride is tempered by religious humility.'[124] In the *Apology*, Socrates delivers his defence speech and recounts his quest to test the Delphic Oracle, which had named him the wisest man:

> Socrates claims in the *Apology* that he began to engage in his distinctive philosophical activity – the process of questioning his fellow citizens and, inevitably, exposing the incoherence of their opinions – in order to test the oracle of the god at Delphi, which had declared that no one was wiser than he. Socrates explains that he came to understand the oracle to mean that he is wiser than others just to the extent that he recognizes his own ignorance. By examining and refuting his fellow Athenians, he shows that human wisdom is "worth little or nothing" (23a-b).[125]

Socrates' quest took him far and wide, and 'into the most unlikely quarters', according to Edmond Cherbonnier: 'Unimpressed by pedigrees, he winnowed ideas in banquet hall and market place, rejecting none until they stood condemned by their own inner contradictions.'[126]

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[119] Hart, *Increasing Academic Achievement*, p. 11.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Jenny R. Labendz, *Socratic Torah: Non-Jews in Rabbinic Intellectual Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 37.
[122] Labendz, *Socratic Torah*, p. 39.
[123] Hart, *Increasing Academic Achievement*, p. 12.
[124] Howland, *Plato and the Talmud*, p. 10.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Edmond La B. Cherbonnier, 'The Logic of Biblical Anthropomorphism', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 55.3 (1962), pp. 187-206 (p. 187).

Socrates becomes the 'model or pattern (*paradeigma*) of human wisdom' (*Apology* 23a-b), because he recognises his own ignorance.[127]

Labendz notes that another significant aspect of Socratic elenchus is the use of analogy. However, the analogical element of elenchus is not a demonstration of rhetoric, rather when Socrates uses analogies they are 'intimately connected with his theory of learning', because they join different areas of knowledge together. [128] Moreover, Socrates' analogies make 'the lofty ideas' in his discussions more accessible to his interlocutors.[129] One of the most profound analogies of Socrates is the Cave. In the *Republic* Socrates uses this image to explain the effects of philosophic education upon the soul, but he begins by depicting life without philosophy, without thinking:

> Imagine human beings living in an underground, cavelike dwelling, with an entrance a long way up … open to the light … They've been there since childhood, fixed in the same place, with their necks and legs fettered, able to see only in front of them … Light is provided by a fire burning far above and behind them. Also behind them, but on higher ground, there is a path stretching between them and the fire. Imagine that along this path a low wall has been built, like the screen in front of puppeteers above which they show their puppets … Then also imagine that there are people along the wall, carrying all kinds of artifacts that project above it – statues of people and other animals … these prisoners [do not] see anything of themselves and one another besides the shadows that the fire casts on the wall in front of them … the prisoners would in every way believe that the truth is nothing other than the shadows of those artifacts (*Republic* 514a-515c).[130]

Socrates paints a vivid picture of people living in relative ignorance and knowing no better. It is the unexamined life. What occupies them is shadow play. Furthermore, they have been imprisoned their whole lives – unaware and unquestioning.

Socrates now proceeds to describe the act of liberation from this imprisonment, in its initial stages:

> Consider … what being released … and cured of their ignorance would naturally be like … When one of them was freed and suddenly compelled to stand up, turn his head, walk, and look up toward the light, he'd be pained and dazzled and unable to see the things whose shadows he'd seen before. What do you think he'd say, if we told him that what he'd seen before was inconsequential, but that now … he sees more correctly? … if someone compelled him to look at the light itself, wouldn't his eyes

[127] Howland, *Plato and the Talmud*, p. 68.
[128] Labendz, *Socratic Torah*, p. 43.
[129] Labendz, *Socratic Torah*, p. 44.
[130] Plato, *Republic* (2nd edition), trans. George M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), pp. 186-187.

> hurt, and wouldn't he turn around and flee towards the things he's able to see, believing that they're really clearer than the ones he's being shown? (515c-d)[131]

The process of liberation is painful, causing aporetic disorientation. Contemplation, therefore, does not come easily. All men may desire to know, as Aristotle stated, but not all desire liberating knowledge because it comes at a great cost: every held view and all prior understanding must be abandoned.

Next, Socrates takes the liberated soul out of the cave, to experience life in the world outside for the first time:

> …if someone dragged him away from there by force, up the rough, steep path, and didn't let him go until he had dragged him into the sunlight, wouldn't he be pained and irritated at being treated that way? And when he came into the light, with the sun filling his eyes, wouldn't he be unable to see a single one of the things now said to be true? …he'd need time to get adjusted before he could see things in the world above. At first, he'd see shadows most easily, then images of men and other things in water, then the things themselves. Of these, he'd be able to study the things in the sky and the sky itself more easily at night, looking at the light of the stars and the moon, than during the day, looking at the sun and the light of the sun … Finally … he'd be able to see the sun, not images of it in water or some alien place, but the sun itself, in its own place, and be able to study it … And at this point he would infer and conclude that the sun provides the seasons and the years, governs everything in the visible world, and is in some way the cause of all the things that he used to see (515e-516c).[132]

The *aporia* gradually clears like mist and, with the new dawn, the liberated soul begins to make sense of life, the world and the universe it inhabits. It is in stages, with increasing degrees of illumination leading to greater and fuller understanding, from the shadow to the sun.

Now Socrates has the soul turning to consider the cave again, and the fellow-prisoners that were left behind:

> What about when he reminds himself of his first dwelling place, his fellow prisoners, and what passed for wisdom there? Don't you think that he'd count himself happy for the change and pity the others? …if there had been any [honours], praises, or prizes among them for the one who was sharpest at identifying the shadows as they passed by and who best remembered which usually came earlier, which later, and which simultaneously, and who could thus best divine the future, do you think that our man would desire these rewards or envy those among the prisoners who were [honoured] and held power? Instead, wouldn't he feel, with Homer, that he'd much prefer to

[131] Plato, *Republic*, pp. 187-188.
[132] Plato, *Republic*, p. 188.

> "work the earth as a serf to another, one without possessions," and go through any sufferings, rather than share their opinions and live as they do? (516c-d)[133]

After the pain, liberation finally brings its reward – happiness and contentment without the esteem of others, without possessions or prizes. What passed for wisdom is now revealed to be a shallow token, and those who excel in it are to be pitied.

Going further, Socrates imagines the soul returning to the cave, and the implications for those who return and those who have remained:

> If this man went down into the cave again and sat down in his same seat, wouldn't his eyes – coming suddenly out of the sun like that – be filled with darkness? …before his eyes had recovered – and the adjustment would not be quick – while his vision was still dim, if he had to compete again with the perpetual prisoners in recognizing the shadows, wouldn't he invite ridicule? Wouldn't it be said of him that he'd returned from his upward journey with his eyesight ruined and that it isn't worthwhile even to try to travel upward? …as for anyone who tried to free them and lead them upward, if they could somehow get their hands on him, wouldn't they kill him? (516e-517a)[134]

The soul liberated by philosophic contemplation finds no place in the cave, only rejection. This was, of course, Socrates' own experience, and whether the killing he speaks of is Socrates predicting his own demise or an idea woven in by Plato we do not know. The unexamined life may not be worth living but many, Socrates fears, prefer the bliss of ignorance. The journey is too costly and perhaps too remote – they will settle for the safety of the puppet show.

Finally, Socrates makes clear the meaning of the analogy, revealing the purpose of the journey:

> …if you interpret the upward journey and the study of things above as the upward journey of the soul to the intelligible realm, you'll grasp what I hope to convey … In the knowable realm, the form of the good is the last thing to be seen, and it is reached only with difficulty. Once one has seen it, however, one must conclude that it is the cause of all that is correct and beautiful in anything, that it produces both light and its source in the visible realm, and that in the intelligible realm it controls and provides truth and understanding, so that anyone who is to act sensibly in private or public must see it … It isn't surprising that the ones who get to this point are unwilling to occupy themselves with human affairs and that their souls are always pressing upwards, eager to spend their time above (517b-c).[135]

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[133] Plato, *Republic*, pp. 188-189.
[134] Plato, *Republic*, p. 189.
[135] Ibid.

Freedom from the cave represents the upward journey towards the intelligible, knowable realm. It is the journey towards the 'good' which illuminates everything, however, Socrates acknowledges that it is a difficult journey, attended by aporetic pain and rejection.

Celermajer believes that Socratic philosophy – as demonstrated in the Cave analogy – promotes the concept of thinking as seeing: 'When, with our mind's eye, we followed Socrates from the obscurity of the cave out into the clarity of the sun's light, we inherited a metaphoric world of knowing that remains deeply woven into the fabric of Western thought and language.'[136] She supports her claim with a reference to Arendt's reflection on the predominance of sight in philosophic thinking – Arendt wrote:

> Thus, from the outset in formal philosophy, thinking has been thought of in terms of *seeing*, and since thinking is the most fundamental and the most radical of mental activities, it is quite true that vision "has tended to serve as the model of perception in general and thus as the measure of the other senses." The predominance of sight is so deeply embedded in Greek speech and therefore in our conceptual language that we seldom find any consideration bestowed on it, as though it belonged among things too obvious to be noticed.[137]

For Celermajer, the 'truth' of Arendt's comment 'is evidenced by the ubiquitous presence of visual metaphors throughout our language'.[138] Certainly, the elenctic analogies of Socrates are, by their very nature, replete with visual images, as the Cave vividly illustrates. Celermajer argues that the influence of Greek thought through seeing is felt everywhere: 'Although obvious once pointed out, the dominance of sight in the Greek way of thinking is so pervasive that it has entered the category of the invisible conditions of thought.'[139] This 'visual dominance' is 'most striking in Plato's doctrine of ideas,' and 'in the intimate relationship that the Greeks perceived between geometry and metaphysics.'[140] Moreover, William Barrett finds evidence of the connection between sight and thought in the pre-Socratic philosophers:

> Parmenides and Heraclitus were visionaries and seers. Parmenides wrote in verse, and his poem opens by describing itself as the account of a vision vouchsafed by the goddess, who has taken the poet in her chariot beyond the portals of the day and night. Heraclitus' sayings are dark and oracular, and they are meant to be taken as oracles – visionary disclosures of the real. The Greek word for "I know," *oida*, is the

[136] Celermajer, 'Seeing the Light', p. 120.
[137] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, p. 110.
[138] Celermajer, 'Seeing the Light', p. 120.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Celermajer, 'Seeing the Light', pp. 123-124.

> perfect of the verb "to see" and means "I have seen." He who knows is the man who has seen, who has had a vision.[141]

To see, then, is to know. The liberated soul emerges from the cave seeing – it is through sight that the world outside the cave is perceived. Indeed, even the shadow play within the cave is the visualisation of a base understanding. Unlike Hebrew Wisdom where hearing is the predominant sense, the Western voice of philosophy is in no small way shaped by the sense of seeing.

Another facet of Socrates' philosophy (often overlooked) is the connection between his elenchus and religion. Howland notes that earlier in the *Republic* Socrates attributes the good with the divine: 'When Glaucon at one point surmises that the Good is pleasure, Socrates warns him not to engage in blasphemy (509a).'[142] The religious language employed by Socrates is 'a register of the gratitude he feels at the gift of learning'. His philosophy 'begins from human experience' and the 'erotic longing for wisdom, which directs him prophetically toward the beginning of the Whole that he calls the Good'. Thus, 'the process of learning is an essential way of relating to that which is divine'; and 'for Socrates, the activity of philosophical inquiry is the grateful reception of a sacred gift'.[143] Indeed, his elenchus is divinely motivated, his quest inspired by the Oracle. In the *Apology* Socrates 'humbles others in argument in order that they may come to share his knowledge of ignorance and his humility in relation to the wisdom of "the god," and so turn in earnest to the quest for truth and the care of their souls (cf. 29d-30a)'.[144] Likewise, in the *Theaetetus*, Socrates 'maintains that he serves "the god" as a philosophical midwife (149a-151d)'; and in various other dialogues, he 'speaks of the divine being (*daimonion*) that directs his philosophical activity'.[145] Notable among these is a reference from the *Apology*:

> I have a divine or spiritual sign … This began when I was a child. It is a voice, and whenever it speaks it turns me away from something I am about to do, but it never encourages me to do anything. This is what prevented me from taking part in public affairs, and I think it was quite right to prevent me (31d).[146]

Leo Strauss astutely remarks on the contrary roles played by the Oracle and 'the god' in the life of Socrates: 'While the Delphic oracle urged him forward toward philosophizing, toward examining his fellow men, and thus made him generally hated and thus brought him into mortal danger, his *daimonion* kept him back from political activity and thus saved him from

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[141] William Barrett, *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977), p. 72.
[142] Howland, *Plato and the Talmud*, p. 156.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Howland, *Plato and the Talmud*, p. 10.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Plato, *Five Dialogues*, p. 36. For other references to Socrates relationship with the divine being, see *Euthydemus* 272e; *Republic* 496c; *Theaetetus* 151a; *Phaedrus* 242b-c; *Alcibiades* I.103a; *Theages* 128d-131a.

mortal danger.'[147] Ironically, whilst Socrates desisted from political activity, in the *Republic* he presents his ideal model for political order – and it is a human order, not divine:

> …according to Socrates, the coming-into-being of the best political order is not due to divine intervention; human nature will remain as it always has been; the decisive difference between the best political order and all other societies is that in the former the philosophers will be kings or the natural potentiality of the philosophers will reach its utmost perfection. In the most perfect social order, as Socrates sees it, knowledge of the most important things will remain, as it always was, the preserve of the philosophers, i.e., of a very small part of the population.[148]

The ideal city is ruled by philosopher-kings (473c-d), and they are, as Strauss observes, the select few. However, the reason it is a ruling minority may be due to the steep climb from the cave below to the world above – few are willing to make it. Nevertheless, leaving the *Republic* aside, Sandy well sums up the contribution of Socrates, who 'advocated for the pursuit of timeless truth untouched by human affairs, and this removal from public life later became the hallmark for Platonic philosophy and the philosophers' paradigm of education'.[149] Yet, a philosophy removed from public life and human affairs is in danger of producing an unconcerned and remote elite, with a contemplative wisdom that has no practical value. An examined life, yes, but one that is out of touch in the relational and social realm.

Hebrew Wisdom Literature, on the other hand, presents a wisdom that is practical, relational and socially aware. John Skinner traces the development of Hebrew Wisdom literature – the Book of Proverbs, the Book of Job and the Book of Ecclesiastes – in Jewish tradition:

> Originating in the time of Solomon, it is supposed to have been carried forward by a succession of Sages or Wise Men, who were ultimately incorporated as a regular teaching profession or guild. From this circle of thinkers there emanated the various writings which we group together under the title of the Ḥokmah literature: – first, perhaps, the Proverbs of Solomon, next the Book of Job, and lastly … Ecclesiastes.[150]

In Jewish and Christian tradition, Job is a contemporary of the Patriarchs, and is even considered one of the earliest of biblical narratives. He is mentioned twice by the prophet Ezekiel (see Ezekiel 14:14, 20) in the exilic period (c. 587-538 BCE), thus, the story was already considered a part of established Scripture by this time, and its origins must precede the sixth-century. James Crenshaw argues for a redaction of Proverbs that sees the completed collection somewhere in the Hellenistic period, and also a later dating for Job and Ecclesiastes:

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[147] Leo Strauss, 'Jerusalem and Athens: Some Introductory Reflections', *Commentary*, 43 (1967), pp. 45-57 (p. 57).
[148] Ibid..
[149] Sandy, 'Tracing the Liberal Arts Traditions', pp. 311-312.
[150] John Skinner, 'The Cosmopolitan Aspect of the Hebrew Wisdom', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 17.2 (1905), pp. 240-262 (p. 240).

> The book of Proverbs may not have been complete until Hellenistic times (332-198), although containing older literature as well. Its anthological character suggests that a distinction must be made between the origin of discrete collections and the final composition of the book. A sixth-century date for the book of Job seems likely, and Ecclesiastes was probably written in the third century.[151]

Genung also argues for a redaction process in the compilation of Proverbs, with a variety of authors: 'The Book of Proverbs is an anthology of Wisdom utterances, a deposit of mashals of a certain artistic species and finish, gathered from various sources, and representing the accumulation of a long period of time.'[152]

The Book of Proverbs names three authors within the text: Solomon (1:1, 10:1, 25:1), Agur son of Jakeh (30:1) and Lemuel (31:1), as well as noting the anonymous 'sayings of the wise' (22:17, 24:23). However, the book has become synonymous with Solomon (c. 1000-900 BCE), the king of Israel and son of David. The origin of his legendary wisdom is recorded in the Book of Kings, when Solomon was still a young monarch:

> …the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." And Solomon said … "O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honour, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days" (1 Kings 3:5-13, ESV).

The conversation between God and Solomon takes place in a dream – God invites Solomon to ask him for something – anything – the invitation is open-ended, so Solomon could request whatever he desired or needed. He chooses the latter – a need – wisdom, understanding, discernment and the ability to govern the people well. God is pleased with Solomon's request, noting that he could have chosen a more selfish desire – longevity, wealth or revenge. God grants Solomon his request, and throws in riches and honour anyway. Solomon will possess

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[151] James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), p. 4.

[152] Genung, 'The Development of Hebrew Wisdom', p. 20.

unequalled wisdom and discernment. However, even before this endowment, Solomon appears to possess a certain degree of wisdom evidenced in the very request he makes. Like Socrates, centuries later, Solomon reveals his wisdom in the admission that he lacks it. Both men are given a divine mission, but Solomon appears to understand his lack from the beginning of his journey, rather than at its end. Solomon has examined his young life and found it wanting – his need for wisdom is in the service of others, in public life and human affairs.

Almost immediately, as if to demonstrate that this was more than just a dream, Solomon's wisdom is put to the test:

> Then two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. The one woman said, "Oh, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house, and I gave birth to a child while she was in the house. Then on the third day after I gave birth, this woman also gave birth … And this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on him. And she arose at midnight and took my son from beside me, while your servant slept, and laid him at her breast, and laid her dead son at my breast. When I rose in the morning to nurse my child … he was dead. But when I looked at him closely … he was not the child that I had borne." But the other woman said, "No, the living child is mine, and the dead child is yours" … And the king said, "Bring me a sword" … And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to one and half to the other." Then the woman whose son was alive said to the king, because her heart yearned for her son, "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means put him to death." But the other said, "He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide him." Then the king answered and said, "Give the living child to the first woman, and by no means put him to death; she is his mother." And all Israel heard of the judgement that the king had rendered, and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice (1 Kings 3:16-28, ESV).

Crucially, the two women had been alone in the house, so there were no witnesses that Solomon could call on. How could he choose between their two conflicting testimonies? His method seems extreme and violent, yet we discover that he had no intention of harming the child ('by no means put him to death'). Indeed, he is searching for maternal love and compassion to manifest itself when the child's very life is in the balance. The true mother will forfeit her right to her child in order to preserve his life. Solomon's wisdom may be divinely imparted, but it appears to employ very logical means.

Solomon is considered the wisest person to have ever lived in Jewish tradition. In the following chapter, we read a summary of the extent of his wisdom and achievements:

> And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all other men, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol, and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. And people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom (1 Kings 4:29-34, ESV).

Bruce Waltke believes that Solomon's wisdom is representative of a wider regional literary genre: 'The comparison made in 1 Kings 4:29-34 between Solomon's wisdom and that of the ancient Near Eastern sages strongly implies that his proverbs were a part of an international, pan-oriental, wisdom literature.'[153] Solomon is credited with speaking '3,000 proverbs, yet the Book of Proverbs contain only a small fraction of that amount. Moreover, there is no way of knowing to what degree the redacted version of Proverbs, as a collection, represents the individual proverbs spoken by Solomon.

Whilst the account of Solomon's wisdom in the Book of Kings points to wisdom as a divine gift, the Book of Proverbs points to a wisdom that can be learnt and emulated, as well as sought:

> My son, if you receive my words
> and treasure up my commandments with you,
> making your ear attentive to wisdom
> and inclining your heart to understanding;
> yes, if you call out for insight
> and raise your voice for understanding,
> if you seek it like silver
> and search for it as for hidden treasures,
> then you will understand the fear of the Lord
> and find the knowledge of God.
> For the Lord gives wisdom;
> from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
> he stores up sound wisdom for the upright (2:1-7, ESV).

[153] Bruce K. Waltke, 'The Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature', *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 136 (1979), pp. 221-38 (p. 221).

Wisdom is not just passively received in sleep, despite Solomon's experience – there must be some activity on behalf of the individual – in these verses there is a variety of verbal actions: receiving, treasuring, paying attention (giving one's ear), inclining the heart, calling out, raising one's voice, seeking, searching, and finding. Educative instruction plays a role in obtaining wisdom: 'My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments' (3:1). As with Socratic wisdom, there is much climbing to be done. The repeated address to a 'son', suggests that the initial responsibility for instruction is parental, passed down from father or mother to child:

> Hear, O sons, a father's instruction,
> and be attentive, that you may gain insight,
> for I give you good precepts;
> do not forsake my teaching.
> When I was a son with my father,
> tender, the only one in the sight of my mother,
> he taught me and said to me,
> "Let your heart hold fast my words;
> keep my commandments, and live" (4:1-4, ESV).

The mother's role is also explicit in the instruction of wisdom: 'Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching' (1:8); 'My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching' (6:20); and the proverbs of Lemuel begin with: 'An oracle that his mother taught him' (31:1). The parental responsibility does not diminish the divine origin of wisdom, but it does imply that the Jewish thinking voice can be communicated and passed on through instruction and example.

The idea that wisdom can be taught by instruction and example is also clear in Proverbs, because it is intimately connected with morality, righteous and just living – it cannot be obtained without these:

> Then you will understand righteousness and justice
> and equity, every good path;
> for wisdom will come into your heart,
> and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;
> discretion will watch over you,
> understanding will guard you,
> delivering you from the way of evil…
> So you will walk in the way of the good
> and keep to the paths of the righteous.
> For the upright will inhabit the land,

and those with integrity will remain in it (2:9-12, 20-21, ESV).

As we shall see later, biblical wisdom and morality are interdependent – you cannot have one without the other. Thus, philosophical understanding mirrors moral understanding, and vice-versa. However, morality must be translated into a corresponding ethical behaviour – it is a pathway to be walked – understanding is demonstrated in action.

There is an admonition in Proverbs to avoid wisdom unaided, a purely human wisdom. Naturally, this points towards a divine understanding and to God's wisdom as an external guide beyond the limits of human reason:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.
Be not wise in your own eyes;
fear the Lord, and turn away from evil (Proverbs 3:5-7, ESV).

The first part of verse 7 – 'Be not wise in your own eyes' – evokes the advent of corrupted wisdom in Genesis 3:7, where Adam and Eve's eyes were opened. It is a reminder of the potential self-deception inherent in human wisdom. The second part – 'fear the Lord, and turn away from evil' – is found in almost identical form in Job 28:28, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.' The act of turning the mind from human wisdom unaided is completed in the turning towards God's wisdom. The 'fear of the Lord' is something we shall return to later.

In Proverbs wisdom is given a unique identity: 'She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed' (3:18, ESV). In Hebrew, the phrase 'tree of life' is עץ חיים (*etz hayyim*), and it is an expression found only here and in the creation narrative of Genesis: 'The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' (2:9, ESV). This would suggest that the author of this proverb is connecting the tree of life in Eden with divine wisdom; and, by implication, all other wisdom – human and corrupt – is embodied in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The distinction is perhaps between wisdom that instructs one how to live ethically and righteously, and mere knowledge that does not. The words 'those who lay hold of her', remind us that Eve reached out for the other fruit – thus, choice must always be made. A blessing comes with the right choice, just as surely as a curse came to those who chose wrong. There is a promise of longevity and peace (Proverbs 3:16-17), the outcome is different to that of Eden. Immediately after this reference to wisdom as the tree of life, as if journeying backward through time, we are told that wisdom was utilised by God in the creation: 'The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; by his knowledge the deeps broke open,

and the clouds drop down the dew' (Proverbs 3:19-20, ESV). This concept is later developed in a cosmological parenthesis, where wisdom speaks in the first person:

> The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work,
> the first of his acts of old.
> Ages ago I was set up,
> at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
> When there were no depths I was brought forth,
> when there were no springs abounding with water.
> Before the mountains had been shaped,
> before the hills, I was brought forth,
> before he had made the earth with its fields,
> or the first of the dust of the world.
> When he established the heavens, I was there;
> when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
> when he made firm the skies above,
> when he established the fountains of the deep,
> when he assigned to the sea its limit,
> so that the waters might not transgress his command,
> when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
> then I was beside him, like a master workman,
> and I was daily his delight,
> rejoicing before him always,
> rejoicing in his inhabited world
> and delighting in the children of man (8:22-31, ESV).

The opening verse states that wisdom was 'possessed' by God, but an alternative reading in the footnote to the translation offers 'fathered' and the Septuagint translates it as 'created'. Wisdom has moved back through time, past Eden, to the very beginning of creation: God's first act is the creation of wisdom, and every subsequent act is fashioned with it. It is unclear whether the creation of wisdom is an event prior to the creation of the cosmos or the first part of it. We are told that wisdom is brought forth before the earth is formed. In the Genesis account, the first creative act recorded is the coming (יהי, *yehi* – 'come into being') of light (1:3). Is this account in Proverbs an equation between wisdom and light – wisdom as illumination? From God's perspective, this would be consistent – as a craftsman opening his workshop and switching on the light before setting to work. The account does not go as far as calling wisdom co-creator, but it is a shaping tool in God's hand. Or is wisdom the tree of life, not springing up 'out of the ground' as the other trees of Eden, but fully formed as if it had pre-

existed? Either way, wisdom speaks as the voice of one well-qualified to teach 'the children of man'.

We turn now to the Book of Job – the story of one man's suffering – his loss of children, wealth, health, honour and friendship, because Satan challenges God to see if Job will still maintain his upright integrity if he loses all he has. Job's three friends come to comfort him, but then accuse him of having erred somewhere in his life for all this calamity to come upon him. His wife is even less sympathetic: 'Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die', she goads him (2:9, ESV). The conversation between God and Satan takes place in the prologue of the book (over chapters one and two), and Job and his friends seem quite unaware of what is going on in the heavenly realm. Indeed, Satan is never mentioned by any human character in the book. Towards the end of the story, God enters into the human realm for the first time, addressing Job with a series of rhetorical questions that humbles all of his thinking. Finally, God restores more to Job in wealth and livestock than he first lost and he and his wife have ten children (presumably to compensate for the ten who were destroyed). Job is exonerated before his friends, who are told to make sacrifices for speaking incorrectly concerning God. Moreover, the humiliation is turned upon them, when God tells them that Job will pray for them in order to avert their due judgement.

As a Wisdom book, Job specifically focuses on the problem of evil and suffering, but does so on a wider human scale, encompassing the sufferings of Jews and non-Jews alike, as Robert Gordis explains:

> Wisdom is the most secular branch of ancient Hebrew literature, being concerned with broadly human rather than with specifically Jewish problems. Job actually treats the problem of human suffering through a gallery of non-Israelitish characters.[154]

Gordis believes that the Book of Job embodies a philosophical angst that is existentially rather than intellectually based, but it is an angst that gives way to peace in the context of the cosmos:

> For Job, the agonizing riddle of life is the suffering of the righteous and the prosperity of the wicked, and the challenge it poses to faith in a God of righteousness and power. For the poet, the *Angst* is existential, not intellectual. Indeed, the mystery and the beauty of the cosmos constitute the response and the remedy expressed in "the Speeches of the Lord out of the Whirlwind".[155]

Yet, as has been mentioned already, the role of Satan is never discussed by mortals, suggesting that either they were unaware of his existence or his involvement in human affairs, or that they ruled that God presided over all, therefore God was ultimately responsible. This latter

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[154] Robert Gordis, 'The Social Background of Wisdom Literature', *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 18 (1944), pp. 77-118 (p, 89).
[155] Gordis, 'Religion, Wisdom and History', p. 370.

view focuses our attention on the relationship between God and humanity in the area of suffering – what God allows rather than what Satan inflicts (and according to the prologue the suffering is inflicted by Satan directly):

> And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head (2:6-7, ESV).

For Carmy and Shatz it is Job's relationship to God that brings closure and makes sense of the suffering: 'The idea that Job's experience of God is the key to his reconciliation suggests the primacy of the human drama in Job, and this insight leads us to a distinct philosophical appropriation of the book; we discover in Job's ordeal a "theodicy of soulmaking".'[156] Thus, the suffering has a purpose: to make Job's soul complete:

> Take the problem of God's wager with the Satan. God's rationale is theologically problematic, to say the least. Can God justifiably make Job a pawn in order to prove a point? If Job is, at bottom, an exploration of what people make of suffering, then the dispute between God and the Satan becomes less capricious. The Satan holds that suffering inexorably corrupts; faithfulness is a luxury only the prosperous can afford. God says that suffering can ennoble; faithfulness can be forged in the crucible of anguish.[157]

God wins the wager – he predicts the outcome correctly and, along with Job, is 'vindicated by the process of suffering'. Moreover, through the process of suffering, Job develops the 'ability to perceive that which previously he could not perceive'; he grows 'through crisis'. Ultimately, then, 'God was right … Satan was wrong'.[158]

The Book of Job chronicles a journey of faith. Firstly, it could be said, the faith of God. From the outset God's belief in Job is rock-solid: 'And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil"' (1:8, ESV)? By the end of the story, God's faith in Job seems well-founded. Yet, as Carmy and Shatz point out, for the human characters it is a journey of faith that changes along the way:

> The book of Job is a veritable phenomenology of faith in a state of challenge. It spans moments of commitment (13:15), doubt (23:5), self-pity (19:21), self-confidence (13:18?), and defiance (9:22–3). The friends' rhetoric may evolve – and their temper may degenerate – but their faith, in contrast to Job's, is throughout simple and simplistic.[159]

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[156] Carmy and Shatz, 'The Bible as a source', p. 18.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.

The Jewish thinking voice draws on faith to withstand the buffeting and aporia of suffering. Job's faith is complex – it grows and develops in response to his suffering, while expressing the moments that Carmy and Shatz allude to. Thus, his experience affects his thinking and subsequent believing; as Carmy and Shatz conclude: 'We have proposed taking Job's religious growth as the kernel of a compelling explanation of evil, suggesting a perspective that lives through the various stages of the poetic portion and emerges at the other side after God has spoken.'[160] The friends' faith, as Carmy and Shatz rightly assess, is simplistic – it is based on assumptions not 'forged in the crucible', not tested in the experience of suffering – it is the faith of the bystander, the onlooker, not the sufferer. Like Satan, the friends' belief proves wrong: Satan is wrong about Job, and the friends are wrong about God.

Another feature of the Book of Job is centred on the subject of wisdom itself. In the discussions between Job and his friends, Job delivers a discourse in which he questions where wisdom is to be found:

> Surely there is a mine for silver,
> and a place for gold that they refine.
> Iron is taken out of the earth,
> and copper is smelted from the ore.
> Man puts an end to darkness
> and searches out to the farthest limit
> the ore in gloom and deep darkness.
> He opens shafts in a valley away from where anyone lives;
> they are forgotten by travellers;
> they hang in the air, far away from mankind; they swing to and fro.
> As for the earth, out of it comes bread,
> but underneath it is turned up as by fire.
> Its stones are the place of sapphires,
> and it has dust of gold.
> That path no bird of prey knows,
> and the falcon's eye has not seen it.
> The proud beasts have not trodden it;
> the lion has not passed over it.
> Man puts his hand to the flinty rock
> and overturns mountains by the roots.
> He cuts out channels in the rocks,
> and his eye sees every precious thing.

[160] Carmy and Shatz, 'The Bible as a source', p. 19.

He dams up the streams so that they do not trickle,
and the thing that is hidden he brings out to light (28: 1-11, ESV).

Job begins by considering various subterraneous ores and metals which are mined, smelted, and refined. These are naturally hidden from the eye, but humans have found the means to extract them from the deep darkness of the earth. Out of the earth's surface wheat grows for making bread, but beneath the surface lies fire. The earth also conceals precious stones, and these are hidden to all creatures, except humans. Birds of prey with keen eyesight are able to spot their targets whilst high up in the air, but are unable to see these things. The miner, however, knows these metals and jewels are there, and cuts them out of the earth. Yet, Job argues that something far more precious than metals and jewels lies beyond human finding:

But where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the place of understanding?
Man does not know its worth,
and it is not found in the land of the living.
The deep says, 'It is not in me',
and the sea says, 'It is not with me.'
It cannot be bought for gold,
and silver cannot be weighed as its price.
It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir,
in precious onyx or sapphire.
Gold and glass cannot equal it,
nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold.
No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal;
the price of wisdom is above pearls.
The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it,
nor can it be valued in pure gold (28:12-19, ESV).

Wisdom eludes human detection. Moreover, humans do not appreciate its value – it is priceless, worth more than all the precious metals and stones the earth could yield. However, wisdom is not to be found in 'the land of the living', or in the earth or the sea. In Proverbs 8, wisdom is very present in the creation, but in Job's reckoning she is altogether absent. Where is wisdom to be found then, asks Job:

From where, then, does wisdom come?
And where is the place of understanding?
It is hidden from the eyes of all living
and concealed from the birds of the air.
Abaddon and Death say,

> ‘We have heard a rumour of it with our ears.’
> God understands the way to it,
> and he knows its place.
> For he looks to the ends of the earth
> and sees everything under the heavens.
> When he gave to the wind its weight
> and apportioned the waters by measure,
> when he made a decree for the rain
> and a way for the lightning of the thunder,
> then he saw it and declared it;
> he established it, and searched it out.
> And he said to man,
> ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom,
> and to turn away from evil is understanding.’ (28:20-28, ESV)

Wisdom is hidden and concealed from all creatures. It is not to be found in the land of the living, said Job, but Abaddon (אבדון, the Hebrew ‘hell’) and Death have heard rumour of it. It is, then, perhaps closer in death than in life, thinks Job. Interestingly, he confirms the primacy of hearing over seeing, as wisdom is hidden from sight but its rumour is heard. The answer to Job’s question is that God alone knows where wisdom is to be found. Now Job’s understanding aligns with Proverbs 8, as wisdom is located in the creation. Dor-Shav’s four elements can be seen here too: the earth, the heavens the wind and the waters. Wisdom is in the cosmological elements – the fabric of existence. The Jewish thinking voice is bound to a cosmological understanding. Finally, Job quotes God’s words to man, defining wisdom as ‘the fear of the Lord … to turn away from evil’ (see Proverbs 3:7 above).

The third Wisdom book is Ecclesiastes, which in Jewish and Christian traditions takes us back to Solomon as the author, especially because of the very first verse: ‘The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem’ (1:1, ESV). The word translated ‘Preacher’ can also be translated as ‘Convener’ or ‘Collector’ (in Hebrew קהלת, *Kohelet*). Ecclesiastes is the Wisdom text that most obviously lends itself to philosophical discourse; as Dor-Shav states:

> Ecclesiastes is a philosophical account of the attempt to find happiness by a man who has everything … it is one of literature's earliest encounters between faith and reason: The author struggles to believe that life is meaningful despite his experience of the world. The book's inclusion in the Hebrew Bible is therefore remarkable, testifying to

> Judaism's interest not only in divine revelation, but also in man's exploration of the meaning of life and mortality.[161]

The exploration of Ecclesiastes is different in nature to that of Job: 'As opposed to the quest of Job, Solomon's search for wisdom did not arise from a desire to make sense of either personal misfortune or national catastrophe.'[162] The anguish of Kohelet lies in the incorporeal realm – he did not suffer physically or emotionally as Job did; as Gordis rightly points out:

> While by no means indifferent to the problem of evil (3:16-22; 4:1-3; 9:2), [Kohelet] is less concerned with it than with a metaphysical *Angst*. He is basically obsessed with man's inability to discover the ultimate truth about the universe, the purpose of creation, the goal of human existence, and the nature of death.[163]

Gordis believes that both Job and Kohelet display a 'fearless use of reason in grappling with the most fundamental issues, their unwillingness to pretend to certainty where none is to be had and their passionate quest for the truth at all costs.'[164] However, unlike Job, Kohelet enjoyed 'a life of unrepentant indulgence: He tempted himself with wine, entertained himself with male and female performers, and amassed untold treasures and hundreds of wives and concubines.'[165] His inquiry commences 'from the perspective of a life replete with fortune and opportunity … his starting point [is] not revelation, but man's personal need for meaning'.[166]

The key theme throughout the book is expressed in the word 'vanity', which appears 38 times in the text in various forms, outnumbering all other occurrences in the Hebrew Scriptures combined.[167] The translation is quite controversial with multiple alternatives coming from the Hebrew הבל (*hevel*), which apart from 'vanity' can mean 'breath', 'delusion', 'emptiness', 'fleetingness', 'futility', 'uselessness', 'vapour', 'fruitlessness' and 'worthlessness', amongst others. The message of Kohelet begins: 'Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity' (1:2, ESV). This opening statement – with all its translational possibilities – at first appears extremely negative and might easily lead to the conclusion that Kohelet was a depressive, and that his 'search is doomed from the start'.[168] In verse 3, he asks: 'What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?' He develops this view of human labour in the following passage:

> I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will

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[161] Ethan Dor-Shav, 'Ecclesiastes, Fleeting and Timeless, Part I', *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, 36.4 (2008), pp. 211-222 (p. 211).
[162] Ibid.
[163] Gordis, 'Religion, Wisdom and History', p. 370.
[164] Gordis, 'The Social Background of Wisdom Literature', pp. 116-117.
[165] Dor-Shav, 'Ecclesiastes, Fleeting and Timeless, Part I', p. 211.
[166] Ibid.
[167] See William E. Staples, 'The "Vanity" of Ecclesiastes', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 2.2 (1943), pp. 95-104 (p. 95).
[168] Dor-Shav, 'Ecclesiastes, Fleeting and Timeless, Part I', p. 212.

> be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labours under the sun, because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity (2:18-23, ESV).

As Dor-Shav observes, Kohelet 'despairs over what he sees as the futility of life's [labours]'; he is 'disillusioned with life because he believes it is all in vain; he abhors the idea of leaving his life/s work behind for someone else to enjoy or to squander'.[169] Systematically, Kohelet tests the various experiences of life, finding no more satisfaction with leisure than he did with work:

> I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself." But behold, this also was vanity. I said of laughter, "It is mad", and of pleasure, "What use is it?" I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine – my heart still guiding me with wisdom – and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life … And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun (2:1-3, 10-11, ESV).

Both work and leisure seem meaningless and appear to paint a nihilistic picture of life, with no purpose and nothing to be gained – work, pleasure, and wealth grant no advantage in the final analysis.

Dor-Shav believes that the translation of *hevel* as 'vanity' is 'not only misleading, but in some cases it makes the text impossible to read'. He gives as an example a passage where Kohelet discusses the value of love: 'Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun' (9:9, ESV). Dor-Shav rephrases the text to read: '*View life with a woman you have come to love – all the days of your transitory life* [kol yemei hayei hevlecha] *which he has gifted you under the sun – every fleeting day. For this is your share in life …* (9:9).'[170] The traditional translation of the verse is 'difficult to parse', resulting in 'something like, *Live joyfully … all the days of your vain* life' or 'Life is vanity, so enjoy love?' He

[169] Ibid..
[170] Dor-Shav, 'Ecclesiastes, Fleeting and Timeless, Part II', *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, 37.1 (2009), pp. 17-23 (p. 17).

argues that if *hevel* is translated as 'fleeting' ('focusing on life's brevity'), then the verse makes more sense: 'Cherish your time together, for life is fleeting, and therefore precious. Then is your love that much more meaningful.'[171]

Thus, Dor-Shav claims that understanding *hevel* as 'fleeting' or 'transient' is crucial to understanding the book: 'It is only through the corrected reading of *hevel* as "transience" rather than "vanity" that we may understand the structure of the book of Ecclesiastes, and thereby learn its message.'[172] Kohelet begins in the first stage of the book with negative references to transience:

> The initial stage, covering the first five chapters of the book (starting at 1:12), is characterized by frustration with the transience of life: Kohelet bemoans the fact that all achievements are short-lived. He is bitter about the transience of human contentment (2:1-3), riches (2:4-11), physical existence (3:18-21), and corrective social remedies (Chapter 4). Stylistically, this stage is characterized by the juxtapositions of the term *hevel* with words of despair and tragedy.[173]

This first stage explains why Kohelet 'hated life' – 'he has discovered that all one's worldly achievements are, like man himself, in the end but dust and ashes'.[174] In the second stage the negativity of transience gives way to a more neutral acknowledgment:

> Dejection soon gives way to acceptance, however, as the book enters its second stage, starting at 6:4 and running through Chapter 7, in which Kohelet begins to view the ephemeral nature of reality more philosophically … The neutrality of the six appearances of *hevel* in this stage is typified by the example of temporary flattery … the fickle nature of fools' praise and fleeting popularity.'[175]

The shift in Kohelet's view of the transient is also seen in his reference to a stillborn child, who he argues is better off and experiences more peace than a man who lives a long life and fathers a hundred children but experiences no pleasure or satisfaction (6:3-6). In the traditional translation, the stillborn 'comes in vanity and goes in darkness' (4), but Dor-Shav rephrases this as '*for in transience it comes* [behevel], *in oblivion it departs*'. The traditional translation creates a contradiction: 'if the stillborn child comes in "futility" or "vanity," how could his situation in any way be described as better off?'[176] By reading '*behevel* to mean "in transience," the passage instead becomes a [sombre] acceptance of the objective fact of mortality', and 'teaches that, indeed, temporal existence is not an end in itself'.[177]

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[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Dor-Shav, 'Ecclesiastes, Fleeting and Timeless, Part II', p. 18.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Dor-Shav, 'Ecclesiastes, Fleeting and Timeless, Part II', p. 19.
[177] Ibid.

The third and final stage in the book, covering the last four chapters, sees a reversal in the use of *hevel*, whereby it has 'lost any trace of the negativity which it carried in the early chapters' and is 'associated, directly or indirectly, with joy, or *simha*'.[178]

> Kohelet refers to the transience of injustice: While evildoers may succeed, their success is only temporary. This knowledge, however, is linked directly with Kohelet's own happiness at the fact: *Therefore*, he concludes, *I prized joy* [hasimha]. The same holds true in his statements about the transience of youth. *Youth and virility are fleeting*, he famously declares, yet only after admonishing his reader to "rejoice [*semah*]." A similar point is made in the context of fleeting love: *Live with a woman you love all the fleeting days of your life*, he suggests but only immediately after having told his reader to *Go, eat your bread with joy* [besimha] (8:15, 11:9-12, 9:7-9). Indeed, only a few verses before the end of the book, the link between transience and joy becomes explicit, even emphatic: *Even if one lives many long years, he should rejoice* [yismah] *in them all, heeding the days of darkness, for they shall be many; all that transpires is fleeting* [hevel] (11:8).[179]

The concept of *hevel* has transformed from 'tragedy and evil' to 'happiness'. Kohelet has moved from hating life to affirming life: he 'has now learned, and seeks to teach, the deeper lesson of *hevel*: Transience as inspiration.'[180] The realisation that 'not only good fortune and success, but also sorrow, power, jealousy, and oppression are all, in the end, fleeting … opens the doors to redemption.'[181] Positive *hevel* creates an 'urgency to live, to experience joy, to take action, and above all, to learn', which leads Dor-Shav to the 'underlying message' of the book: 'That only in understanding the transience of life do we attain the beginning of wisdom; and in turn, only through the wisdom derived from our experience of life may we in some way take part in that which is eternal.'[182] Thus, the Jewish thinking voice speaks with an appreciation and understanding of transience as a necessary prerequisite to wisdom.

Like Proverbs and Job, Ecclesiastes also discusses the nature of wisdom: 'Then I saw that there is more gain in wisdom than in folly, as there is more gain in light than in darkness' (2:13, ESV); 'For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money, and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it' (7:12, ESV); 'Wisdom gives strength to the wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city' (7:19, ESV); and 'A man's wisdom makes his face shine, and the hardness of his face is changed' (8:1). Thus, wisdom gives advantage in life, it protects and preserves, it gives strength, and it transforms.[183] In the

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[178] Ibid.
[179] Dor-Shav, 'Ecclesiastes, Fleeting and Timeless, Part II', p. 20.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Dor-Shav, 'Ecclesiastes, Fleeting and Timeless, Part II', p. 21.
[183] Dor-Shav, 'Ecclesiastes, Fleeting and Timeless, Part II', pp. 21-22.

face of all that is fleeting, Kohelet's realisation is that 'true wisdom is the one thing that is not dependent on transient circumstances', and yet 'all of the transient circumstances in this world serve as the means of acquiring it'.[184] For Dor-Shav, the lasting influence of Kohelet is his wisdom:

> Everything but wisdom is transient, teaches the king, and history has proven him right. Neither Solomon's riches, nor his power, nor even his monumental Temple in Jerusalem survived under the sun. What has indeed lasted, however, is the legacy of his wisdom, embodied in the Book of Ecclesiastes.[185]

As might be expected, there are as many interpretations of the meaning of *hevel* as there are translations of it, and Dor-Shav's reading is but one. William Staples, for example, offered an interpretation where *hevel* represents the inexplicable rather than the vain:

> …everything under the sun, toil, joy, the inability to understand wisdom fully, the relation of man and beast, life, many words, the lack of profit, and evil are all [*hevel*]. A survey of the use of each of these ideas in the book indicates that the author does not look upon these things so much as "vain" as incomprehensible. They are mysteries which are unfathomable to his finite mind. He recognizes God as the creator of all things, as the director of the universe, and that the universe is essentially good.[186]

The Jewish thinking voice leaves room in its wisdom for the mysterious and unknowable; it recognises the otherness beyond comprehension. Theodore Perry, on the other hand, renders *hevel* as life-affirming 'breath'; and sees Ecclesiastes as a much misunderstood book, and thoroughly positive. He reframes the second verse of the book thus:

> In the context of wisdom, the wisdom message of [Kohelet], here is the Book's revised motto: The breath of life; the life of breath: it is all life/breath. His punctuating refrain, which can be applied to the whole of our existence and when anything happens, anything at all, then: C'est la vie![187]

Perry's revision is challenging but appealing nonetheless. Coming close to Dor-Shav's interpretation, it offers a positive philosophy wherein all life experience is good, even when it seems otherwise – it is all 'life', it is all living. In Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, we are told that everything has its due time:

> For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
> a time to be born, and a time to die;
> a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
> a time to kill, and a time to heal;

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[184] Dor-Shav, 'Ecclesiastes, Fleeting and Timeless, Part II', p. 22.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Staples, 'The "Vanity" of Ecclesiastes', p. 104.
[187] Theodore A. Perry, 'Enigmatic Qohelet' (paper presented at the 3rd Annual Interdisciplinary Conference on Philosophical Investigation of the Hebrew Scriptures, Talmud and Midrash, Jerusalem, Israel, July 23-26, 2012).

a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace (ESV).

If we use Perry's interpretation of *hevel*, then all these cycles of life are a necessary part of life as a whole. There are elements we dislike or would want to avoid, but all can be greeted with the same affirming life-breath, in the knowledge that no one state is final – war must give way to peace as surely as peace will give way to war, death must give way to life as life gives way to death, hate must give way to love as love gives way to hate. A negative reading ends each cycle with a negative state, i.e. death, war and hatred. However, this reading is inconsistent because some of the cycles end positively, i.e. healing, laughter and dancing. Thus, the cycles continue to move – they do not terminate – they are seasons (3:1) and, thus, death turns to life as winter turns to spring. Moreover, these cycles take place 'under heaven' – they say nothing of the divine. The cyclical nature of life is reflected elsewhere in the book:

A generation goes, and a generation comes,
but the earth remains for ever.
The sun rises, and the sun goes down,
and hastens to the place where it rises.
The wind blows to the south
and goes round to the north;
round and round goes the wind,
and on its circuits the wind returns.
All streams run to the sea,
but the sea is not full;
to the place where the streams flow,
there they flow again (1:4-7, ESV).

The whole cosmos runs on cycles of coming and going, rising and falling – a fluid flowing – where even the elements of life are involved in perpetual circuits of sending and returning. The Jewish thinking voice is affirming in its view of life, embracing a world-view of cycles and

seasons rather than linear time. Through the word *hevel*, the Jewish thinking voice presents us with a balanced variety of outlooks on life: on the one hand, its fleetingness and incomprehensibility; and on the other, its affirming breath-like cycles of renewal and hope.

Contemplation and Awe

Strauss defined wisdom as the highest notion conveyed in both the Bible and Greek philosophy. However, he also highlighted the divergence in the biblical and Greek claims to represent true wisdom: 'According to the Bible, the beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord; according to the Greek philosophers, the beginning of wisdom is wonder.'[188] If the prerequisite for biblical wisdom is therefore theism (in particular, 'the fear of the Lord'), then does that exclude it from philosophical discourse on the grounds of the revelation versus reason debate? As we have seen, theism amongst the Greek philosophers did not preclude them.[189] Nevertheless, is it possible to speak of wisdom and 'the fear of the Lord' in the dialogue of philosophy? Returning to the Book of Proverbs, it is possible to find an affirmative answer.

In the Book of Proverbs the opposites of 'wisdom' and 'folly' are presented as two women. The corresponding Hebrew nouns חכמה (*hokmah*) and כסילות (*kesiluth*) are both feminine but the writer personifies these concepts rather than abstracting them. Indeed, Roland Murphy claims that wisdom is the 'most remarkable personification in the entire Bible'.[190] The Greek noun for wisdom σοφία (*sophia*) is also feminine and much has been said in the comparison between the Hebrew and Greek nouns. Whilst a case could be made that Parmenides' unnamed 'goddess' is Sophia, the texts of Plato do not appear to especially personify wisdom.[191] The Book of Proverbs enjoins the reader to love wisdom as if she were a person and not an ideal, giving us a more radical sense of *philo-sophia*.

Interestingly, Jane Webster casts the wisdom figure in proverbs as *sophia* rather than *hokmah*, but why she does so is not clear. Nevertheless, she argues that wisdom is 'constructed as a good wife too difficult to resist'.[192] Webster notes the 'parallel' constructions between divine wisdom with the good wife, and the 'social, legal or religious "other"' – the strange woman – with the evil wife. They are 'polar' opposites. Wisdom is '[shaped] in wifely images … [she] prepares her home (9.1) and offers food and hospitality'.[193] Webster believes that the good wife described in chapter 31:10-31 is the mirror of the woman wisdom

[188] Strauss, 'Jerusalem and Athens', p. 46.
[189] Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, pp. 6-12.
[190] Roland E. Murphy, 'Hebrew Wisdom', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 101.1 (1981), pp. 21-34 (p. 28).
[191] See Joshua J. Mark, 'Parmenides and the Path of Truth', *Ancient History Encyclopedia* (2012) <www.ancient.eu.com/article/175/> [accessed 05/02/13].
[192] Jane S. Webster, 'Sophia: Engendering Wisdom in Proverbs, Ben Sira and the Wisdom of Solomon', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 78 (1998), pp. 63-79 (p. 64).
[193] Webster, 'Sophia: Engendering Wisdom in Proverbs', p. 65.

introduced in the first nine chapters. Both are 'sought and found'; both are 'more precious than jewels'; both bring life, work with their hands, speak wisdom, are concerned with the ways of their households and are praised. Moreover, the 'woman who fears the Lord is to be praised' (31.30) and 'the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord' (9.10). These similarities convince Webster that wisdom is constructed as a good wife.[194] This reading of wisdom dispels the goddess idea, in the sense that she is not untouchable or inaccessible.

The knowledge of wisdom is introduced as the purpose of the book: 'The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight' (Proverbs 1:1-2). Webster argues that 'Like a woman, the typical 'other' in patriarchal discourse, wisdom may be drawn into a relationship. Engendering wisdom therefore allows connections on a deeper, more relational, level. It is at this level that the texts wish to speak.'[195] To 'know' (ידע, *yada`*) is something more than just intellectual knowledge – it is relational knowledge. Indeed, it is relational knowledge in the intimate and experiential sense, as David Lambert asserts:

> …behind the claim that *yada`* denotes sexual intercourse one could imagine there lurks a rather crude objectification, a limited physical knowledge associated with uncovering, grasping, or possessing, in short, various forms of mastery. But, all of these associations ultimately emerge only if we follow the orthodox image of thought. What if we were to understand biblical "knowing" as an act of encounter, a crossing of boundaries … that is constitutive of a certain kind of social unit? Indeed, what we may have here is not a euphemism for sexual intercourse … but a straightforward way of denoting a broader sexual intimacy that would be inclusive of procreative activity. After all, the one extensive representation of physical intimacy in the Bible, the Song of Songs, includes almost nothing about actual intercourse but a great deal about the sensory qualities of the physical encounter, an encounter that is marked by both successful and unsuccessful attempts to cross over to the other.[196]

Biblical knowledge, then, is not the oppressive mastery of deity over human; it is a mutually enjoined relationship. The love of wisdom is relational.

Wisdom is inseparable from justice, righteousness, equity and love in the Book of Proverbs.[197] Therefore, the Jewish thinking voice is always identifiable with these qualities. If

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[194] Webster, 'Sophia: Engendering Wisdom in Proverbs', p. 66; see also Lindsay Wilson, 'The Book of Job and the Fear of God', *Tyndale Bulletin*, 46.1 (1995) pp. 59-79 (p. 62).
[195] Webster, 'Sophia: Engendering Wisdom in Proverbs', p. 79.
[196] David Lambert, 'Knowledge as Performance in the Hebrew Bible' (paper presented at the 3rd Annual Interdisciplinary Conference on Philosophical Investigation of the Hebrew Scriptures, Talmud and Midrash, Jerusalem, Israel, July 23-26, 2012).
[197] See Christopher B. Ansberry, 'What Does Jerusalem have to Do with Athens? The Moral Vision of the Book of Proverbs and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*', *Hebrew Studies*, 51 (2010), pp. 157-173 (p. 160).

wisdom is the woman to be sought after, then these are her siblings. Justice, righteousness and equity are almost immediately introduced:

> To know wisdom and instruction,
> to understand words of insight,
> to receive instruction in wise dealing,
> in righteousness, justice, and equity;
> to give prudence to the simple,
> knowledge and discretion to the youth (1:2-4, ESV).

To know wisdom (לדעת חכמה, *lada'at hokmah*) relationally, one must also become acquainted with her brothers, and in the analogy of the courtship, one must gain their approval. Justice and equity are displayed in that prudence, knowledge and discretion are not withheld from the uneducated or young – there are no barriers of intellectualism or age. The Jewish thinking voice does not exclude.

Yet, the relationship between wisdom and justice has a social dynamic too: she 'raises her voice' in the marketplace, 'she cries out' in the 'noisy streets' and speaks out 'at the entrance of the city gates' (1:20-21). Wisdom's invitation is to the individual but it is also addressed to the wider community. As Phyllis Trible has rightly stated, wisdom's 'podium is the public arena; there she speaks to all sorts and conditions of people.'[198] Trible believes that the double parallelism in chapter 1:20-21 emphasises that 'the call of wisdom is inclusive. All people, wherever they are, may listen to her words … [because] … All are unwise when wisdom begins to speak.'[199] Her cries demand a societal response – the city gate is the judicial seat.[200] Wisdom says, 'By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly' (8:15-16). She implores the wayfarer and commuter, those setting out on their journey and those reaching their destination:

> Does not wisdom call?
> Does not understanding raise her voice?
> On the heights beside the way,
> at the crossroads she takes her stand;
> beside the gates in front of the town,
> at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud:
> "To you, O men, I call,
> and my cry is to the children of man.
> O simple ones, learn prudence;

[198] Phyllis Trible, 'Wisdom Builds a Poem: The Architecture of Proverbs 1:20-33', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 94.4 (1975), pp. 509-518 (p. 509).
[199] Trible, 'Wisdom Builds a Poem', pp. 511-512.
[200] See, for example, Genesis 23; Joshua 20 and Ruth 4.

O fools, learn sense (8:1-5, ESV).

There is no discrimination against the foolish – all are addressed, all are invited to learn. It is true that ancient Israel had its own exclusive groups, but these include, for example, the priesthood tribe and their concern was the House of God, the sacrificial offerings and cultic observance. There were the kingly tribes, but their concern was essentially national or tribal governance. The prophets formed a distinct group but not along tribal or social lines, as Amos the shepherd prophet demonstrates.[201] Jewish and Christian tradition holds that Solomon was the author of Proverbs, in keeping with 1:1, and so if wisdom had meant to be the preserve of the social elite, then Solomon, or someone speaking in his name, could have made wisdom an elite pursuit. Instead, the author thinks nothing of social standing, religious pedigree or politics, putting wisdom within reach of everyman. Perhaps wisdom's elite is found in everyman – a gender elite – and obviously this issue runs throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as in the classical tradition.[202] Nevertheless, the person of wisdom is not a man or a goddess, but a woman. The Jewish thinking voice is distinctly feminine.

In the first chapter a warning is given against the enticement of 'sinners' to commit unprovoked acts of violence and theft (1:10-19). Such unrighteous behaviour carries its own penalty, with the loss of life of the perpetrator. Wisdom's suitors are urged not to heed the voice of sinners, and to refrain from walking their paths. In chapter 3 practical examples of injustices to avoid are described, and they are all relational:

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,
when it is in your power to do it.
Do not say to your neighbour, "Go, and come again,
tomorrow I will give it"—when you have it with you.
Do not plan evil against your neighbour,
who dwells trustingly beside you.
Do not contend with a man for no reason,
when he has done you no harm (3:27-30, ESV).

Deceitfulness and meanness with one's neighbour, planning evil against an innocent fellow citizen, and motiveless contention constitute social injustices. Responsibility and respect constitute just human action – constitute the ways of wisdom, constitute the ways of the Jewish thinking voice.

In chapter 2:6-15, we read that wisdom, knowledge and understanding proceed from the Lord towards the morally upright and people of integrity. He protects the pathways of

[201] See Amos 1:1; 7:14-15.

[202] For a discussion of the feminisation of wisdom in Proverbs see Rosemary Radford Ruether, 'Why Do Men Need the Goddess? Male Creation of Female Religious Symbols', *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, 44.3 (2005), pp. 234-236, especially p. 235.

justice, righteousness and equity. The idea of pathways, suggests that to practice justice, righteousness and equity requires making deliberate choices, these are ways to be walked consciously. Their relationship to wisdom necessitates interdependence – walking the path of justice requires wisdom, and following wisdom will naturally lead you along the path of justice: 'I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice', she says (8: 20). In chapter 8 we read that 'All the words of [wisdom's] mouth are righteous; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them' (8:8). The choice to walk these paths protects one from the alternative – the crooked paths of evil, perversity and darkness – the practice of injustice. Wisdom's brothers keep a watchful eye over her suitors.

Chapter 2 also introduces us to wisdom's nemesis, the 'forbidden' or 'strange' (זרה, *zarah*) woman (2:16-22). Webster believes that the term 'strange' connotes a 'sense of separation or "otherness" … she would be separated by religious laws regulating endogamy.'[203] She is the 'adulteress' who cannot be legitimately courted, and therefore offers no relational future. Rather, she is one 'who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God' (2:17). This forsaking and forgetting manifests in the relationships of marriage, friendship and religion – she represents relational destruction. In every sense, she is wisdom's opposite, offering 'smooth words' instead of earnest pleading; a house of death and ghostly shadows (רפאים, *rephaim*) instead of life. This pale existence is but a poor imitation of life experienced by those who choose the paths of unrighteousness and injustice. However, wisdom keeps her suitor safe from the adulteress through the pursuit of the good and righteous pathways.

The righteous (צדיקים, *tzaddikim*) and the wicked (רשעים, *reshaim*) are contrasted at various points, for example:

> …the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn,
> which shines brighter and brighter until full day.
> The way of the wicked is like deep darkness;
> they do not know over what they stumble (4:18-19, ESV).

The pursuit of righteousness brings increasing awareness and greater perception with each step, whereas wickedness decreases sensitivity and understanding. The ramifications of this relationally are that unrighteous and unjust actions blind and eventually narrow human interest to self, whilst righteousness and justice illuminate and broadens human interest to the other. 'The hope of the righteous brings joy, but the expectation of the wicked will perish' (10:28) – wisdom's righteous action has ever-increasing circles of influence; while folly's unrighteous action implodes. 'The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom… but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverse' (10:31-32) – if the outworking of righteous action is

[203] Webster, 'Sophia: Engendering Wisdom in Proverbs', p. 66.

wisdom and vice-versa, then the outworking of wicked action is perversity, a twisting and distortion of right human action.

The connection between wisdom and love can be seen on at least two levels. Firstly, wisdom's relationship to justice, righteousness and equity equates to care, compassion and responsibility – these are expressions of love which can, for example, extend from one individual to another or from one community to another. Secondly, the courtship of wisdom is itself couched in the language of love:

> Blessed is the one who finds wisdom,
> and the one who gets understanding,
> for the gain from her is better than gain from silver
> and her profit better than gold.
> She is more precious than jewels,
> and nothing you desire can compare with her.
> Long life is in her right hand;
> in her left hand are riches and honour.
> Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
> and all her paths are peace.
> She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her;
> those who hold her fast are called blessed (3:13-18, ESV).

The courtship of wisdom is the pursuit of one without equal. She is of inestimable worth, she is incomparable, and everything deemed precious and rare fades in her glory. Wisdom offers that which material wealth cannot procure: pleasantness, favour, beauty (נעם, *noam*), peace (שלום, *shalom*) and life (חיים *ḥayyim*). She is to be sought, embraced and held onto. The language of love continues in the following chapter:

> Do not forsake her, and she will keep you;
> love her, and she will guard you.
> The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom,
> and whatever you get, get insight.
> Prize her highly, and she will exalt you;
> she will honour you if you embrace her.
> She will place on your head a graceful garland;
> she will bestow on you a beautiful crown (4:6-9, ESV).

Her fidelity is beyond question. It is within wisdom's power to keep, guard, exalt, honour and beautify her suitors. The counsel is to love (אהב, *ahav*) her and prize her – this is the language of lovers – it is the language of union: 'I love those who love me, and those who seek me

diligently find me' (8:17).[204] She demands right action from those who would embrace her – she demands love – she must be courted and is not easily won. Wisdom is relational, and she manifests in human relations. The Jewish thinking voice is the voice of love – not *erōs*, but a love expressed in relational care.

We turn now to awe in the Book of Proverbs, expressed as 'the fear of the Lord'. But what do we mean by 'fear' and how can we speak of it philosophically? It is usually experienced as a negative reaction – not something easily associated with wisdom, understanding and enlightenment. Funkenstein wrote that 'All major philosophical schools since the third century BCE had promised emancipation through knowledge or understanding … An adequate knowledge of the cosmos, and a life according to it … were to free the wise from the repressive fear of the gods, which was a main source of misery'.[205] Knowledge or wisdom should free us from fear not enjoin us to it. However, we must make a distinction between what we mean – are we speaking of 'fear' or 'anxiety'? Paul Kielholz explains that fear is:

> …invariably objective and reflects the magnitude of the threatening danger. Those affected can therefore meet the threat by rational and appropriate action. Let us take fear of examinations as an example. It is a spur to work, and the better the student is prepared the more readily can he master his fear, and even acquire a feeling of security through the acquisition of a sufficient stock of knowledge. The position is quite different with examination anxiety. In spite of the most assiduous study, the anxiety grows more acute as the examination approaches and, on the examination day, turns into an examination stupor with total failure as the outcome.'[206]

Fear then is rational, whereas anxiety is not. The liberating effects of wisdom may indeed dispel irrational anxiety, but we can speak of a 'healthy fear' when, for example, considering dangerous, risky and life-threatening situations. Mayer Gruber uses Kielholz's psychological understanding to define fear in the biblical context – the fear of God mentioned by Abraham in Genesis 20 leads to 'the avoidance of homicide'. Abraham perceives the absence of such fear in Gerar that would consequently lead to his murder: 'That the motivation not to commit homicide is called "fear of God" can be explained as follows: "fear of God" is fright at the contemplation of the consequences of transgressing God's prohibitions.'[207] Similarly, Job is

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[204] See Webster, 'Sophia: Engendering Wisdom in Proverbs', pp. 65-66: 'Similarly, the response to Sophia evokes the actions of a husband toward a beloved wife: she is to be held fast (3.18) and embraced (4.8); she is to be loved (4.6) and guarded (4.13), but not to be forsaken (4.6).'

[205] Funkenstein, 'The Disenchantment of Knowledge', p. 76.

[206] Paul Kielholz, 'Psychopharmacology Measurement of Emotions in Medical Practice' in Lennart Levi (ed.), *Emotions: Their Parameters and Measurement* (New York: Raven Press, 1975), pp. 747-760 (pp. 748-749), quoted in Mayer I. Gruber, 'Fear, Anxiety and Reverence in Akkadian, Biblical Hebrew and Other North-West Semitic Languages', *Vetus Testamentum*, 40.4 (1990), pp. 411-422 (p. 419).

[207] Mayer I. Gruber, 'Fear, Anxiety and Reverence in Akkadian, Biblical Hebrew and Other North-West Semitic Languages', *Vetus Testamentum*, 40.4 (1990), pp. 411-422 (pp. 418-419).

described as fearing God and avoiding evil: 'The avoidance of evil is a positive program undertaken in response to the rational fear of the real danger that lies in store for him or her who arouses the wrath of God by unseemly behaviour.'[208] Indeed, even in the Greek tradition, we find the fear of God discussed – Thomas Hall comments on Aristotle: 'Not to fear the gods and their works (earthquakes, for example) he regarded as insane and not to fear disgrace as ignoble.'[209] Moreover, in a statement on fear attributed to Aristotle, we read: 'For if you make a man too fearless, so as not even to fear the Gods, he is not brave but mad' (1185b24).[210]

Walter Kaiser Jr. traces the historical development of the expression, 'the fear of the Lord', and believes that it is a term that 'brought law and wisdom together [and] linked both law and wisdom to the promise made to the patriarchs.'[211] For Kaiser, the fear of the Lord is expressed through the patriarchs by their 'response of worship, knowledge, and obedience … [as] seen in Abraham's test of faith (Gen. 22:12), in one of Isaac's names for God (Gen. 31:42, 53), in Joseph's believing response (Gen. 42:18) and in Job … (Job 1:1, 8, 9; 2:3).' However, within these contexts, he likens the fear of the Lord to the 'concept of "commitment to" or "trust in" God', and not 'some emotional or psychical form of experience'. Kaiser follows the expression through Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy, where 'it became a focal point of interest … [as a] command and [to be] taught … [involving] service, love, obedience, worship, and total surrender'.[212] However, it is in the Wisdom Literature that the fear of the Lord, according to Kaiser, becomes 'the essence of knowledge and wisdom of God', serving in Proverbs 1:7 as the 'motto for the whole book'.[213] This motto appears 14 times in Proverbs (1:7, 29; 2:5; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:26, 27; 15:16, 33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17), as well as in 4 verbal forms (3:7; 14:2; 24:21; 31:30), epitomising and encapsulating the teaching of the book. For Kaiser, the understanding of fear as the 'attitude of total commitment to the Lord was the starting point, the inception of any and all real knowledge', it is only the beginning.[214] Fear as trust and obedience results in life; 'to fear God was to turn away from evil and to choose the way of life', a call to turn from 'pride, arrogance, perverted speech and devious behaviour'.[215]

If justice, righteousness, equity and love can be seen as wisdom's siblings, then I would like to suggest that awe represents the relationship between wisdom and her father.[216] Imagine a suitor's first encounter with the father of the bride – this may engender at the very

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[208] Ibid.
[209] Thomas S. Hall, 'Greek Medical and Philosophical Interpretations of Fear', *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 50.7 (1974), pp. 821-832 (p. 822).
[210] Aristotle, *Magna Moralia*, trans. George Stock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915), no page numbering.
[211] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., 'Wisdom Theology and the Centre of Old Testament Theology', *The Evangelical Quarterly*, 50 (1978), pp. 132-146 (p. 136).
[212] Kaiser Jr., 'Wisdom Theology', p. 137.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Kaiser Jr., 'Wisdom Theology', p. 138.
[215] Kaiser Jr., 'Wisdom Theology', p. 140.
[216] For a discussion of the father-daughter relationship in Wisdom texts see Elliot R. Wolfson, 'Hebraic and Hellenic Conceptions of Wisdom in Sefer ha-Bahir', *Poetics Today*, 19.1 (1998), pp. 147-176 (pp. 156-157).

least a healthy respect, if not reverential fear. Here, we consider a, if not *the*, central theme of Proverbs, 'the fear of the Lord'. Fear (יראה, *yirah*) can be seen as an awesome reverence and humbling beneath the enormity and beauty of the heavens, rather than the fear of terror:

> The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work,
> the first of his acts of old.
> Ages ago I was set up,
> at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
> When there were no depths I was brought forth,
> when there were no springs abounding with water.
> Before the mountains had been shaped,
> before the hills, I was brought forth,
> before he had made the earth with its fields,
> or the first of the dust of the world.
> When he established the heavens, I was there;
> when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
> when he made firm the skies above,
> when he established the fountains of the deep,
> when he assigned to the sea its limit,
> so that the waters might not transgress his command,
> when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
> then I was beside him, like a master workman,
> and I was daily his delight,
> rejoicing before him always,
> rejoicing in his inhabited world
> and delighting in the children of man (8:22-31, ESV).

The verb קנני (*qanani*) is translated as 'possessed' in the first verse; and in Genesis 4:1 it is used by Eve in declaring that she has given birth to Cain; in Deuteronomy 32:6 it is used for God as a father making and creating Israel; and in Psalm 139:9 it is used regarding the formation of human life in the womb. In this context we see that wisdom is fathered by God. The use of the word 'beginning' (ראשית, *reshith*) evokes the creation narrative in Genesis 1. Wisdom is brought forth by her father at the very beginning and joyfully participates with him in the creative process of the cosmos, the earth and humanity.

This description of the creative process mirrors God's challenge to Job, where God asks Job: 'Where were you?' while God created the cosmos and everything in it (Job 38-41). In awe, Job covers his mouth, unable to answer. However, unlike Job or any mortal, wisdom can answer the question, and affirms that she was present and actively involved. The act of

creation is awesome, and wisdom shares that awe. The fear of the Lord as awe brings about a humility in human action, an appropriate estimation of oneself in the face of the cosmos, the earth and humanity. At the same time, awe elevates one's estimation of that created realm, giving a healthy respect and reverence for the universe and every creature within it. The connection between awe and the cosmos can also be seen in the Prophet Jonah's description of himself: 'I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land' (Jonah 1:9). Jonah makes a natural progression between his fear of the Lord and who that Lord is – the creator. This natural progression can also be seen in Psalms 19 and 111, between the works of God manifest in the creation and the fear of the Lord.

The understanding of fear as terror obviously has its place, for example, as a response to danger or, in theistic terms, a response to God's wrath. However, it is the understanding of fear as awe which allows a philosophical discourse for theists and non-theists alike, by pointing not just to a creator but to the cosmos and life in all its forms. An awesome respect for one another, for all life, for the earth and the universe brings about the beginning of wisdom evidenced in human actions of justice, righteousness, equity and love. The fear of the Lord is also described as 'the hatred of evil' (8:13). Again we find a parallel in Job – he is described as 'blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil' (Job 1:1). Later, Job recounts the words of God 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding' (Job 28:28).This is the shunning of the opposite human actions: injustice, unrighteousness, inequity and the opposite to love, which may not be hate as much as indifference or heartlessness. Thus, in Wisdom literature we find that the fear of the Lord is duel-edged – an acquiring of wisdom and understanding, and a forsaking of evil. In awe, we see the human reaction towards the otherness of the universe, and our fellow-human, which leads to a desire towards wisdom – to understand the otherness of the universe and our fellow-human – and also a shunning of evil action towards them. In Exodus we read of the midwives, whose awe of God resulted in an awe towards human life – they defied the king of Egypt and let the male children live (Exodus 1:15-21). Jonathan Jacobs notes the place of wisdom in human action: 'Wisdom, along with judgement, righteousness, and loving-kindness, is central to the imitation of God in the Jewish understanding.'[217] Thus, the fear of the Lord is a catalyst for imitating God through acts of justice, righteousness and loving-kindness.
Rudolf Otto, in his work describing the numinous – the awesome divine presence – wrote 'To "keep a thing holy in the heart" means to mark it off by a feeling of peculiar dread, not to be mistaken for any ordinary dread, that is, to appraise it by the category of the numinous.'[218] Wisdom pursued, courted and wed; wisdom – the good and faithful wife – leads us to appraise

[217] Jonathan Jacobs, *Law, Reason, and Morality in Medieval Jewish Philosophy: Sadia Gaon, Bahya ibn Pakuda, and Moses Maimonides* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.38.
[218] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. John W. Harvey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), pp. 13-14.

more of our interactions in the cosmos by the category of the numinous. In other words, she raises our estimation of a person, a relationship, of the world; she raises our estimation of the absolute necessity for justice, right action, equity and love; we count them all as holy in the heart. A human understanding that 'holiness is indisputable' is, according to Emmanuel Levinas, 'the beginning of philosophy, this is the rational, the intelligible.'[219] Thus, we dread to violate one another; we dread to violate justice and omit love. Later, Otto states that:

> The truly mysterious object is beyond our apprehension and comprehension, not only because our knowledge has certain irremovable limits, but because in it we come upon something inherently wholly other, whose kind and character are incommensurable with our own, and before which we therefore recoil in a wonder that strikes us chill and numb.[220]

For the theist, the truly mysterious is not an object but God. But what of the non-theist – is there an object beyond apprehension and comprehension? For theist and non-theist alike, the cosmos should cause us to recoil in wonder, life in all its forms should fill us with awe, and the beauty of wisdom and her brothers should cause us to bow, not in worship but humility. Worship, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, is reserved for God alone, but not humility. Humility is reserved for as many whose kind and character we are willing to see as being worthy of the justice, righteousness, love and respect that we would hope to receive ourselves.

The 'irremovable limits' mentioned by Otto, are echoed in Henri Blocher's argument that the fear of the Lord 'might well *invite the wise to modesty*, to the confession of the limits they cannot trespass: wisdom acknowledges human lowness.'[221] Confessing our human lowness may be as distasteful as fear to the modern mind, but humility is an essential human action, a prerequisite from which justice, righteousness and love flow. For Blocher, the 'virtuous woman' in chapter 31 and 'Dame Wisdom at the beginning of the book' stand as 'a personification of the fear of the LORD'.[222] To stand in awe of wisdom; to fear that one might not apprehend her, fail to win her over, or worse, to fear that having gained her hand one might lose her. Wisdom is an awesome woman. Proverbs seeks to raise our estimation of her, to count her as holy in the heart. If wisdom can lead us to justice, righteousness and love, then she not only commands our respect, but we humble ourselves before her in acknowledgement of our need. Ultimately, then, the Jewish thinking voice leads us to wisdom through humility and awe. It is not the contemplation of self-examination, but the contemplation of the other in awe and humility.

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[219] Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 109.
[220] Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 28.
[221] Henri Blocher, 'The Fear of the Lord as the "Principle" of Wisdom', *Tyndale Bulletin*, 28 (1977), pp. 3-28 (p. 16).
[222] Blocher, 'The Fear of the Lord as the "Principle" of Wisdom', p. 5.

Hebrew Wisdom as the Jewish Thinking Voice

How can Hebrew wisdom help us to think? Can thinking even be helped? Yes, according to both the ancient Greek and Hebrew traditions. As Gordis points out, in the Greek sophistic schools and the Wisdom schools of the ancient sages: 'Greek sophia and Hebrew hokmah are strikingly parallel in their concern with the education of the youth for practical life and in their culmination in philosophical scepticism.'[223] The way we think is, to some degree, learnt from one source or another – our thinking knowingly or unknowingly utilises a variety of tools from different traditions, both ancient and modern. The invitation from the ancient Greek tradition is to examine your life, to question every assumption. From the Jewish tradition, the Prophet Jeremiah records the divine counsel: 'Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls' (Jeremiah 6:16, ESV).

Both traditions begin with a cosmological context – how we relate to the universe and what part we play in it. From Thales' proposal that all things originated from water, we can think of a cosmos that is fluid; and existence as fluid not static. This comes to us also from a reading of the Jewish tradition, in which the world is made out of water. We are encouraged to think in a context of change and flow, and to relate ourselves to the very elements of the cosmos. Both traditions enumerate the elements of water, earth, wind and fire – philosophy can easily veer towards the abstract, but the relationship between cosmos and soul in the Hebrew Scriptures draws our thinking to connect us with the very substance of our existence; to think within the context of our universe; and to step back from our thumbnail image of our immediate situation to view the infinite canvas of creation. The result is that our thinking is overwhelmed by a sense of wonder and awe. This response demonstrates that both traditions are closer than Strauss believed; both lead us to an awestruck appreciation of our place and responsibility in the universe – Athens *with* Jerusalem.

Philosophy helps us to think with clarity: to define our terms, to establish causes and principles and, thus, to articulate our knowledge more clearly. Analogies make knowledge accessible, by connecting ideas, images, stories and thoughts. Biblical wisdom, through riddles, parables and proverbs, likewise help us to think with clarity and interpret the world we live in. Ancient Geek philosophy and ancient Hebrew wisdom both require us to think with our senses – to both see and hear. We see conceptually, we visualise ideas, we are illuminated by the light of knowledge. Yet the Jewish thinking voice values hearing. The discipline of rhetoric in the Jewish tradition of the spoken voice requires the ear be as active in hearing as the mouth in speaking, and no less the Jewish thinking voice requires the ear to hear. We give our ear to

[223] Gordis, 'The Social Background of Wisdom Literature', p. 87.

wisdom, remembering and recalling the words and voices of ancient wisdom, and then relaying it from those who have gone before us to those who will follow.

Effort is required in the pursuit of wisdom – no less than with philosophy – wisdom will cost us: to give up our preconceived positions, to move out of our comfortable assumptions, to journey into unknown places, to experience the pain of loss and suffering, to experience uncertainty and bewilderment, to be challenged, to be humbled, to be transformed. But the effort is repaid – there is freedom – the journey moves us upward, affirming us and guiding our steps with understanding. Our suffering is not in vain, it tutors us and enriches us; and we grow in response. Wisdom is not a passive pursuit – it involves, interacts and engages the thought-life – it must be received by the ear, the head and the heart; it must be treasured above all else; it must be given our full attention and inclination; it must be heeded; sought, searched for and found. However, this is not the effort of one enslaved, rather the effort of a lover – a suitor courting their loved one. Wisdom is the woman calling to her lover, she is utterly relational: from the divine to the human, from one human to another, from humanity to the cosmos and all it encompasses. This is not an exclusive relationship for all are called, all are welcome to heed her voice – all have something to learn. But she, in return, demands right action, love and fidelity – wisdom must be won.

This ancient wisdom helps us to think of our existence in useful, practical ways – we understand that life is fleeting, we live appropriately as those whose appearing and disappearing upon this earth is as a vapour. We live fully in the now and fully in the eternal, so that we consequently appreciate all that we have – the little or the much, our neighbour, our friend, our loved ones. This transience helps us to value and make sense of all that is passing, be it our toil or pleasure, our joy or sorrow. We understand that life is in so many ways unfathomable; there are unsolvable mysteries and we will often reach an impasse in the journey. But the very voice that brings us to the impasse will also see us through it, eventually, to the other side. We understand that though our life is but a breath, it is nonetheless life. All our experiences – good and bad – are part of life's cycle. Even death is a part of life, and, in turn, life is a part of death. We live in seasons with ebb and flow, beginnings and endings with no final state. Life is affirmed in all the cosmos: if nothing lives forever, then nothing dies forever. The cosmos is imbued with life-breath.

We are called by the ancient Greek philosophers to 'Know thyself', to examine our lives through contemplation. In our thinking we are to leave the world of appearances and question everything. Our unexamined lives are not worth the living, we will only discover our purpose in the quest. Our thoughts must be shaped by asking, answering, questioning – a dialogical argument with ourselves in self-reflection or with others in cooperative participation and joint inquiry. Our quest is a shared journey – we do not exist in isolation and we cannot

understand in isolation. This requires honesty in stating our position (right or wrong); but the Jewish thinking voice reminds us to be humble in the universe – to seek a truth that is wed to justice, righteousness and love.

The model of humility in Hebrew wisdom is expressed in an awesome reverence for life, a realisation that the creation is awesome from the simplest to the most complex life-form, from the smallest part of the cosmos to the greatest. To think aright is to see ourselves within the universe – not to be crushed by it but neither to exalt ourselves – to stand beneath the enormity and beauty of the heavens with humility and an appropriate estimation of ourselves. Wisdom responds to the cosmos with an awe that manifests in our human actions. Awe elevates our estimation of the cosmos, the earth and humanity; we respond with respect and reverence for the universe we inhabit, the elements from which it is constructed, the various life-forms we share it with, and for one another. Our thinking must be ethical; our wisdom is worth little apart from the actions it leads to. Our understanding must be demonstrated by our actions. Wisdom instructs us how to live, knowledge alone does not.

Wise thinking will manifest in wise action – in justice, righteousness, equity and love. Wise thinking will shun the opposite actions – wisdom cannot be unjust, unrighteous, unequal or indifferent. Wise thinking will raise our estimation of one another, so that we will afford the other justice, right action, equity and love; we will fear to violate one another because we stand in humility, awe and wonder. Our wrongdoing and injustice blinds us and diminishes our field of vision, so that we only see ourselves and our self-interest. Whereas, love, righteousness and justice work for the interests of others, where we see ourselves as belonging to one another – to become our 'brother's keeper'. The Jewish thinking voice involves thinking with responsibility, humility, care and compassion – wisdom is thus manifest. The Jewish thinking voice speaks the wisdom of love, awe and humility.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters we have considered the Jewish voice in written, spoken and thinking contexts; as a voice that offers a valuable counterpart to the Western classical tradition. The Hebrew Scriptures, Talmud and Midrashim form the foundational core of Jewish Great Books; while *midrashic* exegesis brings an alternative and authentic method to reading biblical texts. Indeed, as Geoffrey Hartman has boldly asserted, 'A knowledge of Midrash will prove more interesting for the literary critic than a knowledge of literary criticism for the scholar of Jewish texts.'[1] The *midrashic* method may prove to be an invaluable tool for the reading of all Great Books, not just Jewish ones. As a spoken voice, the Jewish rhetorical tradition beckons us to do more than simply speak well – more than the learning of mere persuasive techniques – it beckons us to speak up for the outcast and the outsider: 'the poor, the widow and orphan'. The Jewish spoken voice cannot support the status quo for the sake of expediency; instead it teaches us that if we are given a voice, then it is to be used on behalf of the voiceless. And even if that places us outside the gates, we will stand with and identify with the outsider and the outcast. We may learn to speak well, but we must speak up. The Jewish thinking voice is the voice of wisdom; and to learn that voice is to embrace a wisdom wedded to right action, justice and love. In other words, we will know if we are thinking wisely, if our thoughts reflect in appropriate actions. The Jewish thinking voice is wisdom rooted in humility and awe – a reverence for all life, if not for the creator of all life. It is a wisdom that has learnt to correctly estimate our place in the cosmos, and from that place display wisdom in our relationships to one another, and to all creation. The fear which wisdom produces awakens us to an awesome appreciation for each element, each creature, and each person we encounter. At the same time, we fear to violate the wonder.

In the Western tradition the arts of reading, speaking and thinking are collectively grouped as the literary arts, because they are so closely related. The three strands of the Jewish voice are likewise related, and inform each other. Thus, the Jewish written voice informs the Jewish thinking and speaking voices; Jewish thinking informs writing and speaking; and Jewish speaking informs thinking and writing. These are all interdependent, although the Jewish tradition would place the written texts in the position of authority. Out of an understanding of the Torah, the Nevi'im and the Ketuvim (the Law, the Prophets and the Writings) flows right speech and wise thought. The wisdom that the Scriptures teach then shapes thinking or speaking which informs further reading and so on, so that the strands

[1] Geoffrey H. Hartman, 'Midrash as Law and Literature' in Geoffrey H. Hartman and Daniel T. O'Hara (eds.), *The Geoffrey Hartman Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh, University Press, 2004), pp. 205-222 (pp. 217-218).

continue to feed into one another. The Jewish voice, with the foundational authority of the Scriptures, thus provides templates for reading (for example, the Scribal and *midrashic* traditions), speaking (for example, the Prophets) and thinking (for example, the Wisdom literature).

The Stranger in Our Midst

It has already been noted that Robert Hutchins deemed the Bible to be so familiar that it did not need including in the Great Books. Indeed, it is familiar, but it stands now as a stranger in our midst. The scant inclusion of random biblical texts in liberal arts programmes reflects a low estimation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the exclusion of the Talmudic and Midrashic writings, speaks of an even lower opinion. Like a stranger, the written Jewish voice is very often unwelcome – perhaps seen as a threat – or it is treated with hostility, ridicule or abuse. As a stranger in our midst, we have become accustomed to its presence, and so it may be tolerated or ghettoised into 'Jewish Studies'. And unless, we venture into the ghetto, it will have nothing to teach us, nothing we want to hear. However, we have forgotten that this stranger is the pillar of Judaeo-Christian society: our laws founded on the Decalogue, and our common values shaped by the Torah. Our literary history in the west owes so much to the Scriptures, the unpaid debt no less than that paid to Athens. Yet as familiar as the Bible is, and as tolerant of it as we are, we still struggle to recognise the stranger's face – we struggle to describe it – because we are not on speaking terms. Can we learn from the stranger? Yes, but we must be willing to be silent for a time. Athens has spoken, and spoken long. There must be a willing ear.

In rhetoric too, the Jewish voice appears as a stranger – the voice of the foreigner. Margaret Zulick astutely observes the same predicament faced by the Jewish voice in the spoken art as faced in the written art:

> However we choose to explain it, the examination of the Hebrew concept of persuasion draws our attention to the fact that the Greek elevation and rationalization of rhetoric cannot be considered a universal norm, not even in our own culture, which is based on both Hebrew and Greek traditions. Instead, it is a particular development in a small society at a certain point in history; a development that needs to be heard again with newly estranged ears. Hebrew rhetoric is in the paradoxical position, in our culture, of being at one and the same time foreign and foundational; an unassimilated other at the heart of Western rationality. It is this foreigner's perspective that a new encounter with the Hebrew tradition brings to the critical study of rhetoric.[2]

[2] Margaret D. Zulick, 'The Active Force of Hearing: The Ancient Hebrew Language of Persuasion', *Rhetorica*, 10.4 (1992), pp. 367-380 (p. 379).

This image of the 'unassimilated other' perfectly encapsulates the position of the Jewish voice in modern liberal arts education. The foreigner's perspective is crucial to growing our understanding and broadening the liberal arts, so that it represents the education of the truly 'free'. Whilst there are unassimilated others there is no real freedom to speak of. The hideous plight of the Jew as a stranger in gentile history alone testifies to the abrogation of freedom. How we need 'newly estranged ears'. The Jewish spoken voice persuades us to welcome the stranger; to even identify ourselves with the stranger: 'When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God' (Leviticus 19:33-34, ESV). Note that the people of Israel are reminded of their condition in Egypt: because they were strangers, they should easily identify with the stranger who lives among them. However, this identification with the stranger is not to manifest in tolerance, but in love – the love, care and respect you would show to your own. Indeed, the word tolerance is used today is if it were a virtue, but can veil an attitude of 'putting up with' rather than an embracing into. Martin Buber explained more fully the extent of the commandments to 'love your neighbour' and to 'love the stranger': 'I must act lovingly toward my *rea*, my "companion" (usually translated "my [neighbour]"), that is toward every man with whom I deal in the course of my life, including the *ger*, the "stranger" or "sojourner"; I must bestow the [favours] of love on him, I must treat him with love as one who is "like unto me" … I must love him not merely with superficial gestures but with an essential relationship.'[3] Reciprocation is essential to relationship, as Buber stated: 'Relation is mutual. My *Thou* affects me, as I affect it.'[4] The future of the Western liberal arts tradition in relationship with another voice must be built on a mutual respect – it is foundational: 'In the beginning is relation.'[5] The Jewish spoken voice calls for parity between the speakers – a reciprocal appreciation of traditions and a reciprocal ear.

The Jewish thinking voice is also estranged. The reason versus revelation dichotomy – despite itself being a deeply-flawed and illogical argument – has almost entirely succeeded in barring the Hebrew Scriptures and the rabbinic sources from philosophical discourse. Yoram Hazony has done a great service in addressing this fallacy,[6] and showing that the Bible is as much a work of reason as the works of the Presocratics and Plato, whose works, in turn, openly include the revelatory. The voices of Parmenides and Socrates are not excluded despite divine encounter, commission and guidance. The Scriptures call for the equal treatment of the stranger and the native-born, and the Western tradition has much to learn here. The Jewish

[3] Martin Buber, *The Writings of Martin Buber*, ed. Will Herberg (New York: Meridian, 1956), p. 103.
[4] Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald G. Smith (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1937), p. 15.
[5] Buber, *I and Thou*, p. 18.
[6] Yoram Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

thinking voice represents the stranger not only in the philosophical world, but represents a wisdom that is strange to our Western understanding – it requires action – contemplation is not enough. The examined life must be exercised in righteousness, justice and love. Humility is not the conclusion at the end of the quest for wisdom; humility is the beginning of the quest – awe is not the result of contemplation; awe precedes contemplation.

The Hebrew Scriptures speak with the voice of the stranger: Abraham, the wandering patriarch; Moses, the 'stranger in a strange land'; Ruth, the Moabitess in Israel; Esther, the Jewess in Persia and Ezekiel, the exiled prophet. All express something of estrangement and the sense of loss, fear, vulnerability and humility associated with the status of the stranger. Whether in writing, speaking or thinking, the Jewish voice stands as the stranger in our midst – familiar and yet still unknown – the 'unassimilated other'. The challenge for the Western tradition and, in particular, for modern liberal arts education, is to embrace the other as a host embracing a guest – to practice hospitality – and here the Jewish voice is also instructive. Richard Kearney asks, 'When faced with the stranger, do we open or close the door?'[7] One of the ways he seeks to answer this question is through the 'Abrahamic' tradition of hospitality: 'In the first Biblical narrative of hospitality [Genesis 18], we find Abraham and Sarah welcoming three strangers in the desert. The strangers appear out of nowhere and the hosts accept them without asking if they be friend or foe.' The hospitality of Abraham and Sarah is unconditional; welcoming without questions. However, there is always a risk involved in hospitality because the stranger's intentions are not always clear: 'The ethos of hospitality is never guaranteed; it is always shadowed by the twin of *hostility*.' Yet, Abraham models a vulnerability as host that demonstrates acceptance of the other without prior assurances: 'instead of reaching for a weapon or retreating into his tent, Abraham finds himself running towards the visitors. He greets them, bows to the ground and invites them to a meal.' Abraham risks self-preservation and is rewarded with a life-changing encounter with the Other; and the challenge to modern liberal arts is to risk the preservation of a singular Western tradition in exchange for an education where we identify with the Other through life-changing encounter. With regard to cultures, Buber wrote that they 'enlarge their world … not merely through their own experience, but also through the absorption of foreign experience'.[8] 'Only then', he argues, 'does a culture, thus grown, fulfil itself in decisive, discovering expansion.'[9] As Buber wrote of culture, the same can be applied to the nature of the liberal arts tradition – expanding by absorbing the 'foreign' voice; it too may reach fulfilment beyond itself.

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[7] Richard Kearney, 'Guest or enemy? Welcoming the stranger', *ABC Religion and Ethics* (June 2012) <www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2012/06/21/3529859.htm> [accessed 16 August 2013].
[8] Buber, *I and Thou*, p. 37.
[9] Ibid.

As Kearney so clearly states: 'Hosting your Other is more divine than protecting your own which is arguably why the Hebrew Bible has thirty six commands to "love the stranger" and only two to "love your neighbour."' The liberal arts tradition has been protecting its own for too long – it is time to run towards the stranger and be changed. Such action requires 'risk and adventure on our part', argues Kearney, and the role of the host is to 'provide a dwelling' for the 'uninvited one'. Does a liberal arts education have room enough to provide a home for the Jewish voice? I believe it does, but the more challenging question involves reversing the roles of host and stranger – does the stranger have room for the host? Abrahamic hospitality is a nomadic, desert hospitality, forever moving. The danger is in settling, because then the host becomes, as Kearney calls it, the 'guest-master' or 'master of the house'. Jacques Derrida's *Of Hospitality* speaks powerfully regarding the relationship between the master and the stranger or 'Foreigner':

> The Foreigner shakes up the threatening dogmatism of the paternal *logos:* the being that is, and the non-being that is not. As though the Foreigner had to begin by contesting the authority of the chief, the father, the master of the family, the "master of the house," of the power of hospitality.[10]

The 'authority of the chief, the father, the master of the family, the "master of the house,"' well describes the dominant Western tradition, rooted in Greco-Roman grammar, rhetoric and philosophy. The outsider voice is able to contest this authority as the non-being that has learnt to desist seeking the authority of settlement for itself. Emmanuel Levinas describes this contesting or shaking up as 'the Stranger who disturbs the being at home with oneself [le chez soi]'.[11] Abraham was called to leave his home (Genesis 12:1), to become rootless. As a result, he is able to welcome strangers – he shares the desert of 'unknowability'. Thus, there is room and breadth in the Jewish voice to host these written, spoken and thinking arts. Indeed, there is room to host all the arts.

Beyond the Preliminaries: the Jewish Voice and the Other Liberal Arts

This study has only focused on the Jewish voice in relationship to the preliminary liberal arts of writing and reading, speaking and thinking, based in turn on the trivium of grammar, rhetoric and logic. The traditional liberal arts education went beyond the preliminaries to the disciplines of arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. Sure enough, the Jewish voice is not left behind here, and has much to say in addressing these disciplines. This study is only an opening in the

[10] Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*; trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 5.
[11] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p. 39.

discussion between Athens and Jerusalem regarding the preliminary arts, and I have not touched on these further four here. However, future research might address these other disciplines in turn: a Jewish approach to arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy will yield fascinating insights from the ancient biblical period, the rabbinic period of Antiquity, the medieval Jewish flourishing and beyond.

In the arts of arithmetic and geometry, the Jewish approach to numbers can be seen in biblical references to counting (for example, Genesis 13:16; Leviticus 25:8 and Psalm 147:4) and numbering (Isaiah 10:19), through to the cabbalistic system of numerology – *gematria* – in medieval Jewish thought.[12] One verse from the First Book of Kings has also given rise to a fascinating debate regarding the knowledge of *pi* amongst the biblical authors: 'Then he made the sea [basin] of cast metal. It was round, ten cubits from brim to brim, and five cubits high, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference' (7:23, ESV).[13] Moreover, the explicit and intentional designs of Moses' tabernacle (Exodus 25-27) and Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6-7; 1 Chronicles 22; 2 Chronicles 2-3), as well as the temple envisioned by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 40-43), point to a biblical understanding of geometry that invites further exploration in the context of the liberal arts.[14]

Regarding music, the Hebrew Scriptures dedicate whole books to song – the Book of Psalms contains a collection of 150 songs, and the Song of Solomon, a three-voice love story in song. Additionally, there are songs scattered throughout various biblical texts, for example, 'The Song of Moses' (Exodus 15:1-21) and 'The Song of Deborah and Barak' (Judges 5) appear within narrative. One of the most remarkable aspects of music in the Scriptures is where it speaks of a musical harmonisation in the cosmos, as in the following example:

> 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?
> On what were its bases sunk,
> or who laid its cornerstone,
> when the morning stars sang together

[12] For a comprehensive discussion of the history of biblical and post-biblical numbering, see Solomon Gandz, 'Hebrew Numerals', *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 4 (1932-1933), pp. 53-112; and 'Studies in Hebrew Mathematics and Astronomy', *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 9 (1938-1939), pp. 5-50.

[13] See Michael A. B. Deakin and Hans Lausch, 'The Bible and Pi', *The Mathematical Gazette*, 82.494 (1998), pp. 162-166; and Isaac Elishakoff and Elliot M. Pines, 'Do Scripture and Mathematics Agree on the Number π?', *B'Or Ha'Torah*, 17 (2007), pp. 133-153.

[14] For a discussion of the geometry in Ezekiel's vision, see Jacob Milgrom and Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel's Hope: A Commentary on Ezekiel 38-48* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2012); and Bennett Simon, 'Ezekiel's Geometric Vision of the Restored Temple: From the Rod of His Wrath to the Reed of His Measuring', *Harvard Theological Review*, 102 (2009), pp. 411-438.

> and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:4-7, ESV)

Here, God is addressing Job with a series of rhetorical questions, and mentions that at the creation of the earth the morning stars (*kochvei boker*, כוכבי בקר) sang together (*beran yachad*, ברן־יחד). There is a link here between the creation of the cosmos and music, and this can also be seen in Psalm 19:1, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork'; and in Psalm 148:3, 'Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars!'

It should not be so surprising that music plays such a significant role in the Jewish tradition, when we remember that hearing is the primary sense in the Scriptures. The prohibition on the visual does not extend to the aural. The written, spoken and thinking voice finds accompaniment in a whole variety of instruments and sounds, from the manmade in Psalm 150 (this includes, for example, the trumpet; lute; harp; tambourine; strings; pipe; and cymbals) to the God-made in Psalm 148 (this includes, for example, angels; the sun, moon and stars; the heavens; the seas; sea creatures; the weather; mountains; trees; animals; insects; birds; and humans – both young and old, male and female, from the king to the common man).

The Hebrew Scriptures reveal a fascinating and sophisticated knowledge and understanding of astronomy, beginning with the creation narrative in Genesis:

> And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. And God made the two great lights – the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night – and the stars. And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness (1:14-18, ESV).

This description indicates that the heavenly bodies serve not only as sources of light, but also as 'signs' and markers of time. Soon after, God gives Abraham (known at this time as 'Abram') the following invitation: 'Look towards heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them' (Genesis 15:5, ESV). God then promises him that his offspring will be as numerous. This has even led to the idea that Abraham may have been one of the earliest astronomers in Scripture.[15] The promise is later reiterated to Abraham using the same example of the stars (Genesis 22:17), and repeated to his son, Isaac (Genesis 26:4).

In the Book of Job we have more detailed accounts of the stars – in the following passage Job describes God's wisdom and power: 'He is wise in heart and mighty in strength – who has hardened himself against him, and succeeded? – he who removes mountains, and

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[15] For a discussion of Abraham as an astronomer see, for example, Annette Y. Reed, 'Abraham as Chaldean Scientist and Father of the Jews: Josephus, *Ant*. 1.154-168, and the Greco-Roman Discourse about Astronomy/Astrology', *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 35.2 (2004), pp. 119-158.

they know it not, when he overturns them in his anger, who shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble; who commands the sun, and it does not rise; who seals up the stars; who alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea; who made the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the chambers of the south; who does great things beyond searching out, and marvellous things beyond number' (Job 9:4-10, ESV). The 'Bear' constellation is translated from the Hebrew עש (*Ayish*), while Orion is translated from כסיל (*Kesil*) and Pleiades from כימה (*Kimah*).[16] That these constellations were known and named in Hebrew suggests an early interest in astronomy within biblical literature.

David, too, appears to show interest in astronomy, as the following quote from Psalm 8:3-4 demonstrates: 'When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?'[17] Moreover, the Psalms tell us that God is an astronomer: 'He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names' (147:4, ESV).

The Hebrew Scriptures provide a rich source for the study of arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy commensurate with the classical traditions of ancient Greece. In a fascinating article, David Curzon has written of the connection between modern science and the Hebrew Scriptures – he boldly concludes that 'beliefs derived from the opening chapters of Genesis are active, if unacknowledged, religious principles underlying and operating in all the discoveries of modern science'.[18]

Beyond the Ancient Jewish Voice

The focus of this study has been on the foundational Jewish voice: the biblical mainly, and the rabbinic to a lesser degree. There is clearly a rich Jewish tradition that extends from Late Antiquity into the medieval period and beyond. It is in the medieval period, for example, that Hebrew grammarians and Jewish philosophers begin to emerge as distinct voices in the Jewish world (such as Saadia Gaon and Maimonides respectively). Part of their identification as grammarians and philosophers is due to their moving closer to Athens, but what they carry with them from Jerusalem is worthy of further study. The same is true up to the present day, although the Jewish written and spoken voices have faded comparatively, as the Jewish

[16] The Bear, Orion and Pleiades are mentioned later in Job 38:31-32, when God is addressing Job, while Pleiades and Orion are mentioned in the Book of Amos (5:8) as being made by God. For a discussion of these terms, see Robert V. Foster, 'Some Astronomy in the Book of Job', *The Old Testament Student*, 4.8 (1885), pp. 358-363.

[17] For a discussion of the Hebrew understanding of the planets, see Robert R. Stieglitz, 'The Hebrew Names of the Seven Planets', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 40.2 (1981), pp. 135-137.

[18] See David Curzon, 'The Genesis of Modern Science', *Jewish Ideas Daily* (October 18th, 2011) <www.jewishideasdaily.com/content/module/2011/10/18/main-feature/1/the-genesis-of-modern-science> [accessed 17 September 2014]. The relationship between science and the Hebrew Scriptures is also explored in Annette Yoshiko Reed, 'Was there science in ancient Judaism? Historical and cross-cultural reflections on "religion" and "science"', *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses*, 36.3-4 (2007), pp. 461-495.

thinking voice has come to the fore in the philosophical world. This fading is an inevitable consequence of the Diaspora, as Franz Rosenzweig so clearly illustrated: '…the eternal people lost its own language and everywhere speaks the language of its external destinies, the language of the people with whom it perchance dwells as a guest; and when it is not claiming the right of hospitality, but lives on its own in a closed settlement, it speaks the language of the people from which, in leaving it, it received the strength to carry out this settling; it never possesses this language in its own right, it never possesses it on the basis of its belonging to the same blood, but always as the language of immigrants who came from all over: "Judeo-Spanish" in the Balkans, and "Yiddish" in Eastern Europe are only the best known cases today'.[19] Nevertheless, despite the diasporic loss, something distinctive remains in the Jewish voice: 'Whereas all other peoples are consequently identified with their own language and whereas the language withers in their mouth the day they cease to be a people, the Jewish people never identifies itself entirely with the language it speaks; even where it speaks the language of the host that receives it, its own vocabulary or at least a specific selection from the common vocabulary, its own word order, its own feeling for what is beautiful or ugly in the language in question, all this betrays that this language – is not its own.'[20] Derrida notes that the 'Foreigner' suffers the 'first act of violence' when forced to 'ask for hospitality in a language which by definition is not his own, the one imposed on him by the master of the house, the host, the king, the lord, the authorities, the nation, the State, the father, etc'.[21] Nevertheless, the Jewish voice has survived among the nations; among the worldviews; and the systems of reading, speaking and thinking into which it has been thrust. Indeed, as Levinas points out, 'the *relation* between the same and the other – upon which we seem to impose such extraordinary conditions – is language'.[22] Ironically, as well as causing suffering to the stranger in its imposition by the host, language also provides the means of conversation:

> To approach the Other in conversation is to welcome his expression, in which at each instant he overflows the idea a thought would carry away from it. It is therefore to *receive* from the Other beyond the capacity of the I, which means exactly: to have the idea of infinity. But this also means: to be taught. The relation with the Other, or Conversation, is a non-allergic relation, an ethical relation; but inasmuch as it is welcomed this conversation is a teaching [enseignement]. Teaching is not reducible to maieutics; it comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain.[23]

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[19] Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, trans. Barbara E. Galli (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), p. 320.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 15.
[22] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 39.
[23] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 51.

Through adopting the host language, the Jewish voice enters into a relational conversation that becomes instructive for the host – and so the Jewish voice lives on through Saadia Gaon, Maimonides, Spinoza, Buber, Rosenzweig, Levinas, Derrida and beyond, to engage in a conversation with modern liberal arts.

Athens *with* Jerusalem

The linking together of Athens and Jerusalem is usually traced back to Tertullian. In his *Prescription Against Heretics*, he asked 'What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?'[24] As the title of his treatise makes clear, Tertullian was primarily addressing the problems of heresy in late second to early third century Carthage.[25] The phrase has become synonymous with the opposition of faith to reason (reason represented by the city of Athens while Jerusalem stands for faith). On this statement faith and reason have been forever polarised, but arguably this is a misunderstanding of Tertullian, who was highlighting the use of Greek philosophy in heretical teachings, rather than negating the value or position of reason amongst people of faith.[26]

In liberal arts and philosophy we commonly speak of Athens *and* Jerusalem,[27] but the '*and*' separates the two cities, while Athens *or* Jerusalem polarises them. Whilst for Levinas, the 'conjunction *and* … designates neither addition nor power of one term over the other',[28] a more helpful pairing of the cities may be Athens *with* Jerusalem – a pairing that directly addresses Tertullian's question of what has one to do with the other. If we are addressing faith and reason, then maybe the separation of Athens and Jerusalem holds good, although, as we have seen, faith and reason are not mutually exclusive in either tradition. If, instead, we are addressing traditions reflected in the liberal arts (in this context, writing, speaking and thinking), then Athens has much to do *with* Jerusalem and vice-versa. This may seem to be an insignificant issue – mere pedantry – but it is important because the word '*with*' forms a bridge between the two cities: an association allowing one to cross over to the other. Thus, we do not need to perpetuate the mutual exclusivity of one view over the other. Both cities, both

[24] Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum (On the prescription of heretics)*, 7.9 <www.tertullian.org/works/de_praescriptione_haereticorum.htm> [accessed 19/03/13].
[25] See Ronald E. Heine, 'The beginnings of Latin Christian literature' in Frances Young, Lewis Ayres and Andrew Louth (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 131-141 (p. 135).
[26] For a discussion of arguments and diverse views on Tertullian's statement see Eric Osborn, *Tertullian, First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 27-47; and David E. Wilhite, *Tertullian the African: An Anthropological Reading of Tertullian's Context and Identities* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), pp. 22-23.
[27] For example, David Janssens, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Philosophy, Prophecy, and Politics in Leo Strauss's Early Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008).
[28] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 39.

wisdoms and both voices can stand side-by-side, shoulder-to-shoulder: the rooted tiller with the wandering shepherd.

Athens *with* …?

Athens *with* Jerusalem is just a beginning; where Jerusalem serves as a prototype for the twinning or joining in of other voices. Kearney expresses the possibility of opening up relationships with all the strangers in our midst and beyond: 'My hospitable relationship with the stranger, in sum, gives meaning to my relations with all strangers, proximate or distant, human or divine.'[29] Once a dialogue has been brokered, other voices can more easily join. These could be two-way discussions: Athens *with* Istanbul, Athens *with* Cairo, Athens *with* Nalanda, or Athens *with* Shanghai. Alternatively, they could open up into two or three-way conversations between different voices. With increasing confidence, the Western tradition might even risk a conversation where Athens is silent, listening instead to the discourse of two or three strangers. For certain, these other traditions have much to teach us about how to read, speak and think – the bigger the conversation becomes, the richer our understanding and experience will become. Indeed, Derrida believes that the advent of the stranger has the potential to liberate the host:

> Crossing the threshold is entering and not only approaching or coming. Strange logic, but so enlightening for us, that of an impatient master awaiting his guest as a liberator, his emancipator. It is *as if* the stranger or foreigner held the keys. This is always the situation of the foreigner, in politics too, that of coming as a legislator to lay down the law and liberate the people or the nation by coming from outside, by entering into the nation or the house, into the home that lets him enter after having appealed to him.[30]

Thus, the strangers' voices may also serve to liberate the Western liberal arts tradition, as outsiders with keys to unlock the arts of reading, speaking and thinking in different ways. The ability to emancipate lies in the freedom of the stranger, as in Levinas' definition of the stranger as 'the free one. Over him I have no *power*.'[31] Indeed, Levinas goes as far as to state that it is the 'absolutely foreign alone [that] can instruct us', because the 'strangeness of the Other, [is] his very freedom!'[32] When we speak of liberal arts – the education of the emancipated – then the outsider voice is one that can bring liberty to a tradition which has been so long settled.

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[29] Kearney, 'Guest or enemy? Welcoming the stranger'.
[30] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 123.
[31] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 39.
[32] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 73.

Writing on the subject of philosophy, Justin Smith argues that attempts to 'open up the discipline to so-called non-Western traditions and perspectives' have failed:

> The goal of reflecting the diversity of our own society by expanding the curriculum to include non-European traditions has so far been a tremendous failure. And it has failed for at least two reasons. One is that non-Western philosophy is typically represented in philosophy curricula in a merely token way. Western philosophy is always the unmarked category, the standard in relation to which non-Western philosophy provides a useful contrast. Non-Western philosophy is not approached on its own terms, and thus philosophy remains, implicitly and by default, Western. Second, non-Western philosophy, when it does appear in curricula, is treated in a methodologically and philosophically unsound way: it is crudely supposed to be wholly indigenous to the cultures that produce it and to be fundamentally different than Western philosophy in areas like its valuation of reason or its dependence on myth and religion. In this way, non-Western philosophy remains fundamentally "other."[33]

Smith's reasons for failure echo Kearney's idea of the 'guest-master' – the Western tradition dominates the relationship and the guest is contrasted by the standard of the master. This is Athens *and*/*or*… as opposed to Athens *with*. The Western tradition always has a seat at the table and never has to justify its presence in the conversation. The challenge to the Western voice is to give up the seat. I have witnessed a common hospitality in many Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern cultures in which a visitor is always welcomed into the house; and if it happens to be at a meal-time then the host not only insists that the visitor joins them, but brings them from the door to the dining table, giving up their own seat without the visitor having time to realise or object. Not that the visitor is naïve, but they are made to feel welcome and find themselves in the thick of the conversation rather than the periphery. The host, meanwhile, is serving– they will pull up a chair, but not at the centre. Derrida calls this 'absolute hospitality' - it 'requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner … but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I *give place* to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them'.[34] Or, in the words of Levinas: 'I welcome the Other who presents himself in my home by opening my home to him.'[35] This 'welcoming the Other, as hospitality',[36] is a paradigm for hosting the stranger in liberal arts education.

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[33] Justin E. H. Smith, 'Philosophy's Western Bias', *The Stone* (3 June 2012) <opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/03/philosophys-Western-bias/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=1> [accessed 13 September 2014].
[34] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 25.
[35] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 171.
[36] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 27.

Smith suggests that one correction to the failure 'would be to stop describing it as "non-Western," but instead to be explicit about which geographical region, or which tradition, we are discussing: Kashmir Shaivism, for example, or Chinese Mohist logic, just as we would speak of German Aristotelian Scholasticism or American Pragmatism, without, ordinarily, bothering to specify that these are both "Western." In the context of liberal arts education, we could speak of rhetoric, for example, defining where it comes from geographically and from what period. Alternatively, Smith advocates treating 'both Western and non-Western philosophy as the regional inflections of a global phenomenon'. Thus, according to this model, rhetoric would be taught as a singular phenomenon within a wide variety of traditions, none of which takes precedence over the others. Smith argues that the Western voice has no privileged right to philosophy: 'Now it is of course very difficult to define "philosophy," but if we think of it broadly as systematic reflection on the nature of reality and on humanity's place in that reality, then it is clear that Europe can make no special claim to be the home of philosophy.' Thus, the 'only reason to take European philosophy as the default tradition for our curricula is that it just happens to be, for contingent historical reasons, *our* tradition'. Nevertheless, Smith is by no means dismissive of the Western voice; he simply wishes to see it as one among equals:

> The West has an extremely rich philosophical tradition … and it is eminently worthy of preservation and transmission to future generations. But its richness has always been a result of its place as a node in a global network through which ideas and things are always flowing. This was true in 500 B.C. and is no less true today.[37]

Perhaps a humbling is necessary, a lesson taken from the Jewish voice of Wisdom. Such a re-evaluation would not only reposition the Western tradition in liberal arts education, but simultaneously elevate the estimation of other traditions.

In the same way that Smith challenges the Western voice in philosophy, Erika Falk has challenged the Greek dominance in the study of rhetoric. She argues that 'the study of Jewish rhetoric in particular, and multicultural rhetoric in general, could help create a definition of rhetoric that is neither time nor context bound. Such an orientation would suggest a greater level of abstraction that encompasses multiple philosophical, cultural, and historical approaches to understanding communication systematically.'[38] Falk notes a variety of 'cultural approaches to rhetoric' that have been and are being studied, including Chinese; African American; Arabic; and Japanese:

> It is impossible at this point to say exactly how a culturally inclusive definition of rhetoric would look. Although such a definition would have to take into account not

[37] Smith, 'Philosophy's Western Bias'.
[38] Erika Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech: Toward Multicultural Rhetoric', *Howard Journal of Communications*, 10.1 (1999), pp. 15-28 (pp. 25-26).

> only the persuasion and logocentric rhetoric of the Greek classics, but also the morally, ethically driven Jewish rhetoric, the historically [centred] and contextually driven rhetoric of the Saudis … the rhetoric of emancipation found in black churches in Alabama during the civil rights movement, which included singing and praying … as well as other historical and multicultural perspectives.[39]

Falk, like Smith, sees the need for an end to the Western monopoly – to include the classical tradition as *a* voice among many, but not *the* voice dictating to the rest. As with philosophy, the other traditions of rhetoric are as old as the Western tradition, if not older. Indeed, they are, in many ways, as old as speech itself.

The Western monopoly on the arts of reading, speaking and thinking highlights the need to hear other voices in liberal arts education. Shermon Cruz draws attention to some of the differences between Western and non-Western traditions in the context of the liberal arts: the Western traditions emphasise the individual and 'individualism expressed through autonomy and freedom of choice as the primary universal value'; and a 'linear (progressive) view of history and a materialistic view of the real'. Whereas, the non-Western traditions emphasise community and 'social cohesion'; and a view of history with a 'propensity for cycles and the transcendental'. Thus, these 'differences in inclinations', he argues, 'have significant implications on liberal arts discourse'.[40] The Western voice, then, has limited scope in the future of liberal arts education as it represents an increasingly smaller and singular position on the global stage of multiple voices.

Moreover, Cruz details several problems with the Western model of liberal arts in the non-Western world. The term 'liberal arts', for example, is considered to be inappropriate by many non-Western academics: 'In the Conference Report of the Hollings [Centre] on Independent Universities in the Muslim World (2007), the word "liberal" is seen as controversial, political, American and Western oriented. A widely noted argument came from a Muslim Professor who claimed that cultural and contextual differences will doom the Western liberal arts model to failure in many of these non-Western, predominantly Muslim societies.[41] Additionally, if a liberal arts student is typically 'an individual, a college graduate, a young adult speaking one on one with another individual to listen, to empower and to persuade', then the 'community, the tribe and the village are hardly a part of her image'. Yet, from the non-Western perspective 'the existence of families and communities is predominant', so 'the

[39] Falk, 'Jewish Laws of Speech', p. 26.
[40] Shermon O. Cruz, 'Peering into the Futures of Liberal Arts', *Journal of Futures Studies*, 16.3 (2012), pp. 79-98 (pp. 81-82).
[41] Cruz, 'Peering into the Futures', p. 82.

unspoken, unacknowledged emphasis on the individual might well be the biggest challenge in translating the concept of liberal education to cultures beyond Western tradition'.[42]

Cruz highlights a Chinese perspective, with one of the most enduring civilisations in 'space and time'. As a result, 'the Chinese have developed their own meaning of existence, human nature, affairs and society'; while philosophically, 'they have an optimistic view of humanity and believe in their knowledge, wisdom and ability to transform and reshape oneself via the rhythms of nature'. Chinese civilisation is 'solidly grounded in the Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist discourse', with self-reliance for survival: 'While the Greek civilization [emphasises] public speaking, political leadership, freedom, and the advancement of democratic institutions in its liberal arts discourse, the Confucian story [centres] on civic culture, mutual respect and complimentary obligations, virtuous [behaviour], self-control, hard work, skills acquisition, patience and perseverance and sustained inter-relationships … this type of educational tradition stresses duties rather than rights.'[43] Thus the goals of a Chinese arts and sciences education emphasise 'the family, the community … the importance of reputation, cultural knowledge and heritage, ethical [behaviour], duty and character building'.

Cruz goes on to consider an Indian 'construct of the arts and sciences', as an alternative to the Western model: 'As the Greeks situate freedom in the political, the Chinese in the cultural, the Indians saw it in the spiritual.'[44] Thus, the 'understanding of the transcendental self is the [centre]-piece of the Indian liberal arts project … the ultimate goal of human life': 'While the Greeks train their subjects with rhetorical skills, argumentation, and debate, and the Chinese train by way of [memorising], writing and reading classical, literature, poetry and humanists' texts, and knowing virtue, the Indian path is through congregating, reading scriptural texts, meditating (mantras), and practicing yoga with the guidance of a Guru.'[45] The Indian model reinterprets and redefines liberal arts 'in the context of the spiritual, which is needed in understanding oneself as well as in advancing the welfare of others to reduce human suffering. Thus, creating spiritual leadership, developing rationality in the context of the transcendental and the universal, and awakening one's conscience becomes the goal of liberal arts education.'[46]

Finally, Cruz offers an Islamic model, where Muslims 'find their meaning, their purpose, [and] their identity in the desert'. Islam 'provides them with a moral and ethical framework, which is the foundation for Muslim education, knowledge, and scholarship'.[47] In this context, Cruz lists the following prerequisites for an Islamic equivalent to a liberal arts

[42] Ibid.
[43] Cruz, 'Peering into the Futures', p. 83.
[44] Cruz, 'Peering into the Futures', p. 84.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Cruz, 'Peering into the Futures', p. 85.
[47] Ibid.

education: 'Group unity, history, inclusiveness, kinship, respect for parental authority, royal authority, Islam, ethics, and choice are essential in the Muslim context of the arts and sciences.'[48] In the remainder of his article, Cruz notes the development and growth of liberal arts programmes across China, India and the Islamic world, but with distinctly relevant approaches in the context of each culture: Confucian, Sanskrit, Persian, Hindu and Muslim.[49] This, he argues, is a sign of great hope in the future of liberal arts education as, by necessity, the emphasis moves away from the dominant Western voice towards the art of reading, speaking and thinking in these other significant traditions.

But what of the Western voice – can it survive into the future? Established American liberal arts education programs alongside resurgent European models continue to promote the Western tradition, albeit in modern expressions. Great Books are still read with little more than a cursory nod to the Scriptures. The value of rhetoric is underlined by politicians around the world through presidential speeches and the countering of opposition would-bes. Liberal arts students are encouraged to take note of political oratory.[50] The teaching of Western philosophy still baulks at the idea of the Hebrew Scriptures as a legitimate source, and plays double-standards when protesting that the Bible is a revelatory book with nothing to offer reason. Will the recent interest in liberal arts education from Asia and the Middle East redress the balance?

By embracing the stranger or strangers that dwell in our midst and by becoming – like Abraham – the rootless host, I believe that Athens has a future *with* Jerusalem. In closing, I will briefly consider a new initiative in the story of Athens *with* Jerusalem – in 2013 the first Israeli liberal arts college opened its doors: the Shalem College in Jerusalem. The College draws on the 'best practices' from America's leading and exemplary liberal arts institutions, and positively embraces the Great Books. However, it is here that they begin to make it very much their own:

> Given Israel's unique intellectual and cultural heritage, the Great Books approach at Shalem encompasses the Western tradition, the Jewish tradition, and the Islamic tradition. Of 23 courses in the Core Curriculum, 13 will be taught in accordance with a Great Books approach—including a series of courses on the Western tradition, a parallel series on the Jewish tradition, and one course on the Islamic tradition.[51]

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[48] Cruz, 'Peering into the Futures', p. 86.
[49] Cruz, 'Peering into the Futures', pp. 88-91.
[50] See, for example, the video and audio links on the University of Winchester, *Modern Liberal Arts: The Seven Liberal Arts: Rhetoric* <mla.winchester.ac.uk/?page_id=216> [accessed 15 April 2015] and the University of Iowa, *Department of Rhetoric: Rhetoric Today* <clas.uiowa.edu/rhetoric/about/rhetoric-today> [accessed 15 April 2015].
[51] Daniel Polisar, *The Fundamental Principles Behind Shalem College: An Explanatory Booklet* (Jerusalem: The Shalem Center, 2011), p. 8.

Given the sheer volume of rabbinic and Islamic texts, they are treated differently, with a selection of works representing themes rather than attempting to present the whole corpus. Nevertheless, the Core Curriculum is based on a unique distinctive: 'Our rationale is that Shalem's students are heirs to the Western and Jewish traditions, and must study both of these in-depth, and that their location in the Middle East also requires them to be conversant with the Islamic tradition.'[52]

Inspiration has also come from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, whose Department of Philosophy's degree program includes 'Chinese/Eastern Philosophy' and 'Western Philosophy'. Unlike Hutchins' defence of exclusively Western Great Books, Shalem sees this combination of Western and Eastern philosophy serving as 'an illuminating precedent for attempting a similar joint program exploring Western philosophy together with Jewish thought'.[53] Thus, the Core Curriculum embraces classic texts from the Jewish, Western and Islamic traditions: 'The core curriculum is a reflection of Shalem's unique approach to "the Jewish liberal arts," which weaves the Hebrew Bible and classical rabbinic texts into the main curriculum alongside Western sources in philosophy, political theory, science and literature.'[54] The idea of weaving these world-views together suggests that a close relationship will be maintained between the traditions in approaching science, philosophy, art and other subjects. Hopefully, Shalem will succeed in creating this intertextual dialogue, forming a truly Great Conversation. According to Rebecca Attwood, Shalem has argued that Israel's higher education system 'neglects the humanities and exposure to the great ideas of the Jewish people'.[55] Could not this charge be made against most modern liberal arts providers in their neglect of 'the great ideas of the Jewish people'? Jerusalem is looking to her future. It is perhaps fitting that a bridge to Athens is being built there.

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[52] Polisar, *The Fundamental Principles*, p. 13.
[53] Polisar, *The Fundamental Principles*, p. 19.
[54] Shalem Center, *Shalem College Curriculum* <www.shalem.org.il/Educational-Philosophy/Shalem-College-Educational-Philosophy.html> [accessed 29/10/11].
[55] Rebecca Attwood, 'The liberal art of nation-building', *Times Higher Education* (23/12/10) <www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/the-liberal-art-of-nation-building/414782.article> [accessed 18.04.13].

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